

Georgetown Historical Society

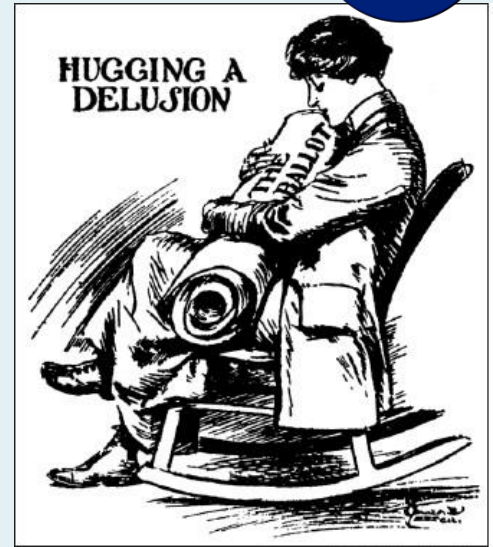
Fall Newsletter 2020

19th Amendment Centennial Celebration

Part 2: Change in the Air

The Fifteenth Amendment had granted black men the right to vote in 1869. This victory fueled the suffrage movement forward as women desired equal rights as citizens under the law.

The Industrial Revolution had brought swift change to the United States. Factories replaced farms as technological advances brought people into the cities to find work. As a vulnerable population of women and children entered the workforce, the need for human rights became more important. Women wanted to protect their families, and this could only be accomplished by participating in the government. In addition to campaigning for their own civil rights, female activists supported other social movements as well - such as the ongoing fight for racial equality, education reform, the labor movement, and temperance. Most of these causes had overlapping personnel as some powerful political activists, such as Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass, occasionally formed alliances to support each other.



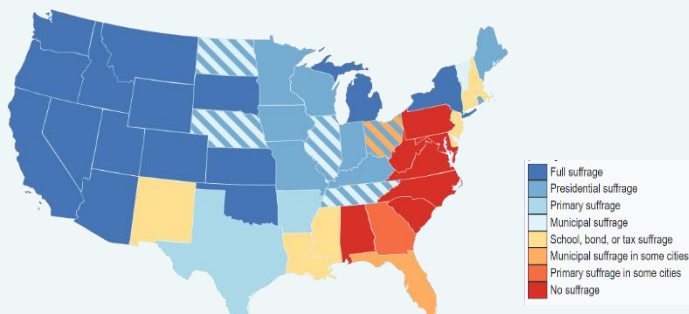
1880's Suffrage Cartoon

“Men, their rights and nothing more; women, their rights and nothing less!”

~ The Revolution, 1868

In the mid-1800s, married women could not own property in their own right, nor participate in legal contracts. For this reason, many chose to remain single – including Susan B. Anthony, who was famously arrested for voting illegally in 1872. She was not alone, however, as many prominent women began to take part in the long struggle for equal rights as citizens of the United States.

U.S.A. Suffrage Ratification Before 1920



"If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice, or representation."

~ Abigail Adams

Apphia Winter Horner Howard - Georgetown's Suffragette

Apphia Winter Horner was born on September 28, 1832, the youngest of four children born to Andrew and Mary Howard in Rowley's West Parish. Apphia's childhood home was on Elm Street, just down the road from the Brocklebank Museum. She lived there until she married Alvah Heaton Howard, a Vermont native and oral surgeon, in 1854. When Apphia and Alvah decided to settle down in her hometown and build their home at 21 Nelson Street, it was purchased in Apphia's maiden name.



GHS members, please return your dues along with your vote on the revision to GHS by-laws.

Married women who lived in Massachusetts could not own their own property, make out their own wills, or buy and sell land until 1855 (some early suffragists stayed defiantly single in response to this restriction). The couple's choice to purchase their new family home in Apphia's name is an interesting one. Although the law was changed the year after their marriage, we can only speculate that they may have purchased their home in Apphia's name simply to make a point.

A prolific writer, Apphia embraced the suffrage movement, publishing articles under both her maiden and married names. She not only wrote for local publications on a variety of topics, but for the 'Women's Journal' and 'Forney's' as their Boston correspondent. Her contributions kept the women's suffrage movement in the forefront of local political conversation.

"It is the duty of those who are actively engaged in the reform, to throw so much light on the matter, that fair minded men and women of twenty-one years of age shall have no excuse for refusing to give the influence of their names in favor of the cause." ~ Apphia Horner Howard



21 Nelson Avenue

Sarah Horner, her older sister by four years, may have strongly influenced Apphia's passion for the suffrage movement. A popular school teacher, Sarah taught in all of Georgetown's one-room schoolhouses – including the last one standing, now located on museum property. Sarah never married or had children of her own, but she was commended by the school committee for her lifelong dedication to the children of Georgetown.

Sadly, neither Apphia nor her sister Sarah would live long enough to see the passage of the 19th amendment. Apphia, her husband Alvah and sister Sarah are all buried in the Union Cemetery on East Main Street. Her home at 21 Nelson Avenue, a beautiful example of second empire architecture, still stands today.

"Do not think your single vote does not matter much. The rain that refreshes the parched ground is made up of single drops."

~ Kate Sheppard

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Earlier this year we planned the replacement of our sign at the museum. The replica of the original tavern sign, painted by local artist Chuck Margeson, had deteriorated beyond repair. After some discussion, the board settled on a design approved by the Essex National Heritage Area. Our new sign, in the same style found on sites around Essex County and at the Union Cemetery, was installed on June 18th.

During August, the flagpole was scraped, restored, and painted by Ralph Chouinard. Jim Boynton and his son Stephen assisted in lowering and raising the pole, and installed a new length of rope. Our flag was proudly hoisted on the shiny new flagpole during our outdoor Trails and Sails event in September.



New Sign

NEW PLANTINGS AT THE MUSEUM

You may have noticed a parade of [tulips](#) lining the museum fence this past spring. This splash of color received so much attention that we planted even more bulbs that will bloom in 2021. Be on the lookout for daffodils, crocus and grape hyacinth!



April Tulips

Two heirloom fruit trees were carefully selected for the grounds of the museum in May. Board member Mary Saunders explains:

“Because the Brocklebank house was once a tavern where hard cider and perry (made from pears) may well have been served, we chose to plant an apple and a pear tree between the back of the shoe shop and the path to the ell. The apple is a Baldwin, which was first discovered in Wilmington, MA about 1740. By 1850, Baldwin was the standard all-purpose home and commercial apple. It also makes high-quality hard cider. The pear tree comes from a cutting from the Endicott pear planted in 1630 or 1632 by the first Colonial Governor, John Endicott, in what is now Danvers. That original tree is still alive! Ours will have a long way to go before we harvest and perhaps prepare our own perry from its fruit.”

LOOKING FOR A GARDEN URN...

Our intrepid horticulturists are planning a Victorian-style flower garden on the museum grounds in 2021. They are looking for an urn – approximately 3’ high and 32” across – as a focal point. Wrought iron is preferred.

Please let us know if you have one to donate, or know where one can be found for a reasonable price.



WINDOW WORK – Jim Boynton

This season saw an urgent restoration to the windows of the museum’s Ell and Shoe Shop by our own Jim Boynton. Here he recounts his meticulous efforts.

After becoming a GHS Director this year I was given a tour of the Brocklebank Museum. During the tour I noticed in the Ell wing several windows with broken or cracked window panes. I thought they should be addressed sooner rather than later. I got the okay and started removing and repairing them one at a time. They were held in place with nails tacked in at an angle to keep them in place as well as several coats of paint buildup on the outside.

Upon removal I found two to be in bad structural condition and had to rebuild them. The windows were sanded/scraped, reglazed (when needed), primed and painted and two applications of boiled linseed oil were applied to the insides (extremely dried out). One window was painted white on the inside that I stripped and refinished to match the rest. I reinstalled them with wood brackets from old wood I found.



While working on the Ell windows I could not help but notice the apparent flaking and missing glazing on the shoe shop windows. I could not stop now as they needed to be addressed as well. I am glad I did as I found the sills to be in worse shape than the windows. Due to the age of the Shoe Shop the window sills were not level and water seems to have gone to the low end and caused some rotting over time that I cut/cleaned out and rebuilt with wood filler.

The windows were also treated like the Ell windows. The one attic or scuttle window was the worst of them all. I had to replace a section of the frame and rebuild a portion of existing. sash. The glass had to be replaced being under proper size and not covering the sash channels properly causing water damage over time. I believe this may be the only original window to the building.



Close-up of wood damage

WINDOW WORK – Jim Boynton

Continued

Also while working in the Shoe Shop I pulled open the drawer to the shoe maker's bench and found a real nasty mouse nest. It was amongst numerous shoe-making tools that were impacted by the mess. They had to be cleaned and disinfected so I brought them and others in the shop home to bring them back to a presentable condition. One thing always leads to another!



Mouse nest!



Every historical shoe shop in the area has a sign over its door identifying it as such. Ours does not, so I made one. Within the Shoe Shop I saw an old unique wooden cutout of a boot hanging on the wall. With some thought I made an "OPEN" sign to attach to it to hang outside when appropriate.

If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.

- Henry David Thoreau

ESSEX NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

GHS RECEIVES GRANT FOR RAISED BED GARDEN

The Board of the Georgetown Historical Society is proud to announce that we are the recipients of a 2020 Essex National Heritage Grant to create historic door yard/kitchen gardens inside the White Horse Tavern Fence at the Brocklebank Museum. Over this past winter the grant writing team of Mary Saunders, Eileen Seaberg, Karen Brockelbank, Sylvia Johnston, and Betsy Moran was successful in securing the grant monies to create these gardens. Once completed, these gardens will be an additional educational layer for the museum visitors and Penn Brook students. Raised beds, which are historic in design and materials, were installed on the property and filled with historic varieties of plants used in the time of the earliest residents of the Brocklebank homestead. The Essex National Heritage Commission is the primary grant sponsor of this project, www.essexheritage.org. Our matching funds will be in labor provided by the grant-writing team, and Historical Society members and volunteers. Project completion date is planned for June 30, 2021.

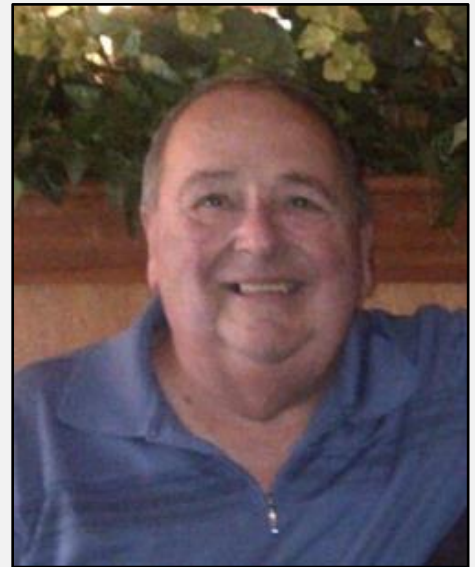


In Memorium

Ralph Chouinard

Long time GHS board member Ralph Chouinard passed away in November after several years of fighting off various serious health problems.

Ralph joined the historical society after helping his friend and GHS member, Dale West, with various projects around the museum – most notably the repositioning of the flagpole to its current location in 2000. Among his many talents, Ralph took care of the property at the museum. His expertise came in handy when interacting with the water department. He was very resourceful, always optimistic, and generous with his time. He will be greatly missed.



Remembrances by some board members:

“My husband and I used to double date with Ralph and Carole. Before we left for the restaurant he would always say, ‘*we’re going out to dinner – put on your buffet pants!*’ It’s one of my favorite funny things about him. He’d make me laugh.” ~ Sylvia Johnston

“Ralph visited us while we were planning the Mardi Gras event at Veasey Park. I was a little worried about him navigating the stairways with that cane, but he marched all over the campus, commenting on what a nice job we were doing and watching us as we made crafts and decorations. On the day of the event he was in the kitchen bugging the staff for a cup of coffee and telling Henny Youngman one-liners to the volunteers. He could always put a smile on my face.” ~ Karen Brockelbank

“My wife said to me, ‘For our anniversary I want to go somewhere I’ve never been before.’ I said, ‘Try the kitchen!’” ~Henny Youngman

“In the last few years when he was in poor health, Ralph would stop by the Museum frequently when we were working on the gardens and fence painting to encourage us and make a few suggestions as well as tell a joke or two. Ralph kept an eye on things. He clearly felt that our work, his work in the past, was very important. I will miss him.” ~ Mary Saunders

Jackie Brockelbank

In July, lifetime member Jackie Brockelbank passed away after a short stay in the hospital. She often took the time to help out with various projects at the museum, and was a longtime supporter.

Roger Clay

Long time member Roger Clay passed away suddenly in December. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family and friends.

19th Amendment Centennial Celebration

Part 3: A Nationwide Shift Towards Inclusion

As Apphia Horner Howard and others like her lobbied for change in the east, territories out west began to grant women the right to vote. Free to be more progressive, the west was not weighed down by conventional thinking. In 1869, Wyoming was the first state to ratify the rights of their female citizens. This liberal way of thinking was briefly threatened in 1871 when the territorial legislature considered repealing suffrage. Amalia Post, a business-woman and wife of a prominent banker (and the first woman to serve on an American jury) wrote letters of protest to the governor. Eventually most states west of the Mississippi approved women's suffrage on some level before the Nineteenth Amendment became law. (map of states, wiki)



Unladylike Behavior

By the turn of the 20th century, women had been marching for equal rights for decades. Suffrage demonstrations began to intensify, and the wave of young women who were actively protesting could say that they learned how from their grandmothers. The “New Woman” was a term used by the media to describe independent women seeking radical change. These women could be found holding jobs, attending college and political rallies, smoking in public and riding bicycles (see inset.) As women continually grew more independent and challenged traditional thinking they were harassed publicly – but this only fueled their desire to be treated as equal citizens.

The Bicycle: A Gateway to Individual Mobility



The invention of the bicycle gave women a new level of freedom. Before the bicycle, the only way a person could travel long distances was by horse. Since societal norms dictated that women only be allowed to ride sidesaddle – a dangerous undertaking – women did not travel long distances alone. However, the invention of a new undergarment called bloomers allowed any woman to straddle a bicycle and travel safely - challenging conventions of female weakness and fragility. Individual women of the Victorian Era were now visible in public spaces, and enjoyed escaping the confines of their homes. Elizabeth Cady Stanton said that “*woman is riding to suffrage on the bicycle.*”

“Let me tell you what I think of bicycling. I think it has done more to emancipate women than anything else in the world. It gives women a feeling of freedom and self-reliance. I stand and rejoice every time I see a woman ride by on a wheel...the picture of free, untrammelled womanhood.” ~ Susan B. Anthony

The “Progressive Era” 1895 - 1916

The Progressive Era brought widespread social activism and political reform. Dozens of new women’s groups popped up and suffrage publications began to blanket the country. Former president and controversial political figure Teddy Roosevelt created a political party that endorsed women’s suffrage in an attempt to regain the presidency in 1912. That same year 20,000 people protested the law by marching in a parade in Manhattan. Four years later, both parties supported women’s suffrage but only on a state-by-state basis.



On March 3, 1913, the day before Woodrow Wilson’s inauguration, thousands of women marched in the Woman Suffrage Procession in Washington D.C. It was the first large, organized march of a political nature to take place in the nation’s capital. Led by Alice Paul and Lucy Burns, the purpose of the parade was to, "march in a spirit of protest against the present political organization of society, from which women are excluded". This political protest received national attention and fueled the fire of the women’s suffrage movement.

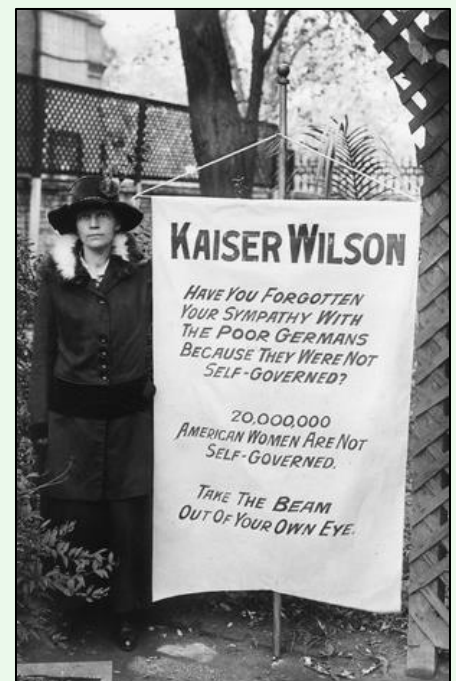
“It is unthinkable that a national government which represents women should ignore the issue of the right of all women to political freedom.”

~ Lucy Burns

The Silent Sentinels

In the summer of 1917 over 200 women known as the Silent Sentinels were arrested for peacefully picketing the White House. Singled out by the group for his lack of support, the president had been labeled “Kaiser Wilson”. The women were imprisoned in a workhouse with squalid conditions. When some of them went on hunger strikes, they were force-fed, beaten and tortured. When stories and pictures of the prisoners were published, Americans became outraged and support for the movement grew quickly.

When the United States joined World War I in 1917, the visibility of women as contributing citizens became glaringly apparent as thousands began to work in factories supporting the war effort in jobs formerly occupied by men. After years of pressure, and compelled by global politics, President Wilson finally endorsed the movement in 1918. That same year John W. Weeks, a Massachusetts senator, lost his bid for re-election because he opposed women’s suffrage which had become wildly popular. On August 18, 1920 the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified after almost 100 years of struggle by women to claim their equal rights as citizens of the United States of America.



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

I had hoped as 2020 began that this year-end note would be a delightful summary of all the wonderful events we had scheduled for 2020, but alas that is not to be the case. The Society Board members worked diligently over the winter of 2019 and the early spring of 2020 to prepare a calendar full of living history events in partnership with other societies and the Georgetown Peabody Library to share with you, our members, and the community. Sadly, the entire season had to be cancelled. We still have high hopes to be able to reschedule these events and more in 2021.

What 2020 did give us was plenty of time to work on the museum, shoe shop and landscape. Thank you to all who have walked by, stopped and commented on the enhancements to the property this past year. And from me a very special and heartfelt thank you to my fellow board members and volunteers who helped make this happen. Together we have made amazing progress.

With the grant funding we received from Essex National Heritage Commission the raised beds were installed inside the fence, which will be adding an educational layer to the museum tours. These raised bed kitchen/dooryard gardens are a sampling of the vegetables, herbs and flowers that would have been grown in colonial times for food, medicinal needs as well as dyes for fabric.

The shoe shop restoration is almost complete. Using CPC funds, the new cedar roof has been installed and looks wonderful, Jim's window restorations are complete and new siding soon will be installed where needed. This will then become another educational feature of Georgetown's rich history coming to life that we will be able to convey to our visitors.

As always, please let us know if you have any recommendations or concerns regarding the museum structure, the grounds 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, as there is always plenty to do. Just send us an email at – info@georgetownhistoricalsociety.com.

This year we were unable to do any fundraising events. If you have not sent in your 2021 dues, please take the time to do so now. It is the support of members like you who enable our continued success. We thank you in advance.

Something to look forward to in 2021 - an additional 100 plus bulbs were planted this fall all around the property! Thank you, Mary, for helping me get them all planted – I may have gotten a little overzealous at the garden shop.

Betsy Moran

COVID SAFE: Because of new [safety guidelines](#) brought on by COVID 19, the Brocklebank Museum was not open to the public during 2020. Until these new protocols are officially rescinded, the Georgetown Historical Society will no longer offer walk-in tours on Sunday.

Instead, we plan to offer tours by appointment only on a family-by-family basis, and also increase our outdoor events. More details to come.

2020 EVENTS RECAP

Mardi Gras: On February 22, we collaborated with the [Groveland Historical Society](#) and the [Friends of Veasey Park](#) to celebrate Mardi Gras. The party started before 4:00 and lasted until 9:00 as more than 150 visitors flocked to Veasey Park. Live music, food, prizes, crafts and games were enjoyed by partygoers of all ages.

Trails and Sails: September 20th and 27th

In response to new safety guidelines required by the state of Massachusetts, our [Trails and Sails](#) event was held entirely outdoors this year. Visitors enjoyed a brief description of the history of the house, and learned about 17th and 18th century herbs, vegetables, and flowers during a guided garden tour. This restructuring of our event was met with enthusiasm by all who attended and volunteered, and was fully endorsed by the Trails and Sails team at Essex National Heritage Area.



MSOG Cemetery Tour: On October 24, a special tour was given of the Union Cemetery to members of the Merrimack Valley Chapter of the [Massachusetts Society of Genealogists](#). Several board members gave presentations on Georgetown legends - including Cuffee Dole, Georgetown's own suffragette Apphia Winter Horner Howard, the Reverend Isaac Braman and his family, and the Throat Distemper of 1735. Seven members of the MSOG showed up to this socially distanced "walk and talk", and enjoyed a question-and-answer session afterward.

Georgetown Historical Society
P.O. Box 376
Georgetown, MA 01833

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.*

 <https://www.facebook.com/GeorgetownHistorical/>

 <https://www.instagram.com/georgetownhistoricalsociety/>

<https://www.georgetownhistoricalsociety.com>