

SIMSBURY

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Gifford Pinchot: Early Simsbury Connections

First U.S. Forester, Governor of Pennsylvania Was Born Here

Gifford Pinchot was born on August 11, 1865 in his grandparents' summer home in the center of Simsbury. In front of that house on August 11 this year the Society of American Foresters, which Pinchot founded 100 years ago, dedicated a monument celebrating his life full of accomplishments. The New England Society of American Foresters hosted the event which featured speakers from those two organizations, the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, the National Association of State Foresters, the Milford (PA) Experimental Forest, the Pinchot Institute for Conservation, representatives of the Pinchot and Eno families and local dignitaries.

The house where Gifford Pinchot was born 135 years ago stands on property once owned by his maternal great-great-grandfather Noah Phelps. This Revolutionary War hero is known locally for the daring 1775 mission during which he entered Fort Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain as a spy to assess the strength of the fort's defenses. The force of patriots led by Ethan Allen captured the fort without resistance and took cannon that greatly aided George Washington with the siege of Boston. Noah Phelps eventually rose to the rank of Major General in the Connecticut militia. The extended Phelps family in this town alone contributed twenty-nine soldiers to the Revolution.

Elisha Phelps, Gifford Pinchot's great grandfather, inherited the land from his father, the general, and in 1822 he built the brick house in which Pinchot later was born. In 1800 Elisha Phelps had graduated from Yale College (which Pinchot would later attend) and was admitted to the bar after studying at the law school in Litchfield, Connecticut. Phelps served two terms in the U.S. House of Representatives and was Comptroller of the State of Connecticut for six years. He was also a magistrate and Judge of Probate.

His son, John Smith Phelps, graduated from Trinity College and also became a lawyer. As a young married man he moved to Missouri, where he entered politics. He was elected nine consecutive times to the U.S. House of Representatives and three times to the office of Governor of Missouri (1877-1881). Gifford Pinchot was sixteen by the time Phelps left office. Pinchot himself would later become Governor of Pennsylvania.

John Smith Phelps had two sisters, Mary Ann and Lucy Jane. Lucy married Amos Richards Eno and they had nine children, seven of whom lived to be adults. Their oldest daughter, Mary Jane Eno, married James Wallace Pinchot; Gifford Pinchot was the first of their three children. James Wallace Pinchot's grandfather and father, both supporters of Napoleon, had come to the United States from France after Napoleon's defeat.

Amos Richards Eno, Gifford Pinchot's maternal grandfather, was descended from an Englishman of French heritage, Jacques Henno, whose name was Anglicized to James Eno. James Eno emigrated to

America in 1648 and settled in Windsor, Connecticut. Sometime after Simsbury was incorporated in 1670, his son James settled in town. Several generations later, Amos R. Eno was born to Salmon and Mary Richards Eno. Salmon Eno was a farmer, like most of the men in Simsbury at this time. He had also been a school teacher. He held many town offices and in 1834 he represented Simsbury in the Connecticut General Assembly.

Amos R. Eno was educated in Simsbury by Thomas Moses, Esq., and Rev. Allen McLean, a graduate of Amherst College and minister at the Congregational Church for more than fifty years. An avid reader and natural student throughout his lifetime, Eno taught himself to read several languages, including Italian and French.

When he was sixteen, Eno went to Hartford to clerk in a dry goods store and learn the trade. He returned to Simsbury during the building of the Farmington Canal and did a thriving business in a store he opened at what would become Hoskins Station. When he was twenty-three he moved to New York City and opened a store. That first business burned to the ground, but he soon went into partnership in the wholesale dry good business with his relative and Simsbury native John Jay Phelps. The success of this and other ventures provided him with the capitol to invest in New York real estate. In 1857 he left the dry goods business and eventually made a considerable fortune in city real estate.

Eno's best known property in New York was the white marble Fifth Avenue Hotel, which he built in 1859 between Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Streets. People called it Eno's Folly and he had great difficulty financing it because, at the time, it was so far uptown from the established center of activity in Manhattan. The land had previously been used for the old Hippodrome. Once it was built, however, the hotel almost immediately became the most fashionable stopping place in the city. The Prince of Wales was one of the first to stay there; J. Pierpont Morgan kept a room there and he and other financial men turned the hotel lobby into a veritable after hours stock exchange; Thomas Platt, the Republican Party boss, lived there in a suite which became famous for its "Amen Corner."

Eno became a founder and director of the Second National Bank, which was located in the hotel building. Among his many other properties was a triangular parcel of land that, like the hotel, had a view of Madison Square. This is now the location of the famed Flatiron Building. Eno was also noted for being the first real estate developer to put a brownstone front on an office building.

Gifford Pinchot's parents, James W. Pinchot and Mary Jane Eno, were married May 25, 1864. They spent five months abroad on their honeymoon, then returned to establish a home in New York City and await the arrival of their first child. By August 1, 1865, with the birth imminent, Mary Pinchot was with her mother in the old Elisha Phelps house in Simsbury.¹

Letters full of solicitude and love that James wrote to Mary from the Eno's home at 26 East Twenty-third Street in New York, are preserved among Gifford Pinchot's papers in the Library of Congress. James Pinchot was staying with Amos and Henry Eno in order to attend to business until the birth. The letters arrived via the post office and with people returning to Simsbury on the New Haven and Northampton Railroad, which had a station just a few blocks from the house. They indicate that Mary's sisters Anna and

¹ By the time Gifford Pinchot was born, the Elisha Phelps house had become his grandparents' summer home through inheritance. It was still owned jointly by the Enos and the John Allens, the sisters having bought their brother's share. The house sat grandly on a small rise overlooking the main street, but it still had its original peaked roof. The more elegant gambrel roof line, side porches (piazzas in Victorian parlance), the large rear wing and landscaping were yet to come.

Antoinette, as well as her mother, were at the Simsbury house with her. Mary's seven year old brother, William Phelps Eno, probably was there, too. Imagine the joy in that house on August 11 when the little boy, his parent's first child and the Eno's first grandchild, was born.

Mary Pinchot's diaries, also among the Pinchot papers, record happy times in Simsbury while Gifford was a small boy. "Took Gifford to Weatogue in Phaeton to meet James who bought him a Dapple grey horse," she notes in August 1867. James and her father spent time hunting and fishing together. Mary paid calls on friends and relatives, some of whom lived in town year round and some of whom, like members of the Dodge family, also had established summer homes here.

Neither the Enos nor the Pinchots limited their winters to New York and summers to Simsbury. In those first years the Pinchots enjoyed summer stays in Saybrook, Newport and the Adirondacks.² When Gifford was six, his parents took him and his two-year-old sister, Antoinette Eno Pinchot, abroad for three years. They lived in Paris, where the Enos and other family members and friends, including General William Tecumseh Sherman, visited them. Gifford attended a day school where he learned to speak fluent French. His brother, Amos Richards Eno Pinchot, was born while the family was in France.

James Pinchot returned to New York periodically to attend to his immensely successful business, which included both importing and manufacturing wall paper and window shades. About a year after they had returned from abroad, at the age of forty-four, James Pinchot was able to retire and devote all his time to his family and to being a patron of the arts. Significantly, Gifford had been named for his father's friend, artist Sanford Gifford.

The Pinchot family had over the years acquired forest land in Pennsylvania and developed a lucrative lumber business. Having seen the destruction caused by the clear cutting of forests done by American lumber operations and having observed managed forests in Europe, James Pinchot suggested to his son as he was about to enter Yale in 1885 that he should become a forester. This was a novel idea at the time. After graduating from Yale Gifford Pinchot spent more than a year studying forestry in France and Germany and later open an office in New York, the first forestry consulting business in the United States.

Gifford Pinchot's first job was with Phelps Dodge & Company, which hired him to report on their white pine and hemlock lands in Pennsylvania. He also made a trip to inspect the company's forests in the Far West and Canada. It is interesting to note that the founder of Phelps Dodge & Company, Anson Greene Phelps, had been born in Simsbury. He was distantly related to Pinchot's mother's family. Anson Phelps was a generation older than Pinchot's grandfather Eno and he had also moved to Hartford and then to New York to seek and find his fortune.

Several of Anson Phelps's grandsons by the name of Dodge eventually had established summer homes in Simsbury. One of them, Stuart Dodge, married the daughter of Amos Eno's business partner, John Jay Phelps. Another grandson, Arthur Murray Dodge, who had a summer estate and farm in the Weatogue section of Simsbury, became the head of the family's extensive lumber business in Canada.

² James and Mary Pinchot would eventually build a forty-one room stone summer home, Grey Towers, on ancestral Pinchot land in Milford, Pennsylvania. It was completed in 1886, the year Gifford turned twenty-one. The house, reminiscent of the great French chateaux, was designed by Richard Morris Hunt, one of the foremost architects of the Gilded Age. He would go on to design Biltmore in Asheville, North Carolina and The Breakers in Newport, Rhode Island, among other buildings. When Gifford Pinchot was poised to enter Pennsylvania politics, he made Grey Towers his legal residence. His son, Gifford Bryce Pinchot, in 1963 donated the house and 100 acres of land surrounding it to the Forest Service, which his father was instrumental in founding. The house is currently undergoing renovations, but will be reopened to the public August 11, 2001. The Pinchot Institute for Conservation's Web site (www.pinchot.org) contains excellent up-to-date information about the Pinchots and Grey Towers.

Pinchot's career as a forester took a great leap when he was hired in 1892 by young George Vanderbilt to reclaim and manage the forests on his estate in Asheville, North Carolina, where he was building the great chateau he called Biltmore. Richard Morris Hunt, who had recently finished a summer home in Milford, Pennsylvania for Pinchot's parents, was the architect for the Vanderbilt house. On this job Pinchot also worked with the famous landscape architect who had designed New York's Central Park, Frederick Law Olmsted. Pinchot wrote in his autobiography *Breaking New Ground* that Biltmore Forest "became the beginning of practical Forestry in America. It was the first piece of woodland in the United States to be put under a regular system of forest management whose object was to pay the owner while improving the forest."

Pinchot's eventful career as a forester brought him into contact with many notable Americans who were interested in preserving this country's natural resources. He recalled in his autobiography a pleasant camping trip with John Muir, but the two of them differed in basic philosophy. Muir devoted his energies to preserving wilderness in its pristine state, while Pinchot generally advocated managed use of resources.

Pinchot realized that the best way for him to promote conservation was through government service. In 1898, during the McKinley Administration, he was named Chief Forester of the United States. Pinchot became a close friend and confidant of McKinley's successor, Theodore Roosevelt, and the two outdoorsmen worked together to add almost 150 million acres to the government's reserves. Pinchot's career with the federal government ended abruptly in 1910 during the Taft Administration, when he was dismissed by the president during a dispute involving Taft's Secretary of the Interior, Richard A. Ballinger.

When Pinchot went into government service, his mother and father were quick to establish a home in Washington, D.C., where the bachelor Pinchot could live and they could entertain for him. Antoinette Eno Wood, the aunt who had been present at Pinchot's birth, also maintained a home in Washington, D.C. where she fostered his interests and those of Simsbury's George McLean, the former Connecticut governor who was a United States Senator from 1911 to 1928. Senator McLean is known locally for many philanthropic works, including establishing the McLean Game Refuge.

Even after Pinchot married and launched a political career in Pennsylvania that culminated in his becoming governor, Pinchot returned regularly to his birthplace in Simsbury. Older residents remember his visits to his aunt Antoinette Eno Wood, who made the house on Hopmeadow Street her summer home from about 1900 until she died in 1930. His last official visit seems to have been in 1932 when he attended the dedication of Eno Memorial Hall, which Mrs. Wood had erected posthumously in memory of her parents. Gifford Pinchot died in 1946 at the age of 81 in New York City.

By Mary Jane Springman

Save the Date!

Saturday, May 12, 2001 is the date set for our Spring Program, beginning at 11 A.M. The topic is "Searching for Those Elusive Irish Ancestors." Our speaker, Janet Pestry, is a retired educator whose maternal grandparents were born in Ireland. Mrs. Pestry is a board member of the Connecticut Society of Genealogists and a volunteer at the Woodbridge Family History Center. She has given programs or classes in family research at Eastern Connecticut State University, Manchester Community College, and Wallingford Adult Education.

Some Recent Acquisitions

Microfilms

Hale Collection of Connecticut Vital Records: Surname Index to Headstone Inscriptions and Newspaper Death Notices, 50 reels (Purchased through a donation of the Abigail Phelps Chapter, DAR)

Manuscript

A History of The Simsbury Copper Mines by Creel Richardson [Unpublished Master's Thesis, 1928] (Donated by Betty Guinan, Alice Newman Historical Room, East Granby Public Library)

Books

- A Brief Account of the Life of John Case at Maspeth Falls, L.I., Windsor and Simsbury, Conn.* by A.P. Case of Vernon, N.Y. (donated by Barbara J. Case)
- The Campbells of the Coast: Genealogy and Heritage of the Campbells of Black Cape, Quebec, 1830's - 1980's* by Richard D. Campbell, et. al. (donated by Jean Perreault)
- The Colonization of North America, 1492-1783* by Herbert Eugene Bolton, Ph.D., and Thomas Maitland Marshall, Ph.D. (donated by Doris Rothe)
- Columbia County at the End of the Century, Volume II* edited under the auspices of *The Hudson Gazette* (donated by Doris Rothe)
- Dr. Samuel Higley* compiled by Jay Robbins (donated by Betty Guinan, Alice Newman Historical Room, East Granby Public Library)
- Ebenezer Dayton Robbery 1789* compiled by Jay Robbins (donated by Betty Guinan, Alice Newman Historical Room, East Granby Public Library)
- Exploding Into The Space Age: The Story of Ensign-Bickford Industries, Inc.* by Ellsworth S. Grant (donated by the author)
- George Washington's Expense Account* by General George Washington & Marvin Kitman, Pfc. (Ret.) (donated by Doris Rothe)
- The History of Braintree, Vermont, Including a Memorial of Families That Have Resided in Town* by H. Royce Bass (donated by Phyllis N. Hawley)
- Index to Accompany The History of Braintree, Vermont*, compiled by Phyllis N. Hawley (donated by the compiler)
- The History of Braintree, Vermont, Volume II, 1883-1975*, written and compiled by Katharine F. DuClos, edited by Muriel C. Thresher (donated by Phyllis N. Hawley)
- Jonathan Belcher's Simsbury Copper Mines: Letters* compiled by Jay Robbins (donated by Betty Guinan, Alice Newman Historical Room, East Granby Public Library)
- North East Roots: A Guide to Sources* by H. Lesley Diack (donated by Bill Farquhar)
- Only More So: The History of East Hartford, 1783-1976* by Lee Paquette (donated by Doris Rothe)
- The Pioneers of Winnebago and Boone Counties, Illinois, Who Came Before 1841* by Katherine E. Rowland, C.G. (donated by Stephen E. Simon)
- Scottish Roots: A Step-by Step Guide for Ancestor Hunters in Scotland and Overseas* by Alwyn James (Donated by Bill Farquhar)
- Some Descendants of Robert Barnhill, I, Immigrant Who Settled in Bucks County, Pennsylvania* by A. Virgil Barnhill, Jr. (donated by A. Virgil Barnhill, Jr.)
- Tracing Scottish Local History: A Guide to Local History Research in the Scottish Record Office* by Cecil Sinclair (donated by Bill Farquhar)
- Tracing Your Scottish Ancestors: A Guide to Ancestry Research in the Scottish Record Office* by Cecil Sinclair (donated by Bill Farquhar)
- Tracts of the American Revolution, 1763-1776* edited by Merrill Jensen (donated by Doris Rothe)
- Your Scottish Ancestry: A guide for North Americans* by Sherry Irvine (donated by Bill Farquhar)
- Vital Records of Abington, Massachusetts to the Year 1850, Volume I-Births* (donated by Doris Rothe)
- Vital Records of Weymouth, Massachusetts to the Year 1859, Volume II-Marriages and Deaths* (donated by Doris Rothe)
- Write It Right: A Manual for Writing Family Histories and Genealogies* by Donald R. Barnes, C.G., and Richard S. Lackey, C.G. (donated by the Friends of the Simsbury Public Library)

SGHRL UPDATES

Joyce Cahill is busy putting the finishing touches on the first of two volumes on the headstones inscriptions in Simsbury Cemetery. It will be published by SGHRL early in the new year. The first volume will cover all of the inscriptions in the old part of the cemetery, the part that is visible from Hopmeadow Street. The second volume, to be published later, will give the inscriptions in the new part of the cemetery facing Plank Hill Road.

The headstone inscriptions are indexed both by section and row and by the name of the deceased in alphabetical order. Volume I will have a brief history of the cemetery and will include maps and photographs. The work, which has taken Mrs. Cahill and volunteers more than three years to accomplish, gives far more detail than any other study that has been done of the cemetery inscriptions.

Peg Bergethon has agreed to index the *History of Simsbury, Granby and Canton from 1642 to 1845* by Noah A. Phelps. All those interested in Simsbury history know that this book, published in 1845, was the first comprehensive history of the town. It contains a lode of valuable information that will be much easier to access when it has an index. All of us at SGHRL want to thank Mrs. Bergethon for accepting the challenge. You will remember that she did the fine index to Lucius I. Barber's history.

The Simsbury Free Library's House Committee, headed by Dick Wagner, has been busy with improvements. The new sidewalk and granite curbstone have been installed on the south side of the building. Architect and board member Rick Schoenhardt has designed a distinctive new entryway for the Chamber of Commerce offices and construction will begin soon.

In Memory of Russell S. Shaw

The Board of Trustees of the Simsbury Free Library sadly notes the death of former colleague Russell S. Shaw. Russ served the Town of Simsbury in many capacities for most of his life and was First Selectman for twenty-two years. Among the many accomplishments reached during his administration were the development of the Simsbury Farms Complex, the construction of the Simsbury sewer system, the initiation of the Open Space Program, and many improvements to local schools. He was very proud of his town and was always interested in its beautification as well as its worthy status.

Russ lent his wisdom and experience to the Free Library Board from 1991-1994. We sent our sympathy and good wishes to this wife, Barbara, and his family. We will miss him.

Peg Donohue, Chairman, Trustees

History of Barns for Sale

The Barns of East Granby: our Architectural Heritage by Betty Guinan and Ted Holly is now for sale at SGHRL. It was recently published by the East Granby Historical Society.

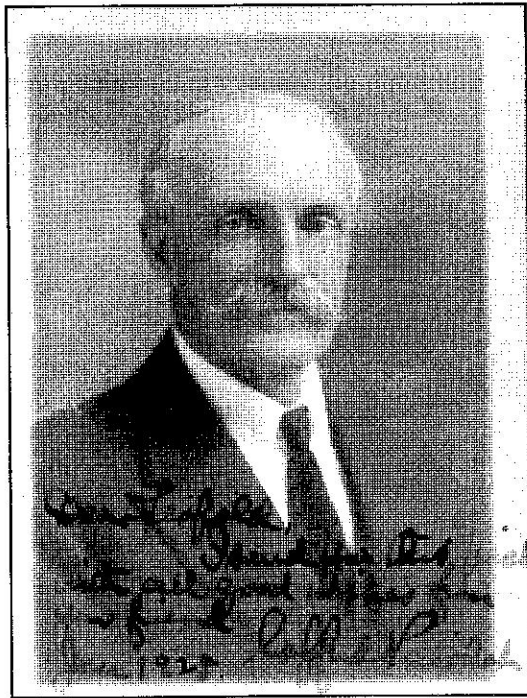
This account of one town's barns tells the original use of each building and the adaptive reuse of some of them. The 296 photographs depict more than forty barns and highlight their most distinctive features. The handsome book will appeal to all those who respond to the charm of rural New England.

Paper bound, 130 pages, cost: \$15.00.

SIMSBURY MARRIAGES

Date	Name	Age	Occupation	Birthplace
Apr. 1, 1864	William Kenyon	21	Farmer	Simsbury
	Harriet Crossley	21		Long Island
June 5, 1864	Patrick Geraghty	30	Laborer	Ireland
	Mary O'Rourke	22		Ireland
July 23, 1864	Thomas Wild	53	Laborer	England
	Maria McGregger	43		Burlington, Vt.
Sept. 24, 1864	Thomas Allen	32	Weaver	England
	Mary Maddocks	21		England
Sept. 18, 1864	John Kitiheu	45	Mason	Scotland
	Mary Ann Wilson	42		England
Sept. 30, 1864	John F. Findley	28	Shoemaker	Scotland
	Elizabeth McCullough	27		Scotland
Oct. 25, 1864	Charles H. Clark	25	Farmer	East Granby
	Catherine J. Hayden	19		East Granby
Nov. 26, 1864	James Gaffney	21	Laborer	Ireland
	Mary Barry	21		Ireland
Nov. 13, 1864	James Quinlan	24	Laborer	Ireland
	Ann Lynch	22		Ireland
Nov. 15, 1864	Patrick Hensley	25	Laborer	Ireland
	Mary Winters	19		Ireland
Oct. 19, 1864	Joseph Maurice	44	Laborer	England
	Sarah Book (?)	30		Ireland
Apr. 15, 1864	William Maddock	20		England
	Ada Oates	22		England
Mar. 25, 1864	Seth Wadsworth	36		Farmington
	Aetna Chappell	22		Simsbury
Apr. 15, 1864	Thomas Sydinham	24		Long Island
	Louisa Lloyd	24		England
June 28, 1865	George B. Thurston	24	in a Hotel	Simsbury
	Jennie B. Clark	19		Simsbury
Nov. 19, 1865	James Bodine	21	Farmer	Canada
	Harriett Deushan (?)	21		Canada

This continuing series on Simsbury's early marriage records has been copied by Stephen E. Simon from microfilmed records at the Connecticut State Library.



Gifford Pinchot in 1928

Gifford Pinchot presented this signed photograph in 1928 to Leopold A. Guerry, who for many years was Antoinette Eno Wood's butler. Mr. Guerry was a native of Fribourg, Switzerland, who spoke both English and French. For about thirty years, until her death in 1930, Mrs. Wood used her ancestral home, Mr. Pinchot's birthplace, as her summer residence. Her primary residence at the time was in Washington, D.C.

Mary Jane Guerry, who donated the photograph to SGHRL, says that her father-in-law and Mr. Pinchot liked to walk in the woods on the estate. A 1903 internal memo of the Frederick Law Olmsted firm of landscape architects mentions that Mrs. Wood had consulted Mr. Pinchot, her nephew, about her woods. At that date he was Chief of the U.S. Bureau of Forestry and a professor of forestry at Yale University. By the time he presented the photo to Mr. Guerry, he had completed his first term as Governor of Pennsylvania.

The house at 731 Hopmeadow Street is now the Simsbury 1820 House country inn.



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