

# THE GEORGETOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Preserving and promoting the history of Georgetown

Winter 2016 Newsletter

## GEORGETOWN'S G.A.R. & THE MYSTERIOUS COUNT

One-hundred fifty years ago, after the end of the Civil War, the first chapter of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) was established in Decatur, Illinois. Soon chapters were springing up throughout the North. The G.A.R. was a fraternal organization of honorably discharged Civil War veterans who fought for the Union. Their objectives were to strengthen the bonds of those who fought for the Union, to help the widows and orphans of their fallen comrades, and to encourage patriotism.

Each post could choose to honor a soldier, sailor, or marine who died during the war by naming the post after him. Although Georgetown had no shortage of fallen home-town heroes to choose from, they instead took the advice of a German man from Boston known as Count Leo B. Schwabe.

Mr. Schwabe visited Georgetown's newly established Post 108 in 1869 to encourage them to name it the E. Everett Peabody Post, with promises of financial support from Col. Peabody's wealthy investment banker brothers, Francis and Oliver, co-founders of Kidder Peabody & Co. of Boston.

Two years later, the officers of E. Everett Peabody Post 108 were questioning the character of the Count, as none of his promises had been fulfilled. They wrote letters to the Peabody brothers, who, it turned out, had never heard of Mr. Schwabe. Fearing they were being scammed, the brothers invited the Post 108 officers to their Boston office for an interview. Convinced of the men's sincerity, they gave them a donation and set them straight about the information Mr. Schwabe had given them on Colonel Peabody, much of which, including his name, was incorrect. The Post now had to go through all the paperwork of correcting their name to the Everett Peabody Post (dropping the first E).



Post 108 G.A.R. hat



The men of Georgetown's Everett Peabody Post 108

Everett Peabody was born in Springfield, MA in 1830. After graduating from Harvard, he worked as a civil engineer for the railroad, first in Massachusetts and later moving to Missouri. When the Civil War broke out, he enlisted in a Missouri regiment in the Union Army, eventually being promoted to Colonel. He was killed on April 6, 1862 at the age of 31 while heroically leading his Brigade at the Battle of Shiloh.

Francis and Oliver Peabody continued to support Post 108 until their deaths.

In 1929, with only three surviving members, two of whom were unable to climb the stairs to the meeting room, Georgetown's Everett Peabody Post 108 was disbanded.

For more information on the mysterious Count Schwabe, see an article on him in the September 8, 1894 Cambridge Tribune at: <http://cambridge.dlconsulting.com/cgi-bin/cambridge?a=d&d=Tribune18940908-01.2.25>

## FROM THE EVERETT PEABODY POST 108 G.A.R. RECORDS

Although most of the G.A.R. records are rather dry reading about meetings and preparations for fundraisers and Memorial Day events, we come across the occasional sentimental piece, such as this letter of condolence to Hannah Munroe on the death of her husband, John in 1918:

*Dear Mrs. Munroe and family:*

*The comrades of Post 108 wish to express their sincere sympathy and condolence in this trying hour of your sad bereavement and sorrow in the sudden death of a beloved husband and father, and while giving expression to our feelings in your behalf, we are most forcibly reminded of his unfailing devotion at all times to the interests of his family, which must be a great comfort and satisfaction to the loved ones left behind.*



**John Munroe**

*We wish also to express our appreciation of the industry, ability, and faithfulness with which he has discharged the duties of all the offices which have been entrusted to his care by this Post, during nearly half a century, and by his genial personality and courteous treatment, winning the respect, confidence and esteem of all with whom he came in contact.*

*His entry into the service of his country at the outbreak of the Civil War, while yet in his teens, serving faithfully for over four years, his prominent connection with all the patriotic societies both State and National during his life; his great interest in the present contest manifested by his many sacrifices and liberal contributions, all testify to his high character as a citizen, and his love and devotion to his country.*

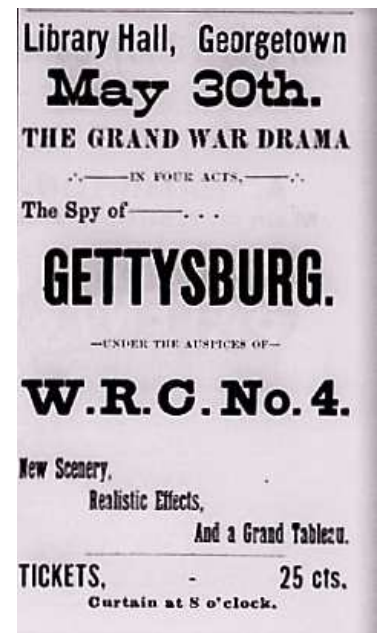
*Comrade Munroe has gone to join the great Army of Veterans on the other side, leaving but a scattered remnant of the Grand Army of the Republic behind, but we shall soon join him.*

*Our work is done, our knapsacks are packed, and we await the call to go with courage and confidence, knowing that the kind Providence which has guided us and the Nation all these years will abide with us forever.*

## WOMAN'S RELIEF CORPS #4

Georgetown's Everett Peabody Corps #4, Department of Massachusetts Woman's Relief Corps (W.R.C.) was organized on April 2, 1883 as an Auxiliary to the G.A.R., with similar objectives. It was made up of the wives, mothers, sisters and daughters of Civil War veterans who were loyal to the North during the war. They assisted the G.A.R. with their Memorial Day preparations and helped with fundraisers such as dinners (oyster dinners were especially popular) and patriotic plays.

*The records of the Everett Peabody Post 108 G.A.R. and the Everett Peabody Corps #4 W.R.C. are available for viewing in the Local History Room of the Georgetown Peabody Library. G.A.R. ceremonial rifles and swords are on display in the library reading room.*



**Georgetown Advocate ad from 1894**

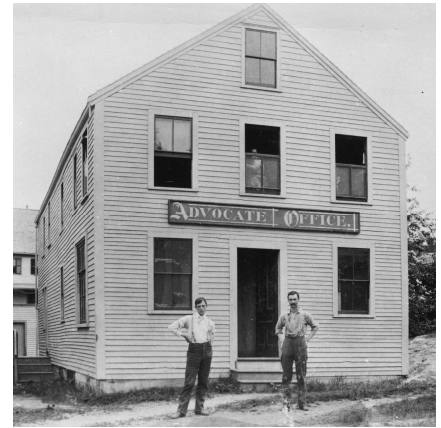


## AND SPEAKING OF THE LIBRARY....

The *Georgetown Advocate*, a local newspaper published from 1874 to 1902, is now viewable and searchable (up through 1899) online through the library's website. This is exciting news for local historians and genealogists! The collection includes memoirs from the Civil War, local and national news, and very detailed obituaries.

The Boston Public Library has recently scanned and digitized Georgetown High School yearbooks from 1956 to 2014, and they, too, are now viewable online.

Visit the library website, [georgetownpl.org](http://georgetownpl.org) and click on "About" and "Georgetown Records" or "Georgetown Yearbooks."



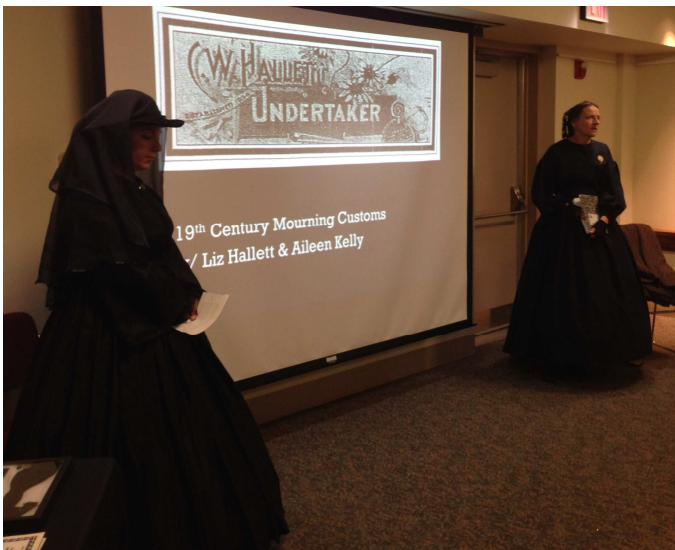
The Georgetown Advocate building

## GHS ANNUAL MEETING

We had a great turn-out for the GHS Annual Meeting on December 2<sup>nd</sup> and heard plenty of positive feed-back on the evening's wonderful program. During the brief business meeting, various Board members talked about the highlights of the past year, including our successful fundraisers and our continued growth, with 23 new memberships in 2015! At the conclusion of the business meeting, the special guest speakers were introduced.

Bill Hallett gave a great presentation on the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, including little known facts about John Wilkes Booth and his co-conspirators. Elizabeth Hallett and her daughter, Aileen Kelly, gave a very interesting presentation on the mourning attire and customs of the 1860s.

Bill Hallett is the author of *Newburyport in the Civil War*. He and Liz conduct the *Footsteps of Heroes Civil War Walking Tours* in Newburyport.



Aileen Kelly (left) and Elizabeth Hallett in 1860s mourning dress at our Annual Meeting  
(Photo courtesy of Bill Hallett)

## AND THE WINNER IS.....

Throughout the 2015 season, GHS has been selling tickets for our iPad raffle fundraiser. The iPad was donated by one of our members (who prefers to remain anonymous), whose generosity is greatly appreciated. The drawing was held at our Annual Meeting, and the lucky winner was Wendy Kaye, who attended the meeting. Congratulations, Wendy!



## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS!

We extend a warm welcome to the following people who have become GHS members in the past few months: Edson & Jennifer Porto, Kristine & James Rodden, Allan Barlow, Molly Sullivan, Joan Chatterton, Gloria Swanbon, and Betty Epperson.

## ***SAD GOOD-BYES***

We note with sadness the passing of long-time GHS member Robert “Farmer Bob” Morehouse in October. Bob was very active in town, serving on various town boards and committees and was the driving force on the Camp Denison Committee.



**Bob Morehouse**

We were also deeply saddened by the recent death of Natalie Tidd just ten days before her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Nat was a life-long Georgetown resident and was active in many groups around town, including GHS, where she was an early member of the Executive Board.

We also extend our condolences to GHS Curator Karen Brockelbank on the recent death of her father, GHS Life Member David Brockelbank, who had been living in Newkirk, Oklahoma.



**Natalie Tidd**

## ***FREE RESEARCH SERVICES FOR GHS MEMBERS***



(Photo courtesy of Louise Richardson)

Have you ever wondered about the history of your house and its early inhabitants? Or perhaps you are interested in learning more about your own ancestors. GHS researchers are always happy to help folks with their genealogy and local history questions, and often help people researching the history of their historic home. We will now be offering two free hours of either genealogical or deed research to all new or current GHS members upon request. If you are interested, just e-mail us at: [info@georgetownhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@georgetownhistoricalsociety.com). Genealogy requests must include as much information as possible, and what specifically you wish to find. Research on historical homes is limited to Georgetown.

## ***CORPORATE DONATION PROGRAMS***

Does your employer offer a matching gift or similar charitable program? Some corporations even extend these programs to their retirees. In 2015, GHS received over \$2500 in corporate donations thanks to some of our members and friends who work at or retired from Cummings Properties, GE and ITW. If your employer offers such a program, we hope you will consider making your annual contribution go even further by enrolling.

**15,000 Companies  
Match Gifts...  
Does Yours?**

Please check with your HR Department  
to find out if your gift can be matched!

## ***2016 DUES REMINDER***



If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2016, we hope you will do so very soon. All annual memberships run from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>. A membership form is included with this newsletter for your convenience, or you can pay online by visiting our website, [www.georgetownhistoricalsociety.com](http://www.georgetownhistoricalsociety.com) and clicking on “Join the Society.”



# 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*  
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## *Georgetown Historical Society*



### **OFFICERS**

*President*

*1<sup>st</sup> Vice President*

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

*Secretary*

*Treasurer*

*Curator*

*Christine Comiskey*

*Sylvia Johnston*

*Ralph Chouinard*

*Lew Harrold*

*Michelle Cook*

*Karen Brockelbank*

### **DIRECTORS**

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

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR** *Christine Comiskey*

- JOIN US ON FACEBOOK! Search Groups: "Georgetown Historical Society."
- 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)