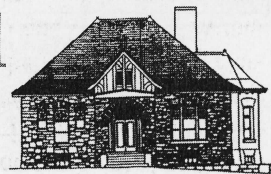


# The Thompson Historical Society Newsletter



Summer 2019

PO Box 47, Thompson CT 06277

## Thompson Town Farm Road



THS recently received a long sought after photo of what is believed to be the Town Farm or Alms House that was located on Quaddick Town Farm Road. We make the statement "believed to be" because of the note on the photo, however, there has been some conjecture that it may not be the Town Farm because of the appearance of the road grading in the photo - present day has a much more level grade. We know, based on the 1869 map, that the Alms House was located at the site of present day Quaddick State Park but the grade cannot be determined from the map. Further review of the 1869 map, with comparison to the 1934 aerial

photo and present day satellite, shows that there have been changes made to the road in this area. Information from the CT State Archives states that the land was sold to the state between 8/1947 and 8/1948. We know that sometime after 1934 there was a change to the road. It is possible the change to the road, including the grade, was due to the sale and creation of the park. Further research is required, to include a visit to the area to determine if the present day road appears to have been cut into a hill. Thanks to Paul Hughes for the donation of the photo from Jesse (Eddy) Hughes estate.

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### Schedule of Events:

#### Civil War Re-Enactment— Fabyan CT

September 28-29, 2019

Camp Opens 10 a.m.—Battle begins 1 p.m. both days  
Check the THS website for updates as date gets closer

### Sale of Nipmuck Land

(Webster Times 90th Anniversary Issue)

**LAST REMNANT OF INDIAN LANDS SOLD BY AUCTION HERE, HAD DWINDLED TO 26 ACRES—Sold on Nov. 22, 1887, All that was left of the Nipmicks' Vast Domain**—Auctioneer H.M. Clemence came to Webster Nov. 22, 1887 to sell 26 acres and 58 rods comprising the last remnant that the Nipmucks or Pegans, the so-called Dudley Indians, possessed on the vast, indefinite tract of country over which their progenitors roamed. The sale which took place at 2 p.m. was made in accordance with a decree granted by the Probate Court, Dec. 22, 1886, at the request of the Indians and their counsel, F.M. Morrison, Esq., of Worcester.

The petition was drawn under the provisions of Chapters 469 of the Acts of 1869, and the court appointed as the required commissioners Thomas Harrington and Charles Stevens, and ordered that the sale was "for the advantage of the tribe." The land is situated about a half mile from the Norwich and Worcester railroad station and consists of sprout land and includes a small cemetery in which there are 30 or

(Cont'd Page 2)

## From The President's Quill - By: Joseph Iamartino



I wanted to document in this issue the support we receive from the Thompson School System. On June 10<sup>th</sup>, the MRFES second grade class had their annual tour of Thompson with visits to 7 of Thompson's 10 villages. The children learned to weave, used quill feather pens and ink, acted in little plays, hunted for the old well on the Thompson Common and learned about the many historical sites in town including the Great 1891 Four Engine Wreck in East Thompson. With the teachers, the children formed a bucket brigade to feed water to the still functioning Old Tub, the original fire engine in town. This old engine is not far from 200 years old! Thank you to the Thompson firefighters

who helped make this a memorable event for our children.

Sue Vincent hosted the children at her home, the beautiful Greystone Farm. Lucille Barrette, Mr. & Mrs. Tilen, Paul Provost, Burt Rhodes and many other THS volunteers assisted. Mr. Rice and Joe Lindley contributed in many ways behind the scenes to make this event a success. Our thanks too for the support we received from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Rangers explained the history and the function of the 1965 dam that protects all of us from the flood damage from major storms as happened in 1936, 1938 and 1955.

While all of the teachers and chaperones should be commended for their participation, I want to especially thank Ellen Pratt for her advice and leadership surrounding this event. My thanks too for the support of school administrative team that puts this on the schedule every year.



Over the years, many young men and women have come up to me and said that they remember their second grade tour of Thompson. Those planted seeds of future history lovers are coming up. Our town will be the better for it. I hope they had fun too!

### (Nipmuck Land Cont'd)

40 Indian graves. The location is not very far from the St. Louis Church.

The land was valued at \$500, and as the sale averaged exactly \$25 an acre and aggregated over \$650, the auction must be considered a success. The land was sold in five parcels of five or six acres each, to as many different people. The purchasers were Rev. Father Quan, F.M. Morrisson of Worcester (for Chas. Haggerty), Dr. Fred Brown, Ladislav Jonakowski and H.J. Potter of Webster. A right of way was reserved 18 feet wide through the land.

The story of the Indians since the time of John Eliot and his missionaries has been peculiar and it may turn out that they have title to more land than that which has just been sold, under the hammer. The territory over which the tribe roamed is not very well defined, and their political relation towards neighboring tribes is not much clearer.

The Nipmucks early came under the influence of the Gospel. Before Philips war, which lasted from 1675 to 1677, there were reported to be 60 "praying Indians" at Manchaug (Oxford), 45 at Chaubunagungamaugg (Dudley), about as many at Maanexit (Dudley Hill), 100 at Woodstock, a town which originally belonged to Massachusetts, and 150 at West Dudley.

On the east side of Dudley Hill was the best conditioned Indian village. It belonged to the Pegans. The mis-

sionaries write of the Indians as being "God fearing men". They could read and they had translations of such religious works as Baxter's "Call", Sheperd's "Sincere Convert". "The Sound Believer", "The Practice of Piety", etc. The second Indian church in the country was established among them.

Daniel Gookin, one of the original settlers among them and one of Eliot's missionaries, writing of his visit to the Indian says: "There are about nine families and forty five souls. (Now Webster). The people are of sober deportment, and better instructed in the worship of God than any of the new praying towns. Their teacher's name is Joseph who is one of the church of Hassanamesit, a sober, pious and ingenious person and speaks English well." The Indians of pure blood died out as soon as they were put upon a reservation. The legislature passed a law forbidding them to leave it, and forbidding the sale or purchase of the land. Guardians were appointed by the legislature to care for them.

In May, 1681, the General Court appointed William Stoughton and Joseph Dudley as commissioners to meet with the Nipmucks who had had some grievances. The commissioners bought of the sachem, Black James, all of the Nipmuck country lying beyond the Kuttatuck, Nipmuck or Blackstone River. Near the center was the village of Manchaug or Oxford. The price paid was 50 pounds and a black coat for Black James.

There was, however, a reservation of five square miles for the Indians to be laid out in two sections. One of

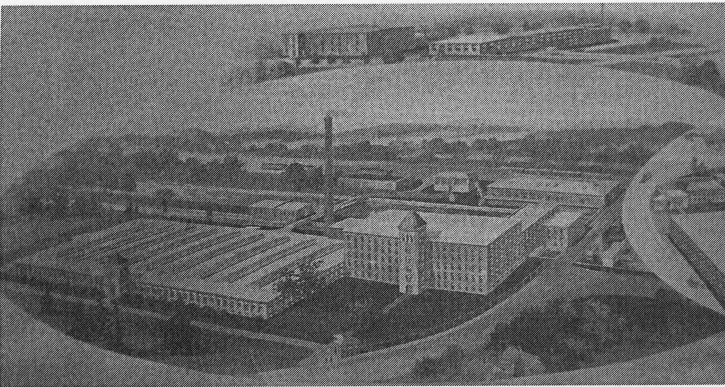
(Cont'd on Page 5)



DR. WILLIAM GROSVENOR was born in Killingly, Conn., April 30, 1810. He was the son of Robert and Mary Beggs Grosvenor, and a descendant in the fifth generation through Robert, Joshua, and Colonel Thomas, from John and Esther Grosvenor, who came from Cheshire, England, in 1680, and settled in Roxbury, Mass., where three more children were born to them. In 1686, John Grosvenor, with John Chandler, Samuel Ruggles, Benjamin Smith, Joseph Griffin and Samuel Ruggles, Jr., purchased



15,000 acres of wilderness land in the Wabbagnasset country from Major Fitch. This tract included the territory afterwards occupied by the towns of Killingly, Pomfret, Woodstock and Thompson, and was given by Uncas, Sachem of the Mohegans, to his son Oneco, who sold it to Major Fitch. John Grosvenor died at Roxbury, September 26, 1691, and in 1692 his widow traveled with the rest of the owners of 'The Wilderness Tract' to Connecticut, accompanied by all her children with the exception of the



eldest, who remained in Massachusetts.

William Grosvenor, the subject of this sketch, was educated in the Providence schools, and then pursued the study of medicine at the Pennsylvania Hospital, with the object of succeeding his father, who was a distinguished physician. Having taken his degree, he returned to Killingly, where for several years he was associated with his father in the practice of medicine and surgery.

August 22, 1836, Dr. Grosvenor married Rosa Anne Mason, daughter of Gen. James B. and Alice

(Brown) Mason, daughter of Hon. John Brown, of Providence, and removed to that city, where he began the practice of medicine. His taste for a mercantile life, however, led him to enter the commercial world as a wholesale dealer in drugs and dyestuffs. He carried on this business successfully for five years, and during this period was brought in contact with cotton manufacturers. He thereby acquired a knowledge of textiles, and until 1860 was engaged in calico printing. In 1848 he was appointed agent of the Masonville Mills, on the retirement of his wife's uncle, Amasa Mason, and from that date became controlling spirit of the company. He infused it with new life, and started it on a career of continuous prosperity. Meanwhile he kept strengthening his position by purchasing shares of stock at every opportunity. In five more years he was so large an owner that he had it in his power to consummate important changes, for which his sagacity had led him to make the preparation. In 1857 the stone and brick mills of the company were united by the construction of a middle section, forming what was for years operated and called Mill No. 3, but which in 1916 was used for...storage...purposes...only.

In 1862, notwithstanding the serious cloud of depression which affected the business of the country, owing to reverses suffered by the Northern arms, Dr. Grosvenor began the construction of Mill No. 4, furnishing the larger part of the capital himself. The new mill proved profitable and further enlarged the capacity of the manufactory in 1864 by the purchase of the Fisherville property, and of another large water privilege lower down the stream, which was name 'Grosvenor'. The different interests being now consolidated under one management, Dr. Grosvenor began to lay the foundations of the present Mill No. 2, and the huge structure was finished and equipped with machinery in 1872. Meanwhile, in 1868, the amalgamated plant was renamed Grosvenor-Dale Company, Dr. William Grosvenor then owning three-fourths of the stock, William Grosvenor, Jr., one-eighth, James B. M. Grosvenor, one-sixteenth, and Lucius Briggs, superintendent, one-sixteenth. In 1883 Mr. Briggs resigned, and the entire property passed into the hands of the Grosvenor family.

Dr. Grosvenor was a man of tremendous ability, genial and courteous in his manners, and highly esteemed throughout New England as a man of integrity and enterprise. He was a member of the State Senate during the Civil War, and was also chairman of the

(Cont'd on Page 4)



(Cont'd from Page 3)

finance committee. He was very largely influential in securing prompt and effective legislation, which gave to Rhode Island a prominent place as one of the first States to respond to President Lincoln's call for troops.

For forty years, he personally conserved the financial interests of the Grosvenor-Dale Company, and aided his eldest son, William upon whom rested the responsibility and the attention to detail in the general management of the steadily growing manufacturing interests.

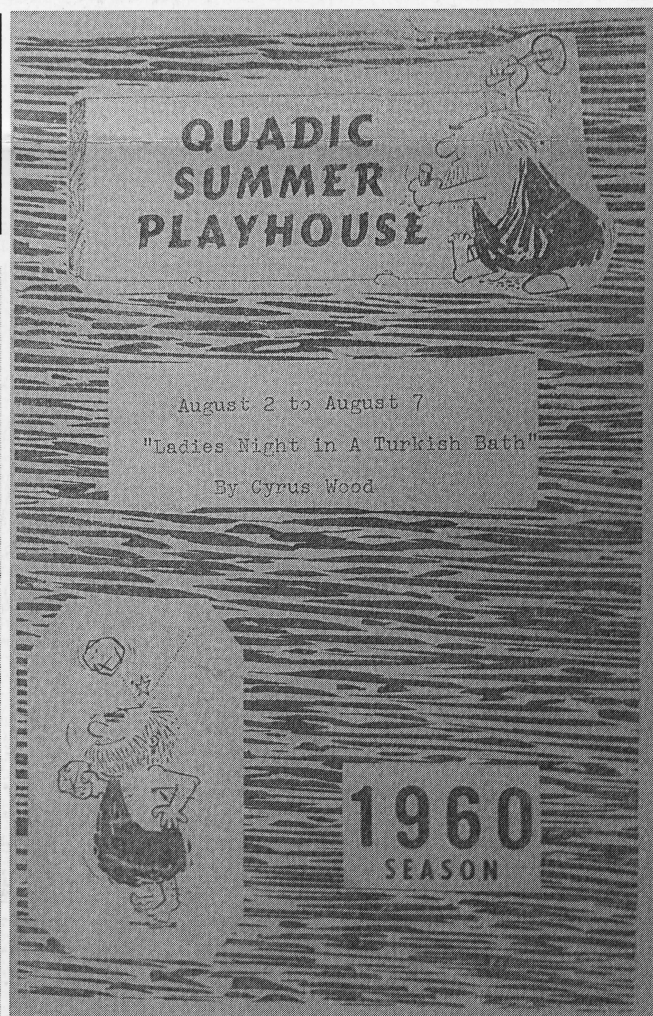
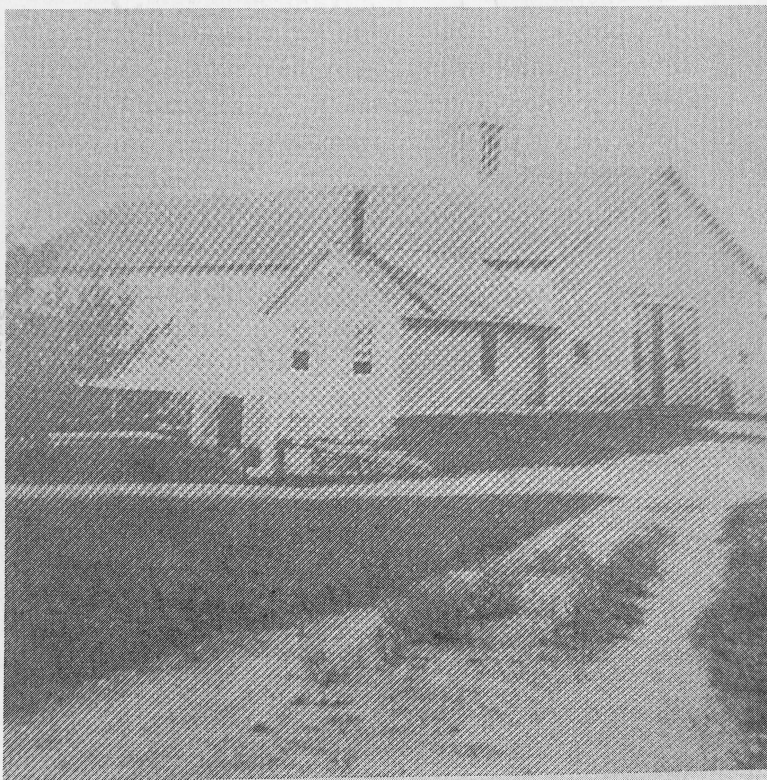
Dr. William Grosvenor died August 17, 1888, his wife having pre-deceased him in 1872. He had seven children: William, James Brown Mason, the founder of the house of Grosvenor in New York, who was the chief agent for the sale of goods of the Grosvenor-Dale Company; Amasa Mason, who died in infancy; Alice, who became the wife of Dr. John J. Mason, of New York; Robert, a graduate of Norwich University in the class of 1868, and until his death, July 19, 1879, was associated with his brother William in the home office of the Grosvenor-Dale Company; Eliza Howe, who died in infancy; and Rosa Anne.



Above: This is William Mason House on Thompson Hill, one of the owners of Masonville Mills that was sold to become part of the Grosvenor-Dale Co.

### Quadric Summer Playhouse (below)

*Formerly known as:  
Bells Dance Barn (1949-1954)*



Quadric Summer Playhouse Play Bill  
(Courtesy of David Eddy given to him by his father Walter Eddy)



(Nipmuck Land Cont'd)

the sections was in the vicinity of what is now Webster, and other was near Woodstock, Conn. In 1682, half the reservation was sold to Stoughton and Dudley and in 1707 the remaining half was sold to the whites, "saving always and reserving a liberty of hunting and planting upon said ground in such places as may be necessary for their support." A deed dated June 1724, to John Chandler and Samuel Morris defines the boundaries as follows:

At a heap of stones on the east bank of a brook called Mekamoro-ocachaug, being the northeast corner of Isaac Newell's farm; thence extending south 5 degrees east 272 perch, by a line of marked trees, to a heap of stones in a north line of the land of the Hon. Paul Dudley, called his Maanexit farm; from thence it extends east, 5 degrees north, adjoining said Maanexit farm 361 perch to another heap of stones, which is the southeast corner of said tract; from thence it extends north 5 degrees west 272 perch, to another heap of stones, being the northeast corner, and from thence by a line running west 5 degrees south 361 perch to the heap of stones first above mentioned. The boundaries included about one square mile.

June 16, 1797, the general court granted the prayer of the Indians for leave to sell the reservation, and in that year the Indians gave a deed to Levi Davis of Charlton, 201 acres, in consideration of \$1667 in money and the remission of a debt of \$300. The money was to constitute a fund, the interest was to be used by the guardians for the support of the Indians.

The accounts of the guardians have never been audited, and what investigation has been made has revealed traces of some rather un-business like transactions, and possibly a more offensive adjective might be truthfully used. The property of the tribe suffered somewhat from time to time by the encroachments of outsiders, or by ques-

tionable bargains. In 1857, the state legislature appropriated \$3000 for a road and for houses for the Indians' descendants. The money was to be expended under direction of the selectmen of the town. They took the money, bought land and built a house thereon. In 1870 the board of state charities voted to sell this property. Thomas McQuaid of Webster was the purchaser and \$1790 the price paid. In 1732 the Indians gave four acres for a common church and a school, on condition of being allowed "convenient seats".

As only 201 acres of the square mile of reservation was sold, there must have been a large tract remaining. Only 26 acres and 58 rods has been accounted for. Where is the remainder? Nobody knows.

In 1886, when it was desired to run a road through a certain tract of land at Woodstock, Conn., it was found that the owners of the land had no title to it. John and Joseph McClellan, cousins of Gen. George B. McClellan, and residents of the town, say they remember the Indians owned land there, not so very long ago, between Woodstock and Thompson, Conn.

The town of Webster was incorporated in 1832 from portions of Dudley and Oxford, and a tract of land known as the "Oxford South Gore" which belonged to the state and was not part of any township. An old deed mentions the fact. William Dudley allowed the Indians to improve land south of Powder Horn Brook, so much west of the road from Woodstock to Oxford, as said Indians may have occasion for subsisting cattle, not exceeding 15 acres, for a period of 20 years and for such further time as may be agreed upon. The rent agreed upon was "one salmon trout in the month of May, annually, of demanded on the premises." Dudley once bought land of the Indians, having forgotten about the law forbidding its purchase and he was compelled to get an act passed to ratify the sale.

Chapter 463 of the Acts of 1869, under which the petition for sale of the land granted, made the Indians citizens, and after that date, of course, no guardians were appointed.

## **The Great Thompson Train Wreck Last Green Valley Trail Day**

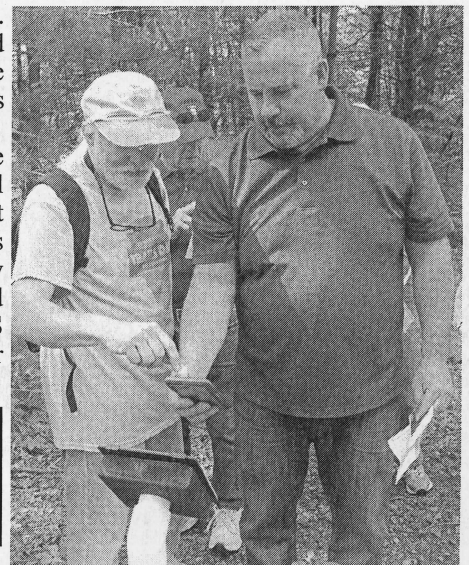
On Dec. 4, 1891, in East Thompson CT, 4 locomotives collided, causing three deaths. Today, the Wreck site and the old rail line is a popular hiking destination and is called the Airline Trail State Park. Charlie Obert sponsored the June 1st tour in support of the Last Green Valley's Trails day.



*L-R: Charlie Obert, Joe Iamartino, Tom Chase*

Paul Provost and Tom Chase collaborated on the successful QR barcode demonstration at the Wreck site during this Trails & Historical Society event. The QR demo allowed visitors to access the THS website for the latest data for historic sites.

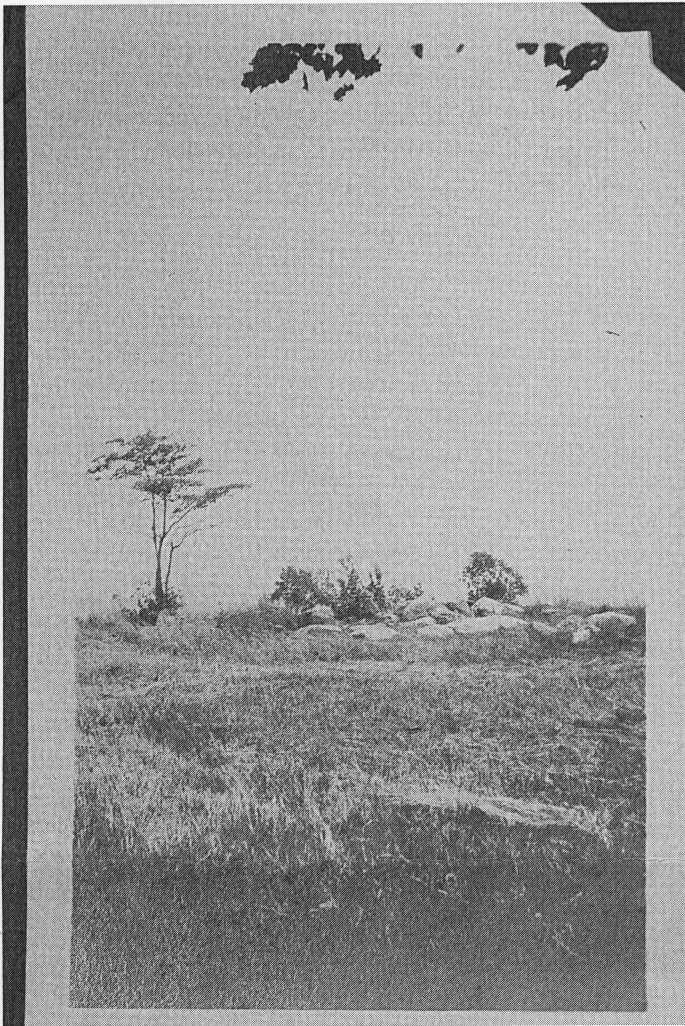
*Right: Paul Provost assisting Larry Groh on how to use the QR Barcode*





## The only known Photo of the Indian Fort on Fort Hill

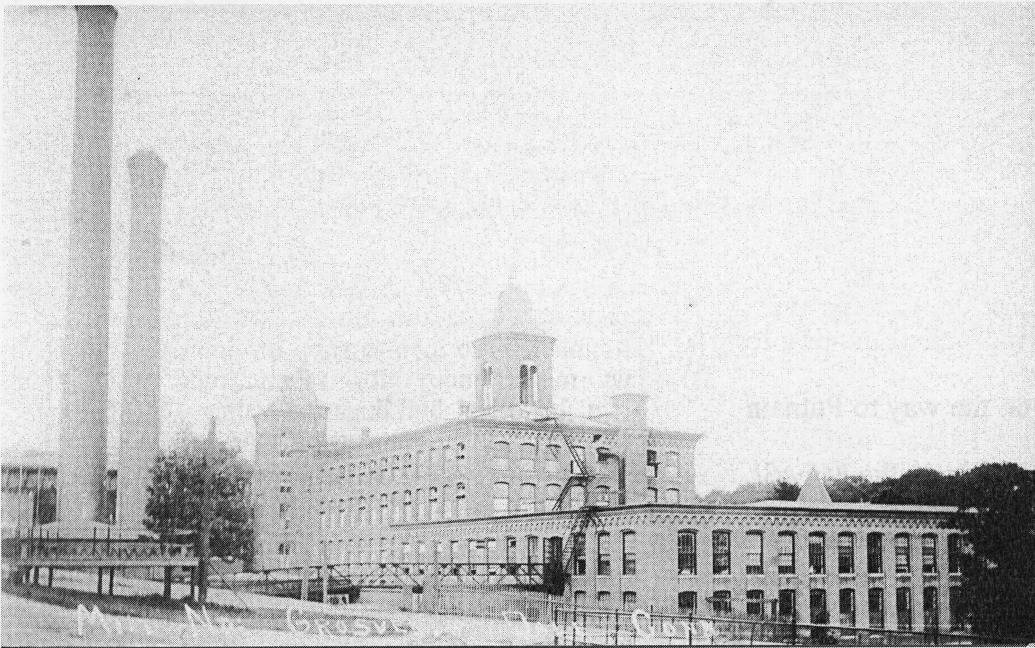
(Photo compliments of Norma O'Leary)



The Fort,  
of which the  
site is shown,  
was where the  
Indians of the  
region held  
off the settlers  
when they press-  
ed them too  
hard.

Standing  
here one can  
see and yet  
not be seen  
as the head  
hardly cuts the  
sky line.

## Pictures from the Past - Grosvenor-Dale Mill Smoke Stacks



Rumors of two smokestacks are true! Trying to compete with lower cost producers in the south, the Grosvenordale Company expanded production, added modern equipment after WWI. For many textile companies in New England, the availability of coal and oil driven machinery at the turn of the century, instead of New England's waterpower, made it impossible for the New England industry to survive. By 1950 many companies were feeling the pinch, and in our area the death knell for many was the 1955 flood. Those that survived, were typically companies that specialized in specific areas like Belding Hemingway with their high-performance sewing threads, but the additional pressure from overseas manufacturers even made their survival impossible.



## Items You May Not Have Known

**Q.** Who is Gen. George Whitefield Davis (b1839 in the Brandy Hill section of Thompson) and what does he have to do with the Washington Monument in DC?

**A.** General Davis made his U S Army reputation for getting things done when he was in charge of the construction and design team (Lt. Col. Casey and Davis) that finished the Washington Monument. Started many years earlier, the monument was about 50 percent complete when the foundation began cracking and funds dried up. Construction stopped and for decades it stood unfinished. Many felt it had to be torn down but Davis, Casey and their Corps of Engineering team had ideas how to fix it. In 1884, three decades after it was started, the world's tallest free-standing stone structure was completed.

Gen. Davis later served as the Military Governor of Puerto Rico and Panama but he frequently visited Thompson after the Civil War and never forgot his hometown.

## Do You Have a Question?

Contact us on Facebook or send us an Email

*We recently received this question request from John Mrazik:*

**Q.** Back in the late winter or very early spring of 1964 -1965 -1966. (Yes, way back then and sorry on the 3-year gap, but I'm really not sure on the year.)

I was traveling on the southbound Budd car on the 5:17 PM out of Webster bound for New London.

I was up front with engineer and my girlfriend, when the conductor comes up front and tells us to stop the train because a person was seen clinging to the ice out in the river.

Location somewhere between Wilsonville and Buckley Hill.

It turned out to be a young German Shepard.

Two college kids from Worcester Jr. College went out on the ice on their bellies and pulled the dog to safety.

The dog rode up front with us on the way to Putnam because of the heater up front.

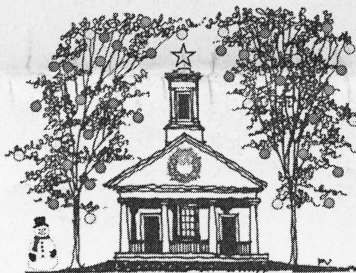
The Putnam Police picked up the dog at the May St. crossing.

The incident was covered in the papers.

Does anyone recall the event and the correct time frame?

## Archivist Corner -By: Mark Snay

THS continues to receive many generous donations, keeping several members/volunteers busy at cataloging. The cataloging process for non digital items involves identification, photographing, assigning an ID number from the Past Perfect software, tagging the item, entering in PP all information/photos we know/have for the item and then packing away for storage. We are finishing the Teresa Muraco collection. Next will be the items from the Lois Bixby Thompson collection. At times, donations are more than just small items, as is the case with the Kenney Post Office and General store from Mechanicville. We are presently working with donor Glenyce Kenney to preserve parts of her family's store which will, in the near future, be set up in a display as it was for more than a century. Thank you to all helping to preserve Thompson's historical items.



If you have any donations for the Christmas Shop call Sue Vincent 508-847-9092. Can be picked up at your convenience. Thank you

**September 4, 1862**

*(From an unknown Newspaper)*

### LABORERS WANTED!!

The contractor for the excavation of a Race-Way for the new mill at Masonville, wants 20 or 30 able bodied men to whom good wages and constant employment will be given for the season.

Members who love to shop on line could help us raise money for maintenance of our two historical buildings by using **AMAZON SMILE**. It is the same as your Amazon account but donates .05% of your purchases to the Thompson Historical Society when you designate us as your choice. There is no cost. If you have questions about joining call Sue Vincent 508-847-9092. Thank you.

## Membership Information:

- \$10.00 Individual Membership
- \$15.00 Family Membership
- \$25.00 Contributing Membership
- \$5.00 Student Membership

Memberships are due by July 1 of each calendar year

Make checks payable to:

Thompson Historical Society  
Po Box 47  
Thompson, CT 06277

Anyone interested in joining the Thompson Historical Society can contact us at:

Phone Number: 860-928-5527  
Web Site: [www.thompsonhistorical.org](http://www.thompsonhistorical.org)



## Museum Hours

Typically Open  
Sundays 9:00 a.m.—Noon  
Call Joe before you come  
(603) 657-6205

## Officers and Contact Information:

Joseph Iamartino - President  
Joseph Lindley - Vice President  
Sue Vincent - Treasurer  
Mark Snay - Secretary, Senior Archivist  
John Rice - Building Committee Chair  
Abe Gustavson - Director  
Ginny Flood - Director  
Burt Rhodes - Director  
Dr. Chris Wagner - Director  
Paul Hughes - Director  
Kathy Welch - Director  
Kathleen Herbert - Director  
John Brynga - Director  
Roberta Baublitz - Director  
Lisa Berg - Director  
Charlie Obert - Director  
William Steglitz - Director  
David Laabs - Director

## Ellen Larned Memorial Building

THS Museum  
339 Thompson Road  
Thompson, CT 06277  
(Opened Sundays 9:00 am to noon)

## Old Thompson Town Hall

1 Chase Road  
Thompson, CT 06277  
(Open by appointment)

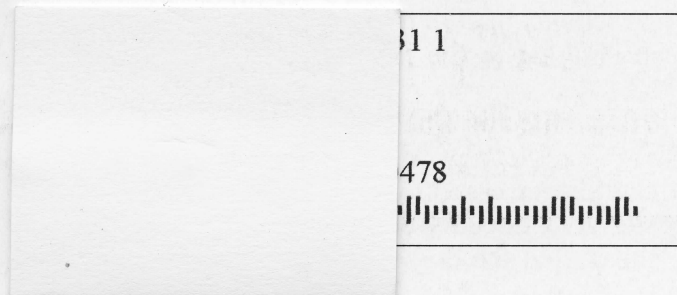
## Tourtellotte Memorial Room

785 Riverside Drive  
North Grosvenordale, CT 06255

## Thompson Historical Society

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