

Randall - Brown Hike

Researching history can be fun! In putting together some background info for this hike, it's amazing what you can uncover. Follow the story of a short stretch of a South Woodstock hill road and learn of the African-American family whose members fought in the Revolution and the Civil War. Discover how a Massachusetts shipbuilder married his Plymouth girlfriend when she was several months pregnant. Learn about a housewife who left to study medicine in Pennsylvania and returned in 1857 with a degree in hand and an intent to divorce her husband.

We will meet at the Academy and drive up to the top of the hill and park by the field on the right. The round-trip hike from this spot is a moderate 2.3 miles. Some hikers may opt to leave from the Academy which adds roughly a mile, and includes a short, steep uphill climb.

1 Billy Brown House,

built circa 1830. Ashlar construction. The house was built around the same time as the Captain Andrew Smith House, perhaps by the same person. Billy's father, Thomas Brown probably had an earlier home (wood?) in the vicinity

2) Nathaniel Randall Foundation

Built by Nathaniel Randall I in 1812, the original brick building was built at the same time as the Gaius Perkins house near the Academy. It was the home of his unmarried daughter Eliza until her death in 1896. The house was then purchased by a family from Massachusetts, the Havills. It unfortunately burned to the ground in 1918. The present house was built on the Randall foundation. It was the birthplace of Mona Hoadley who only recently passed away at the age of 97. A woman still remembered fondly by many South Woodstockers.

Randall Cemetery

"The Randall yard is filled with Randalls, Woods, Kingsleys, Murdocks, Bishops, Thomases, Slocums, Vaughans, Billy Brown, Philip Bordeau a colored man, long a faithful servitor of the Randalls, lies in this yard. He died at the age of 84. He was a brother of Silas who is buried in the Ralph-Jaquith yard, though the name is spelt differently. "**Valley of the Kedron**

3) Joseph Wood House

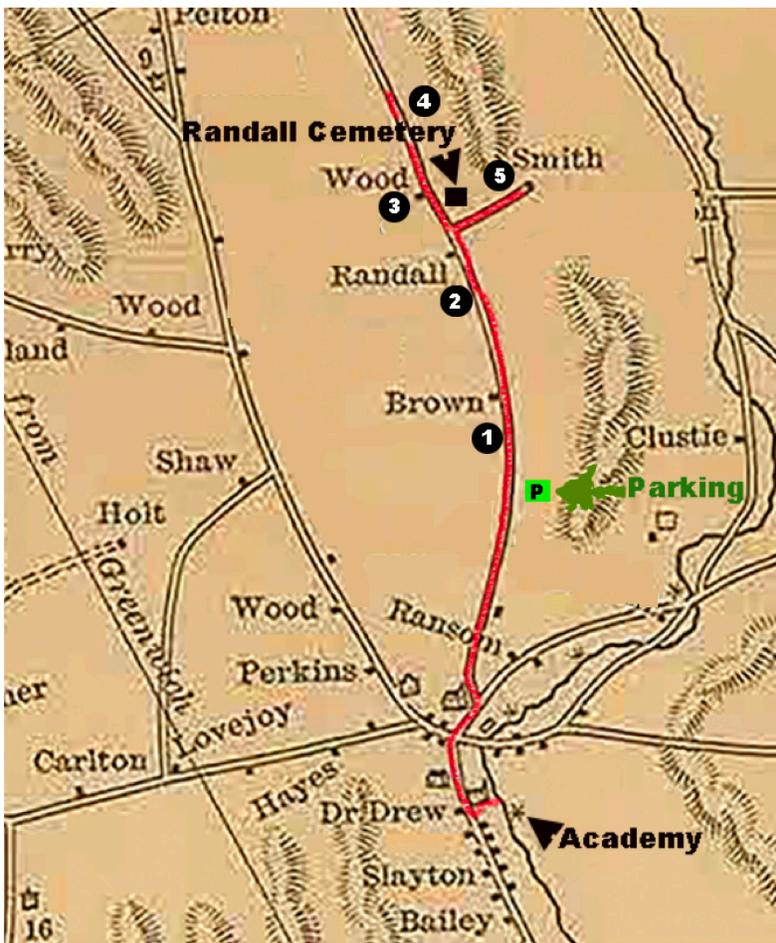
Built by Joseph Wood in 1792. It is one of the oldest homes in South Woodstock.

4) Erastus Wood House

Circa 1825. Erastus, born in 1805, was the son of Joseph Wood. The house is a good example of a late Federal style Cape Cod type beginning to make the transition to a taller, shallower Classic Cottage form. Currently the home of Wade Treadway.

5) Captain Andrew Smith House

Built circa 1835. Deacon Smith bought land for his farm from Phineas Sanderson. This house is one of the earliest "Ashlar" stone houses that there are numerous examples of in South Woodstock and towns south as far as Chester. Believed to be built by the same person due to their similarity. This home was noted in the survey for maintaining the 19th Century landscape.



Timeline

- 1743 Nathaniel Randall born in Pembroke MA
- 1748 Silas Burdoo, the uncle, born in Lexington MA
- 1758 Thomas Brown born in Middleborough MA
- 1775-1783 American Revolution
- 1781 Thomas Brown marries Hannah Lovell in January 6th, 1781
- 1781 Nathaniel Randall I born in Plymouth MA
- 1781 Betsey Brown born April 14th, 1781
- 1783 Billy Brown born in Middleborough MA
- 1790s The Brown Family moves to Woodstock
- 1792 Joseph Wood house built at the crossroads
- 1801 Nathaniel Randall II marries Betsey Brown
- 1805 Erastus Wood born in Woodstock
- 1809 Nathaniel Randall III born
- 1813 Billy Brown marries Rebecca Ellis on March 29th, 1813
- 1822 Thomas Brown dies in Woodstock
- 1826 Silas Burdoo born in Reading VT
- 1827 & 1831 Billy Brown is elected State Representative for Woodstock
- 1828 Philipe Bordeau Silas's brother born
- 1830 ca. Billy Brown Stone house built
- 1835 ca. Captain Andrew Smith House built
- 1837 Silas Burdoo the uncle dies in Reading
- 1842 Nathaniel Randall II marries Maranda Briggs
- 1854 Maranda graduates from the Pennsylvania Medical School
- 1857 Maranda divorces Nathaniel Randall II
- 1864 George Randall, dies in the Battle of the Wilderness
- 1869 Billy Brown dies
- 1900 Silas Burdoo dies
- 1902 Philip Bordeau dies
- 1918 Hundred year old Randall House burns down
- 1920s Picture of the Hail children taken after the rebuilding of the Randall House

Cast of Characters

Philip Bordeau (1828 -1902)

Philip Bordeau (1828 -1902) “ A colored man, long a faithful servitor of the Randalls, lies in this yard. He died at the age of 84. He was a brother of Silas who is buried in the Ralph yard, though the name is spelt differently. He was born in Reading.” *Valley of the Kedron*

Marenda Briggs (1817-1876)

Wife of Nathaniel Randall III. Raised on Rose Hill in Woodstock, her marriage was not a happy one. She was a woman's right advocate and educational reformer. And a doctor! A supreme accomplishment for a woman of that era. In 1854 she graduated from the Pennsylvania Medical College. She returned to Woodstock after graduation and three years later finalized her divorce from Nathaniel. Maranda had 3 children. Eliza, Eloise who moved to Chicago and became a doctor, and George, a Captain in the Vermont Volunteers who died in the Battle of the Wilderness, the local GAR organization was named in his honor.

Betsey Brown (1781-1863)

Born in Middleborough MA, she moved to South Woodstock in her teens and lived over the hill on the Brown farm. Billy Brown was her brother. She married Nathaniel Randall II in 1801. One of her nine children was Nathaniel III.

Billy Brown (1783 -1869)

Billy Brown was born in Middleborough He married Rebecca Ellis on 29 Mar 1813 at Woodstock, VT. He and his wife died within seven weeks of each other. Aged 87 and 80 years. Major Brown was the son of Thomas and Hannah Lovel Brown of Middleborough, Mass. Major Brown's father and mother, also his grandparents came to Woodstock with ox teams and bought the Pool farms on the hill road north of the South Village, and there he built the stone house. He was twice a representative for Woodstock in the Legislature in 1827 & 1831

Thomas Brown (1758-1822)

Thomas Brown (1758-1822) Born In Middleborough MA. Died in Woodstock. A seafaring man, he was captured during the Revolution and taken to Halifax but he succeeded in escaping. He married Hannah Lovell (1754-1823) on Jan. 6th 1781 . She had 4 children, one of which was Betsey Brown. All were born in Massachusetts, the family moved to Woodstock between 1794 and 1800.

Silas Burdoo “The uncle” (1748-1837)

Silas Burdoo (1748-1837) Born in Lexington MA, fought in the Revolution, he died in Reading VT and was buried at the Bailey Mills Cemetery. He was the uncle of Philip and Silas. It is likely his brother lived in Reading as well.

Silas Burdoo (1826 - 1900)

Silas Burdoo (1826 - 1900) “a colored man, who served in the War between the States and lived in the Ralph-Walker family, rests here” in the Jaquith Cemetery. He was a member of the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Regiment, that was the all African-American unit memorialized in the movie *Glory*. Starring Denzel

Washington, Morgan Freeman and Matthew Broderick. Silas was buried at the Walker-Jaquith Cemetery over Morgan Hill. He was the nephew of Silas Burdoo, the Revolutionary soldier.

Rebecca Ellis (1766 - 1853)

Wife of Billy Brown, she came from Middlebury VT. There were many Ellis's in South Woodstock, some lived near the Owen Moon property.

Hannah Lovell (1754-1823)

Wife of Thomas Wood. From Middleborough MA.

Eliza Brown Randall (1812-1896)

When Hannah Eliza Brown Randall was born on 14 February 1812, in Woodstock, Vermont, her father, Nathaniel O. Randall Jr., was 30 and her mother, Elizabeth "Betsy" Brown, was 30. She died on 7 October 1896, in Woodstock, at the age of 84. Unmarried, she lived for many years in the brick Randall house.

Nathaniel Randall I (1743-1831)

Nathaniel Randall, the first, came from Job's Landing, Pembroke, Mass. He was a shipbuilder. He settled near the Reading line in 1788. Farming and building were his work. He later moved to Bristol, NY, where he has some descendants still living. He married Grace Stetson first and had three children. Grace died in 1773 and in 1776 Nathaniel married Deborah Stetson and had another six children in Pembroke. They came to Woodstock around 1788 and subsequently had two more children in 1789 and 1793 before he and wife Deborah moved to South Bristol, NY near Lake Canandaigua where they both ended their lives.

Nathaniel O. Randall II (1781-1825)

Nathaniel O. Randall Jr. was born in Pembroke, Plymouth, MA. He did not follow his parents to the Finger Lakes in New York. He married Elizabeth "Betsy" Brown on 12 November 1801, in Woodstock. They were the parents of at least 6 sons and 3 daughters. He died in 1825, at the young age of 44.

Nathaniel Randall III (1809-1888)

Dr. Nathaniel Randall III was born in 1809, in Woodstock. He married Marena Briggs of Woodstock in 1834. They were the parents of at least 1 son and 2 daughters. This Nathaniel was a silversmith and jeweler, he worked in Woodstock as well as St. Johnsbury. His marriage with Marena Briggs was an unhappy one. They divorced when she was 40 years old and he was 48.

Captain Andrew Smith

Captain Andrew Smith bought land for his farm from Phineas Sanderson. Fought in the Civil War. His home is one of the earliest "Ashlar" stone houses that are sprinkled throughout South Woodstock and towns as far south as Chester. Believed to be built by the same person due to their similarity. Built from 1835-1965. This home was noted in the survey for maintaining the 19th Century landscape.

Erastus Wood (1805 - 1862)

Son of Joseph Wood. He lived in the frame house just across the street and north of the Joseph Wood home. On October 11th, 1862 (aged 57) He died a "casualty". We wish we knew more about what this means.

Joseph Wood (1761 - 1826)

Joseph Wood of Middleborough, Mass. was one of the eleven sons of Ichabod Wood. Correct, 11 sons. He served two campaigns in the Revolution and settled on the hill road between the North and South Parishes, buying his land from Ebenezer Kingsley in 1786. Records indicate he was serving at West Point NY during the time Benedict Arnold attempted to betray the fort to the British. Wood received a pension for his services. Joseph served in the Vermont legislature in 1811. His son Samuel lived in the house his father had built. He was a prominent man in the town.

Mona Hoadley (1922 - 2020)

Mona Hoadley, nee Havill, was born in Woodstock. She was a first generation American, her parents having emigrated from Sweden and England. Before she was born the Havills purchased the big brick Randall home in 1917 and were living there when it burned down the next year in January. The family moved into the sugarhouse! They then built a new home on the foundation. The cellar was filled with bricks from the collapsed walls. Mona was born in the house in 1922. Her father having died at a young age, her mother, Mona and her sisters ran the farm transporting milk, eggs and other farm goods over the Randall road hill down to South Woodstock. The Havill's owned the house into the 1940s. Mona met her husband, South Woodstocker Darwin Hoadley at a dance at the Orion Grange, just down the hill from the Academy. They lived together for years in the red cape next to the Kedron Valley Inn. Mona got to know Tina and liked to sit on her porch and reminisce about the old days. She donated many family items to the GMPA, including the quilt in the upstairs hall and was a lifetime supporter of the Academy.

Randall Family Martha Cook (August 2022)

William Randall (1609-1693) came from England on the ship *Expectation* arriving in Scituate, MA, on April 24, 1635. He married Elizabeth Barstow in 1640. He was a cordwainer (shoemaker) by trade and at times, Constable as well as surveyor of highways. There are notations of transgressions he made. In 1654 he was found guilty of selling strong water to Indians. His wife was fined 10 schillings the same year for telling a lie. In 1665 he was again written up for breaking the King's peace by poking a neighbor. He and Elizabeth had 9 children. Fifth child Job (1654-1727) was the son whose line comes to Vermont.

Job Sr. and Job (Jr.) (1683-1759) were both well-known shipwrights in Scituate. The area of Scituate where they worked/lived was referred to as "Job's Landing." Job Jr. and his wife Ursula had eleven children. Oldest son Thomas (1708-1757) went on to marry Faith Winslow in 1729 and subsequently moved to Pembroke, MA (12 miles inland) where their seven children were born. Their youngest son Nathaniel (1743-1831) married Grace Stetson first and had three children. Grace died in 1773 and Nathaniel remarried to Deborah Stetson in 1776 and had another six children in Pembroke. They came to Woodstock around 1788 and subsequently had two more children in 1789 and 1793 before Nathaniel (Sr.) and wife Deborah moved to South Bristol, NY where they both died.

Nathaniel (Jr.) (1781-1825) stayed in Woodstock. He married Betsey Brown (1781-1863) from Middleborough, MA in 1801 in Woodstock. They had nine children. This Nathaniel is buried in the Randall Cemetery marked by the beautiful slate stone that remains in ideal condition in 2022. (His will and inventory reside in Woodstock records.) His wife Betsey outlived her husband by 38 years! She inherited rights of use to the brick homestead as did girl children. The sons traded shares leaving son Sylvanus (1807-1863) with the homestead. This is all reflected in the will in great detail along with value of each possession of Nathaniel's estate.

Third son Sylvanus married Hannah Washburn (1816-1884) in 1833. They had five children two of the daughters, Ogilva and Alma died as infants and are buried with their parents in the Randall Cemetery. A third daughter Maria died at 15. Surviving children Ovando (1842-1933) and Ella (1850-) were educated at the Perkins Green Mt. Academy—Ovando carved his initials in one of the desks that can be seen today.

Sylvanus' brothers Nathaniel (III) and Myrick went into the silversmithing profession in Woodstock in 1842. Myrick's silver mark was M.O. Randall. They split the partnership in 1843. There is no immediate record of where Myrick went, however, Nathaniel (III) worked as a silversmith, jeweler, and clock/watchmaker until 1875. A third brother Joseph Volney was a silversmith in Burlington listed there until 1855. It must have been during this time that these men's nephew Ovando learned the family silversmithing trade. Ovando is listed as a silversmith in partnership with William H.H. Moore in Woodstock from 1873-1877. The jewelry shop is where Gallery 2 used to be on Elm Street.

Ovando married Mary Almira Royce of Barnard in 1866. They had two sons William and Harry born in Woodstock in 1870 and 1872 respectively. They moved to Dummerston around 1882. Ovando went into business as a jeweler on the main street of Brattleboro in partnership with George Clapp. Ovando and Mary Almira had a third child in Brattleboro, Ethel Almira (1885-1978). Ovando, Mary Almira, Ovando's sister Ella, and Ethel are all buried in the Locust Ridge Cemetery in Brattleboro.

Ethel's daughter, Ruth May Ekberg (1922-2021), moved to Woodstock in 1992 from Westmoreland, NH, to be near her only daughter Martha Ekberg Cook (1964-) who lives in Hartland. Ruth was an active volunteer at Green Mtn Perkins Academy and did all the genealogy written above.

Excerpt from the *Valley of the Kedron*, 1940 by Mary Grace Canfield

"Joseph Darling, Jr., deeded to Nathaniel Randall fifty acres in Dec. 1791, upon which he lived many years, rearing a large family of children. He married, and had by his first wife Lydia, Nathan and one that married John Wood, and by his second wife, Nathan Stetson's sister, he had Gaius, Priscilla, Stetson, Elias, Deborah and John. I think he buried one child named Thomas. Mr. Randall was eccentric, nervous, generous to a fault, especially to himself, given to much prophesying on the weather, his own death, etc., yet I believe he was well calculated to make the most of his means on hand, and that he was something of a poet, as the incident I relate will show. Being out of a team he broke a nice large heifer and bull to the yoke together and drew his winter's wood. Writing to his friends extolling the country and its advantages, he said:

The snow is deep, the trees are tall,
My bull and heifer draw it all.