

# Georgetown Historical Society Newsletter



February 2025

Preserving and promoting the history of  
Georgetown, Massachusetts

From our President, Betsy Moran:

As we begin 2025, we would like to thank Michelle Wilkins Cook, who has been our Treasurer since the fall of 2014. Michelle is stepping off the Board and we cannot express sufficiently our thanks for all she has done for the Historical Society over the past decade. Besides her duties as treasurer, Michelle has kept the Webpage going. GHS is now in critical need of a Website designer.

We would also like to welcome Nancy Zapf who is joining the Board this year as 2nd Vice President. Nancy has already made a wonderful impression as you will see in our photo gallery. Nancy made the beautiful centerpiece for our annual meeting raffle and framed the print we raffled. Thank you, Nancy.

Our fundraising for 2025 begins in earnest on Saturday, February 8th at 10 AM with an Antique Appraisal event at the Georgetown Peabody Library. Dan Meader is giving his time and experience to make this possible. Admission is free; appraisals are \$5 per item, limit 3. We will have refreshments and a raffle for a Valentine gift basket.

*What treasures are hiding in your home?*  
**ANTIQUE APPRAISALS**

WITH **DAN MEADER**  
 ANTIQUES APPRAISER & DIRECTOR AT JOHN MCGINNIS AUCTIONEERS




**Saturday, February 8th, 2025**  
**10:00AM - 12:30PM**  
 Georgetown Peabody Library  
 Free Admission  
 Appraisals \$5 per item; Limit 3 items

Hosted by Georgetown Historical Society  
 Light refreshments will be served  
 Tickets for Raffle Basket drawn at American Flatbread Fundraiser Feb 11th will be sold

**AMERICAN FLATBREAD**

TUESDAY  
 FEBRUARY 11  
 5-9PM

*Pizza*



**50/50 RAFFLE!**

**RAFFLE BASKET!**

**SUPPORT GEORGETOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

258 Andover St. Georgetown EAT IN OR CARRYOUT Fundraiser begins at 5PM. Orders placed before will not count

**HELP RESTORE THE TAVERN ROOM AT THE BROCKLEBANK MUSEUM.**

The next event will be on Tuesday, February 11th, from 5 to 9 PM at American Flatbread on Andover Street. GHS will receive a portion of the sales from both take-out and eat-in pizzas. At the Flatbread event we will also have a 50/50 raffle and the drawing of the winner of the Valentine Gift basket raffle. Come join us and support GHS.

We are always looking to increase our membership. Do you have a neighbor new to Georgetown or a friend or acquaintance that would like to join us? Send an email to the address below. The Society is still looking for a Secretary. Do you know a good Website developer for a non-profit organization. We would love to have you join us in helping to preserve Georgetown's rich history. We welcome and value the input of all our members. As always we welcome your participation in all our events. Feel free to drop us an email anytime at [georgetownhistoricalsociety@aol.com](mailto:georgetownhistoricalsociety@aol.com) Thank you again for all your support. We hope to see you at our upcoming events.

## **Photo Gallery**

### **Winter 2024/2025**



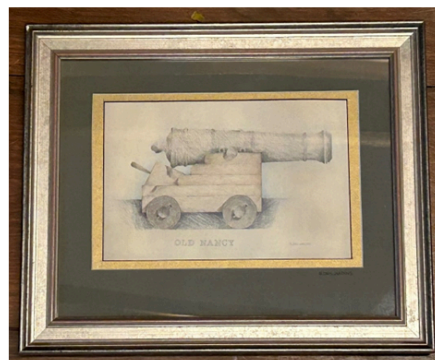
Thank you to Sam Anderson and  
Jeff Lamoureaux for another  
beautiful wreath adorning  
our front door



Our tavern room staged as it may  
have once looked  
thank you to Rick Detwiller for  
Setting this up –  
the fire is photo shopped in  
A similar display was at our annual  
meeting



Thank you to Nancy Zapf  
This centerpiece was  
Raffled at the  
Annual meeting



Our second raffle item from the  
annual meeting is this donated  
artwork of Old Nancy from  
Ed Desjardines

## **Feature Article - Patriot and Tory Taverns of 1775**

**Report by Jacob Follis, Colby Kato, John Halmen, and Roman Kaczmarek  
(Georgetown Middle High School Students) on the  
Presentation by Rick Detwiller at the GHS Annual Meeting, Dec. 7, 2024**

Taverns today are often thought of as parallel to bars or pubs, but this was simply untrue during Revolutionary times. In this period, taverns were divided into sectors, mirroring that of a modern-day inn of sorts. These sectors included tap rooms where the alcohol was dispensed and dispersed, kitchens, and bedrooms. Entire families would stay in a tavern at once when traveling or getting out of the house. During the war prep and wartime phase of the colonies, taverns served as important meeting spots for Patriots and Tories alike. Many of these taverns can be found standing today, often as museums.

### **Where?**

Many of the towns surrounding or nearby Georgetown contain structures that once served as a tavern. Georgetown even has one itself! The Brocklebank Museum in Georgetown has a rich history as a tavern under several owners. Its previous names include the Brocklebank House, the Tyler House, and the Wolfe Tavern. Other nearby tavern locations include the Munroe Tavern in Lexington, Wright Tavern in Concord, Golden Ball Tavern in Weston, Hartwell Tavern in Lincoln, and the Buckman Tavern in Lexington. Each of these contains a similar style of construction with two floors and an attic with a large central chimney. The second floor typically contains five windows facing out while the first only has four facing in the same direction.



These two images feature the Munroe and Buckman Taverns respectively which reside in Lexington. The similarities in the structure are shared throughout many taverns of the time.

## Tavern Craze

The tavern craze started roughly around 1640 and lasted until 1810. The craze saw the building and demand for taverns, explaining the amount that exists today. Construction began right around when the future country was settled and aimed to parallel the taverns that existed in England. After the first tavern was created in Boston in 1638, the trend quickly spread throughout New England and the rest of the colonies. The similarities in structure that nearly all taverns possess can be attributed to their models of an English tavern.

## Tavern Artifacts

Taverns of colonial America gave rise to many unique artifacts. Everything from cups and glasses to pots, pans, chairs, and tables were unique to taverns. When it comes to chairs, ladderback chairs were very common throughout taverns. These chairs had a characteristic back that looked similar to a ladder with rungs running up. The vessels by which drinks were consumed varied. Some taverns used mugs, sometimes with artistic designs, while other taverns used glasses or pewter tankard lids. Punch bowls were also a common means of distributing drinks, many of which also had artistic designs.



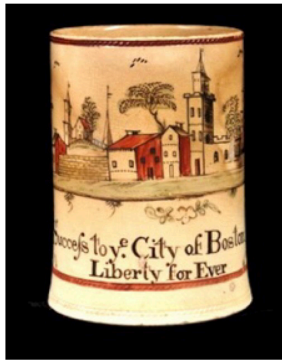
Richard Gridley's Masonic punch bowl from 1700's



Pewter tankard with lid from 1760s



1770's etched Bohemian glass cup

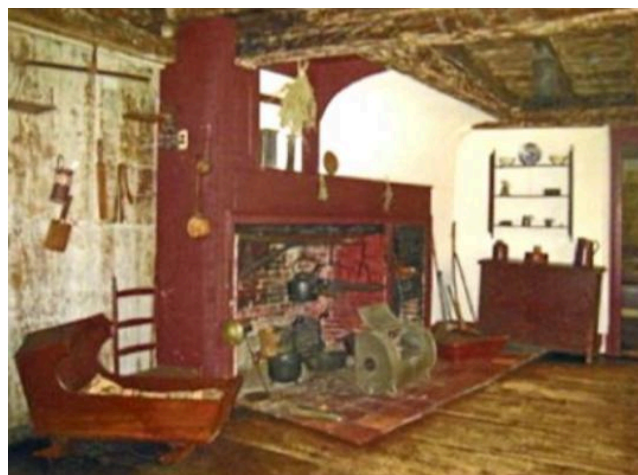


A cider mug from 1760's



A table set from a tavern, notably having ladderback chairs, cider mugs, and a pewter tankard lid

## Tavern Interiors



This image shows the kitchen style that was shared by many different taverns. The picture itself is from Lexington's Buckman Tavern and shows the common method of cooking in taverns: over the fire in the chimney.



Also from Buckman Tavern, this image shows the typical design of a tap room. It sort of parallels a modern-day bar.



This image features an English tavern kitchen; likely what the colonial one was based on. It also shows that full families would be in a tavern at once, meaning that they would have to be large enough to comfortably hold multiple families



The room shown in this image shows what a colonial tavern bedroom would look like. It is from the Brocklebank Museum and shows the fireplace to keep warm and multiple chairs. The rooms would also contain bed(s) for the family to rest in overnight.



Instead of displaying all of the liquor at once, taverns would keep the majority of it hidden away to protect themselves against any robberies. In the picture, there is a cellar wine closet, used to hold wine away from potential robberies.



These two images show the tavern room of the Brocklebank Museum. There are display arms, a common practice of the time. They follow the typical tavern trends of tap rooms and kitchens blended into one.

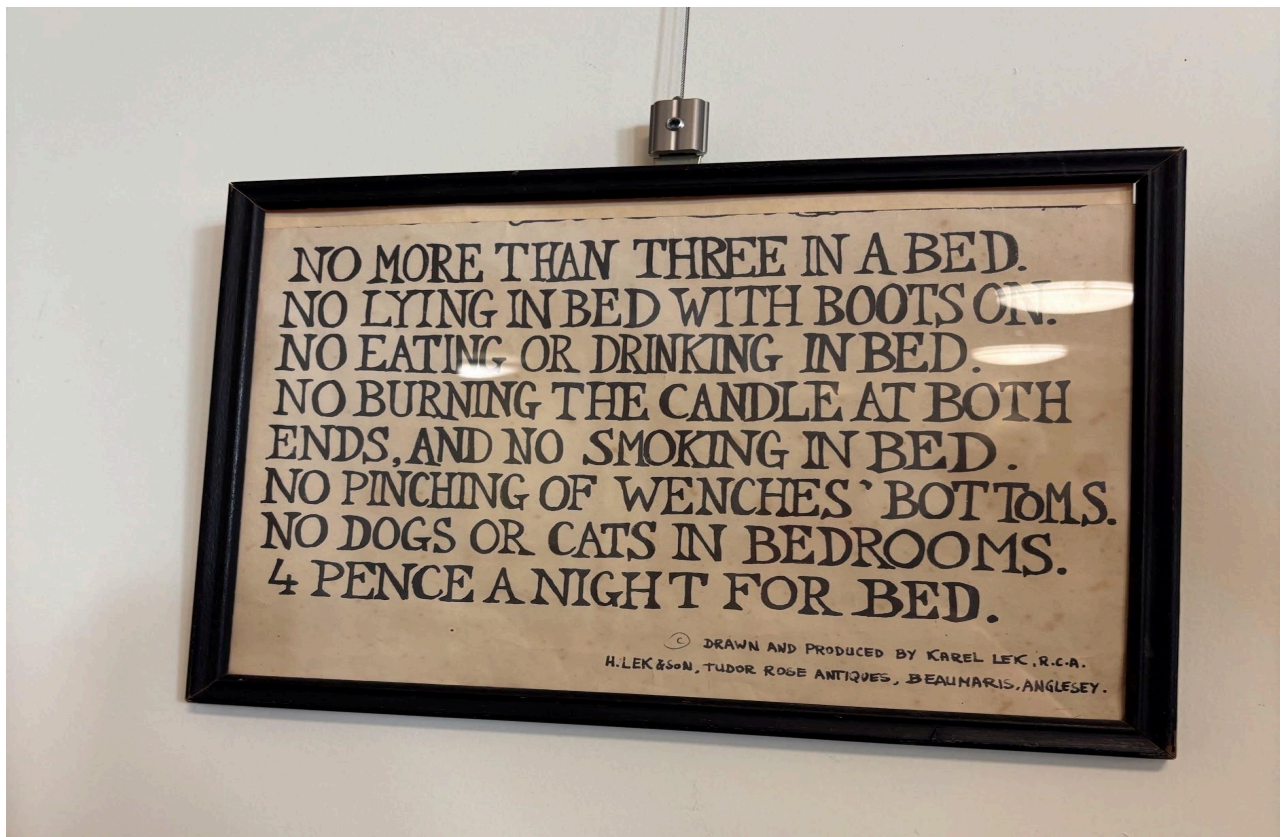




## Tavern Behavior

Taverns usually had certain rules to follow, but sometimes taverns, mainly the bar areas, could become a bit rowdy. Taverns were often a place of discussion, and the influence of alcohol could have created heated debates between colonists. In 1763, Lieutenant Nathan Boynton was staying at the Dudley Tyler tavern and ended up getting charged with drinking too much, causing him to get suspended from communion with the church. Typical rules of the tavern included basic manners, general behavior, and some interesting rules that only pertained to the period.

In the absence of photographs from the time period, imagine these ordinary-size rooms filled with people, who didn't have hot showers and washing machines, all crowded together in a hot, smoky room having loud, sometimes heated, conversations while eating the food and drinking various forms of alcohol from cider to whiskey and hot rum.punch.



This image shows a typical list of rules that would have been displayed in a tavern, expecting them to be followed, which wasn't always the case.

## Royal Lion Tavern

The tavern in the Brocklebank Museum may initially have been named by Dudley Tyler as the Royal Lion Tavern. The name would then have been changed by the second owner, Solomon Nelson, to commemorate the then-famous General Wolfe. Evidence for the Royal Lion theory stands with the faint lion's eyes behind the painting of Wolfe on the tavern sign donated to GHS by the descendants of Solomon Nelson. This sign hangs now next to the stairway in the Brocklebank Museum.

## General Wolfe's Tavern

The Nelson tavern sign memorializes General Wolfe of the English Army remembered for his daring actions in capturing Canada. With his death, he became a war hero for New England and many taverns were named in his honor. His heroic actions were no longer celebrated when the colonists revolted and any object used to memorialize him was quickly discarded. Some tavern signs that favored the English were used for target practice by colonial militias. The sign of the Three Crowns Tavern in Pennsylvania was found with bullet holes as was our own General Wolfe Tavern sign.

## Wayside Inn

The Wayside Inn, located in Sudbury, Massachusetts, became famous for its distinct sign, taproom, and owners. The sign is a red horse, but it includes all of the How-family owners from founding to closing. This lasted from 1716 to 1830. The interior of the taproom (pictured below) was incredibly high quality and looked fantastic. Likely the most interesting thing, however, was that on April 19, 1775, tavern keeper Ezekiel How ran 12 miles to Concord to participate in the battle that is known today as "the shot heard 'round the world." He was the lieutenant colonel of the Middlesex militia, making his background even more interesting. It is likely that due to his position as both lieutenant colonel and tavern keeper, the How Tavern was used as a meeting place for colonial soldiers and generals during the war.



This image represents the high-quality bar room that the Wayside Inn/How Tavern possessed.



The sign shows the symbol for the Red Horse Tavern (another name for the Wayside Inn/How Tavern) with each of the proprietors of the How family and the year that they took over.

GHS has added some resources for further information as follows:

“The Buckman Tavern,” *The Lexington Historical Society*,

<https://www.lexingtonhistory.org/buckman-tavern> 2024

“The Munroe Tavern,” *The Lexington Historical Society*,

<https://www.lexingtonhistory.org/munroe-tavern>

“The Wayside Inn: American Hospitality since 1716,” <https://www.wayside.org/our-story/>

### GHS Board and Officers:

*President: Betsy Moran*

*1st Vice President: Sylvia Johnston*

*Treasurer: Mary Saunders*

*2nd Vice President: Nancy Zapf*

*Secretary: vacant*

*Curator: Rick Detwiller*

### *Board of Directors:*

*Jeff Lamoureux,*

*Chris DiFranco,*

*Gloria Swanbon,*

*Beverly Knapp,*

*Carol Snow*