

Historic Georgetown Inc. Newsletter

February 2016

Editor: Sherrie Lichtenwalner

YEAR OF THE HAMILL HOUSE

In early 2015, HGI staff discovered several potentially problematic issues inside the Hamill House museum, including a growing crack and sagging floors in the parlor. Executive Director Nancy Hale immediately sprang into action, applying for and receiving a structural assessment grant from the State Historical Fund. This grant allowed HGI to hire architects Kris and Tim Hoehn to complete a thorough assessment of the Hamill House. The assessment report will be completed sometime early 2016 and will provide a detailed list of necessary repairs.

With this information in mind, HGI has already begun the process of raising funds for the restoration and repair of this beloved historical jewel. In the summer of 2015, HGI hosted several fundraisers at the Hamill House, including the popular "First Friday" lawn parties and an August picnic and auction. In addition, we are currently selling memorial bricks to be displayed in Hamill Park, with all of the proceeds going into the restoration fund. Once the assessment is complete we will also be applying for grants to aid in this monumental project.

While there is much that will still need to be done this year, we are proud to report that the work has already begun. All three porches of the Hamill House have been repaired and repainted, and HGI is currently looking at bids for the painting of the rest of the exterior of the house. A leak in the conservatory has been repaired, and both the attic and basement have been cleaned out and organized.

The HGI staff is devoted to seeing this old gem restored to her original glory, and we are asking for all our members and supporters to join us in this journey, as many of you already have. Donations can be made to the restoration fund at any time, and memorial bricks can still be purchased by calling the office or through our website. Once the assessment is complete, we will be posting the report to the website so everyone can remain up to date and informed on the progress being made.



2016 GOLDEN JUBILEE HOUSE TOUR

This year HGI will once again be hosting the semi-annual Georgetown House Tour. The date of the tour is scheduled for July 30, 2016. Visitors from Denver and all over the state will be coming to Georgetown to participate in this beloved event. Around a dozen historical houses and museums will be featured in the Tour, including the Hamill House Museum, the Alpine Hose #2 Museum, and the newly opened Heritage Center.

This year a copy of William Wilson's new book "A Guide to Historic Sites in Georgetown, Colorado" will be provided to each visitor with the purchase of a ticket. In celebration of Georgetown's Golden Jubilee, HGI will be hosting "Lunch on the Lawn" at the Hamill House. Keep checking our website for updated information about this event.

Tickets: \$30 Time: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm



HISTORIC GEORGETOWN INC. NEWSLETTER

HGI PARTNERS WITH SMITHSONIAN

On March 12, 2016 HGI will participate in Smithsonian Magazine's Museum Day Live!, an annual event hosted by Smithsonian magazine in which participating museums across the country open their doors to anyone presenting a Museum Day Live! ticket... for free.

Held during Women's History Month, this "special edition" of Smithsonian's signature "Museum Day Live!" event will encourage all people, and particularly women and girls of color, to explore their nation's museums... Smithsonian Magazine website.*

In honor of the great Victorian women who helped to make Georgetown a thriving mining town, HGI will highlight the life of women like Clara Brown, born into slavery and freed at the age of 57. Clara made the courageous journey from Kentucky to the mountains of Colorado where she worked as a laundress. She invested her money in mining property around Georgetown and (according to one article) in a matter of a few short years had acquired property worth over \$10,000. The Hotel de Paris which is owned and operated by The Colonial Dames will also participate in Museum Day! HGI looks forward to partnering with Smithsonian Magazine and sharing the story of our diverse past with visitors. ~ Anne Marie Cannon

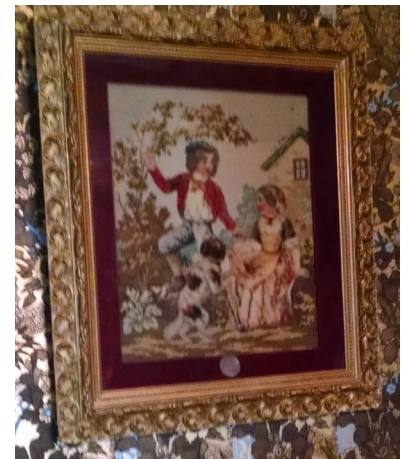
Demolition by Neglect

We are a National Landmark District, and with that designation comes responsibility. Buying a home in the historic core requires the homeowner to adhere to the regulations. This past year for the first time a homeowner demolished a façade that was a contributing structure. A tragedy for the Town and Historic Preservation. HGI jumped into action, working with the town to develop a new ordinance that would penalize homeowners who allow their historical properties to deteriorate due to neglect. A copy of the ordinance is available on our website. ~ Nancy S Hale

PRISCILLA'S PRIZE

For the many contemporary descendants of General William Arthur Hamill and Priscilla Hamill (nee Mckee), the Hamill House Museum is a tangible stopping place, preserved in time, that conveys the narrative of their ancestral past. It has also been the recipient (through the stewardship of Historic Georgetown Inc.) of many artifacts, personal belongings of the Hamill's that lived in the house at 305 Argentine Street, Georgetown, Colorado from 1876 until 1914.

It was quite a pleasant surprise when the family of notable Hamill descendant, Dr. Peter Van Vechten Hamill — who issued the groundbreaking study in 1964 that said smoking was a major cause of lung cancer which ultimately led congress to require tobacco companies to stamp each pack of cigarettes with a warning label— contacted HGI to say they had a prize winning raised worsted work hand stitched by a 15 year old Priscilla McKee (not yet married to W. A.) in 1852 and they wanted to donate it to Historic Georgetown Inc. Dr. Peter Van Vechten Hamill was the great grandson of William Arthur and Priscilla Hamill. Margot Hamill, Dr. Van Vechten's widow, told her son, Northmore, she wanted to return the family heirloom to its rightful home at the Hamill House and wanted to deliver it herself! That is exactly what she did. HGI celebrated the event this past August 21 (W. A. Hamill and Margot Hamill's birthday) in a private ceremony that included Margot, Northmore, as well as Hamill descendants from Denver, Maryland, Virginia and Florida. According to HGI executive director Nancy Hale, "HGI is delighted to have anything the Hamill Family so generously donates, but to have a piece done by Priscilla Hamill is a real treat." Today, Priscilla's prize hangs proudly above the fireplace in the Hamill House dining room.



~Anne Marie Cannon

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GOLDEN JUBILEE

I moved to Georgetown because of the architectural landscape. Its well preserved Victorian buildings that dot the town lured me in. It didn't occur to me back then to ask why or how so many well preserved historic buildings huddled together without the intrusion of any more recently constructed ones. I just knew there was something here that soothed my frazzled nerves. When I moved here in 2013, I was looking for a refuge, a place to heal from a recently endured tragedy. Georgetown became my haven. It was as if the rest of the world stopped existing, as if I had been transported back through time in H. G. Wells' Time Machine. I left the slow paced rhythm of Georgetown as little as possible that first year.



Since childhood, I've had a keen fascination, obsession some might say, with the history of physical artifacts. The Georgetown-Silver Plume National Historic Landmark District is, in effect, a massive scale protected collection of artifacts whispering the ode of our Nation's Rocky Mountain mining boom. Good fortune led me to this job with Historic Georgetown Inc., a job which has given me the 20/20 vision of hind-site, the answer to why so many historic buildings stand huddled together and an even greater appreciation of just how precious Georgetown and Silver Plume are.

In 1966 Georgetown, Silver Plume and the surrounding valleys and mountainsides were designated as a National Historic Landmark District and therefore afforded the protection such a designation provided. Had it not been for the efforts of people like James Grafton Rogers who helped the cause of landmark district designation gain momentum in the 1960s, many of the Victorian buildings we take for granted would have been demolished to make way for the busy passerby on the I-70 corridor. The highway was diverted away from town because of the designation. This year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Georgetown-Silver Plume National Historic Landmark District designation.

Since it is HGI's mission to *preserve and encourage the preservation of historic buildings, objects, sites and areas relating to the history of Georgetown Colorado; to promote an awareness of and respect for all that is historically and architecturally significant about Georgetown*, we have decided to frame this year's events through the filter of the jubilee. HGI has enlisted the support of other historic landmark district stakeholders, including People for Silver Plume, Gateway Visitor Center, Hotel de Paris, Georgetown Loop Railroad, Georgetown Trust and Georgetown Promotions Commission to get the word out via their marketing endeavors for 2016. As a result of our outreach efforts, the Gateway Visitor Center will raise two jubilee banners, Promotions will pass out jubilee buttons to the town's merchants and raise a jubilee banner in town. Silver Plume will also participate in the celebration with banners and buttons. I encourage you as well, to educate others and celebrate our very special National Historic Landmark District. Thank you for contributing to our preservation efforts. HGI will keep you posted on jubilee events throughout the year.

~Anne Marie Cannon
Director of Archives-HGI

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HISTORIC GEORGETOWN INC. NEWSLETTER

CHRISTMAS IN GEORGETOWN



Anyone who has experienced Christmas in Georgetown will have to admit that it is a magical time of year for our small town. From the festively decorated sixth street with its giant Christmas tree, to the museums all decked out in traditional holiday greenery, to the various shops with their garland and lights, the town seems to come alive during the holidays in a very special way.

A centerpiece to Christmas in Georgetown, the annual Georgetown Christmas Market has been a beloved tradition for both locals and visitors for the past 55 years. For the first two weekends in December, visitors stream into our tiny town to experience the re-creation of a historical European market, complete with outdoor vendors, horse-drawn wagon rides, roasted chestnuts, appearance by Saint Nicholas, and the ever-loved Santa

Lucia Children's procession. This year the Georgetown Christmas Market was rated in the top ten Best Holiday Festivals by 10Best and USA Today. If you have never experienced a Georgetown Christmas Market, make plans to visit this coming December. It is an experience you will never forget.

Another tradition of the Christmas season in Georgetown is the Christmas at Hamill House receptions. With caroling from the Silver Plume singers, the lighting of the Christmas tree, Wassail toasts, presentation of the yule log, and a wide spread of delicious food and drink, these receptions have become a Georgetown favorite. This year HGI added a new evening that included a full dinner in the historical Hotel De Paris dining room. The event was met with approval from the forty guests who participated, and HGI has plans to include it in our 2016 Christmas schedule. Reservations for these receptions always fill fast, so if you are planning to participate this year, make sure you call early.

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A VERY SPECIAL THANKS TO DANA ABRAHAMSON AND LEE BEHRENS FOR THEIR MANY YEARS OF SERVICE TO HISTORIC GEORGETOWN INC.

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