



President's Letter

Greetings to All,

Happy New Year! We are off to a good start, as we were able to have our annual New Year's Day celebration at the Tavern this year. The event was well attended, and it was great to see our members.

We have a full year of activities planned, please take a look at the 2023 calendar of events that we have included in this Newsletter. We hope to see you at these events.

We are pleased to welcome four new board members this year. Their individual talents and dedication to our mission will no doubt enhance our ability to provide great programs and help us to maintain the properties we all work so hard to preserve for the enjoyment of all. Brendan Smith is our new Treasurer, Jeff Beatty is an attorney in town whose legal skills have already helped us make some important decisions, Jeff Hutchins is a lifelong Guilford resident with engineering talents that will be sure to help us with projects, and Sarah Cooper who works for the Guilford Education system.

We now have a third property that we will be able to share with the community. We are very excited to have obtained the Clapboard Hill School House, which was recently donated to us by the Dudley family. Steve Dudley, one of our esteemed board members made this a reality for us. Joel E. Helander has provided us with some historical information on the School House for the publication of this Newsletter.

We will be engaging in some costly projects this year, as the windows at the Tavern need to be repaired as does the bridge at the Tavern. These are only a few examples of what we will be focusing on, so fundraising will be an important focus for us this year and we need your support.

We are always looking for volunteers from the membership to help us with certain events, maintenance, clean-up days, and a variety of other activities. Many of you already help us out on a regular basis and we appreciate your support and enthusiasm.

It is our hope that 2023 offers you and your families health and happiness. We look forward to seeing you at our first scheduled event, our famous Wine Tasting, which will be held at the Tavern on Saturday, April 22nd.

Best,

Robert Hartmann, Jr.



Steve Dudley and Bob Hartmann at the School House

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

New Year's Day Reception

It was a nice balmy afternoon on January first of this year, which made it a great day to get down to the Tavern and enjoy some food and beverages with the GKS membership. The event was well attended, and it was enjoyed by all. The Tavern was very festive, as it was decorated for the holidays by the Guilford Garden Club, so we were able to enjoy each room filled with Holiday spirit.

Two of our board members Steve VanDerMaelen and Brendan Smith along with help from others, used the Tavern's beehive oven to bake some home-made sour dough bread. They did a great job perfecting the process and it was quite a treat. The bread came out of the oven and was sliced right there to be enjoyed all. They also baked some home pretzels in the oven, so that was also a nice treat. This process took quite some time as the fire for the oven had to be started several hours earlier to get to the appropriate temperature for baking bread. The rest of the menu was supplied by board members, and there was ample food to go around. The fire in the hearth added to the ambience and helped keep us warm on the first day of January.

It was great to get this event back on track, as we had two cancel it the past two years due to the pandemic.



Using the Beehive oven

Clapboard Hill School House: A Unique & Benevolent Gift for GKS

America's celebrated poet, John Greenleaf Whittier, penned these introductory verses to his lyrical poem, *In School Days*:

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

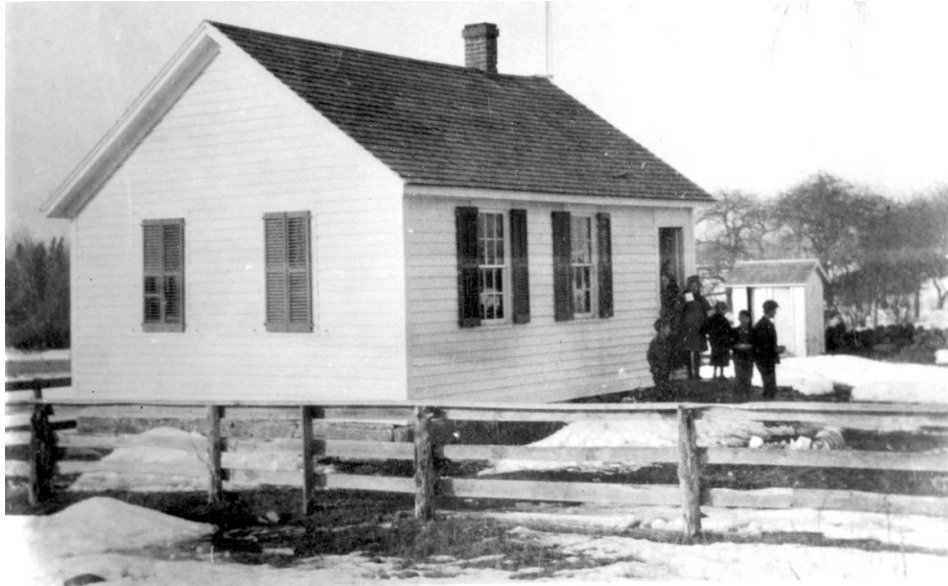
Such a ragged beggar has been sleeping for 92 years on a country roadside in the old-time district or neighborhood of Clapboard Hill. The little temple of learning, measuring only 18x24 feet in size, served the Clapboard Hill neighborhood, including outlying areas such as Goose Lane and Podunk, from 1836 until 1931.

When first built, the structure stood inside the lines of the public highway (Clapboard Hill Road) until the school district purchased a small plot of adjacent land in 1851. Soon after (1852), the school was moved back a few yards onto a substantial stone foundation.

What is most remarkable about Clapboard Hill District School is that it is one of only about ten surviving one-room school houses in Guilford. Moreover, it is one of only two of the ten schools that exist in its original form and location, right down to interior trim such as windows, wainscoting and arched, plastered ceiling. A pot-bellied stove and blackboards remain intact. It is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Over the years, many alumni and teachers of Clapboard Hill School reminisced about their experiences in the single room geared for a primary education—the equivalency of grades one through eight. Mae Barnes Jillson began her teaching career there in 1924. She boarded in the home of Ruby & Horace Dudley at the Clapboard Hill crossroads and walked across the road to teach nineteen pupils. In an interview for a book of oral history (1988), Mrs. Jillson explained that a couple of her pupils received a stipend for building the fire, stacking wood in the "little anteroom", and raising the flag every morning. She said that she had the higher grade children teach the lower grade children, often sending them outside in warm weather to teach each other.

School House (continued)



Clapboard Hill District School House and pupils, circa 1900

H. Philip Dudley described (1982) the interior of the school with a dozen double desks and benches. He said that “whispering was taboo, giggling was frowned upon, passing notes was clandestine, and you didn’t dip the pigtails of the girl in front of you into the inkwell on your desk unless you really loved her and needed to get her attention. We came out well-schooled. Grammar, sentence structure, spelling and multiplication tables were drilled into us. We read ‘Heidi,’ memorized ‘Sheridan’s Ride,’ and knew the heroes of US history. A third or fourth grader could augment his courses by eavesdropping on the recitations of the upper grades.”

The power of Phil Dudley’s pen, later used in his honorable position as editor of the *Guilford Shore Line Times* newspaper, can be traced to his education at Clapboard Hill District School. As a fourth grade pupil there (1918), he wrote a short essay on thrift during World War One, relating how he saved \$137. by catching mice for one penny apiece and doing chores for neighbors. In his essay, Phil proudly proclaimed that his thrift enabled him to buy a fifty dollar war bond. He concluded that “I think it would help if all the children would get a thrift stamp instead of twenty-five cents worth of candy or chewing gum.”

From J.E. Helander collection, courtesy of Mrs. Vernon Dudley (1972)

Miss Martha G. Cornell reminisced (1969) about playing a card game in the school house with friends, Emma Bullard, Sam Loper, and Ed Carter. “Our teacher, Miss Kate Dudley, took them [the cards] away from us and threw them into the fire,” prompting the schoolmarm’s visit to Miss Cornell’s parents to report the pupils’ bad behavior. Miss Cornell said that “Miss Kate,” as she was known, was “a good teacher, but filled with old-fashioned ideas.”

Amusing incidents at the Clapboard Hill School House were often done at the teacher’s expense. The same George Edwin Carter who was Miss Cornell’s card-playing chum reminisced (1968) about a young rascal in the school house who was “itching” to leave school early for a social event on Guilford Green. He scampered onto the school roof and covered the chimney opening with green cherry boughs. The district school was “smoked out,” and as hoped, dismissed early!

In December 2022, venerable Clapboard Hill School House on its .18 acre lot was gifted by deed to the Guilford Keeping Society by David C. Griswold and Stephen B. Dudley. This benevolent gift is an ultimate act of historic preservation. It will **long** be remembered. Thank you, Mr. Griswold and Mr. Dudley, for giving an old school house a new lease on life with its new GKS steward.

—J.E. Helander

Summer Camps at GKS Museums

The Guilford Keeping Society will sponsor two camps this summer where campers can have fun while learning about history.

American Girl Dolls – This camp, for ages 7-12, will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Medad Stone Tavern Museum from July 10-14. Campers will travel through American history with historical American Girl Dolls. They will learn about the everyday lives in the dolls' time periods by reading their stories and hearing about when they lived. The campers will write in their own journals, make crafts, play games from the doll's era and cook food from recipes they would have used. The week will end with a tea party in the parlor of the tavern museum.

Colonial Life Camp – This camp, also for ages 7-12, will be held from 9:30-12:30 at the Thomas Griswold House Museum from Aug. 7-11. The camp will focus on life in a New England town in colonial times. We will learn about life in early Guilford and do crafts, cook and play games from that period. We will have a Native American Day and a Revolutionary War times day. Our blacksmith will show the campers how iron items were made at that time.

Cost for each camp is \$125 and includes project materials. Email info@guilfordkeepingsociety.com or call 203-453-2263 to enroll.



American Girl Doll Camp

GKS Wine Tasting Fundraiser – April 22, 2023

Wines of the USA



The Guilford Keeping Society presents “Wines of the USA”, a signature fundraising event on Saturday, April 22, 2023, from 4-7PM at the Medad Stone Tavern Museum located at 171 Three Mile Course, Guilford, CT.

This event is the sixth of a series of wine tastings that highlight wines from around the world. This year's theme will focus on wines from the United States, and in particular, highlight regions in California and the Northwest.

As a very special added attraction, GKS is proud to present Nina Wemyss, distinguished wine historian and entertaining raconteur, who will launch the event with a brief talk about the history of wine. In 2003, Nina was the featured wine historian on the History Channel's “A Brief History of Wine”. In addition, Nina spent seventeen years as Wine Historian, Lecturer and Cultural Ambassador for Robert Mondavi Winery in Napa Valley.

Come celebrate the sampling of fine wines and hors d'oeuvres at the historic Medad Tavern and enjoy the tavern and its beautiful views. Kirsta Ifkovic, owner of Frank's Package Store, will provide the wine selections for tasting. A Silent Auction will highlight some of the wines.

Tickets for advanced purchase are \$40 for adults, 21, or \$50 at the door. One hundred tickets will be sold to provide maximum enjoyment by all.

Tickets are available at Frank's Package Store, 15 Boston Street; Sachem Card and Party, 946 Boston Post Road; and The Hartmann Group, 705 Boston Post Road; or online at our website, guilfordkeepingsociety.com.

Thank You GKS Members

The Guilford Keeping Society Board of Directors is appreciative for the generous support of its members. Since its founding in 1947 contributions from so many over the years have allowed GKS to continue its mission to collect, preserve and share the history of Guilford, CT for present and future generations. The Board would like to thank its volunteers, too, and particularly life members (designated with an asterisk) and current members who donated in 2022 through February 2023. With your help every year, we can continue our mission. To all, a huge thank you. Please consider becoming an ongoing member.

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Guilford Keeping Society Newsletter • Winter 2023

Date	Event
January 1 (2023)	New Year's Day Reception at the Medad Stone Tavern
April 6	Edith Nettleton Lecture Series - Topic - Carl A. Balestracci, Jr. - Guilford Free Library
April 22	Wine Tasting at the Medad Stone Tavern
May 4	Edith Nettleton Lecture Series - Topic - Dr. Elisabeth C. Adams - Guilford Free Library
May 13	Stony Creek Quarry Tour
June 10	Tag Sale - Thomas Griswold House
June 10	Museums Open
May 29	Memorial Day Picnic - Thomas Griswold House
July 10- 14	American Girl Doll Camp at Medad Stone Tavern
August 7 - 11	Colonial Camp at Thomas Griswold House
September 15 - 17	Fair Parking at Thomas Griswold House
September 30	Beer Tasting at the Medad Stone Tavern
November 15	Annual Meeting - Guilford Free Library
January 1 (2023)	New Year's Day Reception at the Tavern

**Events subject to change*