



SUMMER 2022 - NEWSLETTER

President's Letter

Greetings to All,

It's been marvelous to be hitting our stride this summer season! The museums are open, camps are underway, and restoration work continues – all due to your support. I hope you've noticed that the Thomas Griswold House and its grounds have not looked so splendid in years. But the big news has been our extraordinary 75th Celebration under the big top in the field at 171 Boston Street!

I humbly thank all those who sponsored, supported, attended, and, of course, arranged this event. In these days when so many outside influences, even the well-intentioned, serve to polarize society, GKS stands naturally as a unifying and constructive beacon in our community. At the base of our mission to collect, preserve and share Guilford's history is the sense that all of us – new and old – are keepers of our culture and character that sustain volunteerism, tolerance, grace, humor, and respect. These values were very much in evidence at the Celebration. And we had a grand time!

As always, there is plenty of work to be done. Plans and arrangements are being advanced to rebuild and substantially improve the bridge at the Medad Stone Tavern. We are embarking on a steady, long-term project to restore over 20 of those remarkable windows at the Tavern. Both undertakings are costly, without doubt, but cannot be put off. Your financial support is specifically needed for these.

Besides the financial, there is always a need for those who can help us maintain our fields and grounds on levels from the very basic to the advanced. If you like gardening or brush clearing or tree management, you have found appreciative recipients. Please contact us for more information.

As for the near future, we look forward to spending quality time with you at our upcoming events or as visitors to the museums. Please keep an eye on our web page, be well and enjoy Guilford this summer!

Best,

Robert Hartmann, Jr.



BURWELL CARTER COTTAGE

c.1890

Summer Scenes from Days Gone By – Photo from GKS Collection

MISSION STATEMENT: The Guilford Keeping Society collects, preserves, and shares the history and heritage of Guilford, Connecticut for present and future generations.

Box 363, Guilford, CT 06437 (203)-453-2263. www.guilfordkeepingsociety.com

Guilford Keeping Society – 75th Anniversary Celebration

The Guilford Keeping Society celebrated its 75th Anniversary on Saturday, June 11th at the Thomas Griswold House. The GKS Board, Members, Sponsors, Business Patrons, Patrons, and Friends were all gathered together to join in the celebration. There were about 100 attendees. It was wonderful to see everyone and reconnect with people that we have not seen since before the pandemic. GKS exists because of the multitude of volunteers who have given their time and energy to bring about the success that we experience today as Guilford's premier historical organization.



Shoreline Jazz Quartet

The tent went up at the Thomas Griswold house a few days before the event, and much to our delight, the rain held off for the celebration. Andrea Dante and The Market Place at Guilford Food Center provided an array of hors d'oeuvres that were passed around to the guests, as well as a Tuscan table that provided an array of cheeses, fruits, and other delectable treats. Desserts were provided by board members and the wives of board members. Beer

was provided by the Whaler Brewery from Kingston Rhode Island thanks to Wes Staschke formerly from Guilford. The wine provisions were co-sponsored by Tony Pinto from Shoreline Wine Merchant and Eder Brothers.

GKS gives special thanks to the Guilford Savings Bank and Guilford Foundation for awarding GKS with a grant for \$1000. These funds went a long way to help GKS with the 75th Anniversary Celebration.



Supporters of GKS 75th Celebration

The Shoreline Jazz Quartet provided the music for the venue. Their wonderful sound added to this lovely event, and it really felt like a celebration! A Silent Auction with over thirty items took place, thanks to some generous Guilford retailers, restaurants, and spa owners, and one of our own craftsmen, Steve VanDerMaelen. One of the highlights of the Silent Auction was the Dinner at the Medad Stone Tavern, which was donated by Peter Mousch, a member of the GKS board.



Tent at 75th - TGH Field



Robert Hartmann and Fran Swietlicki

Robert Hartmann, GKS President, started off the ceremony with some words about GKS, its mission, and expressed a heartfelt thanks to all who made the event a success, including board members, volunteers, sponsors, business patrons, patrons, and friends. A special thanks was given to Fran Swietlicki, the Event Chair for the coordination of this wonderful celebration. Robert Hartmann continued the ceremony by welcoming special guests, Lou Federicci and Susan Renner who read and presented a Citation from the Town of Guilford. Sean Scanlon arranged to have a Connecticut Legislature Citation and even requested the Governor to do one recognizing the importance of the Society in Guilford. Christine Cohen, State Senator, presented and read both Citations. Dee Jacob, President of the Shoreline Chamber, also presented a citation to GKS. GKS was truly honored to receive each of these citations and we thank our Local and State governments for their support and appreciation of our mission so that we can carry on in preserving our historical treasures, and share them with our community.

Guilford Keeping Society 75th Anniversary Exhibit

This year's exhibit at the Thomas Griswold House Museum celebrates the 75 years that the Keeping Society has been helping to preserve and to share Guilford's History. In January of 1947, members of the Guilford community formed a society, originally known as the "Old House Group," to foster appreciation of early New England life and to raise awareness of the rich and varied legacy of early New England homes in the community. Its members came from all segments of Guilford society, from descendants of some of Guilford's founding families to the newest residents who were attracted to a community steeped in tradition and history.

The Society was renamed the Guilford Keeping Society in February 1947 referring to the term "Keeping Room," the gathering place for early American families, and resulting in the Society's early slogan "Keepers of Guilford Heritage." The earliest stated objectives of the Society remain the same today: the preservation and restoration of the homes and buildings of early origin and historic sites in Guilford, education, and research to increase knowledge and appreciation of Guilford's history and heritage and maintenance of archives and museums to house and preserve books, documents, pictures, furniture and furnishings and other articles associated with Guilford's history.

The exhibit follows the growth of the Society from a preservation group to the organization which operates two museums and shares Guilford's history through exhibits, lectures, events, camps, Early Guilford Days, and publications.

Many thanks to John Plant for making the exhibit and Joel Helander, Deb Peluse and Museum Director/Curator Pat Lovelace for doing the research.



75th Anniversary Exhibit at TGH



1772 Matching Grant Project at the Griswold House

In 2021 the 1772 Foundation partnering with Preservation Connecticut awarded historic matching grants to twelve private nonprofit organizations maintaining historic sites in Connecticut. The Guilford Keeping Society received a matching grant of \$5000 to paint the exterior of the Thomas Griswold House. Once the Society received the generous financial support of members the Arthur J. Conroy Painting Contractors were engaged. Work began on the extensive prep work last fall. This spring when the morning weather was warm work on the prep was completed and the house exterior, the gate and fence were painted. Our plan was to have it completed for the opening of the museum season and for the 75th.

While the painting was in progress, our painting contractor proposed painting the interior of each window while they were on site. Their offer, while not planned, was extremely favorable. They did an excellent job on the original job and the interior windows which they also cleaned.

Building and Grounds board members did extensive groundwork in trimming trees and other plants adjacent to the house. They also removed the heavy storms off the house for painting access.

A final report was submitted to the 1772 Foundation and Preservation Connecticut at the completion of the painting. Photos which accompanied report include the

Maritime Activity in Old Guilford



A DOUBLE-MASTED NEW HAVEN SHARPIE

c.1910

Now home to expensive waterfront houses and yachts bobbing quietly at anchor, Sachem's Head once was a bustling commercial harbor where farmers from inland Connecticut shipped their cattle to the West Indies and received rum and other valuable cargo in return.

The first recorded mention of what is now Sachem's Head appears in the Jan. 17, 1648 minutes of the Guilford General Court, describing a 1645 resolution to fence in the entire area for grazing oxen. The fence delineating what was then called the Great Oxpasture followed the line of what is now Route 146, confining the cattle to pastures that were guarded by Long Island Sound and marshes on the other three sides.

The commonly owned land was split up among 101 proprietors in the early 1700s, according to Joel Helander's book "Oxpasture to Summer Colony." Meanwhile Sachem's Head Harbor had become a busy thoroughfare for commercial shipping.

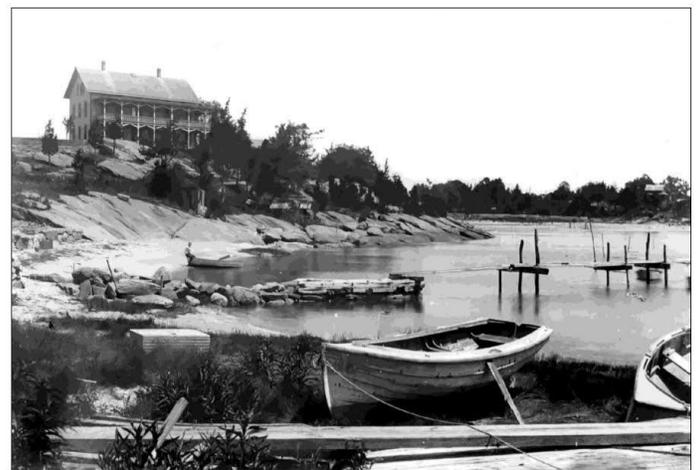
"Vessels sailed out of Sachem's Head Harbor crammed with cattle and returned from the Indies with hogsheads of rum," Helander relates. Rows of cattle sheds stood by what is now 535 Colonial Road, a property overlooking the entire harbor. The Durham Turnpike from Guilford was built principally to handle commerce from Sachem's Head to farms and towns inland, according to F.C. Norton's 1902 book, "History of Sachem's Head."

A logbook for the sloop Sally, now preserved at the Yale University Library, describes a 1789 voyage from

Sachem's Head with a cargo of scantlins (timbers), shingles, peas, pork and corn. The ship arrived back home three months later laden with molasses, herring, wine, rum, soap, syrup and salt.

Prominent landowner Solomon Leete built a warehouse on the harbor in the 1750s and then a house whose roof stood prominently above the surrounding land – an invitation, as it turned out, for the British to burn it down during the Revolutionary War in retribution for attacks on Long Island. Colonel Return J. Meigs had launched Meigs Raid on Sag Harbor the month before from Sachem's Head harbor.

Captain Daniel Brown Leete, born in 1781, was a well-known Sachem's figure whose job for 30 years was to board and inspect incoming vessels to the harbor. He reported being waylaid by "rough fellows" once on a ship that claimed to be sailing to New Haven but went to Huntington, L.I. instead. The Benton family later maintained a wharf for their 35-foot skipjack on what is now Uncas Point, landing loads of fish from their traps in Joshua Cove to use for fertilizer.



SACHEM'S HEAD HOTEL

1897

By the 1880s, wealthy vacationers from New York and Connecticut had discovered Sachem's Head. The Benton family and others began selling their land to the newcomers, and Sachem's Head was rapidly transformed from commercial harbor and farming community into a summer colony.

GKS Board of Directors

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Robert Hartmann, Jr.
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Gail Buxton
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Past President

Winnie Seibert

Museum Director/Curator

Pat Lovelace

Interested in Becoming a GKS Docent?

GKS is in need of Docents at the Thomas Griswold House. Training and compensation is provided by GKS. If interested, please contact us at (203)-453-2263. Becoming a Docent is a great opportunity for learning more about life in the early days of Guilford.

GKS Membership Update

There is still time to send in your membership dues for 2022 if you have not already done so. The Fall Newsletter, expected out in October, will contain the membership renewal form for 2023.

Membership Benefits include:

- Free admission to Thomas Griswold House and Medad Stone Tavern museums
- Ten percent discount on items purchased in the Griswold House Museum Shop
- GKS Newsletter (Quarterly publication)
- Membership Meetings
- Special exhibit openings, lectures, receptions, and workshops
- Holiday and other special events

Membership Categories

Student (grades 6-12)	\$10
Senior	\$25
Individual	\$35
Family/Household	\$50
Friend	\$100
Patron	\$250
Benefactor	\$500
President's Circle	\$1,000

The Guilford Keeping Society is a non-profit 501 (C)(3) corporation. Your contribution is tax-deductible according to law. If you have any questions about your membership, please contact GKS at (203)-453-2263.



The Guilford Keeping Society has received a grant for the second year from the Connecticut Humanities for the state's Kids Free program for Museums. The grant allows us to give one adult and their children free admission to our museums from July 1st until September 5th. This grant applies only to Connecticut residents.

Museum Hours:

Thomas Griswold House

171 Boston Street Guilford
 June - September
 Saturday 11-4
 Sunday 12-4

Medad Stone Tavern

171 Three Mile Course
 Guilford
 June- September
 Saturday 11-4
 Sunday 12-4

Both Museums are open by appointment - Special tours are available. Call 203-710-5327 to set up a date and time

Guilford Keeping Society
P.O. Box 363
Guilford, CT 06437

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Guilford Keeping Society Newsletter • Summer 2022

The GKS 2022 ornament is available for sale. The pewter ornament depicts the **Soldier's Monument** that is positioned on the Guilford Green. It is one of Guilford's most popular landmarks. The ornament is available for sale at the Thomas Griswold House, The Medad Stone Tavern, and at Sachem Card and Party, and online (www.guilfordkeepingsociety.com). The ornament retails for \$20, and can also be purchased along with the entire GKS ornament set for \$130.

