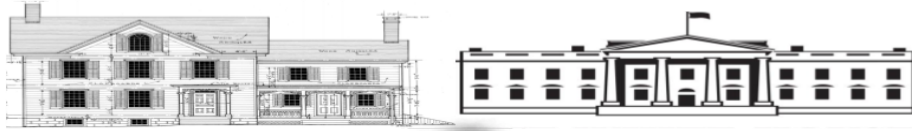


The Grover Cleveland Birthplace Memorial Association



The US President from Caldwell, NJ

Newsletter Issue # 3, July 2019

Grover Cleveland Birthplace Memorial Association Receives Outstanding Service Award



Melissa Castellon, – Hopatcong State Park Superintendent with GCBMA President Dave Cowell – photo courtesy of New Jersey State Parks, Forests & Historic Sites.

The Grover Cleveland Birthplace Memorial Association (GCBMA) was granted the **OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD** by the New Jersey Governor's Office on Volunteerism and the Governor's Advisory Council on Volunteerism "for your efforts and talents in sustaining the communities of New Jersey". The award ceremony, part of the Department of the Environment's April 29th recognition day event at Batsto Historic Village, a New Jersey historic site in Burlington County, was to recognize the achievements of the friends organizations that support the state parks and historic sites. Tahesha Way, the Secretary of state noted "that everyone can be great.....because anybody can serve." citing Dr. Martin Luther Kings, Jr.'s observation on volunteering for the public good.

At the same service, the Division of Parks and Forestry of the DEP awarded a certificate of Appreciation to the Grover Cleveland Birthplace Memorial Association signed by Olivia Glenn the Director of the Division. The award was in response to a nomination from Melissa Castellon the Hopatcong State Park Supervisor. Superintendent Castellon noted in her nomination that the Grover Cleveland Birthplace Memorial Association has staged large historical events such as the re-enactment of the Inauguration of 1893 with the Montclair Symphony Orchestra, active community events such as the annual Ice Cream Socials on July 4th, and sponsored Cleveland Family and Caldwell N.J. research and scholarship.

July 4th Ice Cream Social

As this issue goes to press, we are planning our July 4th Ice Cream Social, 2019

“Come One, Come All” ---to the Ice Cream Social at the Grover Cleveland Birthplace in historic Caldwell, N.J. for a fun filled celebration with free Ice Cream, good food, the Fideaux Flea Circus, free lemonade, popcorn, a DJ, house tours, and the traveling trunks displays. The opening ceremony and the reading of the Declaration of Independence begins at 1 pm. Bring chairs and blankets and enjoy being outdoors from 1-4pm. Sponsored by the Grover Cleveland Birthplace Memorial Association, the Social is at the Grover Cleveland Birthplace, a New Jersey historic site at 207 Bloomfield Avenue, Caldwell, N.J. 07006. Free parking is in the adjoining Saint Aloysius Church lot. Ice Cream is provided by Gelotti's Ice Cream; food is available from the Cloverleaf Tavern. (Rain site, Saint Aloysius gym next door.)

For bakers, there is a cookie bakeoff with prizes. This year's cookie is the “Lavender Cookie”. The rules are simple. Each entry must be made using a recipe from the 19th century using ingredients available in that period and must be accompanied by two copies of the recipe. The recipes are being gathered and will be published with the past winners recipes in a special Grover Cleveland Cookie Book. Two dozen cookies are necessary for the judges to sample and cookies and entry forms must be presented before 1:30 on July 4th at the Birthplace. Forms can be found at the Grover Cleveland Birthplace website or at the Birthplace during open hours.



Photo courtesy of Janet Markman

Grover's Corner: A Great Gift Store at the Grover Cleveland Birthplace

Trustee Akiko Axe oversees our wonderful store “**Grover's Corner**” which is located in our birthplace. “Grover's Corner” provides a great variety of items for sale including momentos and books relating to Grover Cleveland, the Presidents, and American History. Currently, we have new nylon tote bags and coffee mugs with Cleveland's picture. More best sellers include Trustee Louis Picone's books, **Where the Presidents Were Born** and **The President is Dead!**. For more details, see our website or follow us on Facebook. **We will also have our store set up at the 4th of July Ice Cream Social.**

It Ain't Over With "Grover": Baseball, Grover Cleveland, and Presidents

By Paul Maloney

At the Grover Cleveland Birthplace 4th of July Ice Cream Social this year (2019), the educator "Traveling Trunks" will be spotlighting "Chess" and the connection to Grover Cleveland, Benjamin Franklin, and other Famous Americans. At 3:00, kids will be able to challenge "Benjamin Franklin" at chess. Throughout the afternoon, young (and older) attendees at the "Social" will be encouraged to see last year's baseball display and take "first pitches" with red, white, and blue wiffle balls. Attendees will also be treated to our previous displays, "The Origins of Basketball" and "The History of the Frisbee". You might also see a few people recite "Casey At the Bat" and sing "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" at our annual event.

President Grover Cleveland and Baseball

In the recent published book, The Presidents and the Pastime: The History of Baseball and the White House by Curt Smith, Smith discusses a 1885 meeting with the championship Chicago White Stockings and President Grover Cleveland at the White House. Cleveland was a long time baseball fan. When meeting "Cap" Anson, Captain of the White Stockings, Cleveland asked how his old friend, Jimmy "Pud" Galvin was. When Cleveland was sheriff and mayor of Buffalo, he and Galvin were good friends.

Cleveland was a fan but certainly not in playing shape when President. In the book Baseball, The Presidents' Game by William B. Mead and Paul Dickson, the authors also write of this White House meeting. When greeting the rest of the team, Cleveland had difficulty shaking the hands of the physically fit White Stockings players. Player Mike "King" Kelly wrote, "There wasn't a man in the crowd that wasn't six feet in height and were all in lovely condition. Their hands were as hard as iron. The president's hand was fat and soft". When Kelly shook Cleveland's hand, he "...squeezed so hard that he winced". As a result, Kelly reported that Cleveland's hand was in pain and very swollen. Kelly added, "...he would rather shake hands with 1,000 people than a bad nine after that day" and did not shake hands with the team when they left. Cleveland's hand nearly "doubled in size". (Mead and Dickson point out that Cleveland was our second heaviest President and weighed 250 pounds. Cleveland once said, "bodily movement is among the dreary and unsatisfactory things of life".) Although Cleveland had challenges with the handshaking, Kelly concluded, "He impressed me as being a charming, courteous gentleman who had considerable backbone, and democratic enough to be a Democratic president of our glorious country".

Cleveland's Victorian work ethic is spotlighted in this meeting with the White Stockings. When leaving, Anson asked Cleveland if he would come to a White Stockings game but the President turned him down. Cleveland stated, "What do you imagine the American people would think of me if I wasted my time going to the ball game?". Smith writes how Cleveland understood how Victorian America would "applaud" him for his work ethic.

Presidents attending baseball games didn't end with Cleveland's decision not to go to a game. In between Cleveland's two terms, Benjamin Harrison became the first president to attend a major league game (June 6, 1892) when he saw the Cincinnati Reds beat the Washington Senators, 7-4 at the Swampoodle Grounds, which was located on the grounds of the present Union Station. By Cleveland's second term, he had John Geydler, a government clerk recite the poem Casey at the Bat: A Ballad of the Republic Sung in the Year 1888, by Ernest Lawrence Thayer when delivering a document to the White House. In later years, Geydler became President of the National Baseball

League. A copy of Casey at the Bat was recently donated to the Grover Cleveland Birthplace Memorial Association 1880's/1890's "traveling trunk" for educators.

The GCBMA offers a Traveling Trunks Program for educational institutions, service organizations, and other groups interested in keeping the legacy of Grover Cleveland alive, as well as getting to *feel* the historical past of how people of three different periods lived and were influenced by the historical events of their day. (There are three traveling trunks-- one for the 1830's, one for 1860's, and one for the 1890's.) For more details on borrowing the trunks, please contact Paul Maloney at EssexNewsMaloney@aol.com. See our website for additional details.

Sources and Suggested Reading:

Mead, William B. and Paul Dickson, Baseball, The President's Game. Farragut Publishing Company, Washington, D.C. 1993.

Smith, Curt, The Presidents and the Pastime: The History of Baseball and the White House. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 2018.

Spencer, Lyle, "Baseball, Presidents Go Back A Long Way", Major League Baseball website, accessed June 25, 2018.

**A Short History of the Grover Cleveland Birthplace and the
Grover Cleveland Birthplace Memorial Association**

Profile of our first GCBMA President

Information Provided from our website

and Trustee Dr. Beverly Crifasi, Chairperson of the GCBMA's Archives and History Committee

People who are new to Grover Cleveland and the Grover Cleveland Birthplace may be interested in finding out more about the history of the Birthplace and the Grover Cleveland Birthplace Memorial Association. Here are key events provided by our website, www.PresidentCleveland.org.

1832 A two-and-a-half story house built on the north side of Newark Turnpike by the First Presbyterian Church at Caldwell, as a manse for its minister. Rev. Richard Falley Cleveland and Ann Neal Cleveland were in residence when their fifth child was born on March 18, 1837. He was named for the Church's first minister, Stephen Grover. The House and barn were enlarged and "modernized" during ensuing years.

1902 The Church begins negotiations for sale of the property at \$18,000, to be used only as a memorial to Grover Cleveland.

1907 A Committee of friends installs a bronze tablet in the room where Grover Cleveland was born. The 70-year-old ex-president wrote that he was profoundly moved by the event.

1913 The Grover Cleveland Birthplace Memorial Association was incorporated with four officers and 39 trustees, prominent citizens from throughout the country. The Association purchased the house and lot, plus a lot along Arlington Avenue

1933 The GCBMA experienced financial difficulties during the Great Depression. The State of New Jersey assumed ownership. Twenty trustees were appointed by Governor Moore.

1936 The House was restored to its 1870 appearance under a WPA program. Placed under Bureau of Historical Monuments: subsequently under Dept. of Environmental Protection and Energy, Division of Parks and Forestry. The house is listed on both the National and New Jersey Register of Historic Places.

1986 The GCBMA was reactivated for the Sesquicentennial of Grover Cleveland's Birth (1987).

The first President of the GCBMA was President John Huston Finley (1863-1940). Trustee Dr. Beverly Crifasi reports that Finley was a well known national figure. He lived in New York City, and was in succession, Professor of Politics at Princeton University, President of the City College of New York and Commissioner of Education of the State of New York. He was an Associate Editor and Editor in Chief of the New York Times until 1938 and Editor Emeritus until his death.

His other accomplishments include being President of the American Geographical Society, serving on the Board of Trustees of the Society for Science and the Public, and being the recipient of honorary degrees from over thirty colleges and universities. Twelve governments gave him thirteen decorations. Finley was also awarded Honorary Membership in the American Library Association.

Finley held the position of GCBMA President from 1913 to 1931. He is buried at Princeton Cemetery, Princeton, (the same cemetery as Grover Cleveland).

In future newsletter issues, other GCBMA “original” Trustees will be profiled. Thanks to Dr. Crifasi for providing this information.

Original GCBMA President John Huston Finley



Our Staff Members

Come and visit our **New Jersey State Park Caretaker Sharon Farrell and Interpreters Paula Tomshe and Janice Caputo** at our birthplace. Our staff will give you a great talk about the 22nd and 24th President’s life and a history and a tour of the Caldwell Birthplace. See our information at the bottom of the next page.

Coming in October! Ghost Tours at the Grover Cleveland Birthplace and Bloomfield Avenue! Details will be available on our website!

Our Present GCBMA Trustees-- Current News

This past March 14th, **Sharon Farrell, Caretaker of the NJDEP's Grover Cleveland Birthplace Site and Dr. Beverly Crifasi, Chairperson of the GCBMA's Archives and History Committee** attended a ceremony at the Library of Congress as invited guests of Grover Cleveland's descendants. The purpose of the ceremony was to donate the Bible used by President Cleveland at his Inauguration Ceremonies. The visit began with a guided tour, followed by a talk given by Mark Dimunation, Chief of the Library of Congress's Rare Book and Special Collections Division and Christopher Warren, Collections Specialist. The day also included a showing of the Lincoln Bible and original machine prints of the Declaration of Independence.

Our Fall 2018 Issue gave an overview of our current Board Members. With 2019, we welcome **Trevor McLaughlin, Anthony Stevenson, and Greg Crump** as new Board Members. **Trevor McLaughlin** was raised in the Caldwell's and is a Social Studies Teacher at Grover Cleveland Middle School. Mr. McLaughlin is a graduate of The College of New Jersey and Caldwell University where he earned many academic honors. **Anthony Stevenson** brings to our Board many administrative experiences from Wells Fargo Bank in North Caldwell and the United States Air Force. He holds a B.A. and M.A. from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University. **Greg Crump** was also raised in the Caldwell's and is very active with the St. Aloysius Church Choir, the Caldwell Track Program, and the Boy Scouts. He is a graduate of Catholic University of America and is a retired engineer.

How have our Presidents kept physically fit?

Summer is here and we're all looking to get into shape! As our "Baseball" article discusses, Grover Cleveland didn't always keep in physical shape. However, he loved to go fishing and duck hunting (and wrote a book about fishing and hunting). As we will explore at the 4th of July Social, he also played chess. Here are some ways our Presidents have kept fit. In many ways, their physical fitness habits tell you about their personalities.

George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Many "Founding Fathers": Great Horseback Riders

John Quincy Adams: Known for 3-4 Mile Walks and Swims in the Potomac River.

Abraham Lincoln: Played recreational baseball and when waiting for the news on his Presidential Nomination, played handball against the side of his house.

Theodore Roosevelt: Had a tennis court built on the near south side of the White House but did not want to be photographed playing. He wanted to appear more "vigorous" with hunting and other activities. At various times, took up wrestling, boxing, hiking, rowing, polo, and judo.

Herbert Hoover: Would have cabinet members join him on the South Lawn of the White House where they would throw a heavy "medicine ball" over a net. The game would eventually be called "Hooverball".

Franklin Roosevelt: Swam in an indoor swimming pool, which opened in 1933, was built on the west terrace behind the West Wing. FDR had great "upper body" strength.

Harry Truman: "King of the Walkers" with 1.5 mile walks, 120 steps per mile pace.

Bill Clinton: 4 to 5 mile runs around the Mall; drove Secret Service "crazy" with Mall runs.

George W. Bush: Ran sub 4:00 marathon; could average 7:00 mile pace when running three miles.

Barack Obama: Basketball, free weights, elliptical machines, and "workout playlists".

Donald Trump: Golf and Sauna.

The Grover Cleveland Birthplace, 207 Bloomfield Ave., Caldwell, N.J. 07006, 973-226-0001. The birthplace is open year round, Wednesday-Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to noon and from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. It is open to the public free of charge and is closed for all State and Federal holidays. The address of the Grover Cleveland Birthplace Memorial Association is PO Box 183, Caldwell, N.J. 07006. For more information, visit www.PresidentCleveland.org and our Facebook site - www.facebook.com/ClevelandBirthplaceAssociation. Your membership (join-renewal) form is included in this hardcopy mailing of the newsletter or visit our website www.presidentcleveland.org/membership to download this form. Questions about membership? Contact us at membership@TheGCBMA.org or call us at 973-226-4357.

