

VAIL HOUSE KETCHAM FAMILY

Major Barnard Ketcham (1778-1856), a veteran of the War of 1812, son of an early settler, and a Mason, married Aaron Jackson's daughter, Mary P ("Polly"), and in 1826 built a magnificent brick Georgian plan house near the original Jackson house site. Barnard's daughter married a Vail and it subsequently was referred to as the Vail House. At one time, it included about 1800 acres in Sudbury, Orwell, and Whiting. It remained in the family until 1967 when it was bought by David and Sylvia Keiser. Sylvia Keiser established the Hammond Chapman Foundation for Yesterday's Living, to protect the brick mansion, which at that time only had 1.5 acres. The Foundation now oversees 650 acres. Additional property was acquired so farmers could continue tending the land and thus preserve the agricultural character of the historic homestead.

The architect was Thomas Dake. The beautiful spiral staircase is a mirror image of one Dake designed for his own home located on South Street in Castleton, Vermont. Also, a house that appeared to be a twin of the Vail House in Proctor, Vermont has been torn down.



The Vail House is near the Crown Point Military Road.



Historical Notes on the “Ketcham-Vail House”

Thomas Ketcham, born February 8, 1748, died May 19, 1834, aged 86 years. He moved from Dutchess County, N. Y., to Sudbury at a very early date in the history of the township. Major Barnard Ketcham, son of Thomas, married a daughter of Aaron Jackson. Major Barnard Ketcham 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.

The Hammond Chapman Foundation owns the Vail House, at 879 Vail Road. Gary Bowen is the executive director and steward of the foundation. It is open to the public by chance or by appointment. This beautiful home is located on one of the “Governor's Lots” in Sudbury. Before each of the New Hampshire Land Grants were subdivided amongst the proprietors, six 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), another to the Church of England, one to the first clergyman to settle in the township, one lot for a school, and two lots went to Wentworth himself. A "Lot" may have been 100 acres, but possibly varied by the size of the township.

Ranking among the best Federal style houses in Vermont, the house has exceptional entry detail with tapered fluted Corinthian columns and an eagle in the fanlight. Its keystone is inscribed with a Masonic sign. Ketcham’s home was the “temple” for the Washington Masonic Lodge in his brick home between 1826 and 1851.

An Anti-Masonic movement arose due to the secretive nature of the society that was thought to have undue influence on government. People looked upon Masons with distrust and commenced threats to eliminate the organization. A tragic fire occurred in downtown Brandon in 1835, that was unrelated to the Anti-Masonic movement and unrelated to the Vail House. The following explanation will hopefully correct some misinformation published about that fire.

In 1986, two college students gathered information for the book *The Historic Architecture of Rutland County* and came up with a preposterous story. They heard, during their tour of the Vail house, that it had had seven staircases, one of which could have provided an escape route from the meeting room—should the Masons ever find themselves under siege. The students also learned that when Ketcham’s lodge in Sudbury closed, all the Masonic regalia went to a Masonic lodge in Brandon.

Unfortunately, those items, having survived the anti-Masonic period, burned in one of Brandon’s tragic downtown fires. The students did not take good notes and wrote: “Ketcham’s home reportedly was sacked and its contents burned at the height of the Anti-Masonic excitement about 1835.”

The false story snowballs and has been embellished by other writers one of whom added: “Fortunately, they spared the structure and its brick walls still exist today.” The students were wrong and Gary Bowen wishes to correct the record. He hopes this publication will help do so.

Edward Walsh, great-great-grandson of Barnard Ketcham, called from California exclaiming, “If they thought everything burned—then how do they explain all the original furnishings and other items my ancestors had including my great-grandmother’s wedding gown and gifts—that are all still there?”

THE KETCHAM FAMILY (Two branches: Thomas and Platt)

Thomas Ketcham (1748 - 1834) was born in Nine Partners, NY. He married Mary Doughty on February 4, 1769. The 1791 Census of Sudbury listed 258 people. The Thomas Ketcham family contributed 12 and the Platt Ketcham family contributed 4., or 6% of the population.

In the early 1880’s an article in the Middlebury Register said: “About fifty of his descendants, residing in Sudbury, Brandon, Pittsford, Hubbardton, Benson, Orwell, Whiting, and Malone NY met at the residence of Allen Ketcham, Esq. grandson of Thomas, for a family visit.”

Here is a picture of a similar reunion in 1893.



1893 Family Reunion at Oliver Hazard Perry Ketcham’s Home

Thomas Ketcham (1748 – 1834) and Mary Doughty (1749 – 1835) had eleven children. The first seven were born in Nine Partners, NY. The male Ketcham offspring are also shown below.

1 Rebecca (1770 – 1802)	6.4.5 Eugene L (1867 – 1926)
2 Phoebe (1772 – 1844) Not married	6.4.6 Ray Lee (1870 – 1900)
3 William (1774 – 1855)(12 kids, 2 males)	6.6 Stephen (1823 – 1882)
3.5 Harvey (1808 – 1883)	6.6.8 Charles (1866 -)
3.12 William (1824 – 1889)	6.6.9 Stephen (1868 -)
4 Thomas (1776 – 1835) (9 kids)	6.6.9.2 Homer (1894 - 1919)
4.1 Isaac (1805 – 1881)	6.6.9.3 Paul (1898 -)
4.1.3 Dighton Churchill* (1835–1901)	6.6.9.4 Stephen (1901 -)
4.1.3.1 Roy Treverton (1870 – 1948)	6.9 William E (1829 – 1854)
4.1.3.1.2 Dighton (1898 - 1958)	6.10 Charles M (1831 – 1910)
4.1.3.1.2.2 Treverton (1924 -)	7 Pamela (1784 – 1834)
4.1.3.1.2.3 Gordon (1926 -)	8 Ruth (1784 – 1834)
4.1.3.1.2.5 Wayne (1930 -)	9 Mary (1787 – 1883)
4.1.3.1.2.7 Robert (1943-1943)	10 Isaac (1789 – 1856) (9 kids)
4.1.3.1.2.8 Thomas (- 1945)	10.4 Oliver Hazard Perry (1822–1892)(5 kids)
4.1.3.1.5 Gordon (1902 – 1914)	10.4.2 Martin Sutherland (1865 - 1938)
4.1.3.1.6 Kenneth Burns (1906 -)	10.4.2.1 Robert Perry** (1893 - 1968)
4.1.3.1.6.1 John (1936 -)	10.4.2.1.2 Martin Perry (1922 -)
4.1.3.1.6.2 Roger Roy (1946 -)	10.4.2.1.2.1 Oliver Perry (1951 -)
4.1.3.1.7 George (1908 -)	10.4.2.1.2.4 Charles (1958 -)
4.2 Joseph (1806 -)	10.4.2.1.2.5 Timothy (1960 -)
4.3. Allen (1808 - 1886)	10.4.2.1.3 Charles (1922 -)
4.3.1 Calvin Hubbard (1843 – 1919)	10.4.2.1.3.3 Charles R (1958 -)
4.3.1.1 Albert (1870 -)	10.4.2.1.3.4 Timothy A (1960 -)
4.3.1.1.1 Arthur C (1896 -)	10.4.2.1.5 Robert Thomas (1926 -)
4.3.1.1.1.1 Arthur B (1918 -)	10.4.2.1.5.5 Stephen R (1961 -)
4.3.1.2 William (1874 -)	10.4.2.2 Frank James (1894 -)
4.3.2 Thomas Jefferson (1845 – 1902)	10.4.2.4 Thomas Isaac (1902 -)
4.3.2.1 Clyde (1879 -)	10.4.3 Arthur Sanderson (1865 -)(7 kids)
4.3.1.3 Robert Allen (1885 -)	10.4.3.2 Harry Arthur (1893 – 1969)
4.6 Eliza (1816 – 1846)	10.4.3.3 Olin George (1895 – 1977)
4.8 Thomas J (1821 - 1885)	10.4.3.3.1 Arthur W (1919 -)
5 Barnard (1778 – 1856) (10 kids)	10.4.3.3.1.1 Thomas W (1949 -)
5.1 Aaron c1810	10.4.3.3.2 Russell Perry (1923 -)
5.5 Andrew Jackson (1814 – 1899)	10.4.3.3.2.1 Russell P (1950 -)
5.7 James c1820	10.4.3.3.3 Chester Sawyer (1927 -)
5.9 Dewitt (1826-1850)	10.6 Benjamin Franklin (1827 – 1897)
6 Elias (1780 – 1854) (10 kids,)	10.6.1 Herbert L (1853 – 1932)
6.4 Oliver (1819 – 1893)	10.6.6 (Isaac F (1866 – 1893)
6.4.1 Edward W (1856 – 1921)	10.9 Martin Van Buren (1836 – 1863)
6.4.3 Arthur (1860 -)	11 Sarah (1792 – 1797)
*Dighton, the only son of Isaac, first married Addiel L Bucklin, who died on December 24, 1866. He then married Anne Rustedt, who was born in England and the daughter of a minister, on January 31, 1868.	
** Robert Perry, married Lena Churchill in 1917 in Fair Haven. They bought a farm on Willowbrook Road in 1923, and then moved to the original Ketcham Farm in 1939. He was School director, Auditor, Justice of the Peace, and Lister for 36 years and represented the Town of Sudbury in 1945 and 1963.	



**Oliver Hazard Perry Ketcham
(4.8.1822–1.3.1892)**

**Mary Sanderson Ketcham
(9.9.1828–6.11.1905)**

A quotation from a radio interview with Oliver's grandson Robert (1893 – 1968): " I own over 900 acres: 320 acres in the Willowbrook district, 560 acres on my father's place, and about 30 acres of meadow on Otter Creek.

I hire no help on the farm. My children and I do all the work and get along well together. There have been no divorces in our family. It has been said the Ketcham men are careful in the selection of their wives".



1912 Olin Ketcham in the middle is 17 years old

Platt Ketcham (1769 -) was probably related to Thomas Ketcham (1748 – 1834). His family was also included in the 1791 Census of Sudbury. Platt married Sukie Nash on 9.10.1790. They had seven children. He later married Mary Hodgkins. His seven children are listed below.

1 Righta (7.26.1792 -)
2 Ira (12.28.1794 -)
3 Sarah (6.25.1797 -)
4 Platt (November 1800 – 3.5.1882) who married Susan Washer (- 2.8.1876)
5 Sukie (2.21.1802 -)
6 Warren (6.30.1804 – 9.3.1844)
7 Harvey (1.9.1808 -) married Polly Fairbanks on 11.20.1836 (9 kids)
7.1 Helen Mary (2.28.1838 -)
7.2 Sarah Henrietta (12.20.1839 -)
7.3 Anna Marie (2.21.1841 -)
7.4 Harriet (November 1843 -)
7.5 Alfred Warren (9.15.1846 -)
7.6 Albert Clarence (9.19.1851 -)
7.7 Henry Herbert (4.5.1853 -)
7.8 Emily Charlotta Lucina (3.3.1856 -)
7.9 Lucy Aurilla (2.12.1859 -)