



His Majesty's

Tenth Regiment of Foot

In America, Inc

Special Order

07-17-125

14 June 2017

REENACTOR'S TIMELINE, STRAWBERY BANKE

1 JULY 2017

Volunteers from the Regiment will appear for the *Re-enactor's Timeline* at the Strawberry Banke Museum in Portsmouth NH on Saturday 1 July 2017.

Dress is standard #2 uniform, muskets equipped with woods as there will be no firing. Men should bring company caps, hats, and forage caps (if you have one).

Travel: The museum is located at 14 Hancock St, Portsmouth, NH. **Limited** parking is available onsite and, as such, carpooling is HIGHLY encouraged. There will be a lot designated for reenactors, it will fill quickly (think St. Brigid's on Patriot's Day).

Arrival time: Please arrive between 0900hrs and 0930hrs. The event runs from 1000hrs to 1700hrs (regular museum hours).

"THE PLAN"

New Hampshire is very proud to be the only state that was never invaded by the British, so this is very much a "what if" scenario. We'll be showing what life in occupied Portsmouth might have been like, using a c. 1766 tavern as a backdrop. Interaction will be both with the public and Sarah Vedrani, who will be in the building as a first-person interpreter.

Please keep in mind!!! This event will be almost 100% first-person "in character" interpreting and interaction. I'd like everyone to have some familiarity and comfort with this type of interpretation style

SOME IDEAS FOR THE DAY:

- Recruiting table
- Sentry duty/marching about
- Interrogating the public
- Laundry (see the attached list for more details)
- If anyone has any ideas for what they'd like to do, please send them along!

FOOD: ALL food will be provided for this event. There will be period-appropriate snacks and lunch in the tavern (I think I have enough plates, but please bring your own utensils and mugs). The museum will also be providing a modern lunch (usually hotdogs and salad). **PLEASE BRING \$5 TO JUNE DRILL TO HELP WITH COST!**

Attached are the house notes provided by the museum to give you a sense of the history of the house. I am happy to provide more background for anyone interested (we're talking Kardashian-

level scandal, here). There will also be time during the day to explore the rest of the site (and the 20+ other groups in attendance!)

If anyone has any questions/concerns/etc, please Sarah Vedrani at her personal email: pvtSam1775@comcast.net.

The museum is very excited to have the 10th back for this event! As we get closer Pvt. Vedrani will send along a site map and more specifics, once we have a game plan. A working list will be forthcoming describing possible scenarios and tips for first-person interpretation.

FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER,

Major Michael P. Graves, Adjutant

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1777 ~ PITT TAVERN

From *Introduction to the Historic Houses: A Guide for Interpreters*

Revolutionary War-era tavern owned and run by John Stavers and family

Built: c. 1766

Interpreted to: 1777

Restoration Completed: 1987

THE AMERICAN STORY

Pitt Tavern's interpretation is set during the American Revolution, the focus of its story.

In 1775, hostilities broke out between Britain and her American colonies over long-troubling issues like trade, taxation, and government representation. The following year, the tensions erupted into war. Every colonist had to make a fearful choice between a law-abiding loyalty to the royal government, and criminal defiance of the government in favor of independence. No one knew how things would turn out. If the upstart colony lost, no one was sure what penalties rebels might face. Hanging for treason would not have been out of the question.

Pitt Tavern serves as a place to examine the tensions of those times, the serious stakes of the American Revolution, and the stresses that tore at communities during the creation of a new nation.

Today, when we hear the word "tavern," we tend to think "bar." But Colonial taverns were much more than drinking establishments. They were places for the exchange of information and ideas. They were stations on stagecoach routes, where travelers from many backgrounds crossed paths. Newspapers were usually available. Taverns offered lodging, meeting space, a place to do business and make deals, a place for debates and militia musters, recruitment for sailors and soldiers, entertainments, dances, plays, exhibitions, music, and lectures. Urban taverns were visited by the prominent leaders of the day. This tavern was home to a fraternity of Masons who met on the third floor, part of a network of communication that reached up and down the Eastern seaboard.

America's taverns are rarely thought of as birthplaces of democracy, but their role in Colonial politics was vital. They served as community meeting places where important people spent time and exchanged information – this tavern was visited by Colonial celebrities like George Washington, the Marquis de Lafayette, and John Hancock, among others. The presence of a tavern at Strawberry Banke opens up the topic of the late Colonial Era, which of course, ended in revolution.

Among the topics you can explore at Pitt Tavern are:

- **The Tensions of War** - What did loyalty to country mean at this time? Allegiance to a crown and the protection of an empire, or association with the cause of colonial independence? What was the social cost of taking a stand on contentious issues? The idea of an independent American nation was new and uncertain, and John Stavers' difficulties over loyalty were not unusual.

- **The Road to Equal Rights** – Freedom as defined by the colonists meant freedom from the Crown’s restrictions and freedom to self-govern. Personal freedoms were not always as fully developed. Slavery existed in Portsmouth at this time, and John Stavers was a slaveowner. The women in his family would never be able to vote for their representation. Nevertheless, the national discussion about freedom and the development of the Constitution that would lead to the expansion of individual self-determination had begun.
- **Immigration** – John Stavers was an immigrant from England who made a life here and raised an American family. His brother returned to England after living in the colonies and working as a business partner with John. Today, we call family patterns like this “transnationalism,” but it is really not a new phenomenon.
- **Community Life** – The tavern represents America’s public forums. It was a place for general public discussion and debate as well as food and drink, a place to meet outside of home, workplace, and government. The Masons who met upstairs are another form of association, a fraternal society working together with the aims of improving opportunity for one another and, by extension, the nation.

PEOPLE, NEIGHBORHOOD, AND COMMUNITY

In 1777, Pitt Tavern would be crowded, noisy, and smoke-filled. Around the tables, people would be talking, smoking pipes, drinking punches and rum drinks, eating meals and snacks, and reading newspapers. The punch bowls in the tap room would have been filled with rum punch and passed around the table, each person drinking from the same bowl. The glassware in the taproom was excavated during archaeological research at a tavern on Deer Street, today the site of the Sheraton Hotel.

The kitchen was something comparable to a commercial restaurant kitchen today. Preparing food for a busy tavern was a job of large-scale cooking and round-the-clock labor. It’s likely that Stavers’ wife, daughters, and slaves worked here, as well as assisting with cleaning, bookkeeping, stablekeeping, guest relations and other aspects of running the tavern.

Tavern owners had to be licensed, and licenses were given to esteemed members of the community. Tavernkeepers had to obey strict rules meant to ensure that they were law-abiding places, always well stocked with food and drink, and open to all travelers (though servants, slaves, apprentices and children needed permission to enter). They were important resting places for those traveling the rough roads between cities. Stavers’ tavern was the terminus of the Boston/Portsmouth stagecoach route (founded by Stavers’ brother Bartholomew in 1761), which brought travelers, mail, and news right to Stavers’ door. After his brother’s retirement, Stavers and other investors continued to operate the stage well into the 1780s.

This tavern’s owner, John Stavers, was British-born. He had arrived in the Colonies by 1750, when he married Margaret Campble at the Anglican Queen’s Chapel (now St. John’s Church). He worked as a sailor, serving as mate on at least one voyage, before becoming a tavernkeeper. His first tavern was located on Queen Street (now State Street), in a building owned by his wife through inheritance. In 1766 he built this new tavern, naming it the Earl of Halifax, who had been a president of England’s Board of Trade from 1748 to 1765.

The area between State Street and Puddle Dock was the economic hub of Portsmouth when Stavers opened his tavern here. Large new mansions were intermixed with smaller houses of varied ages, stores, warehouses, storage sheds, outbuildings, and tradesmen’s workshops, creating a mixed-use neighborhood -- typical of 18th-century coastal cities.

Along Water Street (now Marcy Street), which fronted on the river in those days, large merchant ships and gundalows off-loaded cargo into warehouses on the wharves. Wherries crossed the river back and forth to Kittery. Heavy traffic rattled along the streets, connecting wharves to inland markets in the countryside. In Market Square, the construction of a state capitol building and assembly house, along with the Parade and many churches, added a new impression of civic and social activity.

Stavers and his wife Margaret had three children: Margaret Mary, baptized 1751, Margaret, baptized 1753, and John, baptized 1755. The first Mrs. Stavers died about 1757. By 1760, Stavers was remarried to Catherine Walker, who had a daughter, Lucy, about 1760. Following her were Susanna, 1763; Elizabeth, about 1765; and William, baptized 1767. All seven children survived to adulthood.

So upon moving into this new tavern in 1766, John Stavers was 52, father of six children with another soon to follow. Catharine was 39, and the children were 15, 13, 11, 3, and 1. The three teenaged children and young wife meant that John had plenty of ready help in running the tavern. He also had at least one African-American slave or servant, a boy named Fortune, who was about 18 years old when they moved in. There may have been other servants.

Stavers was active in town life and in business promotion. His name appears on petitions to build a public theater, use the wharves to greater efficiency, and to promote fairer taxation. He was a member of St. John's Lodge of the Masons, which brought him into contact with a social and business network extending throughout the colonies.

Some suspected Stavers of being a loyalist, and his tavern was perceived as a loyalist gathering place. His brother Bartholomew was a loyalist who left Portsmouth in 1774 to return to England. As the war gathered steam, Stavers had several run-ins with townspeople who were not convinced that he was a patriot. In 1774, Stavers promised at a public meeting that he would "neither buy or sell Tea for the future," suggesting that he might have been buying and selling tea despite a Portsmouth Resolution opposing the Tea Act of 1773. In January of 1775, a few weeks after mobs seized nearby Fort William and Mary, Stavers was among 60 local men who signed a covenant of association to "uphold the wholesome Laws of the Land" and to "defend and Protect Each other from Mobs, Riots or any unlawful attack Whatever." Of those who signed, some later became patriots, some royalists.

In April of that year open conflict erupted at Lexington and Concord. In November of 1775 Portsmouth's Committee of Safety called Stavers before them; he attested that he believed parliament's late actions were unconstitutional and unjust and that he would oppose them; the committee certified that he ought not to be molested or hindered in his business on any suspicion unless his conduct should give cause. But as tensions mounted he was not left alone. In 1776, the Masons withdrew their Lodge from the tavern, deciding to meet at Folsom's, "who is esteemed a friend to his country." Also in 1776, Stavers (like most other men over the age of 21) signed the Association Test vowing to take up arms against the British.

Less than a year later, the Declaration of Independence was signed and promulgated. The following January 29, 1777 a man named Mark Noble tried to chop down Stavers' tavern sign. Stavers sent out his enslaved African James to stop it. James hit Noble in the head with an ax, knocking him unconscious (Noble recovered). Within two days the Portsmouth Committee of Safety arrested Stavers and along with fifteen others "notoriously disaffected to the American cause" turned him over to the New Hampshire Committee of Safety at Exeter, and sent testimony from men who had frequented Stavers' tavern expressly to eavesdrop. When the committee released all in exchange for parole and a promise to appear before them the following Wednesday they kept Stavers confined in the belief his life would be endangered if he were liberated. The next day the axman himself, Mark Noble, petitioned for Stavers release. A deposition was collected from neighbor John Wheelwright.

On February 5th the suspects returned to the state committee. Stavers was among twelve who were released on condition of a year's good behavior and posting bond of £500 each.

Stavers remained under a cloud of suspicion. The following May the state committee issued an order to the Portsmouth committee to bring before them fifteen people suspected "to be inimical to the American States" to sign another oath of loyalty. Stavers and two others signed the oath and were released; the remainder were jailed or had taken flight.

Stavers was not alone in his experiences. The Portsmouth Committee of Safety jailed other men merely because they associated with "Persons of a suspicious Character." Such abuses were perpetrated throughout the nation. A dozen years later the new Constitution defined treason very narrowly; merely unpopular opinions and affiliations were no longer treasonous. Sometime after these episodes, Stavers re-named his tavern the William Pitt Tavern in honor of the British statesman who was much admired in the colonies for advocating the cause of independence in Parliament. Newspapers, thereafter, referred to it simply as Stavers' Tavern.

Stavers recovered the public's good opinion. Subsequent visitors reputedly included the Marquis de Lafayette in 1782, John Hancock, William Whipple, General Henry Knox and supposedly George Washington himself in 1789. He began taking a leading role in St. John's Church to help the church recover from the war. The Bishop of London had withdrawn clergy support, and it needed a new structure as an American church. Stavers helped create a system for the election of church officers, serving himself as a vestryman, one of eleven governors of the parish. He made many contributions above his pew tax. After June of 1788, the Masonic Lodge reformed and began meeting again at Stavers' tavern. In 1789, representatives of many lodges met at the tavern to form the Grand Lodge of New Hampshire. Upon his death, Stavers' obituary read that until the end of his life, he "retained that attention to business, which rendered the house an agreeable asylum to the traveler."

John Stavers died in a carriage accident in 1797. His heirs briefly operated the tavern. Later it became a multi-family house. Strawberry Banke has restored it to its original condition.

Based on the evidence, we can't be sure where Stavers' loyalties during the revolution really lay. If he was a Loyalist, he was apparently not willing to suffer for his beliefs. He didn't return to England with his brother. Perhaps he was most interested in continuing to run a successful business and keeping his family in their hometown. His story helps us to re-examine some of the serious tensions that pulled families and communities apart during the Revolution. Americans were far from a united group of rebel patriots. Opinions about relations with England differed, and not everyone thought war or independence was the answer. Debates over the war, and distrust of others' loyalties, were common during the Revolution as they are in modern wartimes.

STUDY AND PRESERVATION

Pitt tavern's restoration was guided by the earliest known photographs of the building from the 19th century, and by details from architectural research. Paint colors were based on samples taken from the building, though the original paints were mixed from pigments. The paints on the wall now are modern formulations in as close a match as could be found. The hearth was also restored using modern bricks, which were sanded down to remove machine-molding marks. Furnishing was guided by probate inventory records.

The building is furnished completely with reproduction furniture and objects made by fine craftsmen, including Chippendale-style chairs, tilt top tables, Windsor chairs, sconces, kitchen irons, and punch bowls. Visitors are welcome to sit at the tables and experience the feeling of the tavern's

spaces. The one museum artifact in the building is the clock-jack over the kitchen hearth, a convenience for automatically rotating a cooking spit.

Masons played an important role in supporting this restoration and are still using the tavern. The second floor contains a museum of Masonic history, which is open to visitors several times each season according to a schedule set annually by volunteer Masons. On the third floor, the Masonic meeting hall designed by Stavers remains. Some believe that the entire tavern building was planned to accommodate the large meeting hall. Rather than a central chimney well with fireplaces on each side of a single chimney, Stavers' fireplaces and chimneys were located on the outer walls, in separate structures. This allows for a third-floor room with no large chimney obstructing the center.

The Tavern's surroundings have changed. A small paved courtyard probably surrounded the side and back of the tavern when Stavers operated it. Also on the site we believe that there were two stables for horses, a privy, and other outbuildings.

Pitt Tavern is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.