

## The Life of Nathan Gould

Nathan Gould was the first child of Simeon Gould, originally from New Ipswich, NH, and Rhoda Lane from Bedford, NH, who were married on February 12, 1789. Nathan was born on December 7, 1790 in Stoddard. He died in Marlow at the home of his daughter, Cynthia, and son-in-law, John Q. Jones in 1879. Other children of Simeon and Rhoda were Isaiah (the author of the *History of Stoddard Cheshire County, N.H. From the Time of its Incorporation in 1774 to 1854*, who was born in Stoddard on July 16, 1793 and who died in Keene in 1858), Rhoda (1795-1872), Louisa (1800-1887), and twins Stephen (1803-1872) and Elizabeth (Betsy, who died in infancy, age 21 days).

Simeon (April 17, 1761-July 21, 1816) came to Stoddard from New Ipswich, NH, when he was young. Simeon's ancestors can be dated to Thomas Gould, who settled in Charlestown MA prior to 1640. It is not certain when Simeon arrived in Stoddard. He was not listed as among those who paid the first tax assessment in 1784. It is likely that he came to Stoddard sometime between 1784 and 1797, when he appears on the Town records as a Selectman. He settled on the 4th lot in the 8th range. This is land about .25 miles north of NH Rte 9, and to the west of the Daniel Upton House and to the east of the present-day Monadnock-Sunapee Greenway. "When he [Simeon] was young and worked chopping and clearing it for a few years and would walk to New Ipswich in the forenoon and do a half days work at mowing in the afternoon" (from Nathan Gould manuscript).

According to Isaiah Gould's History, "Simeon was a soldier of the Revolution who afterwards lived in town" (p. 60). No further details are provided as to his military service. He would have been 15 to 16 years old at the time of the battles of Concord & Lexington and Bunker Hill, an age not unusual for a soldier of this period. In later years, a large company of Stoddard's Revolutionary Soldiers was paraded on the common (by present-day Dow Cemetery), composed entirely of soldiers of the Revolution. "No company has been collected on the occasion, whose discipline and tactics were equal to it. Col. Nathaniel Evens, was martial, Capt. John Barker, commanded, Ebenezer Blake was Lieutenant, and Oliver Boutwell, Ensign, Simeon Gould, Martial of the music." (I. Gould History, p. 60).

Simeon was a Stoddard Selectmen from 1797 to 1801 and again from 1804 to 1811. He was Town Clerk from 1798 for four years and then again in 1803 for nine years. Nathan writes in his manuscript that "although he [his father, Simeon] lived among quarrelling and contending neighbors he managed to steer clear of any difficulty or trouble with any of them".

Simeon lived in the same house on lot 5, range 8 from the time he built it until 1816. In that year, his house burnt. The house was re-built, though in a different location on the property. In the same year of Simeon's death in 1816, Isaiah married and began to live on the property until 1855, when it was sold to Manley McClure.

Little is known of Nathan's early life, though it is assumed that he received a basic education provided by the town. From the quality of Nathan's manuscript, it appears that he had a good grasp of reading and writing. Nathan mentions in his notes that at about six years of age, he became lame due to a wound on his knee, with the knee partly stiff through life. At an early age he had an inclination for mechanical work and would try to make something in imitation in wood of almost everything he saw.

Like his father, Nathan also appears to have been active in town affairs, primarily those related to education. Nathan mentions in his notes that he made good proficiency in school and became a school teacher and followed teaching several winters [when it was not possible to farm]. From Isaiah Gould's History, p. 26: "The inhabitants took measures, early to provide some person to look after their schools, but we find no school committees appointed till 1812, since then a variety of modes have been adopted for that purpose. ... The committee of 1815 was Rev. Isaac Robinson, L. Thompson, and Nathan Gould." Based on internet records ([www.nh.searchroots.com/.../History\\_Stoddard\\_NH.txt](http://www.nh.searchroots.com/.../History_Stoddard_NH.txt)), Nathan was also Stoddard's postmaster from 1861 to 1863.

Nathan married Zilpha Corey (1798-July 13, 1874), also of Stoddard, on December 23, 1817, at the age of 27. Nathan and Zilpha had four children, though only Cynthia survived their father and mother. Cynthia (1821-April 8, 1908) married John Q. Jones of Marlow on December 31, 1848. Jones was a carpenter, who represented Marlow in the State Legislature on several occasions. The only child of Cynthia and John Jones was Elgin A. Jones (1852-?), who was a graduate of Dartmouth College and a noted surveyor in the Marlow-Stoddard area. Elgin was Nathan's Gould's grandson. It is interesting to note that Elgin's name appears on many of Charles Peirce's maps of Stoddard of 1902-1952 as the cartographic source for his maps.

Nathan's oldest child was Alonzo (September 1818-May 20, 1870), who worked with his father in the wood shop. After a time, Alonzo moved to Gardner and Fitchburg to work in the chair-making business. According to records, Alonzo fought in the Civil War. Of his other children, Rhoda (May 13, 1822-May 1844), a school teacher, died at 22 years old, and Calista Maria (April 21, 1831-April 16, 1835), died young of "canker rash".

Shortly before his marriage, Nathan purchased some land (about 50 acres) [likely in 1815], from Oliver Boutwell, who owned a farm adjoining Colonel Evens property, on the Old Keene Road, about .75 miles south of the Parker House (present-day Butterfield House), past the Isaac Robertson house and just south of Robinson Brook. He built a house, shop, and barn on this land and lived there for 17 years.

Nathan and his wife farmed their land to provide many basic necessities, like most of their fellow early settlers of the Town, especially while they lived on their farm on the Old Keene Road. Owing to his disability from his youth, it appears that Nathan's primary source of income was work in his "shop at sleighs, wagons, and furniture, also worked at carpentry and painting" (from Peirce's notes). In Nathan's own manuscript notes, he states that he worked at more than 100 houses in town as joiner (finish) work. Isaiah Gould's History, p. 57, also mentioned that Nathan [along with Isaiah] was engaged in making oxen yokes: "Several others are engaged in the business and probably in the course of the year 1854 as many as seven thousand oxen yokes will be disposed of at Boston. Those engaged are Nathan Gould, Gardner Towne, Edwin Jenkins, Heman Jenkins, Edwin R. Locke and some others." "For 24 years, he [Nathan] made ox yokes to the number of 7 or 8,000 and sent them to markets in various parts of the country, sometimes nearly 2,000 miles" (Nathan Gould manuscript notes).

It appears that Nathan became relatively successful due to his various wood-working jobs. He is known to have employed assistants; for a time, his son Alonzo, and his nephew, Stephan. Likely to be closer to his clients and to additional commercial opportunities, Nathan purchased a building lot in the new, expanding village setting in the early 1830s and built his new home there in 1833. Nathan and his family left their now abandoned farm on the Old Keene Road that same year.

He "moved" or disassembled his house and transported it to the center of Stoddard village. Lumber, especially a house's large support beams, was expensive in terms of time required to finish the pieces of wood into usable construction material. As was often done, Nathan re-used this wood in the construction of his new house in the town center. There is some question if Nathan moved his house intact or disassembled the house and moved it in large pieces to re-use on his new site next to the present day Town Hall. Isaiah Gould mentions in his History that "Nathan Gould who built on it and lived several years, he took the buildings down and moved them to the middle of the town." (Gould History, p. 97). Nathan, in his own manuscript notes, mentions that he "moved his buildings on it" to his new location in the town center. In any event, his house in the town center was greatly expanded beyond the relatively humble original house of 1815.

In 1836, Nathan gave land for free use on the southeast corner of his property for the construction of a congregational church. In 1838 the denomination was re-aligned to Universalism. In 1841 the Town purchased the use of the lower floor for a town hall. the church to enable them to build a brick church there later in the 1830s. In 1841, the Town purchased the lower floor of the church for use as a town hall. In the 1850s, the rear wall of the building began to collapse due to soil subsidence. Despite efforts to repair the wall, it collapsed and the building was demolished. Nathan deeded the property to the Town in 1866 to build a new town hall. The town hall was completed in 1868.

Nathan lived in his house in the center of Stoddard village for about the next 40 years, where he continued his wood-working business until he was 84 years old. On July 13, 1874, Nathan's wife died. This appears to have been a devastating event for him as he writes about this at length in his manuscript notes. He writes that "he was very fortunate in the choice of a companion for a wife. She proved though life to be a faithful, industrious, economical, and prudent partner ... She has month after month after our children left us, do the work in the house, tended a hog, milked the cows, and tended the cattle in the barn while I worked or was confined with sickness or lameness". At the age of 84, Nathan "retired from work" in December 1874 to live with his daughter and her husband in Marlow. Nathan died in Marlow in 1879 at the age of 89 years old.

Compiled by:  
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