



THE GEORGETOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

From the President

This spring has been a wild one for Georgetown and the Historical Society. We have had a pair of storms and related incidents affecting historic resources in town. The hurricane force winds (gusts to nearly 90 mph and sustained winds over 60 mph) wreaked havoc in Rowley, Newbury and other sections of the North Shore. The Trustees of Reservations' Crane Estate in Ipswich suffered severe tree damage and Historic New England's Spencer-Peirce-Little house had damage to their barn roof, doors and grounds. In Georgetown, the Clark-Adams House on Main Street had a narrow escape when the huge old tree in front split in two with the falling limbs crashing down in front of the house, barely scraping the roof and front façade doing relatively little damage (see photo). At Union Cemetery another tree came down, uprooting a buried 1860s gravestone that is the subject of another article in this newsletter by Chris Comiskey.

A second storm within a week or so inundated parts of town. Fortunately, for both storms, we had recently completed our re-roofing and siding repairs to the Brocklebank House. The museum would have suffered severe water damage if it hadn't been for the timely maintenance repairs funded by Georgetown's Community Preservation Committee. The cedar wood shingle roof installed by Aulson Roofing and the siding repairs by Advantage Contracting enabled our headquarters to weather the storm.

Behind the Brocklebank House, Scouts have been in the process of cutting invasive brush to create a fire break

around the museum and school house, as well as to install a trail leading to the old barn foundation. Several farm-related relics were uncovered, and as the waters rose, the trail route was shifted slightly to higher ground allowing a drier route for visitors. We are grateful to the Scouts under the leadership of Eagle Scout Ryan Flynn, and his troop for their efforts on behalf of the Historical Society (See Photos).

Finally, Central Street, Route 97 near Pingree Farm Road, was closed for several days due to the flooding. The overflow was relieved by the Town DPW who excavated a drainage ditch down to reveal an ancient stone culvert on the old roadbed. The extra drainage capacity allowed the road to reopen. These experiences remind us that the proper maintenance, pruning of dangerous trees and overarched limbs from historic resources, as well as providing adequate drainage, could prevent more serious storm damage in the future.

Wishing you all a reasonably dry and sunny summer,

Frederic C. Detwiller, GHS President.

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Blazing a Trail! By Barry Crawford

The Scouts of Troop 51, led by Eagle Scout Ryan Flynn, are blazing a trail behind the Brocklebank Museum as part of their "Leadership Service Project". This project includes the installing of a wooden history information kiosk at the trail-head, the clearing of a 120ft walking path, and the removal of large amounts of junk around the old barn site. Any salvageable relics will be turned over to the Society. So far, lots of old farm



and barn materials have been unearthed. The trail will provide

another opportunity to share local and family history at the Museum site as well enhancing the property usefulness. The Society wishes to express it's sincerest thanks to Troop 51 for the significant amount of hours and effort that will soon provide Museum visitors with a new informative experience. Estimated opening of the trail is Summer 2010.



Did You Know?

By Steve Keene

True or false. Tenney Major League Statistics

- 1.) Ranks 158th in total base hits.
- 2.) More hits than Joe DiMaggio
- 3.) Total career home runs 88.
- 4.) Top 500 in stolen bases (152)
- 5.) Ranks 128/129 in runs scored tied w/Carlton Fisk
- 6.) 173rd in total stolen bases.

Only #3 is false -- answer is 22 HR.



Fred Tenney—(Top Center) Boston Beaneaters
Played in the majors from 1894-1911

Fred Tenney (Georgetown High School Class of 1888).

At five nine and 155 pounds he had over 2,000 major league hits (National League), and a nice long career, 1894-1911. A baseball card of his recently sold on eBay for \$2,700, and another sold for \$835. For more information, you can find more data on the web at:

http://www.baseball-reference.com/bullpen/Fred_Tenney

Fred Tenney

GHS Grad Picture
1888



Toppled Tree Uproots Mystery By Chris Comiskey

When high winds uprooted one of the big pine trees in Union cemetery, it revealed a mystery. As the roots were being torn from the ground, they pushed up a toppled gravestone that had lain buried for years. The broken stone had the name Cook on it. Further digging found another large piece from the left side of the stone, showing the name Sarah, widow of Dr. Charles L. C... and Thomas M... and died Oct. 21. As there was a base there without a stone, it was at first assumed that this was the missing stone. However, more digging found another toppled stone on the other side of the base. This turned out to be the stone of Harrison Spofford, whose wife and children were also buried in this family plot. So if this was Harrison Spofford's grave, where was Sarah Cook's? Had her broken stone been moved long ago and placed against the tree?



Sarah was born in 1796, the oldest of twelve children of Enoch and Sarah (Brocklebank) Harriman of Bradford. In 1824 she married Thomas Merrill Jr. of Rowley, and their only child, John, was born the following year. Their time together was not altogether happy, though, as Thomas was said to have been "subject to spells of derangement." This all ended in 1833, when, after returning from several weeks of treatment in Boston, Thomas committed suicide by swallowing half an ounce of arsenic.

In 1841, Sarah married Dr. Charles L. Cook. This union also had a sad ending, as Charles died just four months later of consumption (tuberculosis).

In 1846, her son John married Charles' niece. Sarah lived with them in Bradford for a while, but was living alone in Groveland when she died in 1860.

So why was a woman who lived her entire life in Groveland (previously part of Bradford) buried in Georgetown? Are there other family members buried in Union Cemetery? We are hoping to find an answer (and maybe the missing right side of her gravestone) so that her stone can once again mark her final resting place.



Sinners! by Chris Comiskey

As Church Historian at the First Congregational Church of Georgetown, I have spent many hours perusing the old church records. It can be dull work, but every now and then, among the usual notations of everyday church life, a few entries stand out: the confessions of the sinners!

There was a time when church members accused of a sin had to suffer the humiliation of confessing in front of the entire congregation. Those who refused were usually excommunicated.

In 1763, Lieut. Nathan B. was charged with “excessive drinking of strong drink at the house of D. Tyler.” He was suspended from communion with the church for his “notorious sin.” (Dudley Tyler ran a tavern in what is now known as the Brocklebank Museum.)

David T. stood before the membership in 1792 to confess to “the heinous sin of fornication.” The church accepted his confession.

In 1801, Elizabeth D. was “restored to favor” after confessing to being guilty of “a breach of the seventh commandment” (thou shalt not commit adultery).

In 1826, Elizabeth P. confessed to having a child “born sooner than usual after marriage,” as did Mahala P. in 1832; and in 1834, Harriet P. confessed after having a child out of wedlock. It seems unfair that only the women were called to confess. After all, the men involved must have been at least 50% at fault!

Rooxbe C. had to confess in 1833 to “having improperly broken connexion [*sic*] with John C., who had paid her particular attention for several years with the expectation of marrying her.” It was easy to figure out what happened in this case: five days after her confession, Rooxbe married Caleb T. of Alabama.

Among the charges brought against Isaac P. in 1834 were that he “went to the theatre last Spring and there took an improper seat” and that he had “generally chosen improper associates.” Regarding his testimony in a Salem Court case, it was felt that his statements were “inconsistent and contradictory” and his conduct “improper and unbecoming.” Isaac refused to appear for confession and was excommunicated.

Moses W. confessed in 1838 to being guilty of a breach of the seventh commandment. Though the congregation accepted his confession, they decided to suspend him for a season to prove the genuineness of his repentance. He was restored in 1840 by a small vote, but was eventually excommunicated in 1842 when he joined the radical anti-church abolitionists known as the Come-Outers.

John L., a former chairman of the Georgetown Board of Selectmen, was charged in 1849 with “taking a woman who was not his wife to a hotel in Boston and occupying the same chamber with her during the night.” Mr. L. refused to appear and was excommunicated. His wife, however, remained a member of the church until her death many years later.

Nathaniel H. confessed in 1858, and several more times after that, to the use of intoxicating drinks, and while under their influence, profanity. He was forgiven each time.

And from the records of the Orthodox Memorial Church (which stood on what is now the town parking lot): Mrs. Margaret Ann J. and Miss Alice P. were excommunicated in 1880 when they refused to appear and confess to “neglect of religious duties and immoral and unchristian conduct.”

In 1890, the church voted to excommunicate Mrs. Mima S. for “scandalous conduct in entering a matrimonial bureau, then going to the West to meet one Finch, and after remaining with him some months, returning to live alone with him in her house in Georgetown.” It should be noted that Mima was still legally married to her husband, Charles, at the time.

After being arrested in 1893, Frank V. was excommunicated for “the sin of deceit and forgery,” as it was felt that “the good repute of this church in the community and its influence over its own members are at stake.”

I have chosen not to publish the last names of the individuals involved, as many have descendants living in our community. However, if anyone wishes to know the full names for historical or genealogical purposes, they can contact me at info@georgetownhistoricalsociety.com.

Upcoming Events & Brocklebank Museum Schedule

►► *Along Liberty Road Apr 21, 2010, 7pm—Georgetown Library*

"Along Liberty Road" with architect and preservation planner Frederic C. Detwiller. This illustrated lecture will highlight colonial landmarks that played a prominent role in the American Revolution stretching from the Old State House in Boston to the Old North Bridge in Concord.... Documentation reveals how these buildings appeared in the time of their distinguished or rabble-rousing occupants, whether Tory or Patriot. Landmarks in historic views and graphic form envision life as it really was along Liberty Road - a regional Freedom Trail.

►► *Trails & Sails Sep 17-19 & Sep 24-26, 2010*

The Brocklebank Museum will be open to the public during the annual Essex County "Trails and Sails" event. Trails and Sails is an area event of more than 100 historic sites open to the public for FREE. For more information, please visit the Trails and Sails Website at <http://www.essexheritage.org/ts/index.php>.

►► *Georgetown Days Sep 2010*

The Brocklebank Museum will be open to the public during the annual Georgetown Days celebration. Enjoy the Ice Cream Social and Scavenger Hunt and learn about Georgetown history.
<http://www.essexheritage.org/ts/index.php>.

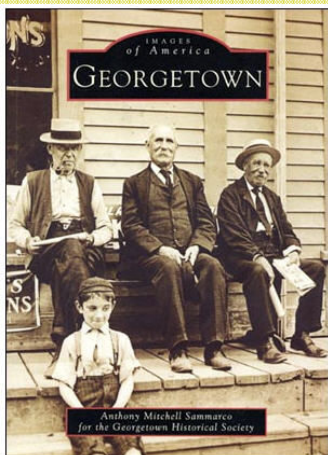
►► *Plow-Shares to Shoe-Pegs Fall 2010*

A pictorial and theatrical history of Georgetown. Always a town favorite, come learn and enjoy the fascinating history of Georgetown.

What's New at GHS?

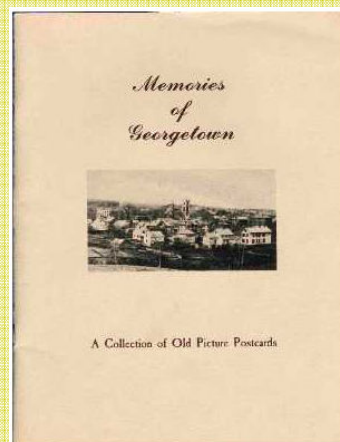
- We can now accept your membership payments and donations online at www.GeorgetownHistoricalSociety.com
- Come visit the new Online Gift Shop at www.GeorgetownHistoricalSociety.com and purchase some history.

Images of Georgetown



\$21.00 +SH

Memories of Georgetown

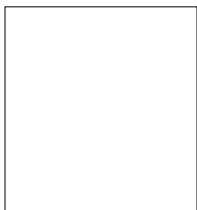


\$5.00 + SH

Postcards



\$3.50 + SH



The Georgetown Historical Society
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Georgetown Historical Society

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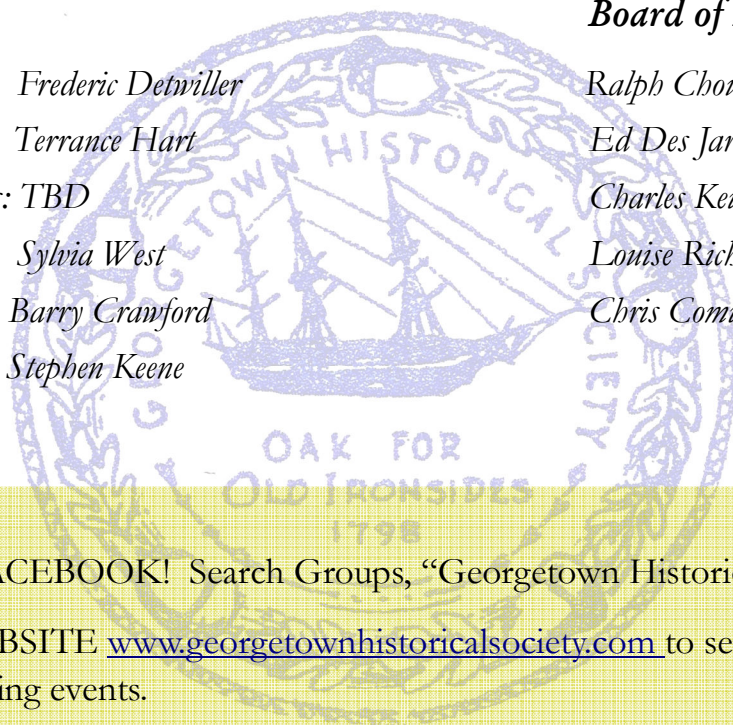
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