

Vail House in Sudbury, Vermont

The House

It was originally built by a Barnard Ketcham in 1826. A daughter married a Vail and it then became the Vail House. At one time it included about 1800 acres in Sudbury, Orwell, and Whiting. It remained in the family for many years. When a Trust acquired the property it only had 1.5 acres. The Trust now owns 1030 acres. The additional property was "purchased" so the farmers could continue farming the property if they pay the taxes, so the area is preserved.

The architect was Thomas Dake. The staircase in this house is a mirror image of one in Castleton. Also there, was a house that appeared to be a twin of the Vail House in Proctor, Vermont that was torn down.



The Vail house is on the Crown Point Road.



Directions

The Vail House is owned by a Foundation. Gary Bowen is the caretaker-restorer, everything. He will be happy to show you through the house. Call him at 802-623-8481. This beautiful home is located on one of the Governor's Lots.

Go 6 miles north from Diamond Brook Kennel on Rt 30. At this point Rt 73 goes east to Brandon. Instead turn left on Vail Road and go .879 miles as the Vail House is located at 879 Vail Road.

The New Hampshire Grants were land grants made between 1749 and 1764 by Benning Wenworth, the provincial governor of New Hampshire. The land grants, totaling about 135 (including 131 towns), were made on land claimed by New Hampshire west of the Connecticut River, territory that was also claimed by the Province of New York. The resulting dispute led to the eventual establishment of the Vermont Republic, which later became the State of Vermont.

The grants were usually six miles square. The grants were then subdivided amongst the proprietors, and six of the lots were set aside—one for the Society for the Propagation of the gospel in Foreign Parts (a missionary organization of the Church of England), one for the Church of England, one for the first clergyman to settle in the township, one for a school, and two for Wentworth himself. I have been told that a "Lot" was about 100 acres.

Notes:

1. <http://www.bsi-vt.com/castleton/chs/index.html> Many of the beautiful homes that stand along Castleton's wide Main Street today were built between 1805 and 1840. Among the most remarkable are several built by renowned architect and builder, **Thomas Royal Dake**. Fires devastated much of the town's center in the early twentieth century, destroying several large hotels, and Castleton declined as a business center, but with its wide Main Street, it remains one of the loveliest villages in the state. See Dake houses in Castleton: <http://www.vaics.org/vaics-castleton.html> Also see Dake's background in <http://www.dakehome.com/Thomas%20R%20Deake%20document.html>

2. From <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~vermont/RutlandSudbury.html>

Thomas KETCHAM, born February 8, 1748, immigrated from Dutchess county, N. Y., to Sudbury at a very early date.

Major Barnard KETCHAM, one of his sons, married a daughter of Aaron JACKSON, another early settler. Thomas KETCHAM died on the 19th of May, 1834.

3. From <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~vermont/TownshipSudburyRutland.html>

Thomas KETCHAM, born February 8, 1748, died May 19, 1834, aged 86 years. He immigrated from Dutchess County, N. Y., to Sudbury at a very early date in the history of the township, and was the father' of twelve children. Maj. Barnard KETCHAM, son of Thomas, located on road 1, corner road 2, where he married a daughter of Aaron JACKSON. The Major was one of the most prominent men in the township, having held offices of various ranks, both civil and military, and at the time of his death was one of the most wealthy men in the township. The descendants of Thomas KETCHAM are very numerous, and scattered in various parts of the State and country.

4. An incorrect statement occurred in the Rutland Herald

<file:///C:/Documents%20and%20Settings/Don/My%20Documents/HUBBARDTON%20HISTORY%20BOOK/History%20Book%20FOLDERS/VT%20HISTORY/Sudbury.htm>

"Sudbury suffered one incident generated by the Anti-Masonic movement that took place in the 1830s. Many people looked upon Masons with distrust because of all their secrecy and commenced threats to eliminate the organization. Some of those threats turned violent.

Maj. Barnard Ketcham, son of one of the first settlers and well-established himself, hosted meetings of the Washington Masonic Lodge in his brick home. In 1835, a band of people raided the house, ransacked it and burned all the contents outside. Fortunately, they spared the structure and its brick walls still exist today." This last sentence is incorrect.

Sudbury History

The close of the Revolution brought many settlers to Sudbury. By 1786 the following new names (from minutes) had settled in Sudbury: John Taylor, John Hall, Benjamin Sanders, Platt Ketcham, Joseph Warner, and Jeremiah Gates. By 1790, according to the *First Census Of The United States*, there were 47 families with a total population of 258.

Roger Burr, who settled in Sudbury in 1784, was the first settler in the town south of the original hamlet. This portion of the town was covered with a dense wilderness which was occupied by numerous wild animals including bears and wolves. It is said that while establishing his first camp, Burr and his helpers slept in hollow logs for protection from the wolves. Later the wolves made the keeping of sheep very difficult. Burr established a sawmill at the outlet of what is now Burr Pond. He took an active part in the building of Sudbury's first church with most of the timber being from his land and sawed into lumber at his mill. He also built the first two story wood frame house in town just up from his mill. It had second story windows and half-length side windows flanking the entry way. This house has been in the Steele family since 1900 and presently is the home of William E. Jr. and Adele Steele.

**5. In Abby Hemenway's History we see under SUDBURY (Was scanned and may have errors):
THE KETCHAM FAMILY.**

Thomas Ketcham was one of the first settlers in the town of Sudbury. He had 5 sons and 5 daughters, who lived to mature years, settled in Sudbury and became useful mem-
* Born in Kingsboro N. C. 1799: fitted with Rev. Dr Yale; graduated at Middlubury, 1826: studied at Princeton Theo. Sem. 1826-'28, Dec. 1828, sent by A. B. C. F. M. Missionary to the Cherokees, in Georgia. Twice arrested by the State for non-acquiescence in expulsion of the Indians ; continued his work till breaking up of the Mission, 1832; Home Missionary in Ohio.

1832-'34; Pastor in Sudbury '34 to '37; of a Presbyterian Church. Granville, N. Y., 1837-40; in Winchester, N. H., from 1840 till his death, Ap. 8, 1846, -Pearson. October 17th about 6fty of his descendants, residing in Sudbury, Brandon, Pittsford, Hubbardton, Benson, Orwell, Whiting, and Malone, N. Y., met at the residence of Allen Ketcham, Esq.. (grandson of Thomas) for a family visit.

Mr. Ketcham is an extensive and model farmer-has a place for every thing and every thing in its place-a characteristic of the family. His elegant and richly furnished residence, the arrangement of his out-buildings, his extensive and highly cultivated fields, waving with a rich harvest, the vast expanse of alluvial meadows on the banks of Otter Creek, and his fine stock of cattle, horses and sheep, all bespeak the taste and judgment of the proprietor ; and yet he is excelled by some of his guests.

Perhaps one of the number is the most extensive fruit grower and horticulturist in western Vermont. He has 30 acres of orcharding, all in a flourishing condition, bending under its burden of delicious fruit, to say nothing of his extensive nurseries of fruit trees and ornamental shrubberies, or of his garden of luxuries blooming with the beauties of nature. He appears to possess by nature a peculiar gift in neutralizing the rigor of our climate, to such a degree that even the various kinds of tropical fruit, unaware but what they are in the sunny South, flourish under his fostering care. Several of the brotherhood may with propriety be called business farmers. I recently met one of them in the street on his way to market with 640 head of cattle.

The presence of two aged matrons at the family gathering added much interest to the occasion. The widow Patty Knowlton, has seen more than four-score years, and is the only surviving member of the original Ketcham family. She came to 'Sudbury when it was nearly an unbroken wilderness-here and there an opening just sufficient to let daylight shine down into the dark forbidding and almost impenetrable forest-when naught was to be heard but the howling of the wolves, the sullen growls of the bears and the sharp screams of the panthers, which frightened the deer that roamed at large ou Sudbury hills, and upon the banks of Otter Creek

She has followed her five brothers and four sisters to the quiet church-yard, and those monuments whose white heads point heaven-(1140)

ward, mark the last resting place of those whose memories and whose virtues are embalmed in the hearts of their numerous descendants. She has led a life and set an example worthy of imitation.

The widow of the late Major Barnard Ketcham, of Sudbury, was present. She was one of the first settlers, and underwent hardships and privations incident to the pioneers of the town, of which the present generation are ignorant. She is a remarkable woman - has lived to see the dense forests disappear and give place to one of the richest farming districts in the valley of Otter Creek. She is a connecting link between two centuries, having seen nearly four-score-and-ten years, and notwithstanding her advanced age, her mental faculties appear with all the strength and vigor of youth. Industry and frugality, uprightness and integrity, energy and decision of character, have been her prominent traits during her long and useful life. Her social qualities render her the life and animation of the circle of acquaintance in which she moves. She will long be remembered for her amiable qualities.

It was truly a social gathering as they renewed former acquaintance, they lived their lives over again.

The men, all substantial farmers - cultivate the soil and their intellects at the same time - the great book of nature being constantly spread out before them; hence there was a degree of intelligence manifest, not common in a family circle. Several of their number have held seats in the Legislature; they have also filled various other important stations. The social intercourse and friendly greetings, the beautiful scenery and admirable music combined to render it an occasion long to be remembered. - From the Middlebury Register.

Also:

HP Ketcham was postmaster in 1840.