

# THE GEORGETOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY



*Preserving and promoting the history of Georgetown*

Fall 2015 Newsletter

With the arrival of the cool weather of Autumn, we begin preparing, as our ancestors did, for the long winter ahead of us. It is time to put away our light summer things and dig out the heavier clothes and bedding to keep us warm during the long cold winter. Perhaps you are fortunate enough to own a hand-made quilt, one that not only warms you with its fabric, but also with the fond memories of a special person or persons who lovingly made it for you. But how much do you know about the history of quilt making?

## ***FRIENDSHIP QUILTS***

Although quilt making can be traced back many centuries, it was not until the mid 1800s that it became a popular hobby and art form in America. Local textile mills were producing fabric in a vast assortment of colors and prints at affordable prices, and the invention of the sewing machine reduced the necessity of hand-stitching all the pieces together.

Women often formed social groups called “sewing circles” to work on their various sewing projects, including piecing together their quilts, while catching up on the latest news and gossip. “Quilting bees” brought women together to finish quilts, either by hand-stitching the layers together or tying them.

One popular type of quilt was the friendship or album quilt. These quilts, which were often presented as gifts on special occasions, included blocks signed in indelible ink. Imagine a woman moving far from her home, missing her family and friends, yet finding comfort each time she looks upon their signatures on her cherished quilt.



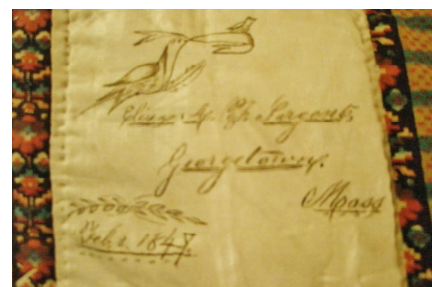
**Antique quilts at Brocklebank Museum**



During World War I, President Woodrow Wilson urged citizens to “Do your bit for America.” Women made quilts in an effort to “save the blankets for our boys over there.” The quilts were often raffled off, with profits going to the Red Cross or similar relief organizations.

The Brocklebank Museum has a fine collection of antique quilts dating back to the mid 1800s, including five friendship quilts. The friendship quilt to the left was made in the 1840s. At the center of each section is a block

signed by a woman from Georgetown or a neighboring community. Some include dates, quotes or artistic embellishments, such as the one to the right.



If you would like to learn more about the art of quilt making, please visit “Quilters Quarters” at 59 North Street in Georgetown or check out Terry’s blog at: <http://AtQuiltersQuarters.blogspot.com>. (Owner Terry Palardy is on the GHS Board of Directors. We are happy to give her a little plug in our newsletter.)

## ENDANGERED GEORGETOWN

### The John and Martha Palmer House



The John and Martha Palmer house at 2 Tenney Street was built in the early 1800s by house builders John Palmer and his son, John Palmer, Jr. John Sr. had purchased the 22 acre property in 1777 and lived in the house at 6 Tenney Street. He deeded a few acres and the old house to John Jr., probably around the time of John Jr.'s marriage in 1807, and built a new house for himself and Martha on the corner of Tenney and East Main Streets.

The historic house, which now sits on 5.3 acres, was purchased by Charles and Dorothy Blanchard in 1948. Charles and Dorothy were well known and active members of our community. Charles passed away in 2012, Dorothy in 2015. A local developer has applied for a demolition permit for the house, barn and garage. GHS Board members will be attending upcoming hearings in an effort to save this piece of our history and help preserve the historic nature of this section of town.

### ABOUT TO BE LOST FOREVER—THE ADAMS-KIMBALL TANNERY

Despite the best efforts of the Georgetown Historical Commission, GHS, the Georgetown Record and our GHS facebook group friends, we are very sad to report that we were unable to save the historic Adams-Kimball Tannery, which was built circa 1770 by Captain Benjamin Adams. Although we did have a number of inquiries, in the end the cost of dismantling, moving and reconstructing the building made it unfeasible. It is due to be demolished any day now. We wish to thank GHS Board member Rick Detwiller who did a great job of photographing and documenting the tannery as well as salvaging artifacts from the interior.



## ANNUAL MEETING SPEAKERS ANNOUNCED



The annual meeting of the Georgetown Historical Society will be held on **Wednesday, December 2 at 7 pm** in the Georgetown Library meeting room.

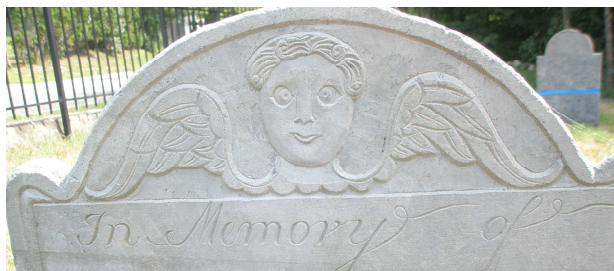
Earlier this year, we observed the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Civil War and the shocking assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. With that in mind, we are pleased to announce that our special guest speakers will be **Bill and Liz Hallett** of Newburyport. Bill will give a special presentation on Lincoln's assassination, including little known facts surrounding the tragic event, after which Liz and her daughter, Aileen Kelly, will talk about mourning customs and fashions of the 1860s. Bill Hallett is the author of *Newburyport and the Civil War*. He and Liz conduct the *Footsteps of Heroes* Civil War walking tours of Newburyport.

This event is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served.



## CEMETERY TOURS

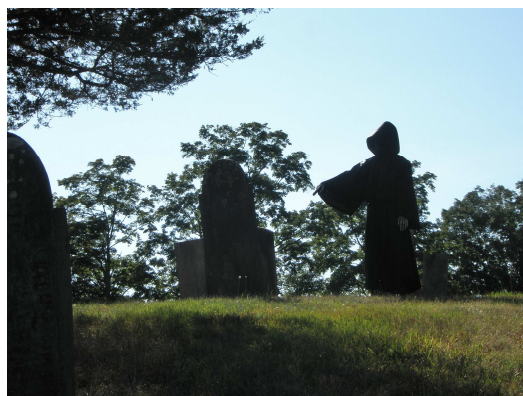
It's that time of year again! Whether you prefer to learn about local history or are looking for macabre tales for Halloween, we have a cemetery tour for you!



**October 17 and 18 at 2:00 PM.** Join GHS President Chris Comiskey for a historical tour of Georgetown's Union Cemetery on East Main Street. Learn about early soldiers and ministers, slaves and abolitionists, and the young victims of a tragic epidemic. See the evolution of gravestone carving since 1731 and learn about early burial customs.

**October 31 and November 1 at 2:00 PM.** Join Chris for a glimpse at the macabre side of Georgetown's history. Hear about witches, ghosts and ghastly deaths, including a murder (and a most surprising murderer!) while touring Georgetown's historic Union Cemetery.

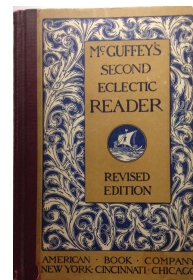
Cost of admission for each tour is \$5, with all proceeds going to the Georgetown Historical Society. For more information, contact us at [info@georgetownhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@georgetownhistoricalsociety.com)



## CURATOR'S CORNER By Karen Brockelbank

The Georgetown Historical Society is proud to announce the acquisition of the diaries of Henry M. Nelson and his sister, Susan E. Nelson. These diaries, which showcase life in Georgetown during the 1860s, were previously loaned to the Society for transcription. Excerpts have been published in the GHS newsletter and the Georgetown Record, and were incorporated into our *Georgetown in the Civil War* exhibit. Thank you to Shirley Rossi (who is a Nelson family descendant) for this generous donation of her personal family history.

Thanks to Joan Chatterton for her donation of the McGuffey's Second, Third and Fourth Reader books in memory of Donn Chatterton. These books belonged to Donn's grandmother, Bertha Weems Chatterton of Williamsburg, Ohio. McGuffey Readers were text books used all across America, and were popular from 1836-1960. They outlined history, biology, astronomy, zoology, botany, table manners, and correct behavior toward family.



And finally, a very special thanks to Priscilla Duffs for entrusting us with her brother Chandler Noyes' collection of Georgetown's Ground Observer Corps diagrams, pictures, and newspaper clippings from the 1950s. These artifacts provide a fascinating glimpse into a side of the cold war – civilians keeping a close watch on the skies. (For more information on the Ground Observer Corps, see the Spring 2015 GHS newsletter in our newsletter archives at [www.georgetownhistoricalsociety.com](http://www.georgetownhistoricalsociety.com))

## ***WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!***

We extend a warm welcome to the following new GHS members: Richard Hunt, Lindsay and Matthew St. Pierre, Lianne Fratus, Carol Gaffney, Jean Jovell, Jenny Palladino, Michael and Shirley Rossi, and Betsy Moran, along with Khankeo Spaulding, whose name was inadvertently omitted from our last newsletter. As new members joining GHS in 2015, they also received one free entry into our iPad Air 2 raffle.

## ***ENTER TO WIN A BRAND NEW iPad AIR 2!***



It's not too late to buy a ticket for our iPad raffle! The drawing date has been extended to our Annual Meeting, December 2<sup>nd</sup>. GHS is raffling off an iPad Air 2 with 64GB, wi-fi and cellular capabilities. Raffle tickets will be sold at the museum throughout the 2015 season and at all GHS events. All new GHS members joining in 2015 will automatically receive a free entry into the raffle. Tickets are \$5 each or 3 for \$10.

## ***TRAILS & SAILS 2015***

We had two wonderful weekends for our Brocklebank Museum Open House as part of *Trails & Sails 2015*. People from all over Essex County and beyond visited. We wish to thank all our wonderful volunteers who helped welcome guests and keep an eye on things: GHS Board members Ed Des Jardins (who held an art sale in the parlor and donated a portion of his sales to GHS), Sylvia Johnston, Mary Saunders, Karen Brockelbank, Terry Palardy and Chris Comiskey; GHS members Doug and Nora Cannon, Carol Pierce and Annette Bilo; GHS volunteer Loretta Foan and Georgetown High School student volunteers Tim Radzinski, Kailey Hooper, Elena Aiduk and Yulika Espinal.



With Christmas shopping season fast approaching, we would like to remind you that you can help the Georgetown Historical Society just by shopping online at Amazon through their "Amazon Smile" program. Just go to Amazon's charity link, [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com), and choose "Georgetown Historical Society" as your supported charity. It doesn't cost you any more money, and Amazon donates a small percentage of your sale amount to GHS. Check out: <http://smile.amazon.com/> for more information on their program. THANK YOU to all GHS members and friends who have already designated GHS as their charity of choice through the Amazon Smile program.

## ***MATCHING GIFT PROGRAMS***

Another great way to help the Georgetown Historical Society is through Matching Gift Programs. Many employers now offer these programs which match charitable contributions made by their employees. Some even continue to offer the programs to their retirees. If your employer offers such a program, we hope you will consider having your annual contribution matched. It is through the generosity of our members and friends that we are able to keep the Brocklebank Museum open and continue to offer interesting and entertaining programs for people of all ages to learn from and enjoy.



# Georgetown Historical Society, Inc.

P.O. Box 376, Georgetown, MA 01833

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## 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:

- |                                |                |                                |                         |
|--------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$200 | BENEFACTOR(S)  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$300 | LIFE (One-time payment) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 | SUSTAINER(S)   |                                |                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 50 | CONTRIBUTOR(S) |                                |                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 30 | MEMBER(S)      |                                |                         |

*Your membership contribution is tax-deductible. Please make checks payable to:  
Georgetown Historical Society.*

Optional: I would like to help as a GHS volunteer (check area(s) of interest)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Museum tour guide | <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising/Merchandise sales |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter        | <input type="checkbox"/> Executive Board member        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special events    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                   |



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

## *Georgetown Historical Society*



### **OFFICERS**

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*Christine Comiskey*

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*2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President*

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*Lew Harrold*

*Treasurer*

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*Rick Detwiller, Jeff Lamoureaux, Ed Des Jardins,  
Terry Palardy, Mary Saunders*

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR** *Christine Comiskey*

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- VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [www.georgetownhistoricalsociety.com](http://www.georgetownhistoricalsociety.com) to see more information about GHS, upcoming events and Newsletter archives
- E-MAIL US AT: [info@georgetownhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@georgetownhistoricalsociety.com)