

# Georgetown Historical Society

## Fall Newsletter, 2019

### A New Splash of Color at the Museum

Perhaps you saw some vibrant colors while passing the museum this summer – we are proud to say that the efforts of our Grounds Beautification Committee have, quite literally, bloomed this year. A new vision for the grounds at the museum began in 2017 with the renovation of our flagpole garden, dedicated to the memory of Dale West, a longtime supporter of the historical society. Weeds that were choking back the flowers were removed, and some new additions were carefully planted. Flagstones were placed to create a walkway so the flag could be raised and lowered without stepping on any flowers. Today, the flagpole garden consists of yellow and orange day lilies, bunches of deep blue iris, black-eyed Susans, daisies, sedum, and more.



The Front Yard Garden

The Grounds Beautification Committee consists of Sylvia Johnston, Betsy Moran, Mary Saunders and Eileen Seaberg. With patience, gritty determination and hundreds of work-hours, these intrepid gardeners have toiled over the past two years to create colonial-era gardens that

the former residents of the museum would have been proud of. It has been almost 40 years since serious attention has been paid to the museum grounds – we are all so happy to see the results of this new effort. The committee planned carefully to create historically accurate gardens in order to add another layer of education to the museum. Flowers, herbs and vegetables were to mirror what the early colonists may have chosen. “Companion planting” is the planting of different crops in proximity for any of a number of different reasons, including pest control, pollination, and providing habitat for beneficial insects. The Wampanoag taught the colonists the benefit of planting what they called the “Three Sisters” – corn, beans and squash together. When the beans grow they climb up the cornstalk, while the prickly squash leaves provide shade for the ground, and keep away raccoons.



The Southwest Garden

## A New Splash of Color at the Museum, *continued*

While most of the plants were donated by Georgetown residents from their own gardens, some of them were lovingly grown from seed. The tall, multi-colored Zinnias that grew taller than the fence were started from seed by committee member Mary Saunders. In the fall of 2018 nearly 100 tulip bulbs were planted. Plans for next year include peonies by the front door of the museum, raised beds, and a couple of fruit-bearing trees.



A Happy Visitor

Keep watching as our new gardens grown and change! We always welcome a helping hand. If you'd like to join the gardening crew, just send an e-mail to [info@georgetownhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@georgetownhistoricalsociety.com).



## The Fence Gets A Facelift!



Busy Volunteers

If you've driven by the museum this year you may have noticed improvements to the picket fence. The fence is a 2009 reproduction of the fence registered at the Library of Congress in 1933 as the "White Horse Tavern Fence," . It had been in disrepair for a number of years with peeling paint, sagging rails, and a loose spindle. Last summer paint scraping was begun. It could not be painted until it was primed, and the weather did not cooperate.

This year the Grounds Beautification Committee members and several volunteers spent 90 hours scraping and sanding the fence, digging out the earth from underneath, reattaching the loose spindle, and coating the fence with a layer of oil-based primer. The anatomy of the fence itself made the work time consuming as the thin vertical spindles are placed through drilled holes in the top and bottom support rails. It is a beautiful, yet complicated design.



## The Fence Gets A Facelift! *continued*

When the fence was finally ready there was a painting party on Saturday, August 24<sup>th</sup>. New member Catherine Nigro showed up with coffee and donuts, and helped to clean the fence. After the fence was cleaned, Jim Boynton, Karen Brockelbank, Lew Harrold, Barb Harrold, Jeff Lamoureaux, Betsy Moran, and Mary Saunders painted the fence. While the painting was going on, Andrew LeBlanc showed up with a donation to help purchase plants for the garden in 2020.

When the paint was dry, pea stone was spread under the bottom spindles to minimize dirt splashing up on the fence. The last stage of the renovation is to correct the sagging that has occurred over the years. Thanks to Daniel Walsh for his ongoing efforts. Cheers to everyone who helped us and encouraged us along the way.

You can find the “White Horse Tavern Fence” at the Library of Congress website when you visit <https://www.loc.gov/resource/hhh.ma0619.sheet?st=gallery>.



### Curator's Corner,

*by Karen Brockelbank*

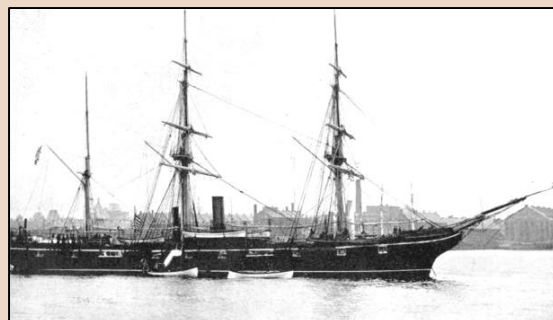
Each year we have a special exhibit at the museum. This year we focused on the work of the Grounds Beautification Committee, with vivid pictures and stories on the walls of the Tavern Room to show off the new gardens that bloomed this summer at the museum. Although this was our main exhibit, there were a number of smaller ones that I consider just as special.

#### The 42-Star Flag

About one year ago, while we were cleaning the museum, a small frame fell off the wall in the Textiles Room and landed in my hands. The frame showed the blue background and white stars of a flag. As I held it, the back

## Curator's Corner, *continued*

came off and the entire flag fluttered out of the frame to the floor. It was huge and tattered, and the small notation on the wall said that it had hung on the U.S.S. Kearsarge, the worthy Union ship made famous during the Civil War. I wondered why we were not displaying the flag more prominently, and so began my journey to discover the story behind the flag.



**The USS Kearsarge**

In order to pinpoint the year when the flag was flown, the number of stars were counted. With some valuable research by our President, Betsy Moran, we discovered that this was a rare flag. Beginning with the Third Flag Act of 1818, the tradition of adding a star for each new state added to the Union became the customary way of updating the American Flag. The act of 1818 decreed that upon the admission of every new state into the Union, one star be added to the flag; and that such addition shall take effect on the 4th of July.



*Thank You!*

<https://postroadframers.net>

On a few rare occasions more than one state was added to the Union within the same year. In November 1889, as Washington State's 42 would have become official, on July 3, 1890 Idaho entered the Union as the 43<sup>rd</sup> state. Consequently, the 42 star flag representing Washington Statehood never became official, despite having a period of 243 days. The unfurled flag is now carefully framed and on display in the tavern room of the museum.

The frame and labor were graciously donated by the Post Road Framers in Rowley, MA. We are indebted to them for helping us to preserve this American treasure.

### The Stetson Family

The Stetsons and their descendents have been loyal supporters of the historical society. Eleanor (1896-1997) and Satira (1898-2000) were the youngest daughters of Alice and Charles Stetson, and lifelong quilters. The sisters never married, and when it became known that there was to be a museum in Georgetown they donated over a dozen extraordinary quilts to the historical society.



*Upper row: Eleanor Stetson, Satira Stetson, Elizabeth Arnold, Mary Spaulding, Harriet Poole. Lower row: William Stetson, Alice Stetson, Clifford Stetson, Charles Hazen Stetson*

## Curator's Corner, *continued*

The Stetson Family: When I visited Jean Jovell, granddaughter of Harriet (Stetson) Poole and great-niece of the sisters, she loaned me a picture of the Stetson family on Alice's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday. It is a fine addition to the Textiles Room, placed next to the Stetson quilts, and across the room from Harriet Poole's wedding gown made in 1920.

### LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Fall is here and the museum is in the process of being buttoned-up for the long New England winter. I would like to take this time to thank all our volunteers who helped with our many projects this past season but especially our docents, who take the time to cater their tours to our guest's specific requests and provide an unsurpassed experience for all those who tour the museum and grounds.

I would be remiss if I did not take the time to thank Dan Meader for his expertise and guidance as we cleaned out an annexed storage building as well as we began to do the same with a storage area within the museum. Dan's vast knowledge of not only Georgetown's history but of antiques is priceless to us and our mission. Thank you, Dan.

I would also like to thank Chris DiFranco, Georgetown High School AP History class, teacher who has volunteered to take the lead on our Instagram account and blog. We look forward to seeing what Chris as well as his students see as "post worthy" to showcase Georgetown's rich, wide-ranging history. I am sure they will inspire us all.

We will soon begin to plan for 2020 events so if you have any ideas, we welcome your input. Please feel free to reach out with your recommendations or any concerns you have regarding the museum, the gardens or Georgetown Historical Society in general, we welcome and value the support of all of you, our members.



*Betsy Moran*

### Flatbread Fundraiser

On August 27<sup>th</sup> the Historical Society held a fundraiser hosted by Flatbread Pizza. Raffle tickets to "A Christmas Carol" were sold, and there was a special guessing game for those that stopped at our table. A number of strange-looking artifacts were displayed. If someone guessed correctly, they were rewarded with a special prize with historical significance. Thanks to everyone who came out to support us.



## Annual Meeting, December 3<sup>rd</sup> , 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Our Annual Meeting is coming up on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6:30 – 8:00 at the Georgetown Peabody Library. Georgetown's own housewright, Matt Diana, will be our guest speaker.

Matt attended the North Bennet Street School's Preservation Carpentry program, where he excelled at the hands-on training of 17th, 18th and 19th century building techniques. Before founding his own company, he refined his knowledge and skills while working with renowned preservation specialists in both Eastern and Western Massachusetts.



**Matt Diana**

Prior to a career in historic restoration, Matt graduated from Clarkson University with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. Matt's engineering background provides foundational skills in problem solving, organization, and project management that ensure projects flow in an efficient and timely manner. Please join us on Tuesday the 3<sup>rd</sup> for this highly entertaining lecture! Light refreshments will be served.

## **Georgetown Remembered**, by *Joe Corcoran and Andrew LeBlanc*

- Before the dump was on East Main Street in the 1950's, people would throw rubbish over the banking on lower West St. into the swamp near where the town wells are now.
- In the early 1950's, everyone had a party telephone line in the Jewett/Jackman/Warren Street area. There were no private lines.
- Streetcar tracks, which began construction in the late 1800's, were still in the center of town in the mid 1950's

### Some actual Georgetown Tidd-bits:

- Hilda Tidd patented a fruit picker in 1908, and brought the organized Mormon Church to town. The first meetings were held in her front room at 43 West Street in the 1940's.
- Oscar Tidd had the first phone on West Street; he ran the wire down the street himself around 1910.
- During 1937, Alfred Tidd built the main house at Camp Denison, paying his workers 50¢ an hour.
- Ellsworth Tidd was a busy architect during the 1960's: He designed the Georgetown High School in 1961, an addition to the Georgetown Public Library at the children's room in 1964, an addition to the Perley school in 1964 and an addition to the high school in 1965.



## Holiday On Main

Join the Historical Society – along with other organizations and small businesses – as we come together on Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup> to celebrate Georgetown’s Annual “Holiday on Main.”

This event will take place from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Each participant will have a raffle card to be stamped as each of you visits a business indicated on a map of the downtown area. If you get six stamps, you will be eligible to win the basic raffle. If you get nine stamps, that makes you eligible to enter a raffle basket with even more prizes.

And if you get 12 stamps? Well that makes you one of the chosen few to enter the drawing for the biggest raffle basket of all. Each business will have its own open house and giveaways. There will be snacks and drinks, live music, photo opportunities, games and much more.

The Historical Society will have a table at the Scala Center. We will have a fun guessing game with prizes, merchandise to sell, and information about our upcoming events for 2020.



### HOLIDAY ON MAIN

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 – 5:00 p.m.

## Trails and Sails



The Brocklebank Museum was open on Sunday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, and Sunday, September 29<sup>th</sup> for this year’s Essex Heritage event of Trails and Sails.

The gardens were still blooming and beautiful during this early autumn event. There were 34 visitors altogether. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped out.

## Halloween Talk

On October 22<sup>nd</sup>, board member Karen Brockelbank gave a lecture at the library entitled, “Halloween: Origins and Evolution,” which traced the ancient origins of Halloween and modern trivia, along with “Gravestones and Genealogy,” which contained photographs of burial grounds and gravestones in and around Georgetown.



At the end of the evening, the winning raffle ticket was drawn for “A Christmas Carol.”

Congratulations to Sam Anderson.



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## GEORGETOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY



### OFFICERS

President	Betsy Moran
1st Vice President	Sylvia Johnston
2nd Vice President	Ralph Chouinard
Secretary	Lew Harrold
Treasurer	Michelle Cook
Curator	Karen Brockelbank

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Joe Corcoran, Rick Detwiller, Jeff Lamoureux,  
and Mary Saunders

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- E-MAIL US AT: [info@georgetownhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@georgetownhistoricalsociety.com)