



Stony Brook **CURRENTS**

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The Newsletter of the Suffield Historical Society

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The mission of the Suffield Historical Society is to collect, preserve and stimulate interest in the history of Suffield and the region and to actively share it. The Society hopes to inspire a sense of community, as well as to provide an understanding and appreciation of Suffield's past.

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ORIGINAL TAYLOR PROPRIETORS

by Ed Chase

In the early years of Suffield, six Taylor men were granted acreage in the fledging community. These men represent three distinctly different families and three different origins.

First were three brothers: Stephen Taylor, Jr.¹, John Taylor² and Thomas Taylor³, all children of Stephen Taylor, Sr.⁴ of Windsor. In March 1672, the first two brothers were granted 60 acres and 50 acres respectively. Stephen's home lot was on the south side of "the Road to Feather Street" (now called Bridge Street) and the east side of High Street (now South Main). His brother John's lot was located across South Main Street about midway between Bridge Street and Kent Avenue (then known as "the Road to the Mill").

Both brothers fled to Windsor during King Philip's War, but returned with a third brother, Thomas Taylor. Thomas received a 50-acre grant in 1677, with his home lot located just north of John's on the west side of South Main.

All three brothers became involved in town affairs and served Suffield well as good citizens, according to H. S. Sheldon's *Documentary History of Suffield*. However, between 1685 and 1710, all three would return to Windsor and live there until their deaths.

The second group, with three Taylors from two families, came to Suffield from Springfield in 1680. Each was granted 50 acres in what were called the Crooked Lane Lots. Crooked Lane was then an unfinished road with a sharp curve that we call Halladay Avenue East. However, the lots were laid out on the west side of Mapleton Avenue⁵ and all the house lots faced Mapleton Avenue, not Crooked Lane. The first of these lots – just north of Crooked Lane – became the property of James Taylor.

James Taylor had been an indentured servant working for John Pynchon and became a freeman in 1664. Although his origins are not clear, after considerable research, I believe that James was purchased as an indentured servant from a group of surviving prisoners of the English Civil War Battle of Dunbar, England⁶. A James Taylor appears on this list, and the chronology fits perfectly.

Now the names get a little confusing here. James Taylor married Mary Taylor⁷, the oldest child of Jonathan Taylor, Sr. and Mary Wright of Springfield. They arrived in Suffield with eight children, and their family grew to include eleven children after their move to Suffield. They also arrived with two of Mary's younger brothers: Samuel Taylor⁸ and Deacon Jonathan Taylor.

These two brothers received the fourth and fifth Crooked Lane lots along Mapleton. (Between Mary Taylor and her two brothers were the second and third Crooked Lane lots that were granted to Barbers.)

The service of these three Taylor families from Springfield is similarly chronicled in the Sheldon history. Although they served the community well, Sheldon's last entry of a Taylor family member record was 1720. This in spite of the fact that James had eleven children, Samuel had seven and Deacon Jonathan had four!

- 1 Stephen Taylor, Jr. married Joanna Porter of Hartford.
- 2 John Taylor married first Sara Younglove and later Elizabeth Spencer.
- 3 Thomas Taylor married first Abigail Roe and later Hannah Granger.
- 4 Stephen Taylor, Sr. emigrated from the West Country of England and appears in Dorchester, Massachusetts, records about 1633. He relocated in Windsor about 1640. He had two children by his first wife, Sara Hosford, whom he married in 1642. His second marriage in 1649 to Elizabeth Nowell brought him eight more children. He died in Windsor in 1688.
- 5 In 1680, Mapleton Avenue was referred to as the "Road to Springfield." However, later it would be renamed as Crooked Lane and finally Mapleton Avenue. These two different Crooked Lanes can be confusing.
- 6 Prisoners from the Battle of Dunbar were brought to New England circa 1651 to work in the Lynn Iron Works, Lynn, Massachusetts. One of the prisoners, John Stewart, was definitely purchased by Pynchon at this time, and his name appears just above James Taylor's name on the prisoners list. Both men were supporters of Charles II and were from Scotland. After the battle, Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell sent them to New England, where laborers were needed.
- 7 Mary Taylor and her brothers Samuel and Deacon Jonathan were the children of Jonathan Taylor, Sr. and Mary Wright, daughter of Samuel Wright and Mary Stratton. Jonathan Taylor, Sr. was born in England but moved to Springfield, ca. 1640, prior to the births of his children.
- 8 Samuel Taylor, born 1652, married Ruth Cogan. They had seven children. For genealogy enthusiasts they named their fourth child Jonathan Taylor to make this lineage even more difficult to follow!

References:

Documentary History of Suffield, Hezekiah Sheldon, 1879;
Selections from Account Books of John Pynchon, Volume II, 1651-1697, Edited by Bridenbaugh and Tomlinson, 1985;
 List of Scottish Prisoners of the English Civil War, Battle of Dunbar;
 Suffield Historical Society webpage genealogies and internet genealogies and 1640 Map from the *Richard Sikes Genealogy*.



PHOTOS:

Shown above is a scene of SHS volunteers meeting and greeting townspeople at our Suffield on the Green booth on September 12. Below is Dr. Nym Cooke, far right, with his American Harmony group in a September 23rd concert at First Church that kicked off our 2015-16 program calendar. The chorus brought to life the music of Timothy Swan (1758-1842), who married the pastor's daughter and lived next door to First Church.

PHONE SURVEY

Society trustees will be calling many of you in the coming weeks to ask you about membership satisfaction in an effort to find out how we can attract new members and better serve you. Your responses will be anonymous, so please help us out with a little of your time and your thoughts and ideas.

RAFFLE WINNER

We are happy to report that the winner of our raffle, held at Suffield on the Green, was Dotty McCarty, who was delighted to win Linda Rusin's hand-knit mittens depicting the King House. Linda was one of our art contest winners.



PHOTOS:

Holidayfest was a huge success with a stunning display of decorative glass.

Shown here are Lester Smith poking the fire in the kitchen decorated for the event, Tami Zawistowski admiring the treasures displayed for the holiday exhibit, and the museum dining room set with ruby glassware and red roses for a striking Christmas table.



CURATOR'S REPORT

We were delighted (and almost overwhelmed) when some 500 visitors toured the King House Museum during Holidayfest in December.

Many generous lenders had added to items from our own collections to put over 300 pieces in the Decorative Glass exhibit – truly a great success! The big crowd was in part the result of our participation in the Suffield Garden Club's Holiday House Tour; visitors really enjoyed our traditional hospitality.

Recently the museum has received a number of interesting items to add to our collections. Doug and Priscilla Viets, longtime supporters, have decided to limit their home ownership to Sanibel Island and Gloucester, and they have given us an old spinning wheel, a trundle bed frame, and a loom. Jim Kent, also heading for the Sunshine State, has donated several tobacco field tools and a set of his father's tobacco farm journals and field layout maps – good records from an important Suffield business. We thank these emigrants and wish them well. And Gil and Christine Ahrens have donated two large bins of old family papers, pictures and miscellaneous records, which we are still working through. We are very appreciative of this help to the museum in preserving the history of our great old town.

—Lester Smith

VOLUNTEERS, THANK YOU!

Thank you to all the volunteers who spent time on a Saturday morning in October to prune branches, haul brush and close up the barn and house among other chores. They include Bill and Cormac Sullivan, Norm, Sean and Nancy Noble, Jackie and Dave Hemond, Jim Reeves (a special thanks for removing all that wire fencing), Jan Peake, Ed, Lester and Anne.

Thanks, also, to each of you who are providing refreshments after our public meetings. The social time gives us an opportunity to greet newcomers and old friends alike as well as the evening's speaker. Many thanks to those who made Holidayfest successful again this year – to both lenders for our glassware exhibit and docents. Also a thank you to our team of cookie bakers who added delicious flavors to the day.

A special thank you to Marjorie Begin who made the beautiful wreaths and over-the-door-decorations which graced the museum house for Christmas season. She has been volunteering her time and artistry for many years now to make the house festive, and this year's wreaths were especially gorgeous.

IMPROVEMENTS

The King house and fence look wonderful in their new coat of paint, and the basement is finally truly dry!

UPCOMING EVENTS

SHOW AND TELL NIGHT

Wednesday, March 16

Kent Memorial Library 7:00 p.m.

Sign up for a five-to-ten minute presentation on any aspect of local history. Anecdotes about local characters, folklore, artifacts or photographs are most welcome.

Contact Ed Chase by March 1 to sign up.

THE OTHER UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Tuesday, April 19

Kent Memorial Library 7:00 p.m.

Bill Sullivan

and his Suffield Academy students

Come join us for an evening exploring the Underground Railroad that once linked West Suffield and a kidnapped African-American woman and her daughters.

This journey will take you all the way to the Supreme Court of Virginia and is a product of original research by American Studies students.

CONNECTICUT'S WESTERN EXPANSION

Wednesday, May 18

Kent Memorial Library 7:00 p.m.

Dr. Walter Woodward, Connecticut State Historian

After the Revolutionary War, Connecticut's western grant was reduced to a 120-mile strip in northeastern Ohio along the shores of Lake Erie. Its title was purchased by developers – mostly from Suffield – but Native Americans also claimed the land. Listen to the stories of the diaspora of young Connecticut men and their families who tried to settle this area.

ANNUAL SHS FIELD TRIP

Saturday, May 21

Details for our trip to Rhode Island in the April newsletter.

SUFFIELD'S PAST IN PHOTOGRAPHS

Wednesday, June 15

Kent Memorial Library 7:00 p.m.

Anne Borg and Lester Smith

See what Suffield was in days past with a contemporary historical perspective through photographs carefully chosen by Curator Lester Smith and Trustee Anne Borg.

Photos are taken from the late Hawley Rising's collection.

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