



Barrington Preservation Society

DISCOVER • PRESERVE • RESTORE

Spring 2015

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Revisit Barrington History: Reorganized Museum Space and Core Exhibit

With Barrington Preservation Society's mission statement as a guide, the museum committee has installed a new full-time core collection museum exhibit, highlighting Barrington's history as reflected in our core holdings of artifacts, maps, and documents, and our core activities in stewardship of Barrington's past. In the museum, visitors may now walk through the most important themes and periods of Barrington's development as a community:

- Pokanoket Indian settlement
- the first European settlers – Baptist settlers at Nockum Hill
- the growth and change of Barrington since colonial times (map sequence)
- Barrington as an agricultural community, and early schools
- Barrington's militia and military history
- immigration and industry in Barrington in the 19th and 20th centuries
- our summer community and coastal businesses
- our inventory of historic, plaqued houses

Our new core exhibit is up and running in time for Barrington's third graders, who all annually visit as part of their community social studies unit.

As we reorganize our core collections, especially of manuscripts and photographs, BPS is always eager to acquire photographs and artifacts that relate to Barrington history. If you have objects or photos that you are willing to share or duplicate, please contact us at info@barringtonpreservation.org or bring them to the museum on a Wednesday or Saturday between 1 and 4 pm. If you are a BPS member and would like to volunteer as a museum docent on one of our afternoons, we would be glad to help familiarize you with the exhibit and more of the Society's holdings. Later this year, selected material related to these core elements of Revisit Barrington History will appear online on the website as well.

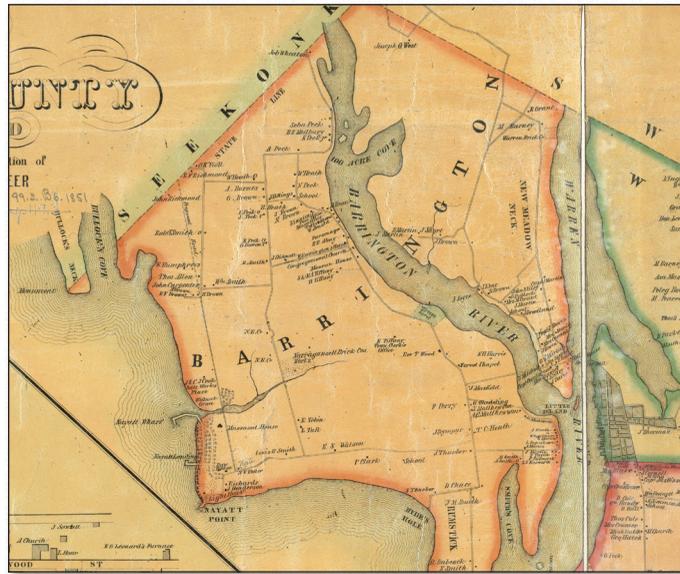
Remembering Volunteer Nancy Wing

Nancy Wing, who passed away earlier this year, was an active, loyal and gracious BPS volunteer for decades—one of our longest-serving volunteers. Many of us remember her time spent in the Museum, helping with exhibits, and helping other volunteers learn about the Society’s collections. Nancy’s great labor was to collect and organize newspaper clippings and other written memorabilia pertaining to all aspects of Barrington’s people and town life. Recently, Nancy’s family has donated the bulk of Nancy’s Barrington clippings files to the Preservation Society. These are currently awaiting reorganization, and we hope that a finding aid will be available later in the year. In addition to warmly remembering Nancy’s service, we also thank her family for taking this step to ensure that Nancy’s work will be available into the future at BPS.

Barrington Historical Maps Series Now Online

One of the best ways to study the growth and change of our town is by looking back in time at old maps of the town. Recently we gathered an exhaustive set of links to clear, high-resolution digital versions of many maps showing Barrington, from as far back as colonial times, on a new “Barrington Historical Maps Series” on the BPS website. Highlights include a map of the 1741 “Boundary Commission” settlement that redrew the colony border, transferring Barrington from Massachusetts to Rhode Island; hand-colored Revolutionary-era maps of Rhode Island showing the location of colonial houses; 19th-century maps showing the coming of the

railroad to the East Bay; and the official hand-drawn Town survey map of all property lines within Barrington, compiled in 1867. If you are researching historic homes in town, or just interested in how Barrington grew, check out the map page on our website. Follow tabs to “Maps” then to “Historical Maps of Barrington.”



◀ Detail from 1851 Walling Map of Bristol County, R.I.

Early Barrington Documents Project Update

Barrington Preservation Society has custody of many old Barrington documents dating back to before the Revolution, some entrusted to us by the Town Clerk, and some given by private donors (most notably, the late Frederick S. Peck). Last year BPS won a grant from the Rhode Island Foundation (Ott Fund) to ensure that these are properly stored and organized. The grant covered ample archival-quality boxes and folders for these precious historical manuscripts.

Later this year the volunteer work of refolding and reboxing these precious documents will finally get underway, and lists of these documents will begin to appear on the BPS website for the benefit of researchers. Contact us if you’d like to be involved in this reboxing project! Watch the website or our Facebook page for updates.



▲ Bundle of handwritten property assessments, 1779. Shown unfolded is Matthew Allin’s description of his farm (now Drownville).

Oral History Video

Barrington High School senior Liam McGuirl has recently completed a skillful videotaping of oral histories, as his BHS senior project. Focusing on immigrant families who came from Italy to work in the Barrington Brickyard, and working with the Museum Committee chair Karen Waterman, Liam participated in all aspects of the project: preparation with research in our historical collections; conducting and videotaping interviews with Barrington residents; and editing the interview video into a finished film, which is now available on a monitor in the Museum, and will shortly be available online, linked through the BPS website and Facebook. Congratulations to Liam for this excellent work, benefitting Barrington while honing his own skills. We hope that others will follow Liam's example, joining in our ongoing efforts to record video interviews with long-time Barringtonians.



Barrington Infantry

Spotlight on Barrington's Early Militia Flag

Each town in colonial New England had its own militia. After the Revolution, the state of Rhode Island continued this colonial tradition, with town militias organized into regiments at the state level, which remained the backbone of our military system nationwide through the Civil War.

BPS is very lucky to have the Barrington militia's flag from the early 19th century, beautifully painted on deep blue silk by William Pitman, a professional sign and flag painter in Providence. Each side features a hand-painted design with an eagle and shield, with text in a scroll; on one side, "Barrington Infantry" (pictured here); on the other side, "4th Company, 4th Reg.," showing the Barrington company's place among the state troops.

This flag was carried when the Barrington troops marched on Chepachet in 1842, in the "Dorr Rebellion," along with Thomas Heath's 1813 Springfield musket, which is also on display. Very few such military flags from before the Civil War survive, at either the state or town levels: Barrington is very lucky to have it!

Now on display for the first time in several years, this flag is our most striking town symbol – visitors love it – but also Barrington's most endangered artifact. Now over 170 years old, this flag has been weakened and damaged over time. The silk is "shattered" (partly disintegrating) and is mostly held together in the middle by the painted design on both sides. The flag is currently encased in a handmade plexiglass frame, with glue holding portions of the silk in place. BPS has had a formal conservation assessment by a fabric expert who specializes in early military flags. Needed work to ensure optimal long-term preservation may cost as much as \$11,000, for which we hope to direct grant-seeking and fundraising efforts later this year.

We are glad to be able to reintroduce this beautiful artifact to Barrington, and to spread the word that we need to preserve it! We will gratefully accept any donations towards conservation of this important Barrington artifact. Stay tuned for future news about the flag later in the year.

Spinning Wheel restored

BPS extends a special thanks to volunteer Dave Rogers, who has carefully restored our (frail and damaged) spinning wheel to working condition, for incorporation into the agricultural portion of the exhibit, "Revisit Barrington History." We are always grateful for our members and friends who donate time and skills to BPS efforts—as well as to those who donate Barrington artifacts and photos!

Nockum Hill News

BPS's Nockum Hill Committee has continued to monitor the legal dispute between the Town of Barrington and a developer on Nockum Hill as it goes to appeal in Rhode Island Superior Court. Barrington Preservation Society has now formally joined the Barrington Conservation Land Trust and other private parties as intervenors in the Superior Court appeal, in order to maximize the chance that our research findings on Nockum Hill's historical significance are fully considered as the case is reviewed. At the same time, the new Comprehensive Plan recently approved by the Barrington Town Council sets new goals for preservation of the unique character of Nockum Hill, representing a step forward in the careful integration of Preservation goals in town government.

Come visit us at a wine-tasting!

JUNE CHARITY PARTNERSHIP

Grapes & Grains

20 Bosworth Street

Thursday June 4, 2015 | 5:30 – 7:30 PM

10% of proceeds of featured libations during the tasting will be donated to BPS. For the whole month of June, 10% of proceeds from sale of a selected partner wine will also be donated to BPS.

Gourmet take-out from **Plouf Plouf** will be available on Bosworth Street that evening.

Barrington Preservation Society

P.O. Box 178
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***** Join BPS and help preserve Barrington's rich history. 2015 dues cover from January 1 to December 31, and this year we are sending every member a BPS 2015 sticker to display on your car or in your home.**

Join the Barrington Preservation Society!

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ e-mail * _____

New member _____ Renewal _____

*Stay connected and help BPS reduce costs by giving us your email address. Dues are tax deductible and qualify members for discounts on museum purchases, including museum photographs.

Membership Categories

Individual \$35

Family \$50

Supporting \$100

Patron \$250

Life Member \$1000

Join or renew online at barringtonpreservation.org/membership/, or clip and send this form with a check payable to:

The Barrington Preservation Society
P.O. Box 178, Barrington, RI 02806