



Stony Brook **CURRENTS**

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A Newsletter of the Suffield Historical Society

July 2012

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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THE REVEREND JOHN YOUNGLOVE:

Original Proprietor & Suffield's First Minister

by Edward Chase

The original petition for the settlement of Suffield was granted by the General Court of Boston on October 12, 1670. It came with the provision that the inhabitants "should procure and maintain some able minister." Two years later, a 30-acre (330-foot wide) house lot was set apart for a clergyman in the area that now includes the Webster Bank and the Bissell Inn. By November 1679, Suffield freemen voted to build a dwelling house "for the encouragement of Mr. John Younglove" to become their minister.

John Younglove, son of Samuel and Margaret of Ipswich, was born about 1640. The first mention of John occurs in the memoirs of the Reverend Michael Wigglesworth. "I had a mind to go to Bermuda," wrote Wigglesworth, and "Providence made way for it wonderfully by providing John Younglove to go with me, so we set sail about September 23, 1663."

Younglove was only willing to stay for one year. They both returned "when God sent by a vessel of Mr. Willoughbies." It is likely Rev. Wigglesworth tutored Younglove in the ministerial profession during their year in Burmuda.

By 1665, John and his brother James Younglove were at the new settlement of Quabog (now Brookfield, Massachusetts).¹ By this time, John had married Sara. The couple arrived in Quabog with a son John Jr. and a daughter Sara. James Younglove died about 1667, and brother John inherited his estate. Settlement founder John Pynchon recognized John Younglove as a legitimate clergyman. By the early 1670s John Younglove was the established minister of Quabog – and thus began his tumultuous career as a clergyman!

The Hampshire County Court at Northampton record of March 26, 1672, shows John Younglove testifying that the people of Quabog were not providing for him according to the law. The result was a full-fledged court hearing in which the dissension between Rev. Younglove and the town was obvious. The court ordered the people to continue with

Rev. Younglove. If no reconciliation could be effected, the court hoped Younglove would be called to some other place. The rift was never healed. As a result, Younglove left Quabog to seek a more congenial atmosphere at Hadley.

The *Judd History of Hadley* lists Younglove as a teacher at the Hadley Grammar School (1674-1680). During his tenure here John Younglove took the oath of “freeman” as certified by the General Court of Boston on January 10, 1677. He had now achieved a mark of distinction.

Also during his period at Hadley, he had preached acceptably to the people of Suffield. In 1680, John Younglove accepted the call to be Suffield’s first minister.

On separate occasions between 1683 and 1686, Hugh Roe, David Winchell, and Peter Roe were brought to the court in Northampton for “slandering scurrilously and reproachful speeches against Rev. Younglove.” Each time the court found Younglove’s critics guilty. They each were fined.

Some townspeople claimed he “broke a promise not to preach any more.” Finally, on April 18, 1690, Suffield inhabitants petitioned the court “to cause John Younglove to cease preaching among them.” Records fail to explain the basis of the discontent by the congregation,² but Divine Providence ended the controversy. John Younglove died on June 3, 1690.

More than four years elapsed before a new minister could be hired to preach in the “broken town of Suffield.” Searches were made from Northampton to New Haven, from Westfield to Boston. An offer was even made to the Reverend Samuel Parris of Salem Village, who presided over the Salem Witch Trials of 1692. He refused the offer.

Whatever the problems were at the time, several facts remain as evidence of the bitterness. No slab or stone marks the grave of John Younglove. The First Congregational Church still does not acknowledge his stewardship as a minister, saying Younglove was never ordained. They list the ordained Reverend Benjamin Ruggles as their first minister.

The animosity, however, did not include Younglove’s widow nor the eight Younglove children.³ Suffield supported Sara Younglove until her death on January 17, 1710. The Younglove children

married within our town, and many residents today carry the DNA of the controversial first town minister.

- 1 Brookfield, like Hadley and Suffield, was one of the towns established by John Pynchon. Both Brookfield and Suffield were abandoned during King Philip’s War between June 1675 and August 1676.
- 2 For most ministers of the time, total compensation included land and a house they could keep after retirement, as well as firewood and a stipend. Taxpayers were forced to support this compensation that far exceeded their own rewards for labor, risk and saving. This discrepancy in living standards often bred unrest. There also appear to have been temperament conflicts between Younglove and the congregation.
- 3 John and Sara Younglove had 4 sons and 4 daughters. John Jr. and Sara both born in Ipswich before 1665; Mary, b. after 1665 at Quabog, m. Thomas Smith of Suffield; Samuel, b. 1676 at Hadley, m. Abilene Hunter; Lydia, b. at Hadley, m. George Granger of Suffield; Hanna, b. at Hadley, m. George Norton of Suffield; James, b. Ipswich; and Joseph, b. Suffield, m. Anna.

References:

Documentary History of Suffield, Conn., H. S. Sheldon, 1879. *Meet the Reverend John Younglove*, West Brookfield Historical Commission. *Family Tree Maker Online*, Rev. John Younglove. *Memoirs of Reverend Joseph Wigglesworth Online*.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

King House An appraisal for insurance purposes was begun by John Pappas, the dealer who ran our Appraisal Day last October.

Storm Damage The recovery from the severe thunderstorm damage of June 9, 2011, was relatively swift. A large limb from the front yard sugar maple fell on the house, causing major damage to the chimney and roof, with collateral damage to the porch and the fence. Heartfelt thanks go to neighbor John Quenneville, who spotted and reported the damage; to Brian Doyon, who responded immediately and did much of the repair; to Treasurer Gary Mandirola, who dealt with the insurance company and oversaw and coordinated the work; and to Curator Lester Smith, who contributed a lot of behind-the-scenes labor. Ultimately, our insurance covered nearly all of the expense, and repairs were completed in a month and a half with minor disruption to our open hours.

Our next emergency came with the heavy October snowstorm. Damage was minimized by the extensive pruning following the June storm. Only a fence needed repair. Volunteer labor from Austin Borg and Art Sikes with chainsaws began our cleanup of fallen limbs. Other volunteers – including Barry Sisk, Anne Borg and Lester Smith – cut, hauled and stacked branches for pickup.

Replacement and Repair The rotted kitchen window frame replacement and repairs were completed in January. A new dehumidifier was purchased for the archives room. Bushes were removed behind the east ell, where an old cistern was discovered. A woodpecker attacked the barn, making several holes. No recent holes have been observed, perhaps due to the installation of a life-like owl.

Publications and Events Our Stony Brook Currents is published quarterly. It continues to be well received, although more feedback would be appreciated. Our schedule of programs included seven lectures and a Show and Tell night. Special events included an Ice Cream Social, an Antique Auto Show, a Fine Arts Festival, and this year an Antiques Appraisal and Tag Sale. Our Halloween candy distribution was cancelled by the snow-storm.

Our popular Holidayfest was a huge success. The King House served as a refreshment stop on the House Tour sponsored by the Suffield Garden Club. In appreciation the club made SHS a generous donation.

Financial We are in a sound financial condition. (reference the Treasurer's Report)

I wish to thank our officers, docents, trustees, all our membership, our many donors to the Society and townspeople for supporting our activities. We are fortunate to have such a multi-talented group.

Ed Chase, President

TREASURER'S REPORT

Fiscal Year 2011 was an interesting year to say the least. Our total income was \$133,006 and our expenses totaled \$134,053 for a net loss of \$1,047. These totals are about \$90,000 larger than normal. We transferred \$60,000 from a CD and \$10,000 from our operating account to our Vanguard portfolio, and this money had to be run through the operating account. In addition we had expenses of \$31,000 to repair the storm damage and received \$29,000 reimbursement from insurance. This difference in insurance reimbursement resulted in our loss for the year. The loss resulted from our deductible of \$1,000 and tree work that we had to do that was not covered by insurance. Other than the above, 2011 was relatively normal and we would have ended the year with a positive balance.



Art Sikes demonstrates how a hook lath would fit across the rails of the old tobacco rack recently donated by Joanne and Glenn Neilson.

Chris Childs was added to the Investment Committee and recommended several changes. We changed our bond portfolio to shorter term bonds and further diversified our equity portfolio. These changes resulted in very positive results. Our total investment worth including our CD increased from \$778,926 to \$819,974 or 5.27%. If you factor in the income we received from those investments that we use all year to function, our total return was 7.4%, which I think was excellent.

If anyone would like more information, copies with complete details of all financials are available at the King House or from Ed Chase or me.

Gary Mandirola, Treasurer

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

We welcome new members Tom and Kati Harmon, George and Cami Beiter, Tom and Cathy Beckett.

As of year end, the Suffield Historical Society has 262 members made up of 126 families and 136 individuals. This reflects the addition of 11 new members between March 2011 and April 2012.

Art Sikes, Membership Chairman

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Wednesdays and Saturdays
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May through September

Newsletter
Maggie Philippon, Editor
Anne Borg, Compiler

CURATOR'S REPORT

The Museum Open House Day organized by the state tourism folks brought eight groups of visitors to the King House Museum on Saturday, June 9, and the three of us on duty were kept hopping. But the most enjoyable heavy visitation of every year is when all the fourth grade classes in town come to tour. This year there were eight classes in three mornings earlier in June. Fourth graders are excellent visitors, old enough to understand and learn from what we can offer and young enough to be well behaved. (Many fifth graders – particularly the boys – pretend to be too cool to show serious interest in history.)

What we have to offer expanded significantly this spring when we received a great addition to the tobacco items in the barn. Joanne and Glenn Neilson have donated an old, horse-drawn tobacco rack, one of the long wagons used to carry the harvested stalks to the curing sheds. We're still seeking an example of the long, narrow splint baskets used to carry shade tobacco leaves in the old days. The barn is still very much a work in progress.

Another interesting recent gift was a collection of over 50 glass-plate negatives of scenes around Herman Ude's farm on Mountain Road at Sheldon Street. These were given by Rev. Donna Maggi, who received them by bequest from the late Dot Kent. At present, we're working to have the plates scanned and printed. We welcome such items, which add to our growing archival collection focused on Suffield history.

Lester Smith, Curator

ICE CREAM SOCIAL
Tuesday, July 17 **5:30 p.m.**
King House lawn
Bring friends and family to an old-fashioned Ice Cream Social. Pack a picnic and bring lawn chairs. The Society will provide the ice cream and entertainment.
Raindate: Thursday, July 19