

## **GUILFORD PRESERVATION ALLIANCE**

NEWSLETTER FALL 2017

## **Letter From the President**

his has been another exciting and productive year for GPA as we continued to pursue our mission of preserving both the built and natural environment of Guilford. Here are some of our accomplishments this year:

- Our newest initiative is the Witness Stones Project, which aims to acknowledge
  the history of slavery in Guilford and honor the humanity and contributions of the
  enslaved people by installing engraved markers where they lived, worked or prayed.
   We are deeply honored to be a part of this project.
- GPA was instrumental in preserving two historic buildings, the Moose Hill District Schoolhouse and the Increase Pendleton House. GPA has acted as the watchdog of the town's Delay of Demolition Ordinance since 2005 and has learned that early intervention is critical in preservation efforts.
- A new GPA committee began work on "A Guide to Preserving the Historic House," a user friendly resource guide for historic preservation.
- Twenty volunteers hosted visitors to the Information Plaza Kiosk this year.
   Over 500 information seekers stopped by and were told about where to eat, shop, hike, boat and even live in Guilford.



Witness Stones committee member Kristine Iglesias holds Moses' Witness Stone which was placed in front of Town Hall Nov. 2nd. (Read more on the following page.)

- Nearly 100 visitors enjoyed the free "Around the Green" walking tours this season. Led by volunteers, the tours include information about the history of the Green and surrounding homes, businesses and civic buildings.
- The Guilford Tourism Committee, convened by Brian McGlone and with the GPA and the Chamber of Commerce, is working on a town signage project to promote Heritage Tourism and reduce signage pollution.
- The Guilford Museums Group, begun by GPA, and made up of representatives of the five historic house museums, meets 4 to 5 times a year to coordinate new and longstanding museum activities.
- GPA's Train Station Committee is continuing its work with Amtrak, the DOT and the Town to preserve the 19th century brick water tower and engine house at the Guilford Shoreline East Commuter Rail Station.
- The GPA is proud to support the 6th CT Regiment reenactment group in placing a plaque at Sachem's Head in May, 2018, to honor and commemorate the valor of Revolutionary War soldiers in Meig's Raid.
- An open house was held for the historic bowling alley and barn at the Chittenden Estate on Broad St. A
  grant from GPA's Jones Trust to the property's current owner helped restore the bowling alley.
- GPA's Jones Trust is also making possible restoration projects in a local church and house museum, and another significant restoration and re-use project is in the initial stages of exploration.

Please read more about these achievements elsewhere in the newsletter. We ask for your ongoing support so that we may continue our work in these many important preservation endeavors.

Sincerely yours,

Shirley Girioni, President

#### Remembering the Enslaved in Guilford: The Witness Stones Project

Through research, education, and civic engagement, the Witness Stones Project seeks to restore the history and to honor the humanity and contributions of the enslaved individuals who helped build our communities.

The Witness Stones Project was born from the idea of bearing witness to the past. Dennis Culliton (history teacher and GPA Board member) and Doug Nygren (therapist and German scholar) collaborated on an idea to acknowledge the history of slavery in Guilford (based upon Dennis's research), and to honor the humanity and contributions of the enslaved individuals who helped build our community. The project (inspired by the Stolpersteine in Germany) will bear witness by installing a marker which recognizes an enslaved person at a location where they lived, worked, or prayed. From the beginning, Culliton envisioned this as an educational project with Guilford students analyzing primary documents in order to research the history of an enslaved individual and reconstruct the memory of that person through the written record. He has worked with Guilford Public Schools and his fellow educators to create a multi-dimensional and thought provoking curriculum, which was presented and approved for students in the 8th grade at Adams Middle School beginning this fall.

The Guilford Preservation Alliance, with its unwavering commitment to the preservation of Guilford's history, is a natural ally for the project. The Board extended its support and the Witness Stones became a committee of the GPA. Culliton and Nygren met with the Board of Selectman and gained approval to install the first Witness Stone in front of Guilford's Town Hall. The Stone will bear witness to Moses who lived enslaved on that site.

The next phase was to inform the broader public and answer their questions. Two events were graciously hosted by the Guilford Free Library. The first was a talk entitled "Remembering the Enslaved in Guilford: The Witness Stones Project" on July 20th. The next event was a Panel Discussion on September 13th moderated by Oliver Scholes from the Harriet Beecher

Stowe Center. Both events were well attended and the reception by community members was resoundingly positive.

As this newsletter goes to print, the 8th grade students at Adams Middle School are analyzing primary documents, writing brief biographies, and creating illustrations in order to restore the history of enslaved individuals who helped build our community. What is learned about the individuals through the students' research will be celebrated at the ceremony for the installation of the Witness Stones, published in a commemorative program, and chronicled on the Witness Stones website.

When you read this article, Guilford's first three Witness Stones will be in place. On November 2, 2017, following an opening ceremony on the Guilford Green featuring music, speakers, and the recitation of students' work; those gathered will have moved to three historic locations where Moses, Phillis, and Candace once lived enslaved. The first Witness Stones in Guilford will be installed in the sidewalks in front of the Town Hall, the Guilford Savings Bank, and the Hyland House, respectively.

The Witness Stones, crafted of granite and brass and hand-stamped with the name of the enslaved individual together with something discovered about them through the research process, will remain as a lasting memorial. In stumbling upon a Stone, one is invited to bear witness to the individual, honoring their humanity and contributions. The goal is to restore history and, ultimately, to promote equality, justice, and inclusion.

This project is generously funded by the Guilford Foundation and the Guilford Fund for Education, and sponsored by the Horton Group and the Witness Stones membership.

If you are interested to learn more about the Witness Stones Project, please visit their website at www.witnessstones.org.

-Cindy Kozal



Little Family sings at the Witness Stones installation ceremony.



Dennis Cullition speaks of inspiration in his opening remarks.



Many hands place Candace's Witness Stone at the Hyland House.

## A Guide to Preserving the Historic House

A new GPA committee has formed with the goal of the GPA and the Historic District Commission, of developing a user friendly resource guide for historic preservation. We will be collecting information from a variety of sources, including but not limited to, historic design, materials, and technologies. And by combining the resources

as well as town ordinances and regulations, the quide will provide professionals and homeowners with comprehensive information in one place.

-Katherine Frydenborg

#### 90 People Visit Bowling Alley and Barn at Chittenden Estate

October 14 was Open House Day for the bowling alley and barn at the Chittenden Estate, 29 Broad



ode audio/picture fil with info about the Chittenden estate.

St., and was enjoyed by 90 people, William Chittenden was one of Guilford's founders, and his estate originally included his house at 29 Broad St., 1 Broad St. next door, as well as a stone water tower, a deer park with fountain, and peacocks and peahens. The gentleman's barn was built in 1868 and the bowling alley in 1870. A recent grant from GPA's Jones Trust to the current owner, Dr. Richard Lewis, has helped with the restoration of the bowling alley. The grant stipulates that the open house will be repeated once annually for the next two years.

-Tracv Tomaselli



Bowling Alley interior

#### 19th Century Railroad Buildings

The GPA's Train Station Committee are continuing to collaborate with Amtrak, the Town of Guilford, the Connecticut Department of Transportation, and other interested parties to preserve the rare late-nineteenth-century brick water tower and engine house adjacent to Guilford's Shore Line East Commuter Rail station.

Working pro bono, consulting architects Will Thompson and Chris Widmer have drafted detailed specifications that will enable us to put the following project out to bid. Once those figures are available, the Committee expects to be in a position to advise the GPA Board on the cost of (a) stabilizing the water tower in situ, to prevent further damage resulting from exposure to the elements; and (b) dismantling the engine house, salvaging as much of the original material as possible, and storing it on Town property so that it can be reconstructed as part of a future development of the train station area.

Warm thanks to Will, Chris, Ellen Ebert, and all the other dedicated volunteers who are helping to keep this project on track!

-Harry Haskell

# 240 Years Later, Soldiers Honored for Enterprise and Valor

In 1777, during the American Revolutionary War, Continental Army supply depots in Connecticut towns were attacked and destroyed by the British. In retaliation, Lieutenant-Colonel Return Jonathan Meigs launched a stealth counter-attack on the British supply outpost at Sag Harbor, New York. Commencing May 23, 1777, 160 men departed from Sachem's Head Harbor. Using whaleboats they rowed across Long Island Sound, and under the darkness of the night, they arrived at Sag Harbor and at 2 A.M. commenced the surprise attack. During the engagement with the enemy, not a single patriot was killed or wounded;

twelve British ships were destroyed, supplies confiscated, and 96 prisoners captured. Congress recognized the "Prudence, Activity, Enterprise and Valor" in which the successful 25-hour expedition was conducted.

The 6th Connecticut Regiment reenactment group will be installing a plague to commemorate this raid in May 2018, on lower Colonial Rd. in Sachem's Head. The Guilford Preservation Alliance proudly supported this project.

-Tracy Tomaselli

## House Museums Work Together

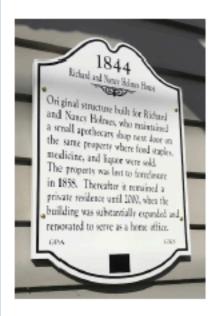
The Museums Group meets 4 to 5 times each. The two-day Early Guilford Days Family Festival in year (or as necessary) to coordinate the year's plans, with a director or curator representing each museum. This year "Illuminating History," "shared" exhibit, was about lighting implements—from the most rudimentary at the seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Henry Whitfield House, Thomas Griswold House and Hyland House to more sophisticated at the early- and mid-nineteenth-century Medad Stone Tavern and Dudley Farm. While it is likely that not many people toured the houses specifically for the exhibit, it provided an extra talking point for our guides and was very popular. We are tossing around ideas for next year's shared exhibit.

late July was VERY successful. It was well attended at all sites on both days: a total of 186 adults and at least 300 children visited the five museums that weekend to tour the houses and gardens and participate in domestic and craft demonstrations.

There was good participation by the Museums Group in the Guilford Fair Parade in September. There's always room for more people, so we will reach out to more of our members earlier next

Katherine Frydenborg and Veronica Soell

## Find these historic plaques around the Green



For information about obtaining a plaque for your building, contact Ellen Ebert at ellenebert@aol.com or call 203-453-6353







#### An Activist, an Actor and a Lawyer Join GPA Board

Cindy Kozal moved to Guilford with her husband and three children in the summer of 2000. After living in six states coast to coast and in between, she appreciates Guilford's dedication to preserving the unique character of its "built and natural" features. For this reason, she is happy to join the GPA and looks forward to contributing toward ongoing preservation efforts. In addition to being a mother, Cindy has been an environmental activist since college focused on issues ranging from nuclear proliferation and opposition to the underground nuclear testing taking place at the Nevada Test Site in the mid-to-late 80s to, more recently, issues related to climate change and public lands. When her children were young, she was very involved volunteering with their schools and activities. In the present, she is one of the co-founders of the Witness Stones Project and serves as the project's Senior Editor.

After retiring in 2016 with 40+ years' experience in the corporate world, Allison Alkire was looking for something completely out of her wheelhouse to keep her busy and engaged in the community. The kiosk was her introduction to GPA and the valuable services it provides to the town and

people of Guilford. Picking up some additional responsibilities as a member of the Board seemed a logical outgrowth of that positive experience. She also volunteers at the Guilford Food Bank, the Branford Compassion Club, a feline rescue and adoption organization, and the Shubert Theater in New Haven. The most atypical activity she's undertaken so far is as a member of the Ivoryton Players, a community theater group sponsored by the Ivoryton Playhouse, where she's appeared in two shows with small speaking parts, played a dead body, and will be appearing in an upcoming production of Neil Simon's "Plaza Suite."

Joe Hellman practiced law in New York City for fifty years during which time he had many interesting and challenging adventures. For some of that time he also taught law at NYU law school. He then retired and chose to live in Guilford so he and his wife could be near their grandchildren. in Madison. The three of them are now at an age where they are peeling off to out-of-town colleges. Joe and his wife love Guilford and enjoy the many cultural offerings here and elsewhere on the Shoreline.

#### **GPA Mission Statement**

Guilford Preservation Alliance, Inc. is a educational displays; sponsors forums; and community advocacy organization constituted to preserve and protect the built and natural heritage of Guilford.

#### Activities and Achievements

GPA has joined with several organizations to begin the Heritage Tourism Initiative, to foster economic growth for town merchants and increased visitation to the five house museums and Guilford's wealth of cultural and natural resources. The centerpiece of Heritage Tourism is The Information Plaza, with the interactive Information Kiosk, and is staffed seasonally with volunteers. Residents and visitors alike can access all the community events, links and resources via the electronic Kiosk and the Guilford community website, www.visitguilfordct.com.

GPA creates educational programs; makes temporary and permanent installations of surveys and makes drawings of buildings for the historical record.

In cooperation with the town's Delay of Demolition ordinance, GPA maintains a master list of historic properties, and advises owners of alternatives to demolishing houses and other historic buildings.

GPA also provides funding with grants and loans, through its Jones Trust Fund, to private and institutional owners of properties for repair and restoration; accepts easements for monitoring on a long-term basis; and is chartered to buy and sell real property for repair, restoration and resale.

Guilford Preservation Alliance has a citizen Board of Directors, and shares board members with the house museums in Guilford. The GPA board meets monthly in the Community Center.

#### The Kiosk at the Information Plaza

The Kiosk had a terrific season at the Information and Viet Nam, just to name a few. Plaza this summer.

Early in the season, after meeting for a brief refresher training about the Kiosk, twenty Volunteers greeted visitors from late May thru early Oct., covering Thursday through Monday 10-1 and 1-4.

The Kiosk was visited by 503 quests, asking questions like where to eat, hike, boat, and even where to live in Guilford. And of course, our FREE Guided Tour on the Green on Saturdays continued to be a big attraction. Advertising by local businesses increased on our website as well.

Visitors from across America and beyond came to Guilford this summer. Folks from 36 states stopped by, and visitors came from places like South America, Australia, Mexico, Canary Islands.

We started to inquire why folks were visiting Guilford, Reasons varied from "had been a college student in the area," came back for family and friend reunions, attended the Guilford Craft Expo. and of course, to attend the Guilford Fair. The one phrase everyone had in common was that Guilford is a friendly and thriving community.

If you are interested in becoming a Volunteer next season, please contact Marcia at Safirstein1428@ amail.com.

Visit our website, www.visitguilfordct.com, for ongoing events in Guilford year round. See you next spring at the Kiosk.

-Marcia Saferstein

#### Walking Tours Featured in USA Today

Free "Around the Green" Walking Tours this year were again very successful. Featured in USA Today on October 2nd (9 Reasons CT Should be your Fall Destination), the tours were attended by almost 100 participants. Led by volunteers, visitors walked around the Guilford Green exploring the history of the Green itself, and the surrounding homes and businesses, most of which are on the National Register of Historic Places, Details about the local Indians, New England slavery, how Guilford is connected to the saving of the Connecticut Charter (1687), the Salem Witch

Trials (1692), and the Statue of Liberty, as well as entertaining historical stories made this tour enjoyable for attendees of all ages. Tours began at the Guilford Information Plaza, 32 Church Street, at 11:00 a.m. on Saturdays, and were also available by appointment.

Find self-guided tours of the Guilford Town Center, historic Fair St., and Alderbrook Cemetery under "Tours" at www.visitguilfordct.com.

-TracyTomaselli

#### Welcome to Guilford

The Guilford Tourism Committee, convened by Brian McGlone with the Guilford Preservation Alliance and the Shoreline Chamber of Commerce, has been working for some months on a town signage project. Over time, we hope to create new, attractive welcome and wayfinding signs for Guilford. The initial part of the project deals with the first signs visitors will see as they approach our town, on the highway and at the ends of the I-95 off-ramps. We have commissioned a design for six Welcome to Guilford signs

for the latter. These signs will be made of a dark green material with elegant gold lettering and an icon depicting a colonial house shape. Members of the committee have been busy identifying locations for the signage and are working with the various authorities with jurisdiction over those roads. We are also beginning to identify sources for funding the signs.

-Veronica Soell

#### Increase Pendleton House 30 Water Street

Time and time again, the Guilford Preservation Alliance has learned that early intervention with owners of endangered historic properties can be far more effective than foisting the delay of demolition under town ordinance. The 18<sup>th</sup> century Increase Pendleton House at 30 Water Street is a classic example. This property does not fall within the purview of the local Historic District Commission, but it does appear on the Town Center National Register of Historic Places.

Ever since the passing of this property's last occupant, Ann Janeway, in 2014, the rugged old Colonial home has been abandoned. It stands hard by the roadside next door to the Guilford Post Office. The pronounced backward lean of the front facade and sag in the roof lend to its intrigue. However, a substantial portion of the dwelling's oak timber frame is in good condition, despite its outdated 20th century interior.

Before the property at 30 Water Street went into foreclosure under bank ownership, local Realtors allowed access to the dwelling for examination and discovery by Jonathan Wuerth, former GPA Board member and restoration contractor. At that time (2016), it was determined that the structure is a good candidate for extensive restoration.

In March '17, a prospective buyer proposed to demolish the Pendleton House, but the preservation community rallied. The deal fell through. In June '17, the principal of the 66 High Street townhouse development, Kenny Horton, purchased the property at 30 Water Street with an objective to effect a full restoration.

Mr. John Matthews of Madison has been retained as Mr. Horton's architect, who appears to have developed a sensitive approach to restoration.

Jonathan Wuerth pointing to the double chimney girts.

The design plan calls for two residential apartments on the second floor and commercial office space on the ground floor.

Both Mr. Horton and Mr. Matthews have worked closely with the Guilford Preservation Alliance to address various best practice/ compliance issues historic using preservation standards. The Zonina Board Appeals has granted setback requirements and an application before the Planning and Zonina Commission was approved.



30 Water Street

Increase Pendleton, for whom the house has earned its name, moved to Guilford with his parents at one year of age (1736), passing his entire life in the 30 Water Street location. He married Phebe Kingman on Christmas Day, 1764, and together they raised six children. During the American Revolutionary War, he earned the rank of Ensign and marched to Brooklyn, New York in the service of his country. He appears to have been active in the civic affairs of Guilford because he signed his name (*Increas*) as treasurer on a 1782 town receipt and later (1785–1790) served as a selectman of Guilford. Like his father, he pursued a trade as tanner and shoemaker.

A surprise discovery has been made that the eastern half of the Pendleton House is framed separately from—and different than—the western half. Thus, the original house with massive chimney only on one end constitutes a 2-story structure utilizing an unusual ¾ room over ¾ room plan. Based on study of early assessment records, the western addition was built (or possibly moved in) after 1790, incorporating a fourth fireplace.

Provisionally dated at circa 1765, the house has appeared on every historic house inventory in Guilford since 1889. Its original eastern portion may date to 1736+ during the ownership of Increase's father before him, but only the cutting edge technology of dendrochronology will be able to resolve the date of origin.

Long live the Pendleton House at 30 Water Street!

-Joel Helander

#### Saving the Moose Hill District Schoolhouse

America's celebrated poet John Greenleaf Whittier penned this verse:

> Still sits the school house by the road, A ragged beggar sleeping; Around it still the sumachs grow, And blackberry vines are creeping...

Such a ragged beggar has been sleeping for 104 years on a country roadside in the old-time district or neighborhood of Moose Hill, on a corner of the Old Boston Post Road. Until this fall, 2017, anyways. That's when a highly successful intervention was made to save the 206-year-old one room school house. In the face of demolition to make way for a new apartment complex, the school has been carefully dismantled and put into storage until it can hopefully soon be re-erected.

Most people never realized that the shabby, one story dwelling house formerly owned by the Montana Family at 2772 Boston Post Road harbored an early nineteenth century school. The living room of their house was the original school building, enclosed on four sides by 20th century additions. During the 1960s, and 1970s, Pasquale (Pat) and Rose Montana were proprietors of the Diamond M. Stables next door, which was a boarding place for horses.

When the schoolhouse lot on the southeast corner of Route One and Moose Hill Road was lost to mortgage foreclosure by the Montana Family in 2013, the Guilford Preservation Alliance went on high alert. After all, there are only twelve (12) other surviving schoolhouses in Guilford. The fate of this little temple of learning was threatened. Once again, the GPA realized that early intervention for preservation is usually more successful than last minute actions taken when the town receives an application for demolition.

A new private owner, Mr. Charles Steinberg of Branford, formed an LLC in 2015 for the purpose of developing the property. He pursued various applications before the Inlands Wetlands Commission and Planning & Zoning Commission, all of which were approved. Demolition of the school building became part of the plan for construction of a 10-unit apartment building. Mr. Steinberg thoughtfully allowed the Guilford Fire Department to use the abandoned building for training drills. And thoughtfully still, he expressed confidence in the work of the GPA by allowing unrestricted

entry for discovery process. What needed be discovered. οf course, was how much of the original schoolhouse existed and, if so, was it feasible to salvage it in some manner? This was accomplished in 2016 by discreetly



Moose Hill District School is designated at the SE corner of Moose Hill Rd. & Boston Post Rd. on the 1852 Irvine wall map.

peeling away multiple layers of corner walls to find the original timber frame.

The hand-hewn, oak timber frame was all there, including tapered rafter sets (4x4"), plates (7x7"), end girts (7x7"), and chimney girt (7x7"), Corner posts and wall studs in chestnut wood are also original to the structure. The flooring system is comprised of hand hewn sills (7x7") and halflog joists. Under three layers of flooring a small area of original random width floor boards were uncovered. Accordion type lath boards supported plastered walls and ceiling. It is believed that a wood stove last heated the little schoolhouse, vented through the ceiling via a metallic pipe into a stubby brick chimney that was seated on a thick plank resting on collar tie supports in the attic. Original nails found everywhere are early nineteenth century cut nails with peened or hammered heads. All that appeared missing was six windows and exterior clapboards. However, a small patch of clapboard remnants exposed vestiges of red paint--harkening back to the little red schoolhouse!

Over the summer of 2017, the Guilford Preservation Alliance coordinated communication between Jonathan Wuerth, restoration contractor, and Mr. Steinberg. A formal agreement was forged whereby Jonathan would salvage the original schoolhouse by extricating its frame from surrounding additions. This was a tedious and laborious task, accomplished in September and October by Jonathan and his assistant, Kory Johnson. Every beam and timber was carefully dismantled, marked, and catalogued for reerection. During the process of dismantlement, Jonathan found telltale school relics i.e. a piece of slate, a broken blackboard eraser, the neck of an ink bottle, and hickory switches.

(over)

## Saving the Moose Hill District Schoolhouse (continued)

Part two of this saga of successful preservation involves William G. Butterly, III, who grew up in Guilford and was a member of the Guilford High School class of 1978. Bill is a preservationist extraordinaire and was last year's recipient of the GPA's Jane Berger Award. Bill has acquired the Moose Hill Schoolhouse timbers and is proceeding with a plan for its re-erection as a quasi-museum school on his Bluff Head Farm in North Guilford. This is another exciting story unfolding.

Town records show that a schoolhouse was established in the Moose Hill District as early as 1771—then managed by Guilford's First



Wuerth examines the original south wall.

Ecclesiastical (church) Society. Sessions were conducted for two months each vear in an earlier school building that stood on the same corner lot. State laws were passed in 1795 and 1798 transferring the power of conducting educational work from the church to voluntary "school societies". Meeting minutes for the First School Society reflect a vote on

October 29, 1811 to "erect a new school house" for Moose Hill District "a little east of the old school house..." Here is the documentary evidence for the origins of the schoolhouse recently dismantled! At that time (1811), Colonel Noah Fowler, Sr. owned the corner lot with a cider mill, but he dedicated a small plot therein to accommodate the replacement schoolhouse.

School district enumerations for Moose Hill reflect 37 school-aged children in the year 1820; 26 in 1876; 8 in 1895; and 14 in 1912. After the Boston Street School in the village center opened in 1906, there was a gradual centralization of Guilford's small district schools. The Moose Hill School closed in 1913 and the town sold the property in 1927. The following year, the place was purchased



Open rafter sets mark where Jonathan Wuerth extricated the original timber frame of the schoolhouse.

by Salvatore Massinello, an electrical contractor from Portchester, New York. Massinello renovated the little structure for a dwelling house, raising up the ceiling by adding 24 inch "cripples" to the lower ends of studs and posts and adding new boxed soffits, rakes, and clapboards. Massinello re-plastered the interior and added a new layer of flooring and decorative trim.

Down through the years since 1928, despite numerous other intrusions to the converted school, little Moose Hill District Schoolhouse remained intact and preserved. There is a lesson learned from GPA's successful intervention: that good preservation practice often requires time and patience. And now, too, there is promise that an old school can have a new life.

-Joel Helander