

# Georgetown Historical Society

## Winter Newsletter, 2020

### 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment Centennial Celebration

*This is the first in a series of three articles*

#### Part 1: Local History

This year marks the centennial of the passing of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution, which granted women the right to vote. However, it took over 80 years of active suffrage before the United States government finally passed this nationwide law.

It may surprise you to learn that before 1776 several colonies allowed women to vote. One might think that the War of Independence would have helped improve the rights of all citizens in a new country – but this was not the case. Because the U.S. Constitution did not clearly define the boundaries of suffrage, by 1807 each individual state had adopted constitutions that denied women the right to vote.

Although the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention is widely regarded as the start of the movement for women's voting rights, a full decade earlier the hub of the Massachusetts movement was happening in New Rowley - which would become Georgetown within a year. Before this, most talk of women's rights occurred during tea parties and in private parlors. However, as time went on the need to organize became more urgent.



Suffrage Poster



In 1850, close to a thousand people from eleven different states gathered at Worcester's Brinley Hall to attend the National Woman's Rights Convention. Two hundred voting members came from Massachusetts alone. One year later, more than 3,000 would attend and the convention needed to be moved to Worcester City Hall. The third gathering was then moved to Syracuse, New York.

In 1855 Massachusetts began to make some small steps in women's rights. A law was passed permitting married women to own and sell property, control their own earnings and make a will. Hindered by the Civil War, the women's suffrage movement regained its stride during the Reconstruction. Some groups attempted to make a connection to the 15<sup>th</sup>

Amendment, which prohibited voting discrimination based on race or color, in order to sway opinions about women's rights. Although this strategy did not work, organized groups were gaining momentum.

### Lucy Stone and the first wave of feminism:

Born in rural Massachusetts in 1818, Lucy Stone grew up in a large family. At the age of sixteen she began to work as a teacher, a role she would play for the rest of her life. In 1839 she enrolled in Mount Holyoke College, a female seminary. She finished her degree at Oberlin College in Ohio several years later, and became the first female college graduate born in Massachusetts. She was noticed by abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison while she was still in college, and was later hired by the American Anti-Slavery Society. Lucy spoke for the society on weekends, and began to freelance for women's rights during the week. This led her to her life's work - the creation of a national women's movement.



Lucy Stone, circa 1850

In 1869 Lucy Stone created the Boston-based American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA). This group concentrated on getting states to give women the right to vote on a local level, thus forcing a national constitutional amendment. Lucy also founded a weekly newspaper, *Woman's Journal*. This would become the communication network of the movement. She held a rally in Boston on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Boston Tea Party. Her point, to the 3,000 people in attendance, reiterated the "no taxation without representation" slogan made popular during the American Revolution. Lucy was pointing out that single and widowed women had to pay hefty taxes on their property, but were not allowed the right to vote.

*"We ask only for justice and equal rights - the right to vote, the right to our own earnings, equality before the law." ~ Lucy Stone*



Massachusetts women were finally allowed to vote in 1879, but only in local school committee elections. At this time women had a disproportionately higher poll tax than men, due to attempts to dissuade them from voting. Lucy Stone believed that married women lost their identities by taking their husband's last name. She herself was refused the right to vote during this time as she would not register under her husband's name. Sadly, she passed away in October 18, 1893, and would never see the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment passed. Lucy left the AWSA and her newspaper in the capable hands of her daughter, Alice Stone Blackwell, who would continue the efforts of her mother at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## VOTE!

It may be easy for younger generations of women to take their political freedom for granted, and perhaps ignore the power they were born with, or earned through naturalization, as citizens of the United States. The Georgetown Historical Society encourages everyone to register to vote, and follow through by showing up for all local and national elections. It is now more important than ever.

*"There never will be complete equality until women themselves help to make laws and elect lawmakers." ~ Susan B. Anthony*

To celebrate this centennial, the Brocklebank Museum will have a special exhibit this summer on the Women's Suffrage Movement, and the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

## MARDI GRAS CELEBRATION!

On Saturday, February 22, the Georgetown Historical Society, along with the Groveland Historical Society and the Friends of Veasey Park, will co-host a Mardi Gras Celebration at Veasey with a focus on family-fun. Live jazz music will be provided by the L&M Rhythm Kings. Dress up in Mardi Gras colors and enter the costume contest. There will be craft tables, games, raffles, prizes, food and more. Bring the family! Hours are 4:00 - 8:00 p.m., admission is \$10.00 for adults, children 12 and under get in free.

Veasey Park – only 7 minutes from Georgetown Square, at 201 Washington Street, Groveland, MA. [www.veaseypark.org](http://www.veaseypark.org).



### Looking for Harlequins:

The Georgetown Historical Society is looking for several “harlequins” to help entertain at the Mardi Gras Celebration. We’d like to find teenagers between the ages of 16-18 to dress up in Mardi Gras colors (purple, green and gold). Harlequins will be encouraged to dance through the hall at Veasey Park, and pose for photographs during the costume contests. Volunteers will be offered a ride to and from the event by a Board member of the historical society and will receive volunteer hours. For more information contact [info@georgetownhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@georgetownhistoricalsociety.com).



Celebrate

# MARDI GRAS!

**FAMILY  
FUN!**

❁ **LIVE JAZZ MUSIC**

*The L&M Rhythm Kings*

❁ **COSTUME CONTEST**

❁ **DANCING**

❁ **FOOD**

❁ **RAFFLES**

❁ **CRAFTS**

❁ **GAMES**

❁ **PRIZES**

*at Veasey Park*

**SATURDAY**  
**FEBRUARY 22**  
**4:00-8:00 PM**



VEASEYPARK.ORG  978-521-9345  
201 Washington Street, Groveland, MA

**ADMISSION: \$10.<sup>00</sup> Per Adult**

**Kids 12 and Under FREE**

*Hosted by the Georgetown Historical Society, the  
Groveland Historical Society, and the Friends of Veasey*

## Chairs---

At the turn of the century there were several antique shops in town. When Antique chairs started getting scarce, Everett, (Bucky) Spaulding went into business making reproductions. His first shop was on Tenney St, (across from Spaulding Rd.). In 1931 Everett bought the Brockelbank house on East Main St. and moved his business there. His sons Everett and Arthur continued after Everett retired, eventually selling the property to the Georgetown Historical Society.

Maurice Spaulding, Everett's cousin, was the next person to start making chairs. He started in the early 30s. Maurice made an assortment of chairs: ladder backs, Hitchcock's, Sheratons, and Queen Annes. Most of Maurice's chairs had rush seats (woven from cat-o-nine tails). His wife Esther put in many of the seats. Maurice and some helpers would cut the rush in local swamps each fall. They would bring it home, dry it on the shop roof, then bundle and store it for use the next year. I assume the same process with the rush was being done at Everett's' shop on East Main St.



**Gail Rogers, 1963**

*...just before the chair was  
Put up onto the Rogers  
Chair Factory roof on  
Jewett street Facing I95*

Also, in town was Holley Rice on Warren St. He specialized in Hitchcock chairs. Later he went to work for Everett Spaulding and after that, Sid Rogers.

But—the biggest chair manufacturer in town was Sid Rogers. After the war Sid took his “mustered out pay” along with some borrowed equipment and started Rogers Chair Co on Jewett St. Sid specialized in Captains chairs. One of his creations was a very oversized chair that he mounted on his factory roof. It could be seen from route 95 and was a landmark for many years. Sid's' shop was open from 1946—1980.

I am Maurice Spaulding's grandson, Andrew LeBlanc. I find it somewhat ironic that I now make chairs in my building across from Maurice's old shop on Jewett Street.

**ROADHOUSES:** Joe Corcoran and Andrew LeBlanc would like to put an article together about "Road houses" that were in the Georgetown area. Places like Fullers in Rowley, Baritz in Groveland, Elms on Central St. Georgetown, The Grove on Pine Grove Ave Georgetown, Blue Goose in Boxford. If you have any pictures or stories about these or any other area Road Houses please let us know. Thank you. Andrew, 508-633-2161, Joe, 978-352-3169.

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

As we begin 2020 at Georgetown Historical Society, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome **Jim Boynton**, who joined our Board of Directors in January. Thank you for your commitment to the continued success of our society. Thank you as well for jumping right in and taking on the task of restoring the windows in the ell portion of the museum, replacing the cracked glass panes as well as stabilizing their frames. This winter project is greatly appreciated. I would also like to recognize my fellow board members and society volunteers for your industrious work at the museum property this past year – kudos and thank you, thank you, thank you! In 2019 we cooperatively made immeasurable strides in continuing to champion the historical society's mission to preserve the historic Brocklebank homestead for future generations. In the coming year I look forward to the continued prosperity of our society while working with you all not only with the upkeep and maintenance of the museum property and grounds, but also to cultivate and sustain interest in our rich local heritage.

In 2020 our grounds beautification committee will continue with the **landscape restoration project** begun in the spring of 2018. It is at this time of year we meet to “plan the work” so during the growing season we can “work the plan”. It is our objective that these gardens will become an additional educational layer to the life of our earliest settlers, while also enhancing the property. We believe the grounds restoration is vital to highlighting this beautiful historic home which is a prominent structure to all those who come through Georgetown. We hope you will all be thrilled as you see our spring bulbs in bloom this year against our beautifully restored fence. Think Spring!

As always **please reach out** and let us know if you have any recommendations or concerns regarding the museum structure, the property and gardens or any programs you would like to see us sponsor. We welcome and value the input of all our members. If you have the time, we welcome your participation in all our goings-on. Just send us an email at – [info@georgetownhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@georgetownhistoricalsociety.com).

As a reminder, if you have not sent in your **2020 dues**, please take the time to do so now as it is members like you who enable our continued success as a society. Thank you again for all your support.



*Betsy Moran*

**FIRSTS FOR WOMEN:** As we celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American woman's right to vote, here are a few other trailblazing efforts to recognize.

### **Wyoming Territory is first to grant women the vote, 1869**

In 1869, Wyoming's territorial legislature declared that “every woman of the age of twenty-one years, residing in this territory, may at every election...cast her vote.” Though Congress lobbied hard against it, Wyoming's women kept their right to vote when the territory became a state in 1890. In 1924, the state's voters elected the nation's first female governor, Nellie Tayloe Ross.

## **FIRSTS FOR WOMEN: Continued**

**Opha May Johnson – First Female Marine, 1918** From 1775 to 1918, the United States Marine Corps refused to admit any women. When the rule was relaxed, Opha May Johnson was the first to enlist. Johnson signed up as a reserve clerk at the age of 40, a trailblazing decision that eventually led to females occupying roles as commanders and generals.

**Edith Wharton - First Woman To Win a Pulitzer Prize, 1921** Wharton won the prize for her 1920 novel *The Age of Innocence*. Like many of Wharton's books, *The Age of Innocence* was a critique of the hypocrisy of the upper class in turn-of-the-century New York. The book has inspired several stage and screen adaptations, and the writer Cecily Von Ziegesar has said that it was the model for her popular *Gossip Girl* series of books.

**Gertrude Ederle – First Female to Swim the English Channel** Ederle was an American competition swimmer, Olympic champion, and former world record-holder in five events. On August 6, 1926, she became the first woman to swim across the English Channel (19 miles). Among other nicknames, the press sometimes called her "Queen of the Waves."

**Genevieve R. Cline - First Female Federal Court Judge, 1928** In 1928, President Calvin Coolidge appointed the U.S. Treasury's appraiser of merchandise at the port of Cleveland to be the first female judge to sit on a federal court. Cline sat on the U.S. Customs Court for 25 years, paving the way for future female jurists like Florence Allen and Burnita Shelton Matthews.

## **Amelia Earhart – First Female Aviator to Fly Solo Across the Atlantic Ocean, 1932**

She set many other records, wrote best-selling books about her flying experiences, and was instrumental in the formation of "The Ninety-Nines", an organization for female pilots.



*Amelia Earhart*

## **Frances Perkins - First Female Member of a Presidential Cabinet, 1933**

Perkins, a sociologist and Progressive reformer in New York, served as Franklin D. Roosevelt's Secretary of Labor for over a decade.

## **Junko Tabei – First Woman to Climb Mount Everest, 1975**

At just 5 feet tall and 92 pounds, Junko Tabei co-led a group of 15 women to the summit of Mt. Everest in 1975, becoming the first female ever to reach the peak. She would eventually ascend the highest summit on every continent.

## **Sandra Day O'Connor - the First Woman on the Supreme Court, 1981**

O'Connor was confirmed that September. She did not have much judicial experience when she began her Supreme Court term, but soon made a name for herself as one of the Court's most thoughtful centrists. O'Connor retired in 2006.



**On Tuesday, May 6, 2020**, Barbara F. Berenson, author of *Massachusetts in the Woman's Suffrage Movement*, will give a talk at the Georgetown Peabody Library. This is a collaborative effort between the League of Women Voters of Topsfield / Boxford / Middleton, the Friends of the Library, and the Georgetown Historical Society.

Berenson is also the author of *Boston and the Civil War: Hub of the Second Revolution* (The History Press 2014) and *Walking Tours of Civil War Boston: Hub of Abolitionism* (The Freedom Trail Foundation 2011, 2nd edition, 2014).

A graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School, she works as a senior attorney at the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. Please visit [www.barbarafberenson.com](http://www.barbarafberenson.com).

## SAVE THE DATE

February 22	Mardi Gras <i>At Veasey Park</i>
March 8	Spring Forward <i>Turn your clocks one hour ahead!</i>
April 4	Kiwanis Breakfast <i>At Penn Brook School</i>
May 4	Town Meeting <i>High school auditorium</i>
May 6	Barbara Berenson Talk <i>At the Library</i>



**It** is with sadness that we note the passing of historical society member Cathy L'Hommedieu earlier this year. Our best wishes go out to her family and friends.

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**Mission Statement:** *The Georgetown Historical Society, a non-profit volunteer organization, cultivates and sustains interest in our rich local heritage by collecting, preserving and displaying cultural material. It does this through research, education and the operation of an historic site.*



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