GREY TOWERS HERITAGE ASSOCIATION
MILFORD • PENNSYLVANIA

GREY TOWERS LEGACY

Conservation • Community • Culture

FALL • WINTER 2021

A DRAMATIC PRODUCTION

Laurel Hill Cemetery Walk

Rain was forecast for the day of Grey Towers Heritage Association's annual Laurel Hill Cemetery Walk. Since there was a 90% chance of rain, everyone anxiously awaited to see what the weather would be like on Saturday. A little dreary weather might add to the drama of the program, but no one wanted a downpour.

As it turned out, there was no rain at all. The sun even came out in the afternoon. Both the 11am and 2pm show were sold out and very well attended.

The inhabitants of the cemetery were anxious to tell the audience more about their lives and times. Cemeteries can tell stories of not only people but the communities they help build. Laurel Hill Cemetery is one of Milford's first graveyards; and there are many stories to tell.

The audience learned more about the Pinchot family from Cyrille CD Pinchot and his wife Eliza Cross Pinchot, parents of James Pinchot. James built Grey Towers and was father of Gifford Pinchot, first chief of the US Forest Service and governor of Pennsylvania.

Catherine Streng Kircheis also spoke to the audience on how she lost 5 of her children in one week. Lightning struck Joseph Mekin; and he and his team of mules died.

In total, the attendees heard stories from 10 of the cemetery's residents. But there are many more stories to be told and you will be hearing from them next year!

The dramatic, first-person readings were performed by the American Readers' Theater under the direction of Jeffrey Stocker.

At the end of the program, Kenneth Sandri, Historic Preservationist, fielded questions from the audience about the cemetery. He discussed the ongoing restoration and encouraged those who were interested to volunteer.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings!

Strolls around the mansion immerse us in autumn's beauty and history of the Pinchot family. Stay connected by visiting the grounds and the website, and following us on social media!

Under the tent this summer, lecture attendees learned about ***Tracking Changes in the Arctic Tundra*** from Dr. Fred Huemmrich and ***Climate, Food, Farms, and Forests*** from Dr. Brian Donahue. Visitors got outdoors on ***National Public Lands Day***.

They enjoyed Gifford Pinchot's tradition of ice cream and the Forest Service celebration of cultural diversity.

Volunteers continue to restore the Laurel Hill Cemetery and the Big Pocono Fire Tower. Dramatic, first-person readings on the ***Cemetery Walk*** told the stories of those buried in this graveyard. Research goes on, and new scripts are being written!

We added new Board Directors and the Board is energized for next year! Look for new programs and new connections!

I am thankful for the most generous spirit of giving from Board Directors and Officers, the US Forest Service, volunteers, and members of Grey Towers Heritage Association.

Marian Keegan

Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays from all of the staff at Grey Towers!

In this season of thanksgiving we extend deep gratitude to our seasonal employee team—Amy Jones, Barbara Zappile, Jen Kosinski, and Tracie Rohner for helping the Forest Service deliver a brilliant outdoor interpretive experience of Grey Towers while we face continuing challenges from COVID-19.

Equally, we extend our gratitude to our faithful volunteers and members of the community who continue to support our mission and visit the grounds.

A special thank you is owed to the Grey Towers Heritage Association for their continued partnership this year and we also extend a warm welcome to the new board members. We look forward to planning a new year of events, lectures, and programs together in 2022!

Enjoy the holiday season, cherish loved ones, and be sure to visit the beautiful Grey Towers grounds in winter!

NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY: SEPTEMBER 25, 2021

The Celebration Returns

National Public Lands Day is the nation's largest single-day volunteer event for public lands. Established in 1994 and held annually on the fourth Saturday in September, this celebration brings out thousands of volunteers to help restore and improve public lands around the country.

This year Grey Towers celebrated with a Fee-Free day sponsored by the US Forest Service with support from the Grey Towers Heritage Association.

Everything was free!

There was yummy ice cream to enjoy, classes to participate in and live music. This year we received many positive comments on the musical performances. People were unable to walk away from the music because it was so compelling.

Children were also delighted. They were able to participate in coloring activities, scavenger hunts, Citizen Science demonstrations and nature displays.

Children, as well as adults, kept the balloon artist busy. He created amazing balloon animals, hats or whatever you could dream up. We hope everyone enjoyed this event as much as we did.

GTHA collected non-perishable food items which were donated to the local food pantry. Everyone was very generous and supportive and your support was so appreciated.

Big Pocono Fire Tower Restoration

After making some good progress last winter, which included restoration of the three stair sections, repair of fire tower framing and pouring of the footings, things slowed down due to weather and acquiring the needed hardware.

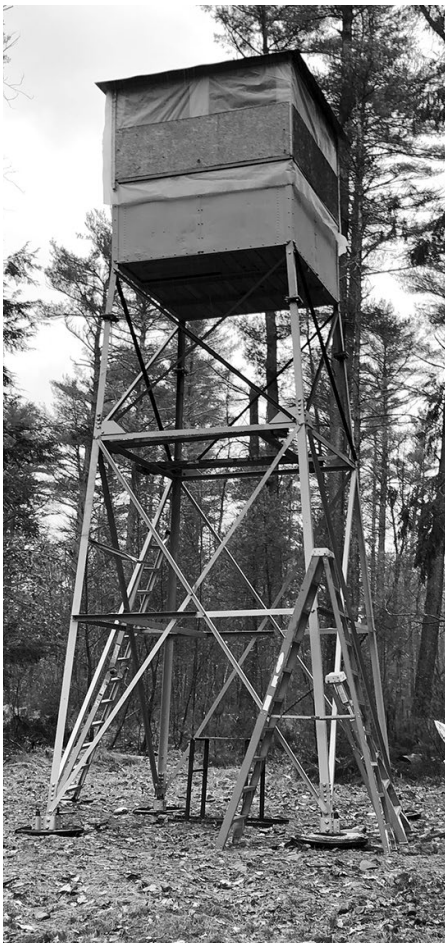
We finally were able to purchase and get delivery of the footing hardware. With the generous assistance of Sequoia Tree Services, we were able to move the tower structure to the permanent location and interpretation site.

Sequoia Tree Services crew helping with the heavy lifting.

The fire tower was lowered onto the concrete footings. With the help of volunteers, the tower footing brackets were fixed to the concrete footings. The tower was then primed and painted.

The fire tower cab was also moved to the interpretation site by the Sequoia Tree Services. The cab, which had undergone restoration, had been wrapped and ready for transport by the volunteer crew to protect it from any damage.

The next step in the process was reattachment of the cab to the rehabilitated tower. Sequoia Tree Services again offered to help with this tricky step and availability of their heavy lift equipment was critical. Sequoia Tree Services completed placing the fire tower cab onto the tower structure on Friday November 12, 2021. The welding crew came back early Saturday and Sunday mornings to complete installation of the cross bracing and securing all the plate connections.



The Big Pocono Fire Tower now stands tall 100 years from when it was first erected.

Volunteer crew and US Forest Service staff working on footings.

A special thanks goes out to the Sequoia Tree Services crew for all the help with the heavy lifting and footing installation, and for the cab connection work!

Also, thanks to the volunteers and the US Forest Service staff who have been working on this project for about 3 years. We are not done yet, but getting the Fire Tower standing again was pretty special.

Based on our research, the Big Pocono Fire Tower was first erected in 1921, 100 years later, it is standing again—November 2021.

Many Hands Make Light Work

We want to recognize and Thank the Boy Scouts for their volunteer service at Grey Towers over the last few years. It is appropriate for Grey Towers to support the local Boy Scouts.

Conservation has been an import part of the program of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) since its establishment. Gifford Pinchot was the first BSA Chief Scout Woodsman and actively supported forest and wildlife conservation programs as part of the BSA. This included the opportunity for Scouts to practice outdoor life and outdoor craft (1925 Handbook for Scoutmasters).

In 2021 Milford Boy Scout Troop 71 helped out with a long work day, cleaning all the headstones and spreading mulch along the main entrance trail to the Laurel Hill Cemetery.

In 2016, a Webelo Cub Scout Den was working on their "Into the Wood" achievement badge. There was a need to add American Chestnut trees in the demonstration site near the Yale Tent interpretive area (one of the three existing trees was dead). American Chestnut seedlings were acquired from the American Chestnut Foundation, and the group completed the planting of the trees at the demonstration site.

In 2015, Logan Brighton, a Scout with Troop 77 in Matamoras, developed an Eagle Scout Project at the historic Laurel Hill Cemetery. During the project he led his crew in filling in 22 depressions, considered potential grave sites. Activities included seeding the sites with native grass seed and placing a marker at each site. Logan and his crew also cleaned 121 headstones with a mild cleaner. These activities made the Laurel Hill Cemetery more inviting to visitors and helped with preservation of the site.

Another project was completed in **September 2014 by Cub Scout Pack 26** from Shohola. The Scouts volunteered to help on a project during National Public Lands Day. Due to a number of storm events, the Forest Discovery Trail was in need of repair.

Cub Scout Pack 26 put together a group of 12 people (4 Scouts, 3 siblings and 5 adults). The group reinforced the trail surface with wood chips. Another 2014 project was undertaken by Milford Cub Scout Pack 71. This was a service project in the Milford Experimental Forest. The Scouts helped with the construction of a new section of trail which was under development.

One of the projects was an **Eagle Scout Project led by Ben Cunningham in 2011**. The Forest Discovery Trail was in need of some major repairs at the time.

Ben took on the project which included (1) Improving switchbacks for safety and erosion control, (2) Improving the trail along the side hill areas using logs/commercial landscape materials and dispersing existing slash and dead/down materials on downhill side of trail to stabilize slope (3) Defining trails in flat areas in vicinity of "learning loops" using "logs" and mulch. You can see the work that was done next time you visit the Yale Tent interpretive area.

Cemetery Restoration Continues

We had another good year of restoration and maintenance work within the Laurel Hill Cemetery. We estimate approximately 200 hours of volunteer time was donated this year within the Laurel Hill Cemetery.

The volunteer crew (Ed, Bill, Don, Tim, Richard, Fred and Robert) put a lot of time and effort into adding wood mulch along the perimeter trail, and mulching areas around the three stone benches and interpretative signs.

The US Forest Service maintenance crew (Shawn, Pat and Ray) provided numerous loads of mulch to help with the many mulching projects. We want to "Thank" the US Forest Service crew for all their help over many years.

The volunteer crew also spent a lot of time weed whacking and mowing to keep the vegetation under control in areas off the main access trails.

Yarosz Landscaping continued to mow the main access roads/trails within the cemetery, which the Grey Towers Heritage Associations funds through donations and grants. Yarosz Landscaping goes above and beyond in their mowing work, creating wide paths for visitors and mowing adjacent areas to provide easy access to monuments and grave sites.

Milford Boy Scout Troop 71 also helped out with a long work day, cleaning all the headstones and spreading mulch along the main entrance trail.

Grey Towers Heritage Association
P.O. Box 188
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greytowers.org

Follow us on Facebook
@greytowersnationalhistoricsite

OUR MISSION

To assist the US Forest Service in education, improvements, promotion, conservation and wise use of Grey Towers National Historic Site, Milford, PA.

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UPCOMING SEMINARS — *Details at greytowers.org*

Sat., January 15 • 11AM & 1:30PM

At Home with the Pinchots: Peeling off the Layers of History

Cost: $15 per person; $10 for members

Enjoy a rare "behind-the-scene" tour at the ancestral home of the original Pinchot family. Ken Sandri, US Forest Service, will share his extensive research and examination of how the home was built and how it shaped the history of Milford.

Sat., February 12 • 11:30AM

The Stillness of the Living Forest: A Year of Listening and Learning

Cost: $20 per person; $15 for members

John Harvey committed to spend on hour each day for a year sitting in the same spot along Pompton Lake (Honesdale, PA). This extraordinary experience transformed his reconnection to and renewed appreciation for all things natural (Pinchot Legacy).

Become a Member

We invite you to join Grey Towers Heritage Association in partnership with the US Forest Service at Grey Towers National Historic Site to continue the Pinchot Legacy by becoming a member of Grey Towers Heritage Association (GTHA).

Benefits of Membership

- Help Preserve the Grey Towers Estate
- Help Support Public Programs
- Help Tell the Pinchot Conservation Story
- Help Strengthen the Community Connection

Membership Levels

- **Individual Associate: $30** (Senior $25/Student $10)
- **Associate Household: $50** (Helps support tree plantings in a National Forest)
- **Patron: $250** plus *Annual Tour Pass*
- **Sponsor: $500** /*Annual Tour Pass*
- **Sustainer: $1,000** /*Annual Tour Pass*

Grey Towers Heritage Association Welcomes Volunteers

There are many Volunteer Opportunities available:

- Mansion and Garden Tours
- Special Events
- Gift Shop
- Conservation Education
- Landscape and Gardens
- Trails
- Cemetery Restoration
- Fire Tower Restoration

And much more!

Go to GreyTowers.org for an application and more information on volunteering.

NEW! Need a gift? Give the gift of a GTHA Membership!
You may join us through our website GreyTowers.org