

THE GEORGETOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

From the President

"Brocklebank House Gets New Shingle Roof"

Dear Members & Friends of the Georgetown Historical Society,

After months of efforts by Georgetown Historical Society board members, volunteers, and the Georgetown Community Preservation Committee who funded the project, the Brocklebank House is now having its new cedar shingle roof installed. The much-needed roof is being put on in the nick of time as winter weather closes in. From the historical point of view, much research has been done to make sure the new roof is authentic and will last a generation or more. The 18 inch red cedar shingles with 1/2 inch thickness were specified to match a sample of the historic roof still pre-



served in the attic under the early 1800s rear gable addition.

In years past, homeowners have long needed legislative support to insure that things were built right. Meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, is one way quality is assured for historic grant programs today. But in early 18th century Boston, things

were clearly for a time out of control. The Boston Newsletter of March 23 to 31, 1713, reported that "On Wednesday last, while the General Court was sitting here, a Bonfire was made in King Street [State St.] below the Town House [Old State House] of a parcel of shingles (upwards of Eight thousand out of Ten thousand) found to be defective by the Surveyors both as to length and breadth prescribed by Law, which Shingles were rather Chips than Shingles, and to prevent the like for the future, both makers and sellers of shingles had best conform to the Law and prevent any more such Bonfires" [sic].

On October 26, 1713, the Fall of the same year, appeared the following item: "SHINGLES. By enactment of the General Assembly of the Island of Barbadoes [sic] all shingles imported from New England must be not less than 18 1/2 in. long, 5 in. wide and half an inch thick." So it is good to know that our new roof on the Brocklebank House meets the antique code for shingles exported from New England in the 18th century! We look forward to many years service of this very appropriate and quality new roof protecting and preserving Georgetown's landmark Brocklebank House Museum.

Frederic C. Detwiler, GHS President.

Inside

- * *Thank you to Joe and Beverly Knapp*
- * *Union Cemetery Documents Found!*
- * *Old Diaries*
- * *Recent Events*
- * *New Officers and Board Members*

Thank you to Joe and Beverly Knapp!

By Ed Des Jardins

If you attended the GHS Annual Meeting on Dec 2, you heard that Joe and Bev Knapp are retiring from the Board of GHS after 30yrs of dedicated service and stewardship (although they will remain active members). We wish to express our heartfelt thanks for all they have done for the Brocklebank Museum and the Historical Society. Between them they have presided as President, Vice President, Director, Treasurer, Program Coordinator, Tour Guide Coordinator and Webmaster.

Through the countless events they have planned including House Tours, Educational Events, and School Tours at the Museum, they have embodied the mission of GHS to preserve and promote the important history of Georgetown and its residents to the public.

The preservation of the museum, restoration of Harry Murch Park, the reactivation of the Union Cemetery Corporation as well as the planned establishment of Georgetown's first historic neighborhood (Elm St) was accomplished in no small part through their hard work and detailed research of Joe and Bev.

Joe was recently recognized with a Special Preservation Award, by the Essex National Heritage Commission and the two are frequently highlighted local newspaper articles for their ongoing contributions to the Town. If you see them around town, make sure you give them a big thank you for all their contributions to preserve our great Town!



Dec 2, 2009 - Joe and Bev Knapp are presented with a hand colored print of the Capt. Samuel Brocklebank Museum, from Ed Des Jardins and GHS.

Original Union Cemetery Documents Discovered!

By Barry Crawford

Letter directing the formation of a Union Cemetery Board of Trustees

Board of Trustees

To Joseph Kimball one of the petitioners to organize & establish a cemetery in Georgetown, near the house of David Brocklebank - Greeting,

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are directed to notify the several individuals, petitioning for the warrant and whose names are annexed to the same, to meet and assemble at Adams street so called in Georgetown, on Tuesday the 8. instant at half past 6. a clock P.M. to act on the following articles.

1. To choose a date of the propriety of said cemetery.
2. To choose a board of officers of said cemetery.
3. To fix upon a name for the cemetery and establish such by laws & regulations in relation to the said cemetery as may be thought advisable.

And have you then this warrant with you doing therein -

Given under my hand & seal this 3. day of October, 1844.

John Russell Jun. Secy.

Essex SS October - 7th 1844

Permit to the within Warrant I have notified the several persons therein named to meet at the time and place, and for the purposes therein named.

Joseph Kimball

Return Warrant.

David Abigail -

Joseph Kimball

John Kimball

John Kimball

Humphrey Kimball

Samuel Brocklebank

Charles H. Adams

Harmon B. Safford

Ralph Cole

David Brocklebank

Mrs. Brocklebank

David B. Kimball

Caleb Jackson

David Bailey

Wm. Kimball

John Kimball

John Kimball

John Kimball

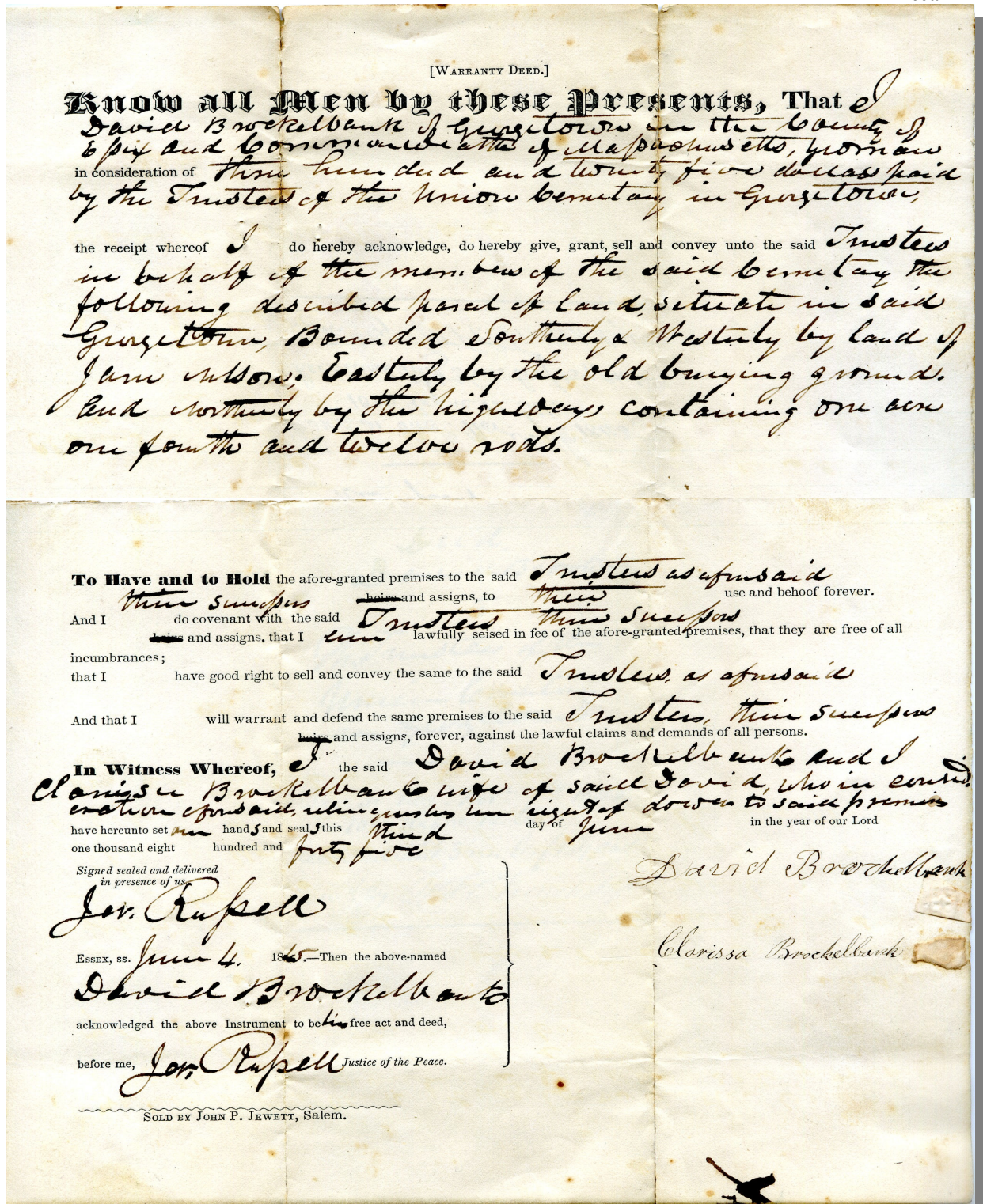
John Kimball

Read the story on Page 3...

Original Documents for Expansion of Union Cemetery

"Museums of Old York", York Maine contacted GHS recently saying they acquired some documents (from auction) from the 1840's pertaining to the expansion of the Georgetown's Union Cemetery. Grateful thanks to our friends of Old York who graciously donated them to us. This exciting find contains 6 original documents pertaining to the formation of the Union Cemetery Board of Trustees, headed up Joseph Kimball and directions to identify a suitable expansion of the cemetery, as well as the Deed to sell land to the Trustees for the sum of \$325 and signed by David and Clarissa Brocklebank. Below are the scans of some of these documents, which will be kept at the Georgetown Town Hall.

Deed



Old Diaries by Chris Comiskey

I was recently given the opportunity to borrow and transcribe two Civil War-era diaries. They offer an interesting glimpse into a turbulent time in our country's history, through the eyes of siblings Henry and Susan Nelson of Georgetown. The following are a few excerpts from Susan's diary:

Sunday, February 5, 1865.

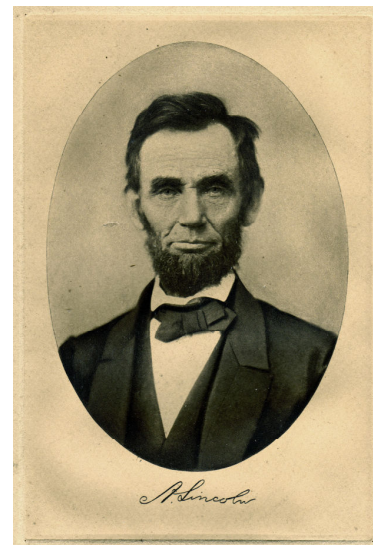
President Lincoln is at Fortress Munroe, consulting with the Rebel Officials. May the termination of the conference point to a time, and that soon, when our eagle shall no more be stained with blood, but our whole land, prospering and sheltered beneath the white winged Dove of Peace.

Monday April 10 - What shall I write, but a Day of Jubilee: our leader has triumphed gloriously, the proud and haughty Lee has surrendered with his entire army to our noble Gen. Grant. All day long the merry bells have been ringing, while answering from city to city and reverberating along our hills the deep voiced cannon, from the early morning until now in the dusky evening, have been pealing out their glad song of Victory. O glorious day, long hoped for, and now welcomed, for thou art indeed the harbinger of Peace.

Sunday April 16 - Like the two last, another pleasant Sabbath day; yet what a change from joy to sorrow in one brief fortnight. Two weeks ago witnessed the fall of Richmond; a week since the surrender of Lee; and who will ever forget the great rejoicing of the following day, when thousands of hearts shouted their gladness in the clanging bells and booming cannon. Today alas how different, "the land mourneth," for yesterday into every city and village the fearful intelligence was conveyed that President Lincoln was dead - shot by an assassin on Friday night while at the theatre in Washington. It is a terrible tragedy and is supposed to be the work of a band of secessionists, mad with excitement that their cause has so utterly failed, and now seeking to wreak vengeance, upon the highest officers of the Federal Government.

Wednesday April 19 - In our country's history, twice, and now again, immortalized today witnessing the funeral ceremonies of President Lincoln at Washington, while during the hours of their observance, religious services were held in all the loyal churches throughout the land. Although bright the sunshine, and balmy the air, yet all this beauty cannot lift the gloom from saddened hearts, the nation like one household mourning as children mourn for a father fondly loved, and whom death had called away to that land from which there is no return. How suddenly came this sorrow, one moment Life - the next Death - for scarcely had the joyous bells ceased their echo ere this cloud came shutting out the sunshine. The day of this tragedy too had been one of joy, for Our Flag had been again placed upon Sumter after four years of absence. When night came, all the joy of that event was forgotten, for he was dying, the friend of the poor and the oppressed, and whom orators style The Father of his People.

Susan Nelson was twenty-five years old when she wrote these words. She never married, and lived her whole life in the family home on Nelson Street. We are grateful that the descendants of her oldest brother Solomon (a Civil War veteran, and the only sibling to marry) chose to preserve these diaries, and that Solomon's great-great-granddaughter has shared these family heirlooms with us.

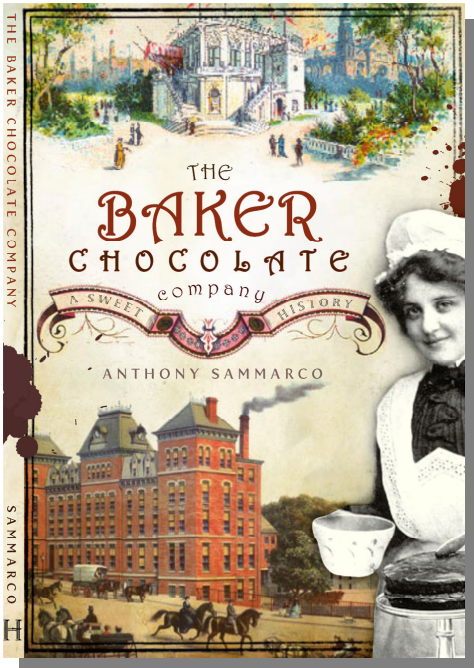


Recent Events

History of the Baker Chocolate Company Nov 12, 2009 by Louise Richardson

"It is highly nourishing and easily digested, and is fitted to repair wasted strength, preserve health, and prolong life" - Baron Justus von Liebig. Such a quote referenced well-known eighteenth-and nineteenth-century Baker's Chocolate, and other citations proclaimed the wonderful delicacy as "Pleasing to the taste, nourishing to the system, quieting to the nerves and most importantly, an ideal food drink -- good morning, noon, and night." Many of us remember the small chocolate squares that came carefully wrapped for convenience and were used in mouth-watering baking and cocoa concoctions.

And, with great fascination, we learned much more tasty information from noted Boston historian Anthony Sammarco's lecture on the Baker Chocolate Company during GHS's November program shared with Haverhill Historical Society and Winnekenni Foundation, Inc.



Based upon Mr. Sammarco's latest publication, *The Baker Chocolate Company, A Sweet History*, by The History Press, we learned that Baker's Chocolate originated as early as 1765 and became seriously competitive to the exclusively held European chocolate fashionable stronghold. So prized and intense was the competition in the making of chocolate that cocoa beans were smuggled through the Revolutionary War blockades to keep the highly valued chocolate available. From the myriad of mill complexes on the Neponset River in Milton Village (now Dorchester, MA), the famed chocolate was made by John Hannon, fine chocolate maker, and financially backed by Dr. James Baker. "If the Chocolate does not prove good, the Money will be returned" - such was the guarantee of complete satisfaction and pride of the mid eighteenth-century maker!

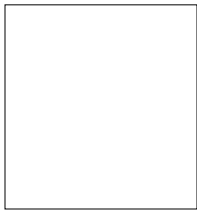
The chocolate-making legacy was carried on through Dr. Baker's son (Edmund) and grandson (Walter), and upon untimely deaths, was continued by Henry Lillie Pierce, who also became active in politics, serving as Boston mayor, member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, and U.S. Congressman. Expansion of the mills continued along with innovative advertising that included premiums of receiving bone china chocolate services with a cocoa pot, and cups and saucers, when loyal purchasers redeemed coupons carefully cut from Baker Chocolate tins and wrappers. However, the most sought after was the annual cookbook instructing how to properly melt chocolate and prepare elegant desserts. The company eventually became part of the Kraft Family Foods in 1979.

Happily, during our informative lecture, we were treated to fine chocolate confections kindly donated by Emily's Bakery in Haverhill.

Annual Business Meeting December 2, 2009 by Barry Crawford

GHS recently held its Annual Business Meeting which was highlighted by the retirement of Joe and Beverly Knapp (See pg 2). Their large shoes will attempt to be filled by the new Officers and Board Members voted in by ballots received from GHS members. The new Treasurer is Barry Crawford and the two new Board Members are Louise Richardson and Chris Comiskey. They join the well seasoned team of returning Officers Fred Detwiller (President), Terrance Hart (Vice President), Sylvia West (Secretary), Stephen Keene (Curator) and returning Board Members Ralph Chouinard, Ed Des Jardins and Charles Keilty.

The Guest Speaker for the evening was DCR Archeologist Tom Mahlstead, who gave a fascinating presentation on local native artifacts found in the Essex County area.



The Georgetown Historical Society
P.O. Box 376
Georgetown, MA 01833

Georgetown Historical Society

Officers

President: Frederic Detwiler
1st V. Pres: Terrance Hart
2nd Vice Pres: TBD
Secretary: Sylvia West
Treasurer: Barry Cranford
Curator: Stephen Keene

Board of Directors

Ralph Chouinard
Ed Des Jardins
Charles Keilty
Louise Richardson
Chris Comiskey

We gratefully thank Joe and Beverly Knapp who are retiring from the Board and we welcome two new Directors—Louise Richardson and Chris Comiskey.

- JOIN US ON FACEBOOK! Search Groups, “Georgetown Historical Society”.
- VISIT OUR WEBSITE www.georgetownhistoricalsociety.com to see more information about GHS and upcoming events.
- EMAIL US info@georgetownhistoricalsociety.com with your interesting stories of Georgetown or questions about GHS.