

Historical Society of Clarendon, VT

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SON OF A GUN!

Ah...fathers and sons -in- law. I'm sure if one looked closely, paintings from cave men would have a few choice stories to tell about that particular relationship. Most newly married men know to tread lightly on the father of the bride; perhaps even more so if his primary occupation is the making of guns! Such is the story of Edgar Glynn and his son in law, William Gould. Mr. Glynn was a gunsmith in Clarendon in the latter half of the 1800's. Pictured below is a rifle of Mr. Glynn's making graciously donated to the Society by David Ballou.



Besides that he was a gunsmith, we have one other piece of information about him...his attempted murder of his son in law. Now, what might drive a man to murderous intentions? Abuse of his beloved daughter? Comforting her because of her wretched husband's infidelity? Well in this case no...it appears that the crime for which Mr. Gould faced the wrath of his father in law was...taking his mother in law's side in an argument. Glynn's daughter Leona had just given birth to a baby boy, and naturally, Mrs. Glynn had gone to her daughter's home in Shrewsbury to help with the baby and get her back on her feet. Some weeks passed, and presumably, Edgar became tired of fixing his own meals, and headed of to Shrewsbury to collect his wife. However, Mrs. Glynn was not overjoyed to see her beloved husband, and refused to accompany him back to their love nest in Clarendon. Words were exchanged, and the son in law, Mr. Gould, gallantly ordered his father in law to cease his abuse and leave. Mr. Glynn obliged, but dared his son in law to

follow him outside. (Note: perhaps accepting the dare of his clearly irate gun toting father in law was not the best decision.) Mr. Gould obliged, and for his trouble got the top half of his ear blown off by the pistol Edgar had brought along. Now, perhaps Edgar was just trying to put the fear of God into his son in law, and was an extremely good shot...or was aiming for his head. What a jury would have thought we will never know, because although charges were brought against Edgar, we don't know the final verdict, or whatever became of him. But we do have his spectacular rifle!

THE DIRTY THIRTY

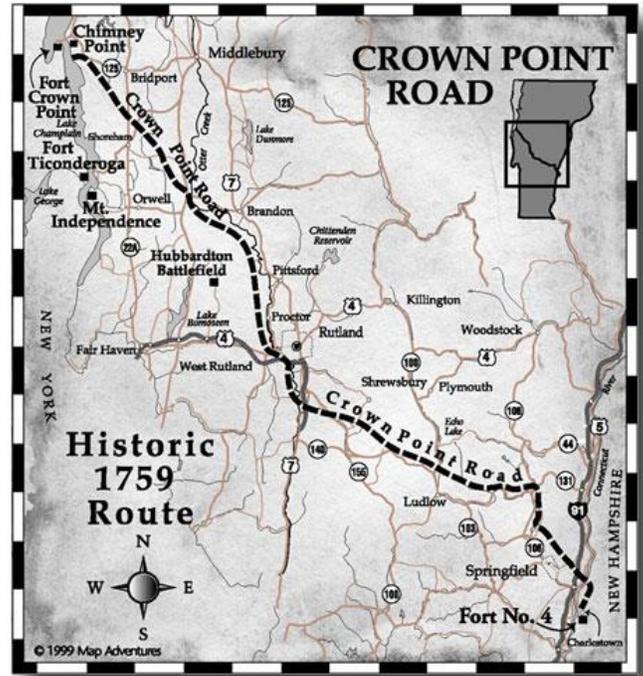
Imagine, if you will, that little Vermont, fed up with the perceived abuse of the United States government, decided to declare independence from the US. You and your family live inside the borders of Vermont, and you have a choice to make. Back Vermont against the most mighty military power on earth, or stay with the US, having confidence that the rebels will soon be defeated and all will go back to normal. There is no neutral option, and the stakes are high: your life, your families lives, your property. Which side would you lay you bet on? As improbably as this scenario sounds, it was almost exactly the same dilemma that colonists faced during the Revolutionary war. There were passionate Patriots, and loyalist Tories, and there were people who were just trying to live their lives, hoping it would all blow over. For those that did not support the rebel/patriotic cause, the State had no qualms confiscating all of their worldly goods. If they weren't going to physically help the cause, the money made my selling their property would. Clarendon has the dubious honor of having more confiscations of "Tory" property than any other town in the State, thirty to be exact. For these thirty men, some pationately Tory, some likely just in the wrong place at the wrong time, all of their

property, including land, homes, livestock, even furniture, was confiscated by the State, and sold to fund the war effort. The situation would have been rife with the potential for a witch hunt. You don't really care too much about the politics of the time, but maybe you don't like your neighbor. Maybe he looked at your sister wrong or cheated you on that pig he bought from you last year. Maybe his land is better than yours, and you know that if you reveal him, rightly or not, as Tory, that land could be yours for a bargain price. So you turn him in, and the rest is history. Their families, women and children, were left to shift for themselves. If they were lucky, some local family might vouch for them and give them shelter, but the possible taint of Tory was enough to make them persona non grata for the most part. As for the men, the thirty, they were shipped off to Bennington (the de facto center of government at the time), to be held as prisoners. From that point on, we lose track of them. Upon eventual release, some most likely traveled to British Canada, some to England. A very few attempted to return to Clarendon and hoped all would be forgiven. Some died. One thing is certain, in the gamble that the revolutionary period was, when it was neighbor against neighbor, when nothing was certain, thirty men from Clarendon placed their bets on the wrong side and paid a terrible price. For more information on this sad period of history, go to clarendonvthistory.org, look under documents for "Tory Prisoners".



THE CROWN POINT ROAD

The Society will be hosting Barry Griffith from the Crown Point Road Association this Wednesday, May 16th, at the Clarendon Community Center, 111 Moulton Avenue at



6:30 pm, directly following our annual meeting. Please join us to learn more about this often overlooked accomplishment of military engineering. The road stretched from modern day New York to New Hampshire, across Vermont, and although was originally constructed by the British, became a pivotal asset to the rebels, and helped win the war. Please join us on Wednesday to hear more about this fascinating subject! Refreshments will be provided!

Reminders:

- Annual Meeting Wednesday, May 16th, at 5:30, Clarendon Community Center.
- Crown Point Road Presentation, directly following the Annual Meeting.
- Share your stories with us! Oral histories, pictures, and other materials are always of interest to us.
- Clarendon map used with gracious permission from Middlebury college.