



**GENESEE VALLEY CHAPTER
MILITARY OFFICERS
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
NEWS BULLETIN #7
SUBJECT: GRANGER HOMESTEAD
AND CARRIAGE MUSEUM**

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Serving Members and Their Country

June 2013

The Granger Homestead is a Federal style residence on North Main Street. It was built in 1814-1816 by Gideon Granger, postmaster general under Presidents Jefferson and Madison. Four generations of Grangers lived in the house from 1816 until 1929, including son, Francis Granger, who was postmaster general under Presidents William Henry Harrison and John Tyler.

From 1876 to 1906 the Granger Place School for girls with academic promise occupied the premises. Katherine Hepburn's mother and aunt were students at GPS and both studied chemistry there. The school closed in 1906 and two Granger sisters moved in until the last died in 1929. For the next 15 years, it was a home for retired ministers and their wives. The church board offered the home to the Canandaigua Board of Education in 1945 which deferred to the Granger Homestead Society, hastily formed for the purpose of preserving it. Judge Joseph W. Cribb, a popular local personality, was the prime mover. The society later expanded it to include a carriage museum with the biggest collection of horse-drawn carriages in western New York, several of which horse guy Joe Cribb donated from his own collection.



Helen Keller

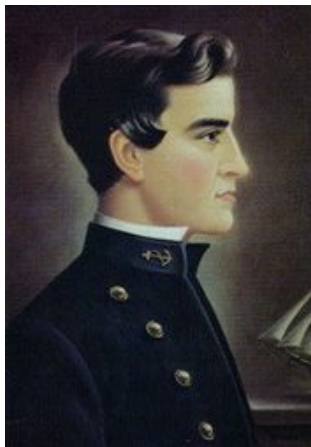
The homestead is spilling over with spectacular antiques and historical artifacts. The two mirror-image front rooms feature two magnificent identical crystal chandeliers installed sometime mid-century. They replaced two equally magnificent brass "gasoliers" (gas-fueled ceiling light fixtures), one of which is hanging in the adjacent library. A priceless photograph of Helen Keller and her pit bull dog, Sir Thomas (see insert), hangs on the wall in a second floor bedroom. Keep in mind Helen Keller was deaf and blind but the picture is inscribed in her hand, "To Miss Granger, with all kind love and mindfulness. Helen Keller, April 24, 1926." The letters are in a straight

line and neatly spaced. (How? you ask?)

Stephen A. Douglas, “the little giant” (see insert) and debating opponent of Abe Lincoln spent some time in his early years in Canandaigua. He was born in Brandon, Vermont in 1813. His father was a physician who died while Douglas was an infant. His mother apprenticed him to a Middlebury cabinet maker during his teens which he hated. When his mother remarried, he moved with her to Canandaigua where he attended Canandaigua Academy which is now the local high school. He then “read law” under the tutelage of Walter S. Hubbell, a practicing attorney in Canandaigua. The two-room Hubbell Law Office is now on the Granger Homestead grounds and visitors can see the room where Stephen A. Douglas studied. In 1833 he went to Ohio and then on to Illinois and his famous debates with Lincoln. He also courted Mary Todd before Lincoln dispatched him.



Stephen A. Douglas



Philip Spencer

Philip Spencer is a Canandaiguan (see insert) you will not hear about in Canandaigua. His father was John C. Spencer, Secretary of War under President John Tyler. According to some reports, he was intelligent, wild and uncontrollable, an incorrigible miscreant. On December 1, 1842 at age 19, Midshipman Spencer was hanged from the yardarm of the USS Somers for plotting a mutiny. He paid a heavy price for his aversion to discipline.

After an investigation ordered by the Secretary of the Navy George Bancroft, the U.S. Navy stopped training boys at sea and founded the U.S. Naval Academy. Now you know how Philip Spencer and Canandaigua are forever connected with George Bancroft and the U.S. Naval Academy. There is no plaque, headstone, monument or other artifact commemorating Spencer in Canandaigua nor at the U.S. Naval Academy nor should there be. The best that can be said is, together, Spencer and John Paul Jones were the inspiration for the Naval Academy.

The Granger Homestead is on North Main Street, a short distance past the Ontario County Courthouse. Both are on the right side (east) and both are worth the price of admission. The Courthouse is free (including defendants) and the Granger Homestead is \$5.



Granger Homestead

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