

CITY OF GROTON

The Jewel of the Eastern Shore

City of Groton



progress prudence pride
100 *years*

A Historical Overview

Introduction

This year we celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the City of Groton. Although our time as a City is relatively short, our history is long.

This booklet describes the rich and varied history of the City of Groton.

As you read about our history you will understand why Groton offers such a great quality of life to our residents – beaches, battlefields, parks and open space, industry, public power and water – we have it all. If what has happened in the past predicts the future, we can only get better.

The Centennial Celebration Committee has worked long and hard to bring you an outstanding series of celebration events. Our thanks to them.

Sincerely,



Dennis L. Popp
Mayor





City of Groton

The Jewel of the Eastern Shore

“At the dawn of the twentieth century forward-looking businessmen on the east bank of the Thames realized the need for municipal services and worked to form the Borough of Groton, incorporated in 1903 to provide water and electricity as well as fire and police protection for its population. The Borough became the City in 1964. Now, entering its second century, it continues successfully to meet the needs of residents and local industries. As Groton Town Historian I am pleased to salute the City of Groton’s Centennial.”

– *Carol W. Kimball*
Groton Town Historian

In 1646 when John Winthrop, Jr., established Pequot Plantation, later New London, the boundaries included both shores of the Thames River, stretching northward six miles from the sea. Thus the present City of Groton began life as part of New London, known at first as the “east side,” and later as “the Bank.” When residents of the east side were finally allowed to become the separate town of Groton in 1705, the village along the Thames River’s east shore became known as Groton Bank.

New London was built on rocky land, and the east side was valuable for pastureland. To reach this land a ferry was soon established to cross the Thames River. Edward Messenger was the first ferryman, but soon moved to Windsor. In his place Cary Latham was appointed in 1654. Latham built a house by the ferry landing, becoming the first settler to live on the Groton shore.



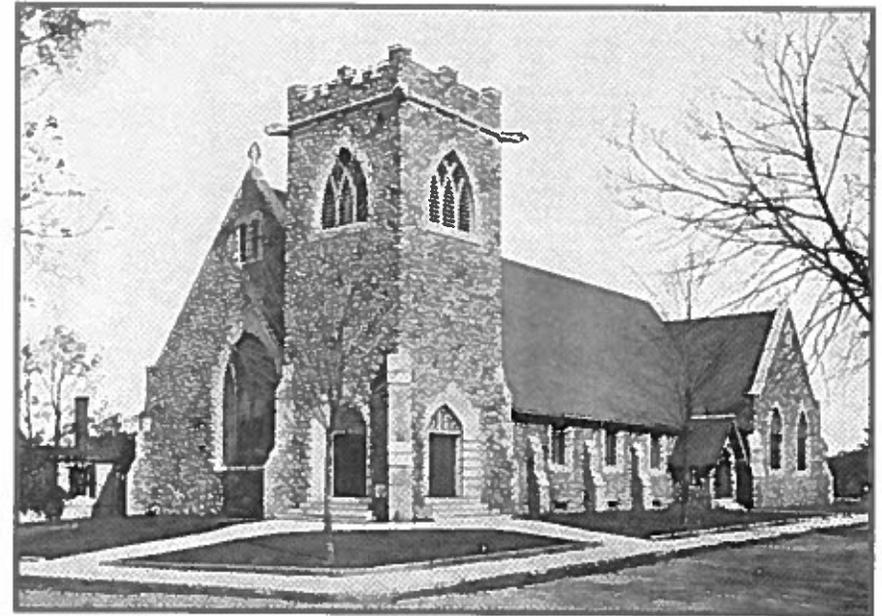
THE FERRY LANDING

The ferry landing and the ferry tavern were originally located across the street from what is now the Avery-Copp Museum. Later the ferry landing was moved to the foot of the present School Street. The ferry was the only one to cross the Thames River, and it was a central meeting place for travelers as well as local businessmen. The ferry was an important factor in the economic growth of the east side through the years and led to the development of Groton Bank as the town's business center, becoming the focal point of commerce and trade. The old Indian trails became roads and streets, with all thoroughfares ending at the ferry. Parts of Broad and Thames Streets were known as the King's Highway. Eventually these became part of the Lower Boston Post Road in the days of the post riders. As time went on, heavy stage-coaches rumbled along on their way to the ferry crossing.

Over the centuries Groton Bank flourished with the establishment of shipbuilding and a brisk maritime trade. Docks and piers bristled along the river, while on the south end of the heights granite was quarried off Granite and Thames Streets. Stores and shops appeared along Thames Street and the population increased in contrast to that in the rural areas of town.

Before There Was a Town, There Was a Church

In the colonial period of Groton, churches served as a gathering place where citizens could meet to discuss civic issues as well as worship. Groton's first church, Congregational, was started in Center Groton in 1705 because geographically it was the center of town. Later Groton's First Church was moved to the corner of the present Walker Hill and Pleasant Valley Roads. As the population grew on Groton Bank the Church moved once again, first to north Thames Street in 1834, and then to the corner of Monument and Meridian Streets in 1902, where it stands today. The unique fieldstone meetinghouse is modeled after the Avery Family parish church in Ipplepen, Devon, England.



GROTON'S FIRST CHURCH, CONGREGATIONAL



GROTON BANK BAPTIST CHURCH

The Groton Heights Baptist Society was formed in 1843. The Church was first built on the west side of Thames Street where the World War II Submarine Memorial stands today. In 1872 the Groton Bank Baptist Church was built on Broad Street. The structure was made of wood in the Italianate style of architecture. In 1887 the name was changed to Groton Heights Baptist Church. A brick sanctuary has been added to the original church structure.

Groton's Seabury Memorial Church was built on the corner of Fort and Thames Streets in 1876. This Church was consecrated on September 13, 1881 and was named in honor of Samuel Seabury who went to England to be ordained a Bishop and became the first Episcopal Bishop of the United States. The original Church building still stands on Thames Street, but the Bishop Seabury Church is now located on Route 117 (256 North Road).



SEABURY MEMORIAL CHURCH

Two other churches, pictured on the next page, were established in the early 1900s. Sacred Heart Catholic Church, originally located opposite the main gate of the Electric Boat Company, was later moved to its current location on Sacred Heart Drive; and the Chapel on Circle Avenue, presently the Rock of Salvation Christian Temple, was established for the summer residents of Eastern Point and still stands today.



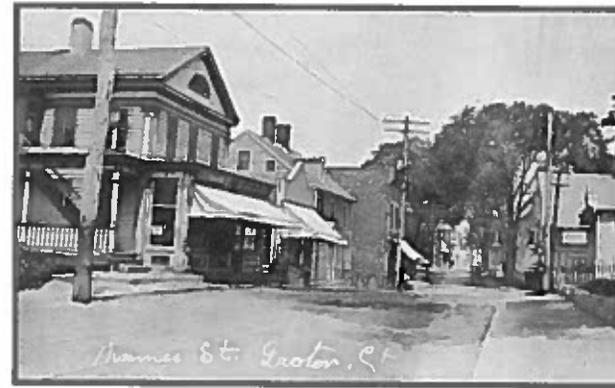
SACRED HEART CHURCH



EASTERN POINT CHAPEL

Family Businesses Boomed Along the Eastern Shore

As neighborhoods of people began to spring up along the eastern shore of the Thames River, small family owned and operated businesses were established throughout Groton Bank. Residents in a particular area would frequent the convenience store closest to their home. Most people walked, and having easy accessibility to food and services was important. Family run businesses selling groceries, meats and fish, dry goods and general services dotted Groton Bank. Some of the well-known establishments were: Blastow's on Mitchell Street, Dibowick's on Baker Avenue, Universal Food Store on Poquonnock Road, Brocky's Bakery on Hynes Avenue, and Alva Welt's Meat Market, on the corner of Smith and Thames, and of course the Little Big Store on Thames.



THAMES STREET NORTH



THAMES STREET SOUTH

However, the main concentration of businesses and professional services for residents of Groton Bank was along Thames Street, Groton Bank's Main Street until the 1960s. It was the focal point of commerce and business. From town parades to daily shopping, Thames Street was the center of town in its day. People knew each other well; business was conducted with a mutual respect for the citizen and the business owner alike. Banks did not exist in Groton until the 1950s. The following is a listing of some well-known business establishments on Thames Street from 1903-1960:

Howard A. Edgcomb (Edgcomb and Poppe)	Dry Goods
H.E. Marquardt	Grocery
Charles A., George & Christian G. Marquardt	Construction
Charles Marquardt (Groton Lumber Yard)	
George Hempstead	Plumbing/Stoves
George Avery, Choice Groceries	Grain/Feed/Flour
Clarence B. Sharp (Whaling City Dredge & Dock)	
W.L. Morgan	Watchmaker/Jeweler
Thomas H. Sisk (Manager) Redding's Drug	
William H. Hawkey (Groton Livery & Stables)	Boarding Stable
Carlos W. Allyn	Grocery
George Long (Long's Fish & Oyster)	Fish Market
Manuel & Ed Costa (Costa Lobster Pound)	Fish Market
Anthony P. Levesque (Thames Electric)	
Gott Gerring (Gott's Garage)	Auto Repair & Towing
Romanilla Family	Jill's Diner
John L. Couch (Groton Hardware Co.)	Hardware, Paint, Toys
Frank W. Hewes, M.D.	Physician
Edmund L. Douglas, M.D.	Physician
Charles Barnum, M.D.	Physician
A. Duncan McDougall, M.D.	Physician
Robert H. Byles (Byles Memorial Home)	Funeral Services
Joseph Dembo, D.D.S.	Dentist
Kenneth Streeter (Ken's Tackle Shop)	Fishing Equipment & Bait
Rudy Santaoroce (Groton Oil Company)	Auto Repair & Oil
Spicer Ice and Coal Company	Ice, Coal & Oil

Shipbuilding and Submarines, The Craft That Built the Eastern Shore

The Thames River provided a rich and protected area on which to build wooden boats. From the earliest colonial period to the present day, many fine craftsmen established their boatyards along the Thames River's eastern shore. Jonathan Leeds was the first boat builder on Groton Bank. In 1680 he started a boatyard just south of the original ferry landing on Thames Street. He built the brigantine *Tryall* in 1708 and later the sloop *Swallow*. Other boat builders soon followed, Thomas Starr in 1710 built the 67-ton square-stern sloop *Sea Flower* on Groton's shores and William and Thomas Lathan's shipyard, located where Electric Boat is today, launched "Ye Groton Sloop." In 1723 the first large scale shipbuilding began in Groton by James Sterling and John Jeffrey. In 1725 Jeffrey's ship, a vessel of 700 tons and the largest merchantman built in America before 1774, was launched at the ferry landing on Groton Bank.

The Revolution brought a static period in shipbuilding but after adoption of the Constitution, a new maritime policy favoring American shipping stimulated the industry once again. Thirty-two vessels were built in Groton from 1784-1800 and 28 more in the next seven years. The landscape of the eastern shore was laced with shipyards and commerce. As the nineteenth century was coming to a close, the dominance of wooden ships and the prominence of individual shipbuilders in the maritime world was coming to an end. Shipbuilding became big business and iron shipbuilding was the new field.

In 1900 James J. Hill started the Eastern Shipbuilding Company on what is now Electric Boat's north yard. The Eastern Shipbuilding Company set out to build all classes of merchant ships or war vessels of whatever magnitude and complexity. The company built only two ships, both 33,000 tons and 630 feet long. The *Minnesota* was launched in 1903 and the *Dakota* in 1904. These two ships were the largest vessels ever built in the world at that time. The purpose for such large ships was to transport wheat to Japan. The endeavor was unprofitable because coal was needed to fuel the vessels. Coal was not readily available for a ship sailing to the Orient. The Eastern Shipbuilding Company shut down in 1905.



GROTON IRON WORKS



NLS&ECO BUILDING

In 1911 the New London Ship and Engine Company bought what had been the Eastern Shipbuilding Company, and it was referred to as (NLS&ECO). The Company built diesel engines, gas engines, and parts for submarines and commercial ships. NLS&ECO became a subsidiary of Electric Boat in 1929. The submarine *Cuttlefish* was built by Electric Boat in 1933. The company gained a fine reputation for making submarines for the U.S. Navy and the Peruvian government, as well as gunboats, tugboats, yachts, trawlers, and ferryboats.

The Groton Iron Works, another large shipbuilding yard established in 1916, was located on the current Pfizer Inc site and intended to construct large steel freighters for use in World War I. Although the success of Groton Iron Works was limited, its location was of value because it included the railroad spur, which connected to the railroad ferry near the quarry on Thames Street in the eventual north yard of Electric Boat Company. After lying dormant for many years, Electric Boat purchased the former Groton Iron Works and during World War II created the Victory Yard, which produced a fleet of 74 submarines – more than any in America. In 1947 General Dynamics purchased Electric Boat and during the 1950s the company was selected to build the world's first nuclear-powered submarine, *Nautilus SSN-571*. The *Nautilus* was launched in 1954 on the shores of Groton Bank.

The people of Groton Bank were forward thinkers and willing to accept risk. As a result they are credited with being excellent craftsmen, insightful business people and hard workers who make excellent products, boats, engines, and ships. They perfected a craft and became the world's leader in submarine construction.



VICTORY YARD GATE



NAUTILUS SUBMARINE

United States Submarine Base

As a result of Groton Bank's significant role in making world-class submarines and the location of the United States Submarine Base emerging with the creation of the Navy Yard, Groton is often referred to as the "Submarine Capital of the World."

In 1868 The U.S. Navy Yard was planned and promoted by John R. Bolles, a resident of New London and head of the New London Board of Trade. Bolles was the spokesperson to members of Congress and the Connecticut General Assembly to make the case for the establishment of a Navy Yard in New London. The Navy Yard would supply the Navy vessels and also repair them on-site. Land was not affordable on the west side of the Thames River for such a project so attention was turned to the eastern shore where 112 acres, including a mile of waterfront property, was donated by New London and the State of Connecticut. The property is currently used as the United States Naval Submarine Base. The Navy Yard became noteworthy during World War I as a base for the infant submarine service. It was an excellent location on which to conduct naval exercises from and develop a training school during the war years. The Navy Yard was enlarged to accommodate the submarine force and the nuclear power school.



SUBMARINE BASE

Sea Captains of the Groton Bank

Groton Bank was also the home of many prominent nineteenth century sea captains. With the building of boats and the proliferation of Groton as a commercial trading and whaling port, Groton Bank served as an ideal location for internationally known sea captains to make their homes. Twenty-six such families have been identified as living in Groton Bank from the 1670s to the beginning of the twentieth century. Many of the homes have survived into the twenty-first century and today are marked with historical plaques. One of the most famous whaling captains was Captain James Monroe Buddington at 149 Monument Street, who in 1855 rescued the 600-ton British ship *Resolute* abandoned on the Arctic ice and sailed her back to New London. From the ship's ornate teak deck Queen Victoria had a desk made that is now in the Oval Office of the White House. The other, Captain Ebenezer "Rattler" Morgan, 131-133 Monument Street, recorded the most successful whaling voyage of his time profiting about \$100,000. He is also credited with planting the first American flag on Alaskan soil, ensuring a profitable lease for the New London-based Alaskan Commercial Company. Captain William H. Allen, 234-236 Thames Street, who also lived on Groton Bank, broke Captain Morgan's record in 1866 with a profitable cargo that sold for \$417,000.

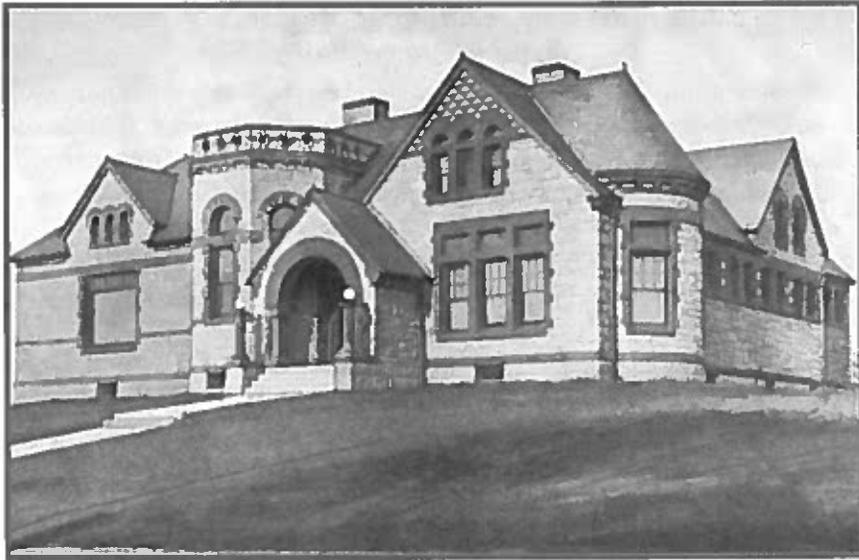
In addition, Groton Bank was the home of Captain Jason Randall, 67 Ramsdell Street, owner of the famous schooner, *Mary Adelaide Randall*; John Miner, 71 Broad Street, Captain Lorenzo Dow Baker, also of Broad Street who sailed coastal packets; Captain Edward Pettigrew, 80 Baker Avenue, who was instrumental in the oyster trade; and Captain William H. Avery, commander of the Stonington Line steamers. Several captains in the Buddington Family resided on Groton Bank. They were James Waterman Buddington, 141 Monument Street; S.O. Buddington who was involved with the Polaris expedition and Waterman Z. Buddington, 91 Broad Street. Two Groton Bank whaling captains had the misfortune to be caught in the ice in Bering Strait in 1871 when 33 whale ships were crushed by ice floes. Captain Horace Newbury, 109 Broad Street, and Captain Charles E. Allen, 342 Thames Street, lost their vessels and cargoes during the disaster.

Philanthropists Enhanced the Golden Age of the Eastern Shore

As Groton Bank became a thriving area of commerce and trade, two well-known philanthropists contributed generously to creating historical buildings and landmarks within its borders.

The first of these men was Frederic Bill. Bill was born in Ledyard on September 7, 1833. He was married twice. Both wives, Lucy Denison and Julia Avery, were from Groton. He started as a publisher in Springfield, Massachusetts and after the Civil War engaged in the importation and manufacturing of linen goods under the firm name of Tracy and Bill out of New York City. In 1870 he sold his business, retired, and began traveling extensively throughout Europe. At that time he also purchased a farm on the eastern shore near the mouth of the Thames River.

Mr. Bill was very interested in the growth and development of Groton. He presented Groton Bank with a library in memory of his two deceased sisters. The Bill Memorial Library on Monument Street was built in 1890 and served as the only Groton library until 1960 when the Groton Public Library was established. Later he added a museum to the Bill Memorial Library. The Bill Family cemetery is located on the grounds behind the Library building where Frederic Bill and his two wives are interred. In more recent years a modern addition has been attached to the building. In 1902 Mr. Bill, an active member of Groton's First Congregational Church and the chairman of the Building Committee for the construction of the current church building, gave \$6,773 so that the fourth church structure could be dedicated debt free. In 1912 he paid for the still existing brick Groton Heights School building that replaced the aging wooden building. He was an early contributor to the Connecticut College for Women. The Bill Hall on campus is named for his wife who was also very generous.



BILL MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Morton F. Plant also invested in the growth and development of the eastern shore. Mr. Plant owned the Plant Steamship and Railroad Lines located along the southeast coast of the United States. He purchased much of Eastern Point and built his summer home at Avery Point. Plant's estate house, the Branford House at Avery Point, was built in 1904. It was there that Mr. Plant entertained many influential business people and friends. Morton Plant was instrumental in bringing leisure and recreational activities to the eastern shore by creating a resort-like area in which to entertain friends.

In 1905 he purchased the Fort Griswold House. The House became so shabby that Plant decided to build the grand Griswold Hotel, which opened in 1906 and continued operating until the late 1960s. It was known as the most elegant hotel in southern New England.

Today the Groton-New London Airport and the Branford Manor Apartments are located where Morton Plant had his farm. He called it the Branford Farm because his wife was born in Branford, Connecticut. On these sites Plant had a poultry farm, dairy farm, orchards, and vegetable gardens, which provided fresh locally grown products for his hotel. He built the road from Avery Point to the airport and planted the sugar maple trees along Shennecossett Road.



BRANFORD HOUSE

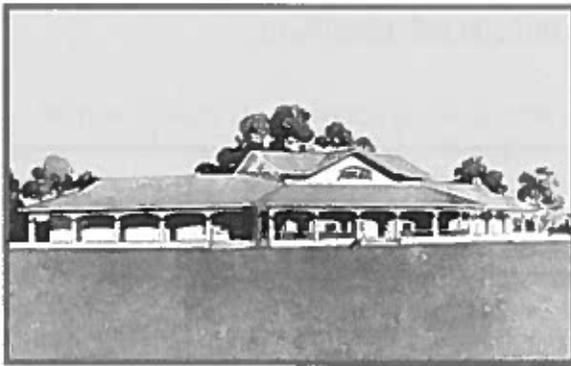


GRISWOLD HOTEL

Nearby, Thomas Avery had built a 4-hole golf course in 1898. Plant later purchased the course and eventually made it into an 18-hole golf course and named it the Shennecossett Golf Club. Plant also constructed the Griswold Bathing Beach, presently the Shennecossett Beach Club on waterfront property next to his Avery Point Estate for the exclusive use of friends and professional golfers.

Plant also built and furnished Groton's Town Hall in Poquonnock Bridge in 1913 and provided \$6,000 needed for the addition to the Monument House Museum at Fort Griswold Battlefield State Park.

In 1938 the Plant property, which was obtained by the State of Connecticut, was deeded to the U.S. Coast Guard, and from 1942 to 1967 it used the land at Avery Point as a training station. Today the property is owned by the State of Connecticut and serves as the southeastern branch of the University of Connecticut.



SHENNECOSSETT GOLF CLUB

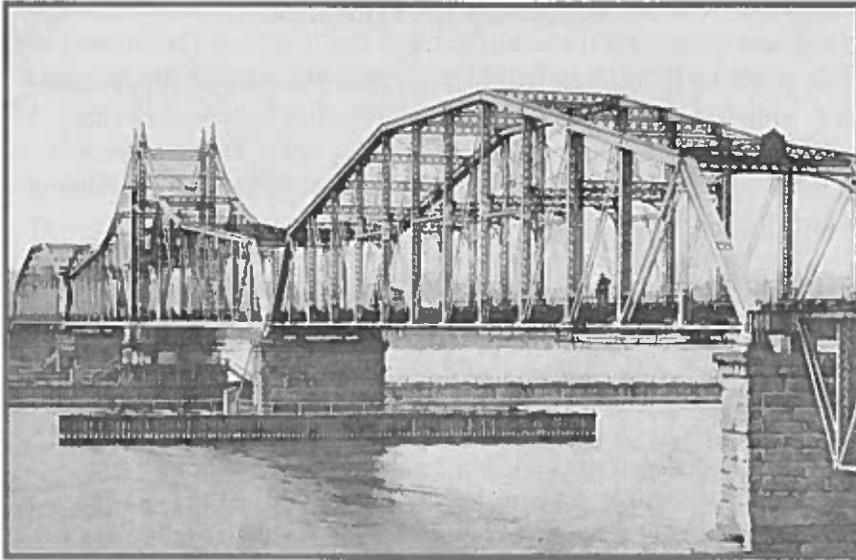


COAST GUARD AT AVERY POINT

Railroads and the River

In 1837 the Stonington Railroad ran from Providence, Rhode Island to Stonington, Connecticut. Passengers traveling to New York City would catch the Stonington Steam Ship Line Ferry at Stonington to journey by water to New York. In 1856 the New London & Stonington Railroad consolidated with the New Haven & New London Railroad as the New Haven, New London, and Stonington Railroad; and established a railroad ferry across the Thames River at the present site of Electric Boat's north yard. In December 1858 the railroad between New London and Stonington was completed and the first train from New York to Boston made the trip in 7 hours and 7 minutes. Ferries were used to cross the Thames and Connecticut Rivers, thus, providing passengers and freight cars with the final link to make connections with the Shoreline Railroad. Many passengers preferred using the "railroad ferry," particularly if Eastern Point was their destination, because it was closer and eliminated additional miles of walking. The passenger ferry was located at the bottom of Pleasant Street at that time and later located at School Street.

In early 1865 the Steamboat Terminus was established at the Railroad Ferry Wharf on the east bank of the Thames, but on September 25 was moved back to Stonington due to large passenger travel from Stonington. A disastrous fire on December 28 on the steamship *Connecticut* at the Groton Wharf resulted in \$1 million damage. Boat service from Groton to New York was relocated back to Stonington. Although the terminus was gone, the railroad ferry service across the Thames continued until 1889.



RAILROAD BRIDGE

On October 10, 1889 the Stonington Railroad built a new railroad from Poquonnock Bridge northwesterly through Groton and opened the bridge across the Thames River, connecting with the Shoreline Railway in New London. This provided the first continuous rail service from Boston to New York City. Groton had a passenger and freight station at Bridge Street from 1889 to 1919 when the construction of the second Rail Bridge across the Thames, as well as the conversion of the first bridge for vehicles and a pedestrian walkway, alleviated the need for a station. These bridges were regarded as the greatest major railroad engineering projects of the nineteenth century. Even today many of the tracks and train trestles from this era dot the landscape of Groton. On April 1, 1892 the New Haven Railroad took over the Providence to Stonington Railroad. On June 27, 1893 the first 5-hour run was completed from Boston to New York. The first vehicle expansion bridge was razed in 1942 and the second vehicle bridge erected in 1972.

Pharmaceutical Manufacturing

In 1946 the present Pfizer Inc purchased the Victory Shipbuilding Yard, formerly Groton Iron Works, for \$912,000 and began to manufacture citric acid and penicillin. Prior to this time penicillin was not available for use by the general public, only the military. When restrictions were relaxed, Pfizer saw an opportunity for expansion and growth in the production of antibiotics. The company also purchased 32 acres of adjacent land from private owners for future expansion for \$119,628. Today the Research and Development facility of Pfizer is on this property.

Groton's Victory Yard was chosen as a prime location because of its close proximity to water in which to cool the tanks, the railroad track that already existed, plus a diesel engine (known as the Groton Express) for shunting boxcars in and out of the plant. Several buildings, docks, utilities, and equipment were all in place. The company started with a trailer in the northwest corner of the property. From there a manufacturing plant was built. In 1960 the company opened the medical research laboratories and began to expand into the international market. The first shipment of crystallized citric acid went out of Groton in April 1948. Today Pfizer Inc has become one of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies.



PFIZER INC

Utilities, Groton Bank's Gold

The development of utility services in the Town of Groton started in 1891. Private investors who were noted residents of the area began the Groton Water Company, which was soon followed by the establishment of the Groton Electric Lighting Company in the early 1900s. Property on which to place the two companies was purchased in 1901 in the Poquonnock Bridge section of Groton. The Groton Electric Lighting Company provided street lighting and a power system for the town streets, including the Groton Bank area. The rapid expansion of shipbuilding and the addition of the Griswold Hotel on the eastern shore served as a ready-made customer base, which generated the impetus to push for increasing the production and establishing easily accessible water and electric utilities to the Groton Bank area. Much of Groton was rural but Groton Bank was commercial and growing fast. Business and civic leaders on Groton Bank were progressive and cosmopolitan. They wanted to go forward into the modern age, to possess the same privileges and services that New London had including water, electricity, fire and police protection, as well as retaining the right to govern the financing and profits of such services.



GROTON UTILITIES BUILDING

The Borough Hall on School Street, which stands today, was used by the Groton Town Court, primarily for voting purposes and as a public meetinghouse. In 1906 electric utilities were generated for Groton, Thames Street, and the Groton Bank area from the electric plant that was moved from its original location in Poquonnock Bridge to the bottom of Baker Avenue on Thames Street. The "Utilities Building," currently the site of the restaurant Seahorse on the Thames, originally housed the fire department, government offices, courtroom, and the police department. The arrangement was not satisfactory for the fire department, which later built its own building on Pleasant Street. The location actually became the focal point for government along Groton Bank. The Thames Street facility produced electricity by steam for part of the evening, from 4 to 11 p.m. Due to the expense of producing the steam, water-driven generator turbines (still located at the original Poquonnock Bridge site) supplied power for the rest of the day. This process lasted until 1919 when power was bought from the Shore Line Electric Plant at Montville. As the area grew, the demand for water and electricity accelerated. To meet the need the Ledyard Reservoir was established in 1954. The Reservoir increased water storage capacity from 1 million gallons of water to 1 billion gallons.

The desire to control the revenues acquired from water and electric utilities was one of the primary reasons that two forms of government formed within one geographic area. The residents of Groton Bank and Eastern Point were neither willing to relinquish control of the income from utilities revenue nor give up the tax benefits (at that time) that resulted from the location of the power stations in the Borough. Thus, the establishment of a borough government was initiated.

The Eastern Shore Becomes a Borough, Then the City of Groton

The eastern shore area continued to grow in population and industrial growth. Shipbuilding, whaling, and commerce made many Groton Bank residents successful businessmen. Following their profitable voyages, Captains Morgan and Allen established banks in New London. Other Groton Bank residents, who were officers of New London banks, included Charles E. White, William H. Allen (who became the president of the Mariners Savings Bank in New London), Thomas Avery Miner, and Belton A. Copp who served as vice president of the Mariners Savings Bank and The Savings Bank of New London, respectively. Major Noyes Barber, another Groton Bank businessman, also involved in trade with the West Indies, served seven terms in Congress from 1821-1835 and was a close friend of President John Quincy Adams. Many members of the Connecticut legislature and Groton civic leaders made Groton Bank their home.

In 1901 a group of Groton Bank citizens organized and petitioned the Connecticut General Assembly to establish an independent municipality entitled The Borough of Groton. The Connecticut Senate gave final approval on June 4, 1903 for the Borough of Groton Charter to be certified by the voters. The Borough Charter was approved May 26, 1904. The Borough's inhabitants, while citizens of the Town of Groton, enjoyed certain extra service benefits. The governing body was the Board of Warden and Burgesses and consisted of a warden, six burgesses, a clerk, a treasurer and the borough attorney. The Board of Utility Commissioners, consisting of five members, including the warden, administered the Borough's municipally owned department of utilities (water, electric, and sewer). At the time of the formation of the Borough of Groton in 1903, Groton Bank served as the transportation, industrial, and business core of the newly formed Borough of Groton, which later became the City of Groton.

The Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics, Pfizer Inc, United States Submarine Base, and the United States Coast Guard Training Station led to the rapid population growth of Groton Bank and Eastern Point during and after World War II.

In 1963 a committee comprised of Clarence Sharp, Frank Pisapia, Jim Brennan, and Harry Brogan determined that the term "city" was more important than the Borough identity and would thus be easier to get grants from the State. In 1964 the Borough changed its name to the City of Groton, a term viewed as more progressive and distinguished than the Borough. In addition, positions comprising the governing structure were changed as well. The elected Warden became known as the mayor, the Board of Burgesses became known as the City Council, which consists of six members, a city clerk, and a treasurer with an appointed city attorney.

Today the only building still proclaiming the existence of the Borough of Groton is the Borough Post Office on Thames Street, which has been serving in that capacity since the 1920s and claims to be the only U.S. post office that still requires two combinations to open individual post boxes.



BOROUGH POST OFFICE

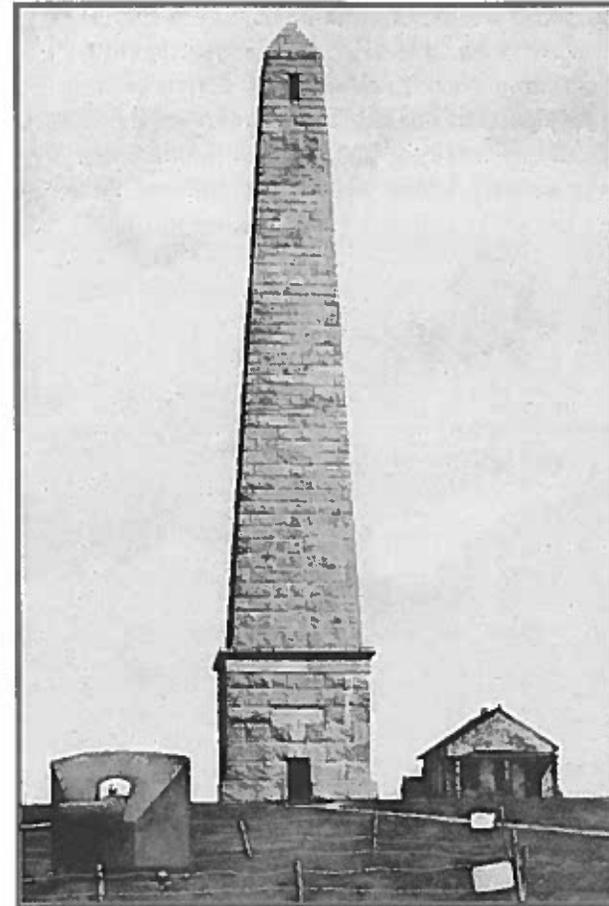
Parks, Museums and Historical Sites

The City of Groton has many beautiful parks and historical sites within its borders. From the Fort Griswold Battlefield State Park to the beautiful Eastern Point Beach, the City of Groton has some of the most scenic and historically valuable sites in Connecticut.

Fort Griswold Battlefield State Park – Fort Griswold was built in the latter part of 1776 to protect the valuable shipbuilding harbor from enemy invasions. On September 6, 1781, Groton was the site of the only major Revolutionary War battle fought in Connecticut. In the early morning, British forces attacked Groton and burned New London. One hundred and sixty-five brave Groton residents under the command of Colonel William Ledyard fought valiantly to defend the Fort. Unfortunately, the colonists lost the battle, but the presence of the Fort today serves as a reminder to all visitors of the courage and honor shown by the colonists that day. The organization known as the “Friends of Fort Griswold,” along with the ancestral families of the fallen, gather each year to reenact the battle.

Groton Monument and Monument House Museum – Local citizens constructed the Groton Monument starting in 1826 and dedicated it in 1830 as a memorial to the defenders of the battle of Fort Griswold. Today the Monument has 166 steps to the top where a beautiful panoramic view of Groton, New London, and the harbor can be seen. Next to the Monument is the Monument House Museum, containing artifacts of the Revolutionary War and the meeting place for the Anna Warner Bailey Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Behind the Monument House Museum stands a statue honoring all the men of Groton who served in the Civil War. Congressional Medal of Honor holder Robert A. Gray, himself a Borough resident, donated the statue to honor those who had fallen in the conflict.



MONUMENT AT FORT GRISWOLD



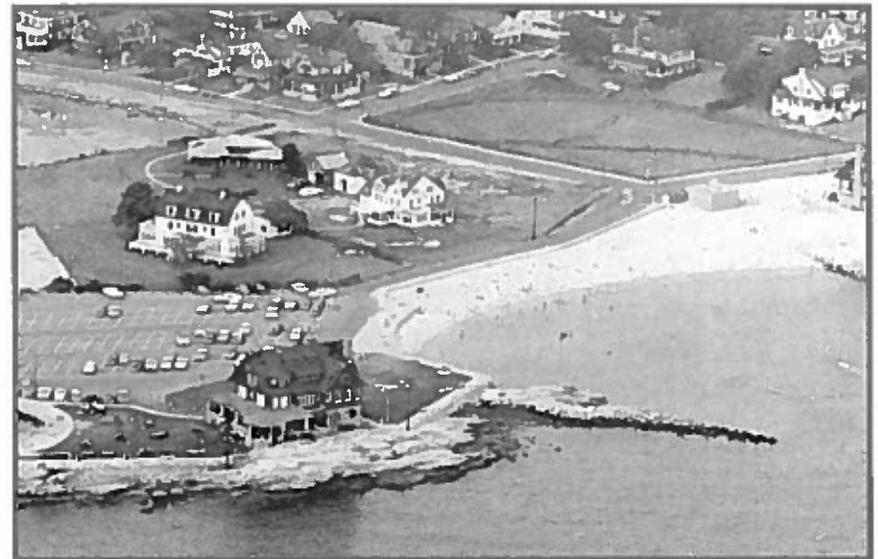
MONUMENT
HOUSE
MUSEUM

Avery-Copp House Museum – This museum is located in the vicinity of the earliest colonial activity on Groton Bank, the ferry landing established by Cary Latham in 1655. Latham Avery, Cary’s great-great-grandson, established residence in the federal-era home on the hillside of Thames Street overlooking the River, which was a hub of commercial, maritime and social activity. Bessie Avery Copp inherited the house in 1895, and her last child Joseph kept the house until his death in 1991 at age 101. The house now serves as a museum filled to the brim with accumulated, untouched family furnishings, letters, documents, and photographs depicting the spirit of early days on Groton Bank.



AVERY-COPP HOUSE MUSEUM

The Borough of Groton purchased Eastern Point Beach – The Tyler Point Beach was purchased in 1946 for the express purpose of providing a public bathing and recreational facility on the water for Borough residents. Today this park is fully equipped and serves as a wonderful rocky coastal waterfront in which to enjoy the summers and year-round sunsets over the Thames River.



EASTERN POINT BEACH

Washington Park – In 1919 George Marquardt and his sons started to prepare his combination pasture, swamp, and dump as a park. It was the 25 acres of land where Washington Park stands today. In 1932 George Marquardt presented a deed for the park property to the Borough with the stipulation that the land would only be used for recreational purposes. At the east point of the park a stone monument honors the Marquardt family and names the park after George Washington in commemoration of his 200th birthday in February 1932. The area is used for skating, sledding, baseball, basketball, and for picnics and children’s play. The original playground equipment was donated by the Groton Hardware Company. Lawrence “Yogi” Berra was known to have hit many home runs in Washington Park when he was on the Navy Team.



SUBMARINE VETERANS MEMORIAL

Submarine Veterans Memorial – In 1957 a committee of World War II Submarine Veterans initiated the creation of a memorial to honor those lost at sea. The United States Navy gave the conning tower, fairwater and periscopes of the submarine *Flasher* (SS249) to the veterans as a memorial. The original memorial was dedicated on July 1964, but was rededicated in 1974 when it was moved to the present location on Thames Street. A Wall of Honor, consisting of 3617 names of departed shipmates was added later. The dedication of the entire memorial occurred on September 28, 1995, fifty years to the day that Japan surrendered on the *Missouri*, ending World War II. The land was donated by the City of Groton, and the city currently maintains the site in honor of submarine veterans.

Wardens and Mayors
1903 – 2003

1904 – 1908	C. Tyler Lamphere
1908 – 1909	Edward E. Spicer
1909 – 1910	C. Tyler Lamphere
1910 – 1912	Christopher L. Avery
1912 – 1913	Edward T. Pettigrew
1913 – 1919	C. Tyler Lamphere
1919 – 1921	Henry Gamber
1921 – 1922	Archibald Main
1922 – 1933	George R. Hempstead
1933 – 1934	James D. Williams
1934 – 1940	Charles A. Marquardt
1940 – 1942	David F. Armstrong
1942 – 1958	Arthur M. Card
1958 – 1959	Frank Pisapia
1959 – 1962	Charles J. Apicelli
1962 – 1964	Robert A. Toher
1964 – 1966	Frank Pisapia
1966 – 1973	Clarence B. Sharp
1973 – 1981	Donald B. Sweet
1981 – 1995	Katherine J. Kolnaski
1995 – 1999	Bette J. Giesing
1999 – Present	Dennis L. Popp

Acknowledgements

This booklet was developed to celebrate the Centennial of the City of Groton. This publication is comprised of information obtained from local individuals who have an interest in, and information on, the establishment and development of Groton Bank, the Borough of Groton and the City of Groton. This piece is not a definitive presentation but an effort to pull together in one publication a large amount of historical fact, folklore, and explanations regarding an area of Connecticut that saw the largest growth of any region in the state during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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City of Groton Centennial Celebration Committee



Charles Bartnicki, Jr.

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George Edwards, Jr.

David Hale

Amy Havens

Keith Hedrick

Charles Kosloskey

Deb Patrick

Dennis Popp – Mayor

John Santacroce

Michelle Santacroce

James L. Streeter – Chairman

Wally Trolan

Domenic Vendetti

Robert Walker



THE CELEBRATION COMMITTEE



Front Row: *Robert Walker, Amy Havens, Michelle Santacroce,
Deb Patrick and James Streeter*

Second Row: *Domenic Vendetti, Dave Hale, John Santacroce
and Wally Trolan*

Back Row: *Keith Hedrick, Dennis Popp and George Edwards, Jr.*

Missing from photo: *Charles Bartnicki, Jr., Penny Patch-Bartnicki,
Carol L. Brown and Charles Kosloskey*

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