

# Working Together: GCC and GHS Collaborate at Carpenter House

BY THE GUILFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Last May, the owners of the Carpenter House, Art McEvily and Davida Bagatelle, reached out to members of the Guilford Conservation Commission (GCC) and the Guilford Historical Society (GHS) to ask if we knew that this year was the 250th anniversary of the house and if we would like to plan some kind of celebration.

Both groups were enthusiastic about the idea, knowing our missions overlap when it comes to Guilford's history. We began by reaching out to Gail Lynde, who published some of her research on the Carpenter House in a 2021 edition of the Gazette. Gail, who now lives in Maine, grew up in West Guilford and has a special interest in Guilford history. She agreed to join us at our first planning meeting in May, hosted by Art and Davida at the Carpenter House.

Sitting around a table on the quiet lawn behind the house, we envisioned the day and its events—small group tours of the house, a booklet describing its architecture and ownership, a history talk, guided walks around the Carpenter Hill Cemetery, and an invitation to walk the trails on the property. We looked through old photos and documents left at the house by previous owners and from the GHS museum files. We chose a date and divided up tasks for the summer ahead.

Art and Davida encouraged us to highlight the GHS and its efforts to raise funds for critical ceiling repairs at the Meetinghouse in Guilford Center. We decided that a raffle would be a fun way for folks to participate. Art and Davida offered the

top prize for the raffle—a dinner for six that they would host and prepare at the Carpenter House. GHS members agreed to gather additional raffle items.

Lots of quiet work went on over the summer. Gail worked on the research for her presentation. Diane Frost visited the town office to research the deed history. We set up a Google Drive folder to share resources we were all gathering from old newspapers, internet searches, and former owners. Some of us walked and mapped the trails with Art. Karen Murphy and Erin Tkaczyk met several times at the cemetery to plan their guided tours. They also reached out to the Guilford

Cemetery Commission for help with a broken marker.

We continued to meet monthly at the museum to work through the schedule, announcements, and other details of the day. We are most grateful to Mike Tkaczyk who arranged and set up the porta potty and parking. Our last meeting took place at the Carpenter House a few days before the event. We all read through documents about the house beforehand. On this day, we moved through the house room by room, sharing stories and talking about each room's special features. Those who had agreed to be docents took notes. Others reviewed their responsibilities for the welcome and raffle tables, the parking area, the cemetery, the trail walks, and the history talk.

Though rain postponed our Saturday plan, all turned out well. Sunday was a cool day, but our hearts were warmed as visitors started arriving right at 10am and continued coming in small groups throughout the day. More than 200 people had a chance to tour the house. Many toured the cemetery and stayed for Gail's talk.

As Gail said to Art and Davida at the opening of her talk, "We are so grateful that you have shared your home and allowed us to feel the history of this place for ourselves. It is such a gift to the community and to those folks here who are descendants of the Carpenters." We also thank them for bringing our two organizations together.



*Art McEvily and Davida Bagatelle  
(Photo courtesy of Rachel Boettcher @  
LifeSketch Photography)*

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*Gail Lynde tells visitors about the history of Carpenter House.  
(Photo courtesy of Rachel Boettcher @ LifeSketch)*



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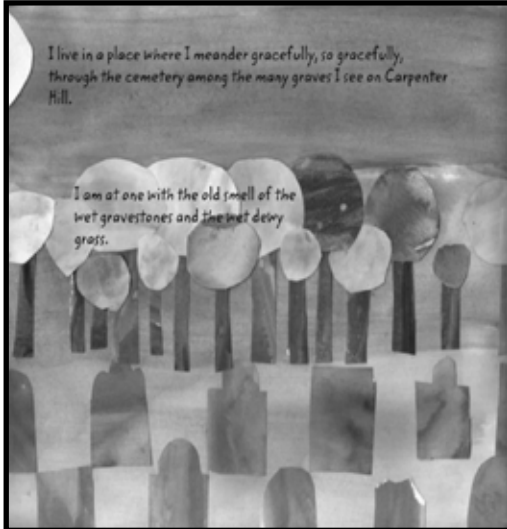
*At One  
In a Place Called Guilford*

By the 6th grade class of  
Guilford Central School

## At One in a Place Called Guilford


Several visitors asked about a book we displayed at the Carpenter House celebration. Created by the 2015-2016 6th Grade Class at Guilford Central School, *At One in A Place Called Guilford* is a picture book filled with watercolor collages and poetic descriptions of special places in Guilford. We displayed the pages of the Carpenter Hill Cemetery and the Carpenter House.

The class self-published this book through Blurb. You can page through the entire book on Blurb's website at: [www.blurb.com/books/6678475-at-one-in-a-place-called-guilford](http://www.blurb.com/books/6678475-at-one-in-a-place-called-guilford). You can also order a hardcover copy of the book from Blurb for \$37.23 ([www.blurb.com/b/6678475-at-one-in-a-place-called-guilford](http://www.blurb.com/b/6678475-at-one-in-a-place-called-guilford)). Or, you can visit the Guilford Free Library and enjoy reading through their copy.



I live in a place where I meander gracefully, so gracefully, through the cemetery among the many graves I see on Carpenter Hill.

I am at one with the old smell of the wet gravestones and the wet dewy grass.



I live in a place where I stare calmly, so calmly, at Benjamin Carpenter's old house.

I am at one with the wild crazy sounds from the animals around the handsome yard.

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