



THE GEORGETOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER - SUMMER 2014

From the President:

Just a few months ago, we had a problem. We had a lot of cleaning to do and a new exhibit to set up, but before we could do anything, we needed the water turned back on, and we couldn't do that until the weather was warm enough (the museum has no heat). It wasn't until mid-May that we were finally able to turn on the water and get working. We had just one month to clean and set up a new exhibit before the Penn Brook School students were set to arrive! Somehow we managed to pull it off. The new exhibit looks great, and a number of changes were made to the upstairs rooms, too. Thank you to all the great volunteers who helped make it all happen!

Our *Georgetown in the Civil War* exhibit is now in its final year. If you haven't been in to see it yet, please do not wait. Many items on display are on loan from the library and have probably never been on display before. Who knows if they ever will again? In a few months, they will be going back to the attic or closet where they were before.

The Brocklebank Museum is open every Sunday from 2 – 5 PM through Columbus Day weekend, and other days and times by appointment. Admission is free to GHS members. Please drop in for a visit this summer and see all the changes we've made.

Wishing you all a safe and happy summer!

Christine Coniskey



NEW BUSINESS EXHIBIT OPENS



Last year, Curator Steve Keene and GHS President Chris Comiskey were discussing ideas for a new exhibit, feeling that the early businesses of town needed better representation in the museum, and that the back room, where they intended to put the exhibit, needed a major overhaul.

Then, last July, we lost Steve.

This year, with the Board's approval, Chris decided to go ahead and make this exhibit a reality, and to dedicate it to her friend and mentor. On June 22, GHS proudly opened "*Early Businesses of Georgetown*," in memory of Steve Keene. Included in the exhibit are the trains and trolleys that ran through Georgetown, the early Fire Companies, Baldpate Inn, the shoe industry, doctors, and manufacturers of medicines. We hope to be adding even more businesses in the near future.

We hope you will stop by this summer and check out our newest exhibit. We think Steve would approve.



SPECIAL HONOR FOR ED DES JARDINS

On May 16th, GHS Board member and Georgetown Historical Commissioner Ed Des Jardins was honored at the State Archives Building in Boston with a **2014 Massachusetts Historical Commission Local Preservationist Award**. Ed's forty-six years (and counting) of dedication and commitment to historical preservation and education in Georgetown and Rowley made him a highly deserving recipient of this coveted award. We congratulate Ed and are proud to have such a dedicated volunteer among our members.



Secretary of the Commonwealth William Galvin presents Ed Des Jardins with his award.

PENN BROOK SCHOOL STUDENTS VISIT MUSEUM



The third grade students of Penn Brook School had their annual field trip to the Brocklebank Museum and Schoolhouse #3 on June 18. The kids had fun learning about what life was like in the old days, and hearing about some of Georgetown's great old legends. It is a fun day for the tour guides, too. We love their questions and comments, which are often comical (regarding the tavern: "Did they get drunk?") or surprisingly intelligent (regarding school: "Did they have to learn Greek and Latin?")

Thank you to all our tour guides and helpers: Starr Anderson, Beverly Knapp, Ed Des Jardins, Rick Detwiller, Chris Comiskey, bell-ringer and photographer Barry Crawford and crossing guard George Comiskey. Thank you also to our groundskeeper Ralph Chouinard for mowing and trimming to get our property looking great before the kids' visit and throughout the season.



Chris Comiskey talks about the early inhabitants of the Brocklebank house.



Starr Anderson explains what school was like in the old days.

BE A TOUR GUIDE - GET A FREE ESSEX NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA PASS!

If you are interested in local history and enjoy meeting and talking to people, you should consider joining our Brocklebank Museum tour-guiding team! It is a fun and easy job—no memorization or wearing of costumes is required. You get to choose the Sundays you wish to work. This is a great opportunity for high school students looking to earn Community Service credits. As an added incentive, anyone who volunteers at least 10 hours this year will receive an Essex National Heritage Area Volunteer Reciprocal Pass. This enables you to get into over 60 Essex County historic sites, including such popular venues as the Crane Estate, the House of Seven Gables, and the Peabody Essex Museum, absolutely FREE! If you are interested in volunteering or would like more information, please contact Georgetown Historical Society President Chris Comiskey at 978-352-7364 or e-mail her at: info@georgetownhistoricalsociety.com.

HELLOS AND GOOD-BYES

We are pleased to welcome the following new members into our GHS family: Marcel and Margaret Van Galen, and Daniel Preston. We note with sadness the passing of long-time GHS members Leslie Hills and Terry Hart.

TERRY HART



We were all shocked and deeply saddened by the sudden death of long-time member Terry Hart on May 1st. Terry, along with his wife Barbara, joined GHS in 1998. Terry soon became actively involved in the Society. His love of history combined with his friendly outgoing personality made him a wonderful and entertaining tour guide at the Brocklebank Museum, where he spent many a Sunday afternoon. Terry took special joy in donning his colonial costume and portraying tavern owner Dudley Tyler for special events such as *Trails & Sails*. He was pleased and surprised to learn that Dudley Tyler, who once owned the Brocklebank house, had also once owned his house.

Terry was elected to the GHS Executive Board in 2005, serving as Vice President from 2005 – 2006, President from 2007 – 2008, and Vice President again from 2009 until the time of his death.

Terry was a retired Captain in the U.S. Coast Guard and served as Director of the Eastern Essex District Veterans Services for the past 15 years. He was actively involved in the community and was a frequent speaker at Georgetown's Memorial Day observances.

Terry was, in every way, a generous supporter of the Georgetown Historical Society, and will be greatly missed by all who knew him.



Terry Hart addresses a Memorial Day crowd at Harry Murch Park.



Penn Brook School third-graders are captivated by Terry's storytelling



Terry as Colonial tavern-owner Dudley Tyler.

We wish to thank all our members and friends who have honored Terry through a memorial donation to the Georgetown Historical Society.

SIGN RESTORATION COMPLETE!

In our last newsletter, we included a request for donations to help restore our badly deteriorating outdoor replica tavern sign. Thanks to the generosity of our members and some left-over CPA funds from an earlier project, we were able to complete the project. Thank you to local artist Chuck Margeson of Black Swan Gallery, who did a fabulous job painting, restoring, and properly sealing the sign.

Thank you to all whose generous donations helped make this restoration possible.

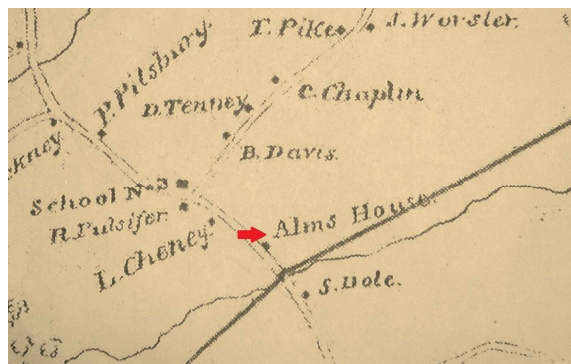


Sign-hanging crew: Peter Durkee, Chuck Margeson, Ed Des Jardins, Ralph Chouinard and George Comiskey.

ASK GHS

We asked our Facebook friends to *ASK GHS* a question, and we would choose our favorite to answer in our newsletter. Here is this month's winner:

When/where/what in Georgetown was a poorhouse?



The Georgetown Almshouse was located on Jewett Street just before the Rowley town line. Originally owned by Thomas Gage, the house and farm were sold in 1822 to the Rowley Overseers of the Poor. It was among the many issues that needed to be settled when Georgetown and Rowley separated in 1838, with each town agreeing to pay its share based on the number of its residents housed there. Rowley sold its share of the property to Georgetown in 1841.

According to a report of the State Board of Health, Lunacy and Charity in 1885, the Georgetown Almshouse had nine inmates; three (two men and one woman) were insane. The other three men and three women were all over 50 and mostly over 70. *"They all occupy separate rooms in the second story, and are locked in at night; the [insane] woman also, during the day.... Their rooms, bedding, etc., were not found in good order."*

Another State report from 1892 reported: *"The almshouse is an old farm building of 1804, poorly planned for its present use, and only in fair repair. The furniture is poor and scanty, the bedsteads of wood, and not very clean. There are no special heating or bathing facilities."*

The Almshouse (known in its final years as The Infirmary) was closed and sold in 1939.

If you have a question for GHS, you may post it on our Facebook page or e-mail it to: info@georgetownhistoricalsociety.com.



GHS is now a listed charity on Amazon Smile, a program through which Amazon donates a small percentage of customer purchases to the charity of their choice when checking out. Like any non-profit, GHS is sustained by the generosity of its members and contributors. So when you purchase online at Amazon, consider going instead to their charity link, smile.amazon.com, and choosing "Georgetown Historical Society" as your supported charity.

Thank you for your continued support of GHS. Check out: <http://smile.amazon.com/> for more information on their program.

HISTORIC CARLETON HOME ITEMS FOR SALE

GHS was contacted recently by the Trustees of the Carleton Home on Andover Street to see if we were interested in any of the remaining furnishings before the historic house was sold. We happily accepted an antique tall clock and four Hitchcock chairs for the museum. We were also given permission to take other furniture to sell for the benefit of the Georgetown Historical Society. The beautiful pieces below are in need of a good home.



Victorian Love Seat, circa 1870, walnut. \$450 and matching chairs \$175 (with arms) \$150 (ladies chair)



Victorian table, circa 1880, \$125



Brass fireplace fan \$85

Please contact GHS President Chris Comiskey at 978-352-7364 or e-mail us at info@georgetownhistoricalsociety.com if you are interested in any of these beautiful pieces.

HOMER TAPIN SCHOLARSHIP WINNER ANNOUNCED

We are pleased to announce that this year's recipient of the Homer Tapin Memorial Scholarship is Jackson Fritz. The Homer Tapin Scholarship is presented each year to a GMHS senior who will be majoring in a history-related field. Jackson will be attending York College of Pennsylvania in the fall, majoring in secondary education in social studies. We wish him all the best for a bright future.

READING YOUR OLD HOUSE – SAVE THE DATE!

Do you own an old home? Have you ever wondered about how old it is and who lived there? If so, please join us on September 17th at 7 PM at the Georgetown Library Meeting Room as Joe Cornish of Historic New England presents "Reading Your Old House." Joe will discuss how to look for clues to determine your home's age, and how to go about researching its history. We hope you will join us for this free event.

2014 DUES REMINDER



If you have not yet paid your 2014 dues, we hope you will do so soon. We count on the support of every member to help us in our efforts to preserve and promote the history of Georgetown for present and future generations to learn from and enjoy. A membership form is included with this newsletter for your convenience, or you can pay online by visiting our website, www.georgetownhistoricalsociety.com and clicking on "Join the Society."

**Georgetown Historical Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 376, Georgetown, MA 01833**

Membership Form

Name(s) included in membership _____

Address _____

Phone number (optional) _____

E-mail _____

I would like to help GHS "Go green" and save money.

Please send newsletter by e-mail. ☐ Yes ☐ No

Membership Levels:

☐ \$200 BENEFACTOR(S)

☐ \$300 LIFE (One-time payment)

☐ \$100 SUSTAINER(S)

☐ \$ 50 CONTRIBUTOR(S)

☐ \$ 30 MEMBER(S)

Your membership contribution is tax-deductible. Please make checks payable to:

Georgetown Historical Society.



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Georgetown Historical Society



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