



Gibbet Hill • Historic Timeline

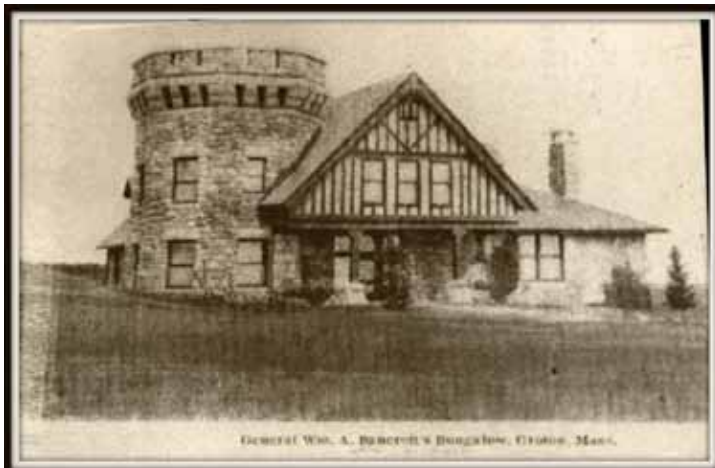
1645

The hill is named for the English gibbet (pronounced JIB-bet), a gallows generally situated on a hill for public executions. Although there are some local legends and rumors, there are no substantiated claims of executions on the hill; Gibbet Hill was more likely named after a hill in England. A farmhouse build by John Lawrence in 1690 still stands (the white house next to the driveway).



1906

General William Bancroft, a Groton native who became head of the Boston Elevated Railroad and Mayor of Cambridge, began building a retirement home called Shawfieldmont at the crest of Gibbet Hill. Beginning with a modest bungalow, he planned to add a castle-like mansion and a stable, but ran out of money before the project was complete.



1918

Property is sold to Harold Ayres, a prominent physician who turned the bungalow into a private sanitarium, which accepted “all but insane or contagious” patients for \$20 per week.



1920s

Groton Private Hospital houses tuberculosis sufferers on its long open porches with views 30 miles to Mount Wachusett.

1930s

The Groton Hunt Club uses the bungalow for fox-hunting parties, dinners, dances and nature outings. In 1932 “careless fireworks” are blamed for a fire that destroyed most of the bungalow, leaving only the remains of a stone observation tower intact.



1947

After World War II, Marion Campbell, a Vassar graduate who had written for the Washington Post and whose father owned Atlantic Monthly, purchases the rundown farm. Campbell hires local farm manager Bill Conley to help her breed Black Angus cattle.

1980s

Herd producing “superior meat” has grown to 600 head and bloodlines have been tracked as far as Australia and Zimbabwe



Late 1990s

Marion Campbell Trust puts property up for sale. In the summer of 2000, they reach final stages of an agreement with the construction company Modern Continental, which approves plans to develop 78 houses on the property.





2000

Geotel Communications founder Steven Webber, a Groton native, buys the 338-acre farm, plus an adjacent 188-acre orchard, to prevent the imminent development; vows to prevent any future residential development. Steve receives a standing ovation at Town Meeting for his commitment to preserving the rural nature of the town.

2004

Siblings Josh, Jed and Kate Webber open the Gibbet Hill Grill on a 100-year old New England style barn on the property. Shortly afterwards they open The Barn at Gibbet Hill, a function facility in a similarly restored barn next door. The siblings co-own and operate the two buildings today.



2009

The Gibbet Hill Grill further its farm-to-fork philosophy by hiring a Farm Manager and planting over two acres of produce to be used in the Grill and Barn. Over 40 varieties of heirloom tomatoes, summer squash, beets, cucumbers, greens, beans, peppers, herbs, edible flowers, and many other crops make it to the menu.