

THE GEORGETOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Preserving and promoting the history of Georgetown

Spring 2017 Newsletter

HENRY FORD AND THE SPOFFORD SAWMILL

When the western part of Rowley became a separate parish in 1731, many more families began moving to the area. This was good news for house builders like Abner Spofford. With a need for lumber to build the homes, Abner decided to build a sawmill on his land on Andover Street. The water-powered “up-and-down” style mill was constructed circa 1740 on Lufkin’s brook and did brisk business in the fast growing community.



Abner Spofford was well known and actively involved in the community. He was captain of the local militia in 1743, a church deacon, and the father of nine children, several of whom also became house builders and millwrights. Abner kept working until 1777, when he was tragically killed in a fall in his sawmill at age 73.



The mill remained in the Spofford family until 1861, when it was purchased by Charles R. Weston and his cousin, George S. Weston. The Weston family continued to own and operate the historic mill until 1925.

Auto manufacturer Henry Ford was a collector of Americana. He envisioned a “Village Green” style living-history museum and began purchasing historic buildings to be dismantled and reconstructed in his new village. Mr. Ford learned of the old mill in Georgetown, one of the last of its kind still in operation. The owner,

Ida Morse (daughter of Charles R. Weston) was contacted, and eventually a sale was negotiated. The old mill and its machinery were dismantled and placed on railroad cars for shipment to Michigan.

A new mill was designed and constructed using the original machinery and an original support beam. Although neither a reconstruction nor a replica, it is still known as the Spofford Sawmill. It can be seen today at Henry Ford’s Greenfield Village Museum in Dearborn, Michigan.



(Photos courtesy of Louise Richardson)

Workers dismantle the old sawmill machinery

GEORGE IS BACK!

The portrait of George Peabody has been restored and returned to the Georgetown Peabody Library. Funding for this project was approved at the 2016 Town Meeting through the Community Preservation Act. The work was done by Oliver Brothers Art Restoration and Conservation.

For more information on this wealthy philanthropist who provided the funds for our first town library, see our Winter 2015 GHS newsletter at: http://georgetownhistoricalsociety.com/Newsletters/2015_1.pdf



SAVE THE DATE!



Mark your calendars for **Tuesday, April 25th, from 5-9 p.m.**, when GHS will be hosting a fundraiser at Flatbread Pizza in Georgetown at the Black Swan Country Club. For every large or small pizza sold, Flatbread will donate a portion of the sale to Georgetown Historical Society.

Visit our GHS table and test your knowledge of antiques with our “What is it?” challenge, buy Red Sox raffle tickets, or sign up for a free house history.

We hope you will join us for some delicious Flatbread pizza and a fun evening with family and friends.

ANTIQUES APPRAISAL DAY

It's spring cleaning time again, a great time to get rid of all that old stuff cluttering up your attic, basement or garage. But wait, haven't you wondered if those old “family heirlooms” are worth anything? Do you suspect that garage sale find may be worth much more than you paid? If so, we welcome you to have your treasures verbally appraised at our third annual **Antiques Appraisal Day**. We once again welcome the entertaining and informative antiques appraiser **Dan Meader** of McInnis Auctioneers. The event will be held at the First Congregational Church of Georgetown on **Saturday, May 20th from 10-1**. Admission is free, but for those wishing to have items appraised, the cost is \$5 per item with a limit of three items per person.



THE SCHOONER FAME



Join us on **Tuesday, May 23rd at 7 p.m.** as we welcome Captain Michael Rutstein of the Schooner FAME, a full-scale replica of a Salem privateer from the War of 1812. Captain Rutstein is the author of two books about the war. He will be discussing privateers, the War of 1812, and the building of the FAME replica in Essex.

The presentation will take place in the meeting room of the Georgetown Peabody Library.

BROCKLEBANK MUSEUM OPENING DAY

The Brocklebank Museum will be opening for the season on **June 25th** and will be open every Sunday through Columbus Day weekend from **2-5 p.m.** and other days and times by appointment. Come check out our newest acquisitions and our *Early Businesses of Georgetown* exhibit. Admission is always free to current GHS members.



BE A TOUR GUIDE - GET A FREE ENHA 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 fun and easy—no memorization or wearing of costumes is required. You get to choose the Sundays you wish to work. This is also a great opportunity for high school students looking to earn Community Service credits. As an added incentive, **anyone who**



ESSEX NATIONAL
HERITAGE AREA

volunteers at least 10 hours with GHS 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.

SUPPORT GHS PROJECT AT TOWN MEETING

New England winters have taken their toll on the exterior of the Brocklebank Museum, and it is time to have it painted again. The Georgetown Historical Society has requested \$15,000 from Community Preservation Act historical preservation funds to have rotted areas repaired, and to have the building scraped, primed and painted. We hope you will show your support of this project at **Town Meeting on May 1st at 7 p.m.**



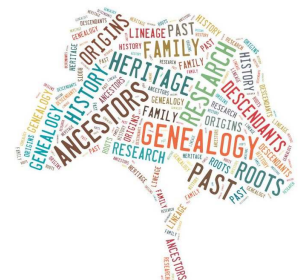
RED SOX TICKETS RAFFLE



Once again, we have received a generous donation from one of our members of two tickets to the Red Sox vs. Orioles game on **August 25th**. Raffle tickets will be available this summer at the Brocklebank Museum and at our upcoming GHS events. The cost will be \$5 each or 3 for \$10.

GENEALOGY PROGRAM AT LIBRARY

On **Monday, May 15th at 6:30 p.m.**, professional genealogist Seema Kenny will be discussing Internet Genealogical Research in the Georgetown Peabody Library meeting room. She will show the audience some searching techniques and will share a list of 40 websites for finding vital statistics and other useful information to help us better understand the lives of our ancestors.



WAYS YOU CAN HELP GHS



Bring your reusable bags when shopping at Crosby's Market in Georgetown. Crosby's "Bagging for the Environment" program encourages good environmental practices by cutting down on disposable bags while helping local charities. Just bring your reusable bags and ask for your tokens, then put them in the GHS canister on the shelf in the front of the store. GHS will receive a small donation for every token collected through October 2017.

Does your employer have a charitable giving program? Make your annual contribution go even further by enrolling in your company's program.

Do your online shopping through Amazon's "Amazon Smile" program at smile.amazon.com and chose Georgetown Historical Society as your designated charity. Amazon will donate a small percentage of your sale to GHS at no extra cost to you.

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

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

HELLOS AND GOOD-BYES

We extend a warm welcome to the following people who have joined GHS in the past few months: Craig Mabijs and Kim Sarno, Bill and Linda Monroe, Frank Phillips, Sandra Martin, Elizabeth and Jeff Wade, and Kelly and Scott Russell. Special thanks go out to GHS member Betty Hastings who has been doing a great job recruiting her neighbors to join GHS and get free histories of their historic Georgetown homes.

We were saddened to learn of the death of long-time GHS member Carol Pierce on March 8th. She and her husband, Norm, who passed away in 2012, were active volunteers for GHS for many years.



Carol Pierce

TIME TO RENEW YOUR GHS MEMBERSHIP!

Thank you to all our members who have already sent in their membership renewals! If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2017, we hope you will do so very soon. All annual memberships expire on December 31st.

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." If you are unsure of your membership status, please e-mail us at info@georgetownhistoricalsociety.com.

We are looking forward to another great year, and hope you will be a part of it!

DON'T FORGET...



April 25, 5-9 p.m. Flatbread Pizza fundraiser to benefit GHS

May 1, 7 p.m. Town Meeting. Show your support for GHS request for CPA funding

May 15, 6:30 p.m. Talk on Internet Genealogy Research at Georgetown Peabody Library

May 20, 10-1 GHS Antiques Appraisal day at First Congregational Church

May 23, 7 p.m. Talk on Privateers and the War of 1812 at Georgetown Peabody Library

June 25, 2-5 p.m. Brocklebank Museum opens for the season



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 my 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) | | |

Optional:

- ☐ I would like to make a donation to Georgetown Historical Society’s Homer Tapin Memorial Scholarship Fund in the amount of \$_____

Your membership fee and scholarship donations are tax-deductible. Please make all 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 _____ |



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Georgetown Historical Society



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