

Annual Meeting Curator's Report

2020

From the first Board Report of September 26, 2019 to today, there is always so much history to explore, to expand and to speculate about. The future for GHHM is bright and every day brings us more history.

Jane Sciacca educated me in the history of the organization and introduced me to the collections. She is the institutional historian with 45 years of experience of GHHM in various different official jobs. It has been a blessing that she shares so freely and kindly and quickly answers my and others' questions. She is also a conduit to Jo Gossel's expansive knowledge as well.

Nothing can be done without members who volunteer, and we need you. We are prepared for volunteers to do socially distancing at GHHM. There is enough work to be accomplished that people can and will work in separate rooms, or in rooms that allow for six feet separation. Masks of course will be required. There is work that can be accomplished at home – watching video CDs, listening to audio tapes, looking at computer CDs to find out what is on it and document the contents. If you have a video tape machine, we have those as well 3.5" computer disks. We have one VCR and one disc reader that can be loaned out to volunteers.

Understanding that, we appreciate all the work that has been done since I arrived in September. Jo Martell has been documenting the Draper Collection that has been on long-term loan from the First Parish Church. The collection had been donated permanently to GHHM. Dottie Kelsey has taken on the tremendous task of finishing the photograph inventory. This inventory was very detailed except to show where the photograph was actually located in any of the 8 shoeboxes. This is 234-page document could use more helpers. Rob DeSaulniers has expanded historical information on Draper houses in Wayland. He has also worked with Jack Russell and Dick Hoyt in reviewing and planning for the basement items and storage. Rob has also assisted in many individual projects. Anette Lewis has helped to bring up to date the file cabinet folders' inventory – time consuming but such an essential project to help researchers locate all the important information available. Karen Lowery has been going through all the education boxes to organize and familiarize herself with the materials. The Collection Committee has been working hard on the costume collection by making the difficult decisions of deciding what to keep and what needs to find a new home, such as to the Framingham State University professor. Board members have been in and out with suggestions, questions and working on individual activities. I have organized the upstairs storage room, one of the large closets, the office and "reference room". The signing-in and out that first Joanne Davis and now I have been asking for, is showing how much work has been accomplished – from October to March there was *over 600* hours of volunteer time given! (not counting my overtime).

A big hit was the scavenger hunt during the Christmas open house. Children participated in locating items and then learning their history. Enjoyment was evident with adults and children when they tried the metal penny bank in the Toy Room. Docents in each room appreciated the "House Tree" that provided a quick one page "cheat sheet" of the house and family genealogical history that Molly and I prepared.

The theme this year was to be the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment. This was group effort of the Wayland Town Clerk, the League of Women Voters, the Wayland Public Library and the Wayland Historical Society. Several activities were planned. The LWV was to have a Civics Bee. The Library had scheduled movies and speakers. The Town Clerk did have a display of what the amendment meant and a list of women in Wayland who registered for the first presidential election that they were legally allowed to vote. The Historical Society will a display to tell the story of Wayland women who used this socially accepted avenue to do more than care for the home and family. These are women who became scientists, rebels, pilots, politicians, environmentalists and more. Many of you helped to write the

biography of these historical women. Ann Gordon did the proofreading for almost forty narratives that were submitted. We have a couple of more stories to be finished. They will be on display in the Town Building in November when people coming to vote can view them. Plans are in place for future activities when we are allowed to gather again.

Since the Governor has placed restrictions on going to nonessential workplaces, I have been working at home. I have been doing a social microcosm study of the Wayland women who registered to vote in 1919 to 1920. I have written a brief biography of each 225 women and mapped where they lived. It is interesting to see the neighborhoods where these compelling women, who defied the male populace who had voted against allowing women to vote, which Wayland did repeatedly, lived. It is thought provoking to find out their economic level, the education they had received, the people they also had to take care of, the family that raised courageous ladies, the husbands and/or fathers who "allowed" or encouraged them to register. The relationships that connected these females was absorbing to see how mothers/daughters, mothers-in-law/daughters-in-law, sisters, grandmothers, and even employer/employee registered together. Interestingly enough the famous Jessica Henderson, who had been arrested in suffrage protests and was state Secretary for the National Woman's Party did not register. However, her married daughter did register. A famed beauty of Washington DC married the Chief of the Six Nation of the Iroquois Confederacy, became a widowed pauper and remarried an older confirmed bachelor and a widowed again. Her daughter married a prominent Wayland man and this lady came to live with them, she registered but her daughter did not!

Many inquiries were answered: two different questions concerning baseball in town, the car race tract on Cochituate Road, Charles Kirby Whittier, who was the first person lost in WWII, Frank Cooper and his house to name a few of questions. I did research for the Shelbourn Museum in Vermont, the Worcester Art Museum and the Stanley Steam Museum in Maine.

Yes, I have had an stimulating eight months and so much fun meeting and expanding new friendships at GHM. Thank you for this opportunity.