

THE GEORGETOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Preserving and promoting the history of Georgetown

Summer 2017 Newsletter

THE DOG DAYS OF SUMMER

When we hear that phrase, we think of sweltering hot summer days and envision our furry friends with lolling tongues, trying to stay cool. But did you know that the phrase actually has a celestial origin?

The ancient Greeks observed that the hottest days of summer coincided with the approximate forty-day period that Sirius, the brightest star in the sky, rose and set with the sun. In Greek mythology, Sirius was the dog of the hunter Orion. The Greeks referred to this period as *dies caniculares* or “days of the dog.” By the 1500s, the English were referring to this point in the astronomical calendar as “the dog days.” With the dog days of summer upon us, we take a look back at dog ownership in the 1800s.



In the Massachusetts Acts and Resolves of 1867, it was ordered that all dogs in the state be licensed and wear a collar with the owner’s name and license number. Those who ignored the law risked having their dogs shot and the owner fined \$15. A licensed dog was considered property, but if an unlicensed dog was stolen, the owner had no recourse, as ownership could not be proven. The license fee was \$2 for males and \$5 for females, with the money collected helping to fund the local schools. Very few people in Georgetown owned females in the days before spaying and neutering. In 1892, only eight of the 118 dogs registered in town were female. The most popular dog names in Georgetown in late 1800s were Rover, Jack, Fido, Prince, Major and Carlo.

This story about a Nelson Avenue St. Bernard named Carlo appeared in the Georgetown Advocate in 1887: *Walter L. Kimball owns a very large, intelligent and good dispositioned St. Bernard dog. He has been in the habit for a year or more to make daily visits to the house of Wm. S. Horner, where he received a bone or a bit of meat invariably. Mr. Horner brought a new dog to his house recently. Upon Carlo’s first visit after his arrival he refused the lunch after seeing the dog. He called again the same day and*



upon seeing his rival refused to partake. The next day instead of calling at Horner’s house, the dog did what he never did before, went to the Station, laid down until Mr. Horner finished his work, and when he went home, followed. There he was offered something to eat, but the new dog appeared and our great St. Bernard, with a sad look, went home, refusing to answer repeated calls to return, and never called at the house since, three weeks having now elapsed. It seems as if there was more than instinct that governed these movements.

In 1893, the Town Clerk noted that one dog, Duke, belonging to Ted Tenney, came to the clerk’s office each year with an envelope containing \$2. He would wait patiently until the license was written and recorded, then take it in an envelope and carry it across the street to his master.

(Top photo - man and dog on porch of Pentucket house, courtesy of Dan Meader. Bottom - men with dog in front of Baptist Church on North Street, courtesy of Louise Richardson)

THIRD-GRADERS TOUR MUSEUM

On June 1st, the Brocklebank Museum opened its doors for the 2017 season to about 115 third-graders and their teachers from Penn Brook School. As you can see from this sampling of the thank you notes we received, the kids had a great time learning about local history:

"Thank you for inviting us to the Brocklebank Museum. I had such a good time. It was my favorite field trip ever because I love history."

"Thank you for teaching us and volunteering for my class. I can't believe you volunteered and you don't get paid. Thank you so much!"

"Thank you so much for giving us a tour of the museum. It was so cool! I loved the schoolhouse. It was cool how kids used to go to school in the small place! Compared to our school that's small! I liked the dresses they wore. They were pretty. My favorite dress was the wedding dress. And that story of that girl Hannah, that was spooky!"

"Thank you for volunteering and spending the time to talk to my class. I enjoyed learning about Georgetown's history. Everybody did an amazing job while they explained some Georgetown history!"

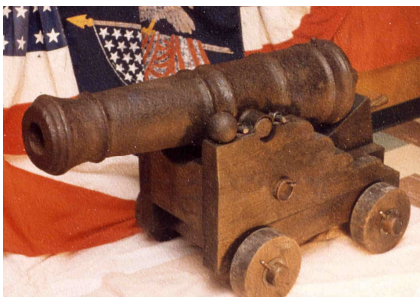
"Thank you for having our class come to the Brocklebank Museum. I am so happy I could go because it was a trip I'm not going to forget. I liked how I got to learn about my town and my town's history. My favorite was the school house and the story I got to hear about Hannah and the Haunted Meal Chest."

"Thank you for inviting us to the museum and volunteering your time to teach us history about our Georgetown home. I learned that it was very hard to live back in the 1800s and 1700s. My favorite part was the school house!"

A big thank you goes out to our wonderful tour guides Starr Anderson, Beverly Knapp, Mary Saunders, Karen Brockelbank and Chris Comiskey, who helped make the visit so fun and memorable. Thank you also to bell-ringer Lew Harrold for keeping everything running on schedule, and to the Georgetown Police Department for getting the kids safely across busy East Main Street. Finally, thank you to the kids, who surprised us with a donation of \$121!



CHEERS TO OLD NANCY!



(Georgetown does, of course!), which, according to local legend, came from the British munitions ship *Nancy*, captured in 1775 by the American privateer, *Lee*. Thank you to the many GHS members who attended the event.

If you missed the event but would like to learn about the REAL Old Nancy, on display in Georgetown's Town Hall (above), and the wooden Nancy replica in the Library, our event display is now on loan to the library. Check it out!

The Mill River Winery in Rowley recently hosted a special event in their vineyard to celebrate the release of their newest wine, "Nancy's Cannon." The Georgetown and Rowley historical societies were invited to discuss the good-natured disagreement between the two towns over who owns the real revolutionary-era cannon, Old Nancy



BASEBALL TALK AT THE LIBRARY



The Georgetown Peabody Library will be hosting a program on Wednesday, August 2nd starting at 6:30 p.m. titled “Baseball as American Culture.”

Northern Essex Community College instructor Frank Morris will present a fascinating history of America’s game. Learn about why baseball galvanized a nation that was beginning to tear apart, how baseball came to be “America’s Pastime” a decade before the Civil War, and how it developed into a world-wide phenomenon in the decades to come.

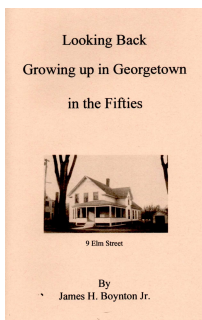
This is an historical talk on baseball with most of the focus on the Boston Red Sox. Frank will share slides and statistics. Fun for all! Registration required. Contact the library at 978-352-5728 or info@georgetownpl.org for more information.

AND SPEAKING OF THE RED SOX...

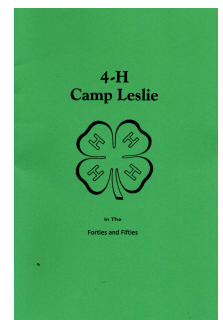
Once again, we have received a generous donation from one of our members of two tickets to the Red Sox vs. Orioles game on **August 25th**. Raffle tickets will be available this summer at the Brocklebank Museum. The cost will be \$5 each or 3 for \$10. The drawing will be on August 13th.



NEW BOOKS AT GHS



Long-time Georgetown resident and GHS member Jim Boynton, Jr. has been busy lately writing about his memories of growing up in Georgetown. He has generously donated to GHS copies of his newest book, “Looking Back - Growing up in Georgetown in the Fifties.” Last year he donated to GHS “4-H Camp Leslie,” about his happy memories of attending the local camp during the days that his father, Jim Boynton Sr., was the director.



Both of these books are available for sale at the Brocklebank Museum for \$3 each. You can also order the books by e-mailing info@georgetownhistoricalsociety.com.

We extend a big thank you to Jim for his generous donation and for recording his memories of life in Georgetown for all to enjoy.

PASTOR BOYLAN EARNS PLACE IN HISTORY BOOKS

Georgetown's Rev. Dr. William Boylan has earned a special place in Georgetown's history, having served as Pastor of the Byfield Parish Church for 49 years, making him one of the longest serving pastors in the history of our town. Bill is also a highly knowledgeable local historian and has given special presentations to the Historical Society on several occasions. We wish Pastor Emeritus Bill all the best in his well-earned retirement. We are also proud to say that Bill and his wife Miriam are Life members of the Georgetown Historical Society.



GARDENERS WANTED!

Do you enjoy gardening? GHS would like to form a Grounds Beautification Committee to improve the Brocklebank Museum property with flowers. We currently have irises around the flagpole, which bloom too early in the season to be enjoyed by museum visitors. We would like to replace them with plants that bloom during the summer and early fall, as well as improve the perennial garden on the west side of the museum. If you are interested in helping, please e-mail GHS at info@georgetownhistoricalsociety.com.



HOMER TAPIN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

We are pleased to announce that Philip Cannon has been chosen to receive the 2017 Homer Tapin Memorial Scholarship. Philip plans to attend Worcester State University this fall, majoring in history, with the goal of becoming a history teacher.

The scholarship is given out each year to a GMHS senior who is planning on majoring in a history-related field. It is given in memory of Homer Tapin (1916-2011) a founding member and past president of Georgetown Historical Society.

TRAILS & SAILS 2017



The Georgetown Historical Society will once again be participating in *Trails & Sails* with an Open House at the Brocklebank Museum on September 17th and 24th from 2-5 pm. We will also be offering a fun and educational scavenger hunt in the Union Cemetery on both Sundays from 10-4. Participants can then visit the museum to be entered into a drawing for some great prizes.

For more information on these and over 150 other FREE *Trails & Sails 2017* events, visit: <http://www.essexheritage.org/ts/>

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS!

We extend a warm welcome to our newest GHS members, Lawrence and Laura Fitzgerald of East Lyme, CT. Lawrence is a descendant of Captain Samuel Brocklebank.

HELP SPREAD THE WORD!

Please share our newsletter with family, friends and neighbors who share your interest in preserving local history, and encourage them to join GHS. We depend upon the generous support of our members and friends, through memberships, donations, merchandise sales, and fundraisers, to keep GHS going and to keep the Brocklebank Museum open. Remember, GHS members can tour the museum for FREE! Visit us any Sunday from now through Columbus Day weekend from 2-5. We LOVE to have visitors!

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER

We still have some members who have not renewed their GHS membership for 2017, including a few who received a FREE house history (a \$250+ value). Renewals are still trickling in, so if you have not yet sent in your renewal, we hope you will do so very soon! Use the membership form attached, or renew online at www.georgetownhistoricalsociety.com and click 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 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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