



connecting to place

nature . history . arts

Fall/Winter 2020

THE NEWSLETTER OF VAUGHAN WOODS & HISTORIC HOMESTEAD



HISTORY CANNOT GIVE US A PROGRAM FOR THE FUTURE, BUT IT CAN GIVE US A FULLER UNDERSTANDING OF OURSELVES, AND OF OUR COMMON HUMANITY, SO THAT WE CAN BETTER FACE THE FUTURE. — ROBERT PENN WARREN

contagion and of our civic duty to do so. He advocates for cleanliness and for distancing from the sick. He encourages the selectmen to put regulations in place through a “vigorous exercise” of their powers and believes that there will be a “cheerful submission” to these laws on the part of the public. He writes:

Wise regulation well observed at Hallowell, may serve likewise for an example for other places; & thence benefit both others and ourselves; since the suppression of contagion in our vicinity concerns not only our benevolence, but our self-interest.

Dr. Vaughan’s words are still meaningful in 2020 as we fight the coronavirus, for what he so clearly understood over 200 years ago is that when it comes to preventing the spread of contagious disease, *we are all in it together!*

A Bit of Aged Wisdom

Dr. Vaughan On Regulations to Prevent the Spread of Contagious Disease In Hallowell in 1798

In the summer of 1798 a yellow fever epidemic hit Philadelphia, New York and Boston, ultimately killing more than 5,000 people. Doctors and scientists did not yet understand how this particular disease was spread. In this letter from Benjamin Vaughan to the selectmen of Hallowell in October of 1798, though, it is evident that there was at least a basic knowledge of how to *prevent*

To Nathaniel Dummer Esq, Capt Randall, & Capt Grant, select men of the town of Hallowell.
Gentlemen,
Hallowell, Oct. 4, 1798.
It seems highly important to establish sufficient powers, by a vote of the town, if not already given by law, for attempting to preserve the future health of the township of Hallowell; & at the same

Dr. Benjamin Vaughan to Hallowell Selectmen, 1798. Letter housed in Vaughan Homestead Archives.

Annual Report

Overview of 2020 Accomplishments

Collections Conservation

- Oval portraits: painting and frames cleaned and repaired
- Vertical sundial: repaired and painted
- Furniture: music room chairs repaired and re-upholstered, windsor chair set restoration in process
- Banjo clock: clockwork repaired and glass painting conserved



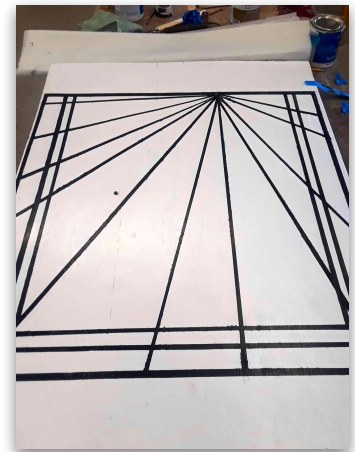
Sarah and Harriet Vaughan portraits (c. 1785) post-conservation, The mother and daughter were among the first residents of Vaughan Homestead.

Gardens & Grounds Work

- Garden paths widened for easier visitor access
- Entry hedge trimmed and re-shaped
- Garden pavilion floor updated

House Restoration / Repair

- Major wall and ceiling repairs to two bedrooms
- Window restoration: eight in process
- Fuel tanks replaced



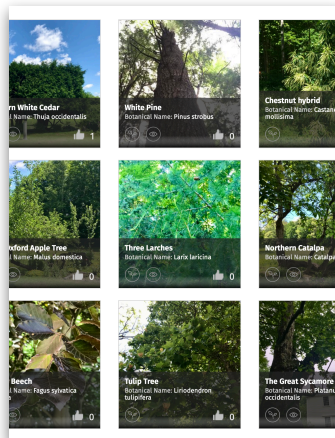
Vertical sundial hangs in the Homestead courtyard, pictured here pre and mid-restoration. Work by Ellen Gibson.

Student & Service Projects

- Summer Intern Projects:
 - “Plants Map” online tree catalogue
 - Interpretive exhibit about women’s fashion
 - Historic house stewardship and use planning research project
- Hall-Dale High School students: a small volunteer crew worked on the grounds throughout the fall - many thanks!

Woods Stewardship

- Upper Brook Trail restoration completed!
- Two cement trails bridges removed

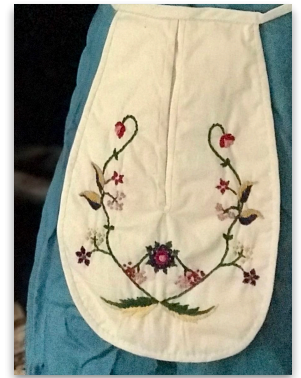


*Left: VWHH Tree Catalogue on plantsmap.com. Link at vaughahomestead.org
Right: Parts of banjo clock from Homestead dining room, dismantled during repair.
Work donated by Gary Weed.*

Sneak Peak

Women' History Presentation

Keep your eyes open for our “Women of Early Hallowell” presentation in 2021! This fascinating exploration of our foremothers will include excerpts from letters as well as period artifacts from the Homestead collection. A new exhibit about interpreting women’s history through fashion will also be featured.



Interpretive panel and glimpse of handmade clothing both created by VWHH intern and Middlebury student, Katherine Concannon



The Evolution of A Hedge

The arborvitae hedge (a.k.a. northern white cedar) that graces the entrance to the upper tier of the Homestead’s 1890 colonial revival garden began as two saplings, one on each side of the stairs, over a century ago. When the saplings became large enough they were joined together to create an archway. When the trees grew even larger, they were shaped into a rounded box with a central opening.

The summer of 2020 marked the first time a bucket lift was needed to trim and shape the enormous hedge!



*Top Left: Overhead view of garden, c. 1920, note the archway.
Top Right: Hedge trimming, September 1972.
Bottom: VWHH Gardener Cindy Gilbert trims and shapes while Groundskeeper Bruce Wheeler works the lift, August 2020.*



Fall glory captured just before field moving, October 2020

Goodbye Dear Friend

A Tribute to Gerry Mahoney

Among the many sadnesses of 2020, one was very personal to all of us at Vaughan Woods & Historic Homestead: the death of our esteemed Board member and good friend Gerry Mahoney. A long-time resident of Hallowell, Gerry, as many know, was fascinated by, and was a student of, history. Local Maine and Hallowell history especially engaged him, and at many levels—whether leading the effort to recreate the historic granite crane that now sits in Hallowell’s Waterfront Park, or delving into aspects of our family’s generational connection to Hallowell, discovering facts we didn’t know ourselves. He could not have been a more thoughtful, insightful, and generous colleague. We will deeply miss his wisdom, his kindness, and his great contributions and commitment to our enterprise, but will remember him with

great respect and fondness. We send our ongoing condolences to his wife, Wendy, and to his family.

—George, Ellen, and David Gibson



Gerry Mahoney reads to Hall-Dale Middle School students on the porch of Vaughan Homestead during school field trip. Photo taken by Joe Phelan for the Kennebec Journal.



Vaughan Woods &
Historic Homestead

2 Litchfield Road, Hallowell, ME | vaughanhomestead.org