

GEORGETOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Preserving and promoting the history of Georgetown

September 2022

A NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT:

Our 2022 season started on June 8th with an in-person field trip from the Penn Brook third grade students. We were thrilled to be able to host the students and to get back to our traditional start of the museum season. Read below for more specifics of the day. The museum will be open through mid-October and we hope you, too, will be able to stop by on a Sunday afternoon between 2 and 5 P.M. We will give you a tour of the house, shoe shop, as well as the gardens (which still desperately need rain) and the Historic Commission's schoolhouse.

For this year's raffle fundraiser, we have a beautiful oil painting by Judith Abbe hanging on the parlor wall when the museum is open. It is truly a beautiful foretaste of New England. Come on in, buy your tickets and take a chance while supporting the Society. It would look lovely in any home or office and would also make a beautiful gift. The photo below does not do the painting justice.

I wish to take this time to thank all the volunteers who have been working on a variety of special projects. Continue reading below about the specifics of each project to date. Again, thank you, thank you for all the volunteer hours you have donated that make these projects possible. We welcome and value the input of all our members. As always, if you have the time, we welcome your participation in all or any of our projects. If you have a good idea, just send us an email at info@georgetownhistoricalsociety.com. Thank you again for all your support. We hope to see you at the museum. If you can, please make the time to stop by for a visit.

Betsy Moran



THIRD GRADE VISITS THE MUSEUM:

On a warm day in June that threatened rain, all the third-grade students from Penn Brook along with teachers and chaperones came walking down Elm Street to the museum escorted by our local police. This was the first visit from Penn Brook students since the pandemic started. They brought with them all the enthusiasm and energy that comes with their age. Volunteers Star Anderson, Beverly Knapp, Sylvia Johnston, Darlene Breen, Rick Detwiller, Lew Harrold, Gloria Swanbon, and Mary Saunders were there to greet them and present, to rotating small groups, the various rooms of the museum, the schoolhouse, and the gardens. Chris DiFranco's AP History Class walked over from the high school and assisted our members at each station and also designed a scavenger hunt for the group and future visitors. Those students were Zach Gilmore, Talia Mendola, Anna Gilmore, Olivia Ribeiro, Kyle Davies, Mason Behl, Ben Guertin, Nicholas Niedzielski, and Stephen Sigurdson.



OIL PAINTING RAFFLE:

This summer and autumn GHS is selling raffle tickets to help with expenses. Local artist Judith Abbe donated this beautiful 3'x3' oil painting of County Street Bridge in Ipswich.

Purchase tickets at the museum on a Sunday or go to our [website](#) near the bottom of the home page to purchase raffle tickets online. The lucky winner to be announced at the annual meeting in December.

THE HOMER TAPIN SCHOLARSHIP:

The \$500. Scholarship was awarded this year to Meghan Bullock. She is going to attend UMASS – Lowell and major in Political Science.

CATALOGING THE COLLECTION:

Lew Harrold and John Kuenzig have been working long hours in the GHS office extracting the information Steve Keene and some others entered into an old (for computer programs) database that no longer works. That information is valuable to the Society as it contains descriptions and sources for many of the items of historical significance that the Society owns. At present the pair are trying to link the text descriptions to the stored images.

Some of the Curatorial Committee (Betsy Moran, Michele Augeri, Jen Abbe, Mary Saunders, Beverly Knapp, and Darlene Breen) have been spending hours in the office each week systematically going through 3-ring binders containing printed materials, pictures, postcards, and small items and checking them against the items listed in the old database, confirming their identification numbers and assigning them a precise location so that they can be found in the future. Chris DiFranco's AP American History class spent several hours in the museum in the Spring doing the same thing.

While cataloging, we found a small treasure, a vintage 1911 Fred Tenney baseball card distributed by Turkey Red Cigarettes. It is in mint condition. Georgetown native Fred Tenney's life was featured in the Spring 2021 newsletter http://georgetownhistoricalsociety.com/Newsletters/2021_01.pdf

THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE HISTORIC RECORDS ADVISORY BOARD (SHRAB) GRANT RECEIVED:

Because GHS benefited last year from a visit from a MA State Roving Archivist, we qualified to apply for Regrant funds. We received \$500.00 to buy archival storage containers for the glass negatives in the GHS collection. For the grant, we must contribute a specific amount of work hours getting the collection cleaned, photographed, and into archival storage. Betsy Moran, Darlene Breen, Jenn Abbe, and Randy Boback are working on that now. A special thank you to Jenn Abbe and Randy Boback. Without their photography skills and equipment we would have had to pay to have these slides digitized.



The Victorian Garden at the Museum before we had to stop watering;

BROOM BRIGADES:

One of the committee's challenges involves identifying the items in our collection that can't be found in Steve's old database. In cleaning and organizing the ell at the museum, we found a large (approx. 1 ft. x 1.5 ft.) photograph mounted on cardboard depicting a bunch of women and a few men dressed mainly in white and holding brooms. Does anyone recognize these people? There is no description written on the front or back. Why does GHS have this? Who are these people? When was the picture taken? Where?



So far, thanks to research done by Board Members and the library research librarian, Michele Augeri, we know Broom Brigades were very popular in the late 1800's especially in the Midwest and Western United States. As part of town parades on the Fourth of July and other events, women would drill with brooms in place of muskets. This might be seen as the women celebrating women's role in the home with this symbol of domesticity, the broom. Or it could reflect changing times in which women were becoming more visible and, perhaps, militant. Mark Twain mentions the brigades in his book, *Life on the Mississippi*, "in the West and South they have a new institution—the Broom Brigade. It is composed of young ladies who dress in a uniform costume, and go through the infantry drill, with broom in place of musket." He described the broom brigade of New Orleans, "I saw them go through their complex manual with grace, spirit, and admirable precision. I saw them do everything which a human being can possibly do with a broom, except sweep."

Reference:

"Broom Brigade of Union, 1889," in the The Oregon History Project by the Oregon Historical Society. Mar. 17, 2018

<https://www.oregonhistoryproject.org/articles/historical-records/broom-brigade-of-union-1889/#.YwPUu3bMKM8>



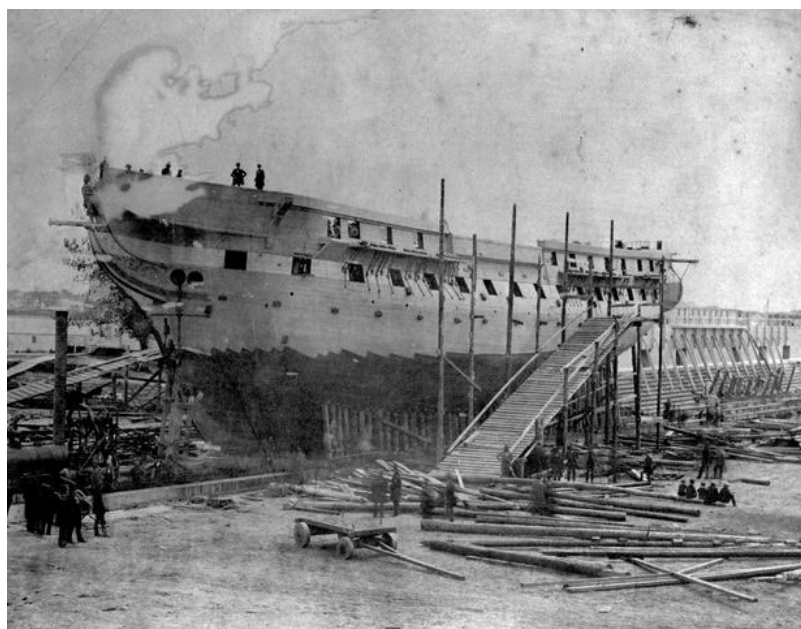
SENATOR SALTONSTALL'S TRIBUTE TO GEORGETOWN AND MORE ABOUT OAK FOR OLD IRONSIDES:

(From information contributed by Rick Detwiler)

In August of 1963, while Georgetown was celebrating its 125th anniversary as a town separate from Rowley, Senator Leverett Saltonstall read a tribute on the Senate floor in Washington DC. from which we excerpt his words about the oak for Old Ironsides, the USS Constitution. "This week Georgetown, Massachusetts is marking the 125th anniversary of its incorporation as a town in 1838. But Georgetown's proud history dates back 294 years to 1669, when it was a parish under the name of New Rowley...The

country offered many streams as source of power, and soon they set up grist and saw mills....Shipbuilding flourished in this little town for a short time in the latter part of the 18th century, and although it did not last long, a number of vessels were built for Chebacco fisheries. In 1798 the oaks from one of Georgetown's hills provided timber for the construction of Old Ironsides."

A source for the information that Georgetown wood was indeed used at least twice to build and repair the USS Constitution can be found in the 1897 *Essex Antiquarian* Vol. 1: "Some of the original timbers



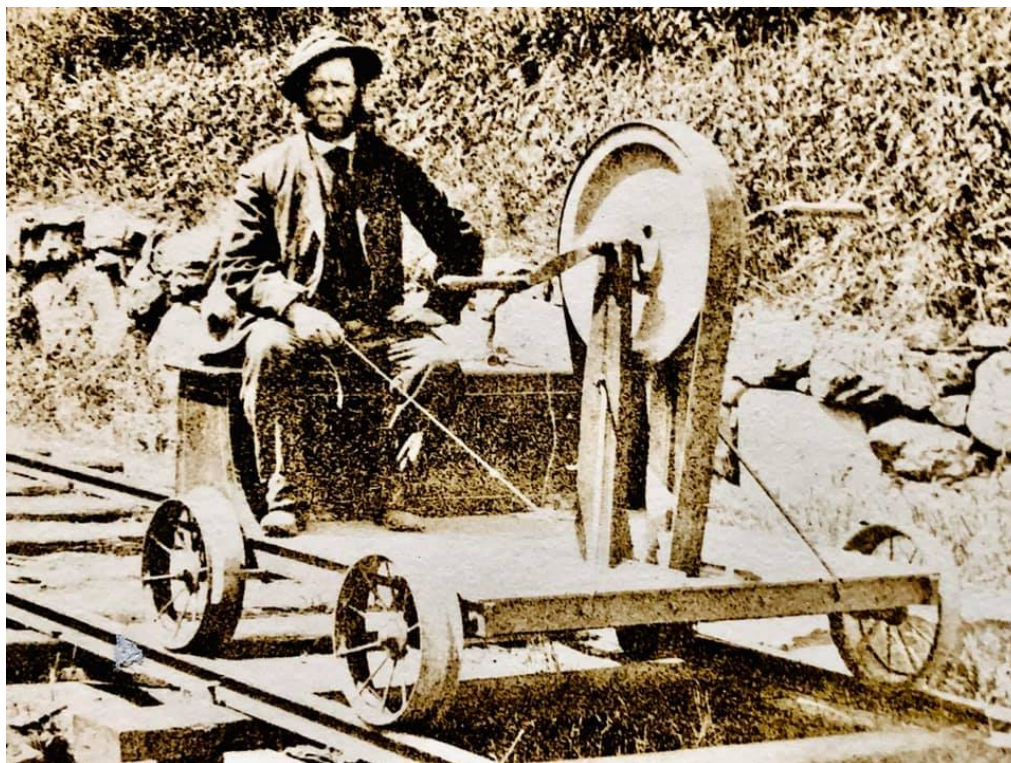
were cut in the woods in that part of Rowley which is now Georgetown, and teamed, by the Brocklebanks and Nelsons, to Charlestown navy-yard, where the ship was launched Oct. 21, 1797." "Dec. 29, 1812, The Constitution encountered the British frigate Java off San Salvador, in the West Indies and soundly defeated her. The Constitution came north to be repaired, and again recourse was had to old Baldpate, in Georgetown, for the timber, out of which its new knees, planks and stanchions were formed. The timber was hauled to Charlestown by Capt. Elphalet Chaplin."

The oldest known photo of USS Constitution: [hOp://www.navsource.org/archives/09/46/094602188.jpg](http://www.navsource.org/archives/09/46/094602188.jpg)

CHARLOTTE HORNER:

Thanks to contact with Salem State Professor Lisa Delisio, the gardeners have learned about a botanist of horticultural renown who lived in Georgetown from 1853 to 1906, Charlotte Horner. She collected, identified, and preserved plant specimens from Georgetown and vicinity that are now part of the collections at Harvard University and The Phillips Library Archival Center in Rowley which is part of the Peabody Essex Museum. Those doing research comparing the historic distribution of plants with present day distribution, still refer to her collection. With the current, sensible trend in using native plants in order to encourage pollinators and cope with drought, Charlotte's work is of interest to us.

Charlotte Nichols Saunders Morse was born in 1823 and raised in Boxford. She taught school before marrying William Horner. William was widely known locally as the friendly station master. Marrying William connected Charlotte to his sisters: Apphia Winter Horner Howard, a Georgetown native and journalist, who was featured in our newsletter about the women's suffragist movement. <https://www.georgetownhistoricalsociety.com/Newsletters/2020-02.pdf>. Also Sarah Horner was a life-long teacher in Georgetown schoolhouses, including Schoolhouse #3 on our property. They all lived on Nelson Avenue. Professor Delisio would love to find Charlotte's writings and papers but is having trouble finding descendants who might have them. Unfortunately Charlotte, Apphia, and Sarah had no children but other Horners and Morses did.



This image of Charlotte's husband, William Horner, stationmaster, is owned by Dan Meader

SCARECROWS FOR FALL DECORATING

Let's snub the drought! If we can't grow flowers, let's grow scarecrows all over town! Jeff Lamoureux is spearheading a committee to run a town-wide scarecrow competition this Fall. The plan is to charge an entrance fee and provide the basic structure in the form of a stake with crossarms and a cloth head to stuff. The rest will be up to the contestants. Look out for more details as plans go forward.

RECENT DONATIONS:

- George Perkins came by the Museum one Sunday and offered an old desk for the schoolhouse. He brought it the next Sunday where it now fits in with the other desks. We hope the Georgetown Historic Commission has the schoolhouse painted before winter sets in.
- George Tolman brought us some shoe pegs that were from the Dickenson Pillsbury Witham House when it was owned by GHS.
- Erica Pierce brought us another copy of *The History of Essex County*, Vol. 2, some notes about GHS activities recorded by her father, the late Norman Pierce, and the paperwork and newspaper articles about a grant proposal for gates for the Union Cemetery submitted by Erica's Girl Scout Troop.

Upcoming Events for the Society

- Trails and Sails open house at the Museum Sunday, September 18 and 25 from 2 to 5 PM
- Annual Meeting with breakfast treats at the Georgetown Public Library on Saturday, December 3 - 10AM to noon

Town Events

- Now and Then Event - part of which will be a Car Show on East Main St. that includes the front of the Museum lawn Sept. 17. Starts at 1:00
- Friends of the Georgetown Public Library Book Sale - Friday, Sept. 16 to 19th
- (Donate books for the sale during library hours starting Wed., Sept. 7)

Contact

- Join us on Facebook! Search Groups: "Georgetown Historical Society."
- Follow us on Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/georgetownhistoricalsociety/>
- VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.georgetownhistoricalsociety.com to see more information about GHS, upcoming events and Newsletter archives
- E-MAIL US AT: info@georgetownhistoricalsociety.com

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