Guide to the **Town of Groton Collection**

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Collection Number V-2-3-7(1-2)

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See also:

School Records Collection, Groton – V-10-3-6
Church Records Collection, Groton – V-6-1-9
Groton Iron Bridge Company Collection – V-28-1-1
Betty Woernley Groton Collection – V-64-2-6

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

In Spring 1817 the Town of Locke, also known as Military Tract Township no. 18, was divided in half, with its southern part added to Tompkins County and named Division. A year later, at its first town meeting, the Town of Division was renamed Groton. The exact origin of this name is unclear, but it is likely that several families residing in the town came from areas close to Groton, Massachusetts and Groton, Connecticut and recommended the familiar name. At this time, several settlements had sprung up within the Town of Groton: McLean, Peruville, West Groton, and Groton City. Today, these are Groton's four hamlets. Maps and atlases created in the 19th century and beyond list other small settlements, including Lafayette, Nubia, Franklinville, Grotto, and Benson's Corners, also known as Bensonville.

Groton's first European settlers included the Perrin, Williams, and Carpenter families, who were hired to clear, survey, and sell off portions of Lot no. 75 of what was then the Town of Locke. Their 1797 settlement, then called Groton Hollow, voted in 1860 to incorporate as a village. By the 1860s, it was by far the largest settlement in the town, including stores, churches, doctors' offices, a town hall, the Groton Academy, and the First National Bank of Groton.

Groton did not begin as an industrial town, but it was transformed into one in the period between the Civil War and World War I. One of its notable firms was the Groton Bridge Company, founded in 1849 and reestablished in 1887, expanding production to steam engines, grain separators, and heaters. In 1900, the company was Groton's largest employer with 160

employees. However, shortly after, J.P. Morgan's American Bridge Company purchased the smaller company, and it closed in 1901. Another Groton commercial pioneer was the First National Bank of Groton, which was established in 1865 by one of the founders of the Groton Bridge Company. In 1896, Groton's Welthea Marsh became the first woman bank president in New York (and possibly the nation) after her husband died. Other Groton industries include the Groton Carriage Works and the Crandall Machine Company, which manufactured some of the earliest typewriters.

This collection details the history of Groton from the era of its incorporation (1860s) to the late 20th century. This information comes from numerous sources, from artifacts such as poetry and newspaper clippings representing both the everyday life of people residing in the town, and major events such as the Groton Fire of 1961, to research materials and historical accounts covering topics in local history such as the Groton Iron Bridge Company. One notable feature of the collection is a "Clock System" map of farms in Groton organized in 12 segments with distance denoted by concentric circles around the community center. This map appears in the 1920 Rural Index published by Rural Directories, Inc.

As a whole, this collection provides a big-picture view of life in Groton since the 19th century. Detailed in some parts and sparse in others, the collection contains materials that relate to many different aspects of the Town of Groton's history, including fliers for musical performances, programs for annual traditions and celebrations, legal records, awards, and more.

CONTAINER LIST

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