



# Exploring History

Barrington Preservation Society Newsletter

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**Barrington Preservation Society Museum**

Lower Level, Public Library

**Hours**

Open Wednesdays 10:00-12:00pm  
or by appointment

**Phone**

(401) 289-0802

**E-mail**

info@barringtonpreservation.org



**BARRINGTON**  
RHODE ISLAND

## TAVERNS TO TYLER POINT: TALES ALONG THE REVOLUTIONARY ROAD

By Stephen Venuti, President, BPS 

Signs along County Road (Routes 114 & 103) through Barrington mark it as part of the Washington Rochambeau Revolutionary Route, or W3R. This commemorates a significant turning point in the American Revolution when French Troops, under the command of General Jean-Baptiste Rochambeau, arrived in Newport in 1780, then marched north through Portsmouth, Bristol, Warren, and Barrington to join forces with General George Washington in Connecticut.

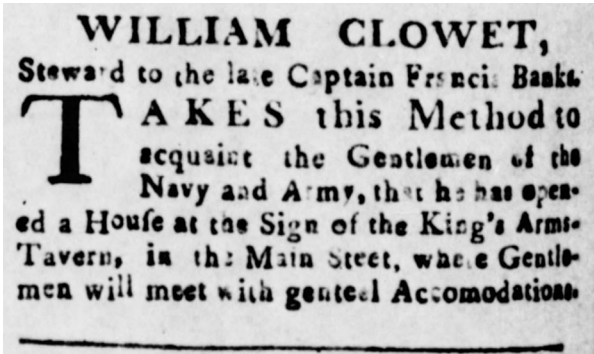
Earlier in the war however, British and Hessian troops had landed in Newport, then marched or sailed north, conducting raids throughout the East Bay as far north as Tyler Point in Barrington. The British and Hessian Occupation of Newport began on December 8, 1776, with the arrival of a fleet of British and Hessian soldiers and lasted through October 1779.

By January 16, 1777, the local newspaper (the pro-revolution Newport Mercury) printing press had been taken over by Tory Loyalist John Howe and rebranded the Newport Gazette. Throughout the British Occupation, the Newport Gazette published reports of the war from a clearly pro-British, anti-Rebel point of view.

**British Take the Taverns, Rebel Sympathizers Take Their Leave**

From the articles published in the Gazette we know that the occupying troops set up residence in the homes of the rebels and rebel sympathizers who had fled Newport and took over most if not all of the local taverns to use as meeting sites and command posts. An ad appearing in the December 11, 1777, edition of the Newport Gazette reads as follows:

*“WILLIAM CLOWETT, Stewart [sic?] to the late Captain Francis Banks, TAKES this Method to acquaint the Gentlemen of the Navy and Army, that he has opened a House at the Sign of the King’s Arms Tavern, in the Main Street, where Gentlemen will meet with genteel Accommodations.”* It is not clear if “William Clowett,” or “the late Captain Francis Banks” supported the Rebels or the British Occupiers, but it’s clear that William Clowett



*Con't on page 4*

# museum news

## STORIES IN STONES

By Jean Douglas, BPS Trustee

In the serene grounds of Prince's Hill Cemetery, amidst the graves of Pecks, Bicknells and other notable Barrington families, there is the final resting place of a former Brooklyn Dodger named Harry Pattee.



Pattee was a member of the Brown University Class of 1906, played collegiate baseball and excelled both academically and athletically at Brown. As a standout player, he contributed significantly to his team's success with his prowess on the field, which caught the attention of baseball enthusiasts well beyond the college grounds.

During the summers between his sophomore and junior years at Brown, Pattee played Minor League Baseball for the Jersey City Skeeters, and in 1908, Pattee signed onto the Major League Baseball system and joined the Brooklyn Superbas, the forerunner of the renowned Brooklyn Dodgers, and his debut on the team coincided with the introduction of the iconic baseball anthem, "Take Me Out to the Ball Game." Though his tenure with the Brooklyn Superbas was only one season, Pattee etched his name into the annals of Major League Baseball by embodying the passion and dedication to the game that inspired generations of athletes.

After two years in the majors, Pattee was sent back to the Minors and led the Rochester Broncos to win pennants in 1909 and 1910.

After hanging up his personal cleats in 1912, Pattee became the baseball coach at Brown University for the next nine years, which allowed him to impart his knowledge and passion for the game



to future generations, and he left an indelible mark on the players he mentored and the programs he helped shape. His teams had a combined 117-42-1 record.

Harry Pattee's life, achievements and journey from Brown University to the Brooklyn Dodgers exemplify determination, resilience and inspiration.

The Barrington Preservation Society gratefully recognizes Richard and Rosemary Danforth for the donation of their extensive research into the lives of Barrington residents interred in Prince's Hill Cemetery, including Harry Pattee. ~



Richard and Rosemary Danforth hold a cemetery plot plan.

# TIME TO MAKE YOUR MARK ON HISTORY

The Barrington Preservation Society (BPS) is comprised of folks from all walks of life with diverse backgrounds. What brings us together is a shared love of history. Those of us who study history, whether professionally or as a hobby, recognize that an understanding of history is a key to preparing for a better future.

At BPS we not only study and preserve history, it is our mission to engage with the community and share the rich historical treasures southern New England, Rhode Island and Barrington in particular have to offer. A key to fulfilling this mission is the work done by BPS's standing Committees.

*If you have an interest in making your mark on history by getting involved in any of the Committees described below... we invite you to contact us at [info@barringtonpreservation.org](mailto:info@barringtonpreservation.org)*

## Museum Committee

*Chaired by Barbara Hail*

The Town Museum, curated and staffed by the Barrington Preservation Society, is located on the ground floor of the Barrington Library/Peck Center building, next to the Peck Center for Adult Enrichment. We are open from 10-12 noon Wednesdays, and by appointment. Our holdings include historical furnishings, clothing, and archival records, including photographs, which tell the story of the town of Barrington since its inception in 1717.

We welcome volunteers who would enjoy serving as museum docents to help visitors appreciate the exhibits. Some docents learn archival skills and help us in cataloguing collections. We also have need of volunteers with media skills, to advertise our exhibitions in the newspaper and online, and keep our web page updated. If any of these tasks appeal to you, please drop us an email. We welcome you to come in and look around and see if this is a good fit for you.

## Program Committee

*Co-chaired by Jean Douglas and Duncan Southerland*

The Program Committee, working closely with both the Education and Museum Committees, is involved in planning, organizing, and overseeing various events, activities and educational programs related to history. The Committee plans and executes events such as lectures, selecting knowledgeable speakers to present talks on various historical topics of interest to the community. Other events have included tours of historic homes, neighborhoods, and cemeteries in town. Outreach and promotion are part of the work. Our volunteer graphic designer creates postcards, which are mailed to present and past members; notices on social media and press releases in the Barrington Times also advertise the event. New members with ideas for new topics and energy to help organize events are always welcome.

## Education Committee

*Chaired by Luther Spoebr*

The Education Committee, working closely with the Program and Museum Committees, engages in research for special projects and assists in conducting programs and activities for school groups and the public. This year, as it has done for many years, the Education Committee will promote an understanding of Barrington's unique history through its annual tours of Prince's Hill Cemetery and the Town Museum for Barrington Public School Third Graders. The Education Committee has also been invited this year meet with Barrington Public School Fifth Graders to talk about Barrington History.

A special project underway by the Committee involves the ongoing research for information about The Barrington Players, a community theater group that was especially active in the 30 years after World War II. We are looking for playbills, photographs, files, and the like, either as donations or simply to be photocopied. We are also looking for articles and reviews of performances in the Barrington Times, the Providence Journal, and other publications.

If you are interested in learning more about how to volunteer to help with any of these projects, or any other education-focused project, we would like to hear from you.

## Plaque Committee

*Chaired by Maria Bruce*

The Plaque Committee, relying on historical records, including those found in both the Town Hall and Town Museum, has the primary responsibility for researching Barrington homes and their historical significance. Currently the Plaque Committee is looking for volunteers, preferably with a background in historic preservation, building and site document research, history, archiving, or

*Con't on page 4*

*Cont. from page 3*

architecture. Volunteers will conduct primary source research (deed, map, tax, probate and genealogical), as well as on-site inspections of the subject property. Findings will be analyzed and compiled into a comprehensive research dossier, and used to produce our classic hand-painted “Barrington Preservation Society” plaque, designating the structure’s original build date and owner. Both plaque and dossier will be presented to the property’s current owner during our annual Plaque Program. Once acclimated to the process, most researchers work independently, and at their own pace.

## Finance Committee

*Chaired by David Stonestreet*

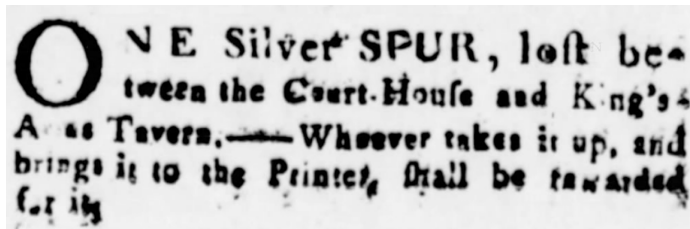
As a 501c3 non-profit corporation, for its day-to-day operation, including support for each of the standing Committees, BPS relies entirely upon member dues and donations. The Finance Committee is responsible for managing the Society’s investments, preparing the annual budget, and supporting the Treasurer (who is responsible for financial reporting and management of the Society’s bank accounts). There are vacancies for new volunteer members with some experience of Excel spreadsheets or investments. ~

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## TAVERNS TO TYLER POINT:

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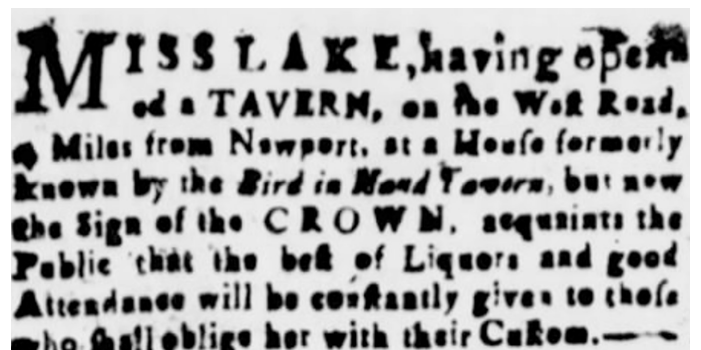
knew where the clientele was to be found. Clearly it wasn’t just “genteel accommodation” one could find (or lose) at the King’s Arms Tavern. An ad appearing in the September 2, 1779, edition of the Newport Gazette reads as follows: “ONE Silver SPUR, left between the Court-House and the King’s Arms Tavern, — Whoever takes it up, and brings it to the Printer, shall be rewarded for it.”



It’s anyone’s guess how the owner managed to lose a “Silver SPUR.” Perhaps a little embarrassed, the ‘gentleman’ clearly

wanted the silver spur returned—but not enough to be named in the paper.

Whether pro-rebel or pro-occupier, “Miss Lake,” like William Clowett, knew where the clientele was to be found. An ad appearing in the July 15, 1779, edition of the Newport Gazette reads as follows: “MISS LAKE, having opened a TAVERN on the West Road (?) Miles from Newport at the House formerly known by the Bird in Hand Tavern, but now the Sign of the Crown, acquaints the Public that the best of Liquors and good Attendance will be constantly given to those who shall oblige her with their Custom.”



Since the name change in July of 1779 was clearly a nod to the British occupiers, one has to wonder if Miss Lake rehung the “Bird in Hand” sign on the tavern four months later when the British Occupation ended.

### British Take the Sails, Rebels Tow the Galley

It is entirely likely that (British) Brigadier General Smith was sitting in one of the British-friendly Taverns when he received a dispatch from a field commanding officer detailing an encounter with a Rebel Galley in waters between Bristol Ferry and Common Fence Point. The details of the encounter were published in the March 20, 1777, edition of the Newport Gazette.

On the evening of Thursday March 13th, 1777, a heavily armed Rebel Galley “...attempted to pass by Bristol Ferry, in her Way to Providence, but was not able to accomplish that Design. In the Night she got (aground) on the North East Point of Land of Common Fence...Being discovered in... the Morning, Capt. Brady brought down the British Field Artillery to the Beach, as near to her as possible, as soon as they began firing, the Rebels (jumped) from the Galley...”

Once Rebels had abandoned the ship, “...Capt. Brady, of the Royal Artillery, went (onboard?), (br)ought off some Side Arms and (set) the Galley on Fire. The other Galley (of) the Rebels [?]. At Howland’s Ferry, came out of their Creek [and] showed some Intention of getting

Cont. from page 4

*up to protect her Consort on the Shore, but on receiving a few Rounds from the Cannon, she tacked about and went back...*

The British forces then dispatched *"...two Boats...from the Diamond Frigate" [that] "passed with the greatest Intrepidity, the Enemy's Battery and Fire at Bristol Ferry, and came in Time to save some of the Sails, Swivels, &c. out of the Galley. Some of the British and Hessian Troops were assembled and came down upon the Common Fence, with the utmost Alacrity, to be there in Readiness... in Case the Rebels had been inspired... to endeavor saving their Galley..."*

Despite these efforts, the British Field Commander was forced to report that *"...the Rebels had (in fact), with the utmost Diligence, brought their Boats from Bristol, and towed the Galley away, under Cover of the Night."*

#### **British Take Prisoners, Bristol and Warren Take Heavy Damage**

A little over a year later—just 4 months before the infamous Battle of Rhode Island—the May 28, 1778, edition of the Newport Gazette reported details of a subsequent military engagement further up the East Bay—once again told from the British perspective. *"Early in the Morning of the 25th Instant, a Detachment of about 500 Men, under the Command of Lieutenant Colonel Campbell, of the 221 Regiment, embarked onboard Flatt bottom Boats and covered by the Men of War, proceeded up the River and landed between Bristol and Warren, from whence they passed over the Kickemuit River, where they destroyed 125 Boats, a Galley with the guns belonging to her, and a schooner laden with stores. On the return of the Troops to Warren they found in the River a Privateer Sloop of 16 guns, which was destroyed, also a Magazine there and some Houses. The Troops then proceeded to Bristol, destroyed a Magazine and a Part of that Town, after which they deliberately re-embarked under Cover of the Flora and Gallies, with Greatest Regularity."*

The news article further details the capture of *"between 60 and 70 Prisoners,"* the destruction of military equipment and the burning of *"the Enemy's Guard House at Fogland Ferry."*

The number of *"Rebels"* killed in the encounter was not enumerated in the article. But the article did report the *"Loss sustained by the King's Troops was, Lieutenant Hamilton, and 12 Privates wounded, some mortally, and two Drummers missing."* The article concludes that the *"good Conduct of the Officers and Men on the Occasion deserves every Encomium and has received the warmest Approbation of his Excellency General Pigot."*

#### **Hessians Take a Chance, Tyler Takes a Musket**

Missing from the Newport Gazette's report of the events of May 25th, 1778, is the ill-fated attempt by Hessian soldiers to extend the invasion beyond the Town of Warren and into Barrington. The details of this part of the story are contained in Thomas Williams Bicknell's 1898 *A History of Barrington Rhode Island*: The bottom tip of Barrington's New Meadow Neck, now known as Tyler Point in honor of Moses Tyler, lies a short distance from Warren, just across the Palmer River. During the raid of Warren by British and Hessian troops, *"(t)wo Hessian soldiers, more adventurous than the rest, secured a small boat and prepared to cross the river to the Barrington side... Mr. Tyler with musket ready prepared by the hands of his wife and daughter, hastened to the bank of the river... to dispute passage of the two redcoats..."*

Despite Tyler's warnings, the Hessians kept coming. As soon as they were within range, *"Mr. Tyler took aim and fired, instantly killing one of the soldiers."*

The other Hessian soldier immediately then turned the boat around and brought it to shore on the Warren side of the river. Upon reaching the shore, the Hessian soldier fled, leaving behind both his dead comrade and his musket. *"Mr. Tyler took possession of the dead Hessian's musket... and with the assistance of a neighbor, gave him a decent burial and returned to his home."* It is likely that, in the days following this event, Moses Tyler would have had ample opportunity to tell his story to friends and neighbors at the nearby—though now long gone—Wayside Tavern. Given that Bicknell's account of the story was written over one hundred years later, we will never know how much of the story is real or just embellishment. But we do know that the captured musket is real because he passed it along to his grandson, Haile Bowen of Warren, whose descendants passed it to successive generations along with the story. ~



**Photo: Moses Tyler descendant S.H. Bowen of Greenville, SC, in 1993 with Tyler's Hessian Muket. (BPS, Photo Archive Collection)**

# PLAQUE PROGRAM UPDATES

## REVISED GUIDELINES AND FALL EVENT PREVIEW By Maria Bruce

For almost 60 years the BPS Plaque Program has explored Barrington's history and common heritage by researching and documenting our historic buildings and their original owners. With historic plaque designations on well over 180 structures throughout Barrington, these architectural examples showcase our past, and create an awareness and appreciation of the importance of historic preservation and restoration.

In an effort to provide greater clarity and structure, the Plaque Committee recently revised its **Plaque Program Guidelines and Plaque Application**. The revised guidelines outline the program's eligibility as described in its criteria and process, while the revised application provides improved instructions, and a streamlined format. Through some minor changes, the criteria outlines four key aspects of the plaque-candidate building including: 1. Age, Integrity and Condition, 2. Exterior Wall Treatments, 3. Exterior Details, and 4. Additions. Similarly, the process portion of the guidelines now incorporates defined steps to be followed by both the homeowner and BPS. As the initial (and integral) part of the process, the revised plaque application provides consistent information, in an easier to complete and submit format. To view all of our revised documents, please visit our website at [www.barringtonpreservation.org](http://www.barringtonpreservation.org), and select the "Plaques" tab. Our hope is that these revised documents will inform and assist the applicant homeowner throughout the BPS plaquing process, and as they choose preservation and restoration for their historic properties.

Looking forward, our early Fall **annual Plaque Program** will once again feature BPS Past President, Nathaniel Taylor, Ph.D. as our

*The General Thomas Allin House (circa 1769 et seq.) located on Lincoln Avenue was once the center of his two hundred acre farm in West Barrington.*

*Photo courtesy of Nathaniel Taylor.*

guest lecturer. Having resumed our in-person program in 2022, Nat's popular presentations are rooted in Barrington's history, and centered around each year's plaque recipient properties, and their original owners. A special addition to this year's lecture will be the inclusion of Nat's own home into his presentation. As a National Register of Historic Places nominated property, Nat's house on Lincoln Avenue was built in 1769 by General Thomas Allin. General Allin was very active in state and local government, served in the Revolutionary War, and as one of Barrington's representatives to a special state convention (held in Newport in March 1790), voted on behalf of Rhode Island to ratify the United States Constitution. Once approved, the General Thomas Allin House (circa 1769 et seq.) will join the Allen-West House at 153 George Street, and the Benjamin Aborn Jackson House at 115 Nayatt Road, as Barrington's third individual residence listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

By exploring Barrington's history and common heritage through the unique lens of our historic buildings and their original owners, the BPS Plaque Program is dedicated to researching and documenting these architectural examples of our past, while raising awareness of the importance of historic preservation and restoration. With continued volunteer assistance and member support, the BPS Plaque Committee remains committed to continuing this vital and important service to both our homeowners and community alike. ~



# *Anyone look familiar?*



*Barrington High School Auditorium. Photo by Paul Darling*

*This is the cast of "South Pacific," performed by the Barrington Players in November 1962.*



**If you recognize any of these folks** or—even better—would like to help the Barrington Preservation Society find out more about the Players, please contact Luther Spoehr: [Luther\\_Spoehr@Brown.edu](mailto:Luther_Spoehr@Brown.edu).



*- Thank you!*



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

## become a member or renew today

*Please complete this form and return with dues.*

\*\*\* Be a member and help preserve Barrington's rich history.  
2024 dues cover from January 1 to December 31.

### Join the Barrington Preservation Society!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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.

### Membership Categories

- |   |      |  |        |
|---|------|--|--------|
| High School Student <input type="checkbox"/>        | \$5  | Supporting <input type="checkbox"/>      | \$100  |
| College/University Student <input type="checkbox"/> | \$10 | Patron <input type="checkbox"/>          | \$250  |
| Individual <input type="checkbox"/>                 | \$35 | Business Member <input type="checkbox"/> | \$250  |
| Family <input type="checkbox"/>                     | \$50 | Life Member <input type="checkbox"/>     | \$1000 |

Join or renew online at [barringtonpreservation.org/membership](http://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