



Bob Barrett
Semi-retired Realtor,
Member of
The Greatest Generation



For more information about
Grafton go to: grafftonvermont.org

Photo Credit: Jason R. Herdke

No, I wasn't born in Vermont, but I got here as soon as I could! As a youth and then a counselor, I spent eight years at a boys' camp in New Hampshire. As a counselor, I enjoyed many days and weeks driving and canoeing in New Hampshire, Maine and Vermont. My feeling then (and later found to be true) was that Vermont was far more environmentally concerned than the other two states—Act 250 had just been initiated, which eventually would protect the mountain tops, the open land and growth patterns. It also provided incentives to protect wildlife and fisheries, including streams, ponds and lakes.

In 1949, I decided to take a scouting trip to Vermont. I convinced myself that the "green state" would indeed be home someday. It took 20 years and hard work in my real estate company before we could afford the move, but happily we arrived in 1970.

We looked for a home all over Southern Vermont and discovered Windham County. It offered everything we wanted and were used to coming from a suburban town, plus low traffic volume, many dirt roads and a general feeling of peace with city amenities in nearby Brattleboro.

We finally found the village of our dreams in the restored early American village of Grafton, cradled in the wooded foothills of the Green Mountains. Grafton is a small, rural community (population 611). The village area is colonial. All the homes are neatly kept, reflecting a pride of ownership. There are two picturesque churches—a brick one for summer (c. 1833) and the other clapboard (white, of course) (c. 1858) for winter. There is also an historic "Old Tavern," formerly a stage coach inn (c. 1802) and now what some refer to as "the most elegant little inn in all of New England." To complete this picture-book setting, two of many swift-flowing trout streams run through the village and join just below town center. There is no main through highway. People come to visit Grafton, not to drive through it—and often remark that "it's the most beautiful village on earth—didn't think there were any more like it!"

While Grafton is a "bit off the beaten highway," a variety of recreational and cultural opportunities are readily available. Just down the road from the Old Tavern is Grafton Ponds, a four-season outdoor recreation area that offers cross-country skiing, hiking, biking, skating and much more.

There's the Grafton Historical Society museum, the Nature Museum, Grafton Village Cheese Company, Hunter's Gallery, Gallery North Star and Jud Hartmann's Gallery to provide local interest and cultural activity. Tater Hill Country Club, Stratton Mountain, Bromley and Okemo provide nearby skiing. Fishing, riding and hunting are offered throughout the area. The surrounding hills and mountains are layered with clear, cold trout streams, ancient roads and trails—great for hiking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling and exploring old cellar holes.



Photos on this page by Jason R. Herdke

South Branch of the Saxtons River, Grafton

I really enjoy the hunting and fishing in the area. Grafton has several small streams—Hinkley Brook, Willie Brook, Howe Brook, Stiles Brook—and the South Branch of the Saxtons River that are great for exploring and for catching native brook trout. My son and I used to fish together. He would start at the top of the steam high on the mountain and I would start at the bottom, and we'd meet for lunch in the middle. We'd wade in the water and fish the pools—most locals fish from the banks. We discovered areas that we didn't think anyone had fished before and, of course, have

trout for dinner that night. The largest brook trout I ever caught (13") was from a stream that starts in South Londonderry and goes up the back-side of Stratton Mountain.

So while we weren't born in Vermont, we have lived here for nearly 40 years and feel that we have outgrown our "flatlander" stigma! And now, all three of our children, and two of our grandchildren, live here, too!

