

Squires Tavern Quarterly

BARKHAMSTED HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The **Quarterly** will be published four times a year to keep you updated on the restoration, findings, and events pertaining to the Tavern and to its place in the history of Barkhamsted. This year your generous donations have contributed to the repair of the heating system and purchase of heating oil for the Tavern and for the production of this newsletter; your volunteer hours have aided in documentary research in town records, on-site archaeology dig, family genealogies, as well as in physical improvements to the building. Thank you for your gifts, and service.

Sharon Neumann-Lynes
President, Barkhamsted Historical Society

Tremendous Progress at Squires Tavern

by Karen Ansaldi, BHS

Impressive amounts of work are underway at the Squires Tavern/Ullmann Farm property at 100 East River Road in Pleasant Valley. After six years of effort, the Barkhamsted Historical Society finally held a ceremonial lease-signing for this state-owned property on July 15, 2001. The Society had hopes of shoring up the exterior of the property before another winter took its toll on the structure. Work began slowly, with volunteer labor, but kicked into high gear with the award of a

state grant.

OPM Grant Awarded

Thanks to the efforts of State Senator Thomas J. Herlihy and State Representative Richard F. Ferrari, the State of Connecticut's Office of Policy and Management awarded the Barkhamsted Historical Society a \$100,000 grant for the renovation and restoration of the Squires Tavern/Ullmann Farm property in August 2001. An earlier \$2,900 grant from the Torrington Area Foundation for Public Giving was used to shore up a badly water-damaged back wall.

An upcoming \$2,000 grant from the Farmington River Coordinating Committee will be used for further consultation with historic restoration expert John Curtis of John Curtis Antique House Advisory and Restoration Consulting, Brimfield, Mass., who has been an instrumental part of the work thus far.

Decisions

The Squires Tavern Committee of the Historical Society elected Walt Landgraf of Pleasant Valley and Dave Ravasio of Riverton Proj-

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Bela Squire, Blacksmith, Farmer, Taverner

by Walt Landgraf, BHS

Bela Squire was one of the most prominent and long-standing residents of the Barkhamsted Historical Society's newly leased property at 100 East River Road. While no biographies of this man exist, we may piece together his life from evidence found in town records, church records, minutes of Masonic Lodge meetings, and other such sources. What follows is a glimpse into the life of this important resident from our town's past.

On October 8, 1786 Bela Squire was born in the little town of Gill, Massachusetts, the second child of

six born to David (a blacksmith) and Laura Gilbert Squire. Birth and census records show the family was still in Gill in 1800, but in February 1802 David Squire bought Richard Smith's old forge and moved his family, including 15-year-old Bela, to Robertsville, Connecticut, part of present-day Colebrook.

Four years after the move to Connecticut, in 1806, Bela married Charlotte Frazier of Hartland and purchased land in nearby Riverton within a year. A year later, Charlotte gave birth to their first child, Saxton Picket, who was followed

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Tavern Chairs Tell Tales

by Doug Roberts, BHS, Town Historian. Interviewed by Paul Hart, BHS

Bela Squire occupied the Squires Tavern for about 40 years until his death in 1861. We have been most fortunate to recover a copy of his probate inventory listing all the items located in the home and farm buildings at the time of his death.

The home items are inventoried by room and this helps verify each room's use. Among other items, there were some 75 pieces of furniture located in the house.

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ect Managers. Since then, the two have worked nearly full time defining and prioritizing tasks, soliciting bids, and overseeing contractors.

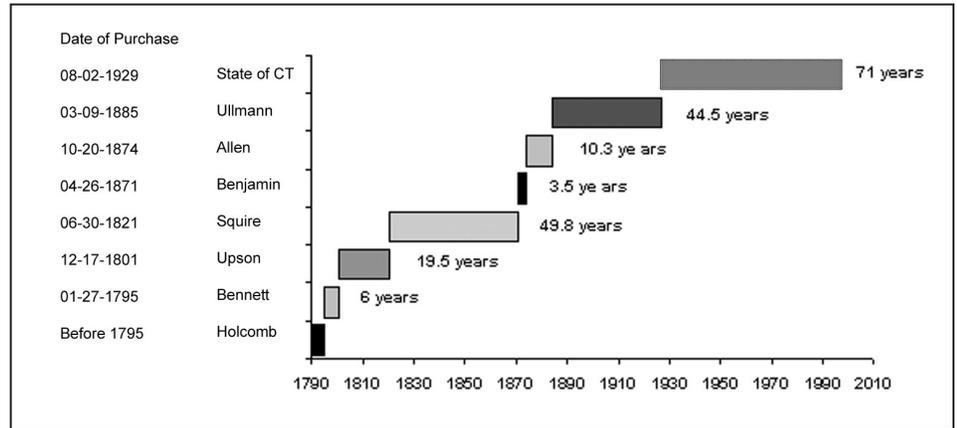
Roof Replaced

Mike Cote of Cote Building and Roofing Company, Litchfield, Conn., began replacing the cedar shingle style roof in mid-October. Cote was selected for the re-roofing work due to his 20 years of experience with historical homes in Litchfield, Colebrook, and Granby as well as for his low bid. Cote removed the existing shingles and replaced them with new center-cut, or “heartwood”, cedar shingles that are nailed with just two nails per shingle to avoid splitting. The galvanized nails will resist rust and will not stain the shingles.

This style roof is in keeping with New England roofs of the 1700s and 1800s and matches the roof seen on the house in photos up until the early 1900s when photos reveal the Ullmanns put on a metal roof.

Chimneys Inspected, Repaired

William Parsons of William Parsons Masonry Restoration and Consulting, Granby, Conn., has thoroughly inspected all three chimneys and their respective fire-



Squires Tavern ownership, 1795 - 2000

places and is currently working in conjunction with Mike Cote to rebuild the top portion of the earliest chimney, which is in the center of the original portion of the house on the north side of the present-day structure. The original portion of this chimney, which likely dates to about 1795, is in good condition, but the top portion, which had been previously rebuilt, was in need of more extensive repair.

Parsons dismantled the top eight feet of the chimney carefully, salvaging about 60 per cent of the bricks. He received an additional load of salvaged bricks in October to replace bricks too damaged to save. He will rebuild the chimney to the original 18th century width to improve draft.

Chimney work is expected to be completed in December, at which time Parsons can move inside to shore up the interior masonry. When the work is complete, three of the existing fireplaces (in the front parlor and front kitchen of the first floor and in the ballroom on the second floor) will be useable, even by more stringent modern fire codes.

As a result of Parsons’ inspections, an additional fireplace was discovered in the front south bedroom. Historical Society volunteers Dave Ravasio and Charlie Lynes cut through the plywood wall that had covered the fireplace

for years. This very shallow fireplace will remain exposed for display purposes, but will not be functional.

Woodwork

Ed Kostak and Son, New Hartford, Conn., are working on replacing badly damaged exterior woodwork and rebuilding the two exterior hatchways leading to the basement. While the all-important sill boards are in relatively good condition and do not need to be replaced, Kostak is using epoxy for repairs where needed. Several of the clapboards—many not original—have fallen victim to harsh weather conditions and will need to be replaced. Most affected are the clapboards on the south side of the building’s addition, which are significantly wider than those on the rest of the building.

Artifact Dig

Dr. Fred Warner, a retired archaeologist from Central Connecticut State University and current member of the Barkhamsted Historical Society, conducted an archaeological excavation prior to excavation necessary for drainage concerns. Several interesting items were found, including china dating to the mid and late 1800s. All items were removed and cataloged prior to the excavation and

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Bela Squires deceased Estate

Front Setting Room on the 1st Floor

1	Sofa hair Cloth		10.00	
1	Melodian		15.00	
1	Mirror		1.50	
1	Dining Table Chery		4.00	
1	Small Rocking chair cain Seat		.75	
6	Cain Seat Chairs	75¢	4.50	
3	Shades	25¢	.75	
1	foot Stool		.25	
1	Carpet 16 yards 3 ply 50¢		8.00	
1	piece of oil cloth		.12	44.87

Back room 1st Floor

1	Burau		5.00	
1	Table Small size		.25	
5	Cain Seat Chairs	25¢	2.50	
1	Small Rocking chair Cain Seat		.50	
6	Flagg Seat chairs	25¢	1.50	
1	Do.	Do. 25¢	.25	
1	Lounge	50¢	.50	
1	Carpet 13 yards		2.00	12.50

Page 308, Barkhamsted probate records. The estate listing of Bela Squire, Nov. 6, 1861, using original spellings.

CHAIRS, CONT. FROM P. 1

These included 7 beds, 6 tables, 36 chairs, assorted chests, stands and bureaus.

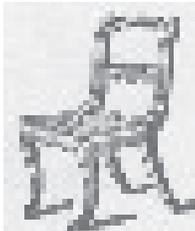
The chairs are interesting because they include many different types. There were wood seat chairs which were most likely of a plain, utilitarian type. There were several types of rocking chairs including a basket seat rocker. This was probably a ladder back with a seat made of woven hickory or ash strips.

Also included were cane seat (woven bamboo) and flag seat chairs (flag, also called rush, was made from twisted cattail).

The cane and rush seat chairs were probably of a fancy type, with stenciling. Perhaps they were even Hitchcock type chairs made in town! ♠

Melodeon. American reed organ invented by a worker in the harmonium factory of J. Alexandre, Paris. Patented in 1846 (later annulled) by Jeremiah Carhart, Buffalo. Produced by Estey of Brattleboro, Vermont, and by Mason & Hamlin of Boston.

Do. Abbreviation. Ditto



This picture shows one of many styles of chairs in use in the period of the Squires' estate inventory.

PROGRESS, CONT. FROM P. 2

foundation work that followed.

Foundation

Eugene Allen, owner of Allen Excavation of East River Road in Pleasant Valley, stepped in to resolve one of the most critical structural integrity issues—severe leakage into the basement.

Allen dug a large trench along the rear foundation and William Richie of Winchester built concrete forms and poured a concrete retaining wall alongside the existing stone foundation, which was found to have a hole large enough for a man to slide through! When the concrete cladding dried, Dave Ravasio stepped in to waterproof the exterior of the concrete.

Once dry, Allen added crushed stone in the trench and laid pipes through the stone, leaving an entry pipe protruding above ground level for possible future drainage from the roof. The pipes are set up to drain into a drywell located on the north side of the building. It was while digging a test pit that Allen discovered the existing drywell, which he moved to a better location.

Allen then backfilled the excavation covering the new drainage features. His work should prevent meltwater and groundwater from seeping in through the stone foundation.

Painting

Although paint preparations began during the summer, exterior painting will not be completed until spring 2002.

A large group of volunteers spent several days in August removing peeling exterior paint from the entire house. Dave Mercier of Dave's Painting in Colebrook was contracted to complete preparatory work and paint the house. He will work over the

PROGRESS, CONT. FROM P. 3

winter, taking certain pieces (such as window sashes) back to his heated shop so they can be prepared at the proper temperature using appropriate methods. When the winter weather passes and the roof and masonry work are complete, Mercier can begin painting.

Bat Tavern

Bryan Waltz of Barkhamsted worked with Historical Society volunteer Steve Davis to design and build a bat house as part of his qualification for the rank of Eagle Scout. Davis and Waltz and some additional Scout volunteers erected the "Bat Tavern," which rises nearly 20 feet out of the ground behind the period garden, and will seed it with bat droppings (guano) from the Squires Tavern attic.

DEP experts examined the attic and estimated that as many as 300 bats had taken up residence there, entering and leaving

through small cracks and holes in the walls. Once all the bats have left the attic for their winter grounds, those holes will be sealed so that they cannot re-enter in the spring. The scent of their colony's guano in the nearby Bat Tavern should lure them there instead.

Period Garden

Just in front of the Bat Tavern prospers the period garden designed by Kim McManus of Barkhamsted to complete her Master Gardener's requirement through the Agricultural Extension Service. She and her husband Ed McManus planted the garden, built walkways, borders, and a central structure for climbing plants. Over the summer and into the fall they visited the site to weed and water nearly every evening after work. Her design, which features plants used in different periods of the home's history, is scaleable and can be expanded in years to come. ♠

BELA SQUIRE, CONT. FROM P. 1

by two more children during their Riverton years.

In 1808 Bela became a Mason and joined the village lodge where he was identified as a blacksmith and farmer. Records show his last attendance at the Masonic meetings forty years later, on December 27, 1848.

In 1810, Bela sold his Riverton land and buildings and purchased a series of parcels in his wife's hometown of Hartland to form a small farm with house and barn. During the next eleven years he built a forge and coalhouse, where he carried on the blacksmithing trade he learned from his father.

He became active in Hartland town affairs. Bela was elected sealer of weights and served in that capacity from 1810 to 1815. In 1817, he was elected fence viewer, and in 1819 surveyor of highways.

During their years in Hartland, Bela and Charlotte had five additional children by 1820.

It was on June 20, 1821 that thirty-four year old Bela Squire bought the present "Squires Tavern" from Saul Upson of Barkhamsted. His purchase included the house, barns, and 380 acres of farm land and forest that spanned both sides of the West Branch of the Farmington River. The Farmington River Turnpike passed through the property, close to the front of the house.

Four days after his purchase of this Barkhamsted property, Bela deeded his Hartland blacksmith shop, coalhouse, and farm to Saul Upson, who sold it just a few months later and moved to Ohio.

Three years later, at a town meeting in January 1824, Bela was appointed one of six taverners for the Town of Barkhamsted. But that was not Bela Squire's only enterprise; town records also show

Town of Barkhamsted, January Meeting 1824

At a Meeting of the civil authority, Select Men, Constables & Grand Jurors of the Town of Barkhamsted, Convened at the House of Jesse Ives in said Town on Monday the 5th day of January 1824 John Merrell Esq was appointed Moderator & Jesse Ives chosen Clerk

The following persons were appointed retailers of Wines & Spiritous Liquors for the Year Ensuing Viz Sexton & Phelps - George, Merlin & Samuel Merrell Little, Holmes & Beech and William Moore Jr

The following Persons were appointed or Nominated Taverners for the Year Ensuing (Viz) Jesse Ives, George Merrell, Amasa Mallory, Bela Squire, Oliver Phelps, Sexton & Humphrey Phillips

The following Persons were appointed Jurymen for the Year Ensuing (Viz) Jabin Ford, George Merrell, Daniel Sandford, Amos Beecher Jr, Alexander Cleveland, Drayton Jones and Luke Hayden.

John Merrell Chairman

Jesse Ives Clerk

A true copy from the minutes J. Ives Clerk

BELA SQUIRE, CONT. FROM P.4

that he provided oak planks and chestnut timbers for area bridges. In 1827 the Town of Barkhamsted gave him financial credit for building one quarter of the new Woodruff Road (West River Road) from the bridge north to the present-day American Legion State Forest, where he owned over 100 acres. In the years 1830 to 1832 he was paid for the care of town paupers, and in 1833 he wrote a mortgage for Polly Elwell, the granddaughter of James and Molly Chaugham.

Three more children were born to Charlotte and Bela at the Tavern, bringing the number of offspring to eleven. They were Saxton (1807-1860), Mary (1809-1810), Bela (b. 1810), Charlotte (b. 1812), Caroline (b. 1814), Susan (b. 1815), Edmond (b. 1818), Horatio (b. 1821), Hiram (b. 1823), Francisco (b. 1829), and Seth (?).

After twelve years in Barkhamsted, Charlotte died in October 1833 at the age of 45. Bela subsequently married Roxey Moses of Canton in 1835. Together, they had three children: Sarah (b. Abt. 1836), Flora (b. Abt. 1837), and Elisha (b. 1839).

In 1840, Bela leased land for a pyroligneous acid works, which he sold later that year, when it was moved up the hill (known locally as "Acid Hill") on the east side of the Pleasant Valley bridge.

The 1849-51 account book of Bela Squire at the Connecticut

1859. The A&P retail food chain has its beginnings in the Great American Tea Co. store opened at 31 Vesey Street, N.Y., by local merchant George Huntington Hartford, 26, who has persuaded his employer George P. Gilman to give up his hide and leather business and go partners in buying tea from China and Japan directly from ships in New York harbor. Both originally from Maine, the two men buy whole clipper ship cargoes at one fell swoop, sell the tea at less than one-third the price charged by other merchants, identify their store with flaked gold letters on a Chinese vermilion background.

1871. The A&P gets its name as the 10-year-old Great American Tea Company is renamed the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company to capitalize on the national excitement about the new trans-continental rail link (see 1869). Proprietors George Huntington Hartford and George F. Gilman attract customers by offering premiums to lucky winners, they use cashier cages in the form of Chinese pagodas, they offer band music on Saturdays, and they employ other promotional efforts while broadening their line of grocery items to include coffee, spices, baking powder, condensed milk, and soap as well as tea.

Historical Society in Hartford shows that he delivered butter, cheese, eggs, chickens, potatoes, and chestnuts to Crow Jewett's store in New Hartford, where he regularly bought dried cod and coffee. The account book indicates he was still taking in boarders at this time. Probate and deed records show that Bela also continued to operate a blacksmith shop next to his Tavern during the forty years he lived there. His son Edmond B. also had a shop across the turnpike from Bela.

In 1843 Bela was baptized in the Riverton Episcopal Church, where his active participation was recorded until 1859. As in Hartford, Bela took an active role in Barkhamsted affairs. Here too, he was elected sealer of weights six

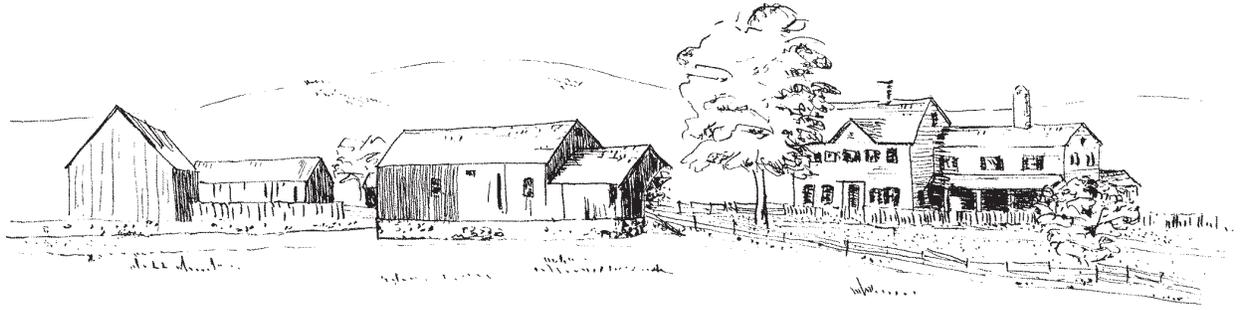
times between 1843 and 1854. He also served as town pound keeper in 1851 and the sixth Barkhamsted tithing man in 1857. An 1857 article in the "Winsted Herald" describes the editors' visit to the Squires' house for a "Yankee Supper" and strawberries "right from the field."

Bela's second wife, Roxey, died on October 7, 1858. On Christmas Day of 1858, Bela took Mary Cromack, an English woman living in New Hartford, as his third wife. Not long after his third marriage, on October 5, 1861, Bela Squire died three days shy of his seventy-fifth birthday.

Upon his death, his son Seth bought out the rights to the Tavern and farm from the other heirs except Bela S. Squire. Mary Cromack Squire returned to New Hartford, where she passed away on January 24, 1864. The 1870 census has Hiram Squires (sic), wife Mary and four children living at the farm (tavern). Historically, the spelling of Squire(s) varied, depending on the writer of the day.

On April 26, 1871 Seth P. Squire of New York City and Bela S. Squire of Terrytown, NY sell the property to John Benjamin of Sheffield, Mass. ♠

1826. Collins axes are introduced at Hartford, Conn., by local storekeepers Samuel and David Collins, who start making their own axes after some years of buying British steel to supply blacksmiths for making axe blades. The Collins brothers buy an old gristmill on the Farmington River, rig up some machinery to blow air into the forges and turn grindstones, obtain dies and forging machinery devised by Elisha King Root, and begin a business that will grow to turn out 40,000 axes per month. Standardized precision-made trademarked Collins axes will fell the trees of the American wilderness and Collins machetes (called cutlasses in the British West Indies) will clear tropical jungles for more than 165 years.



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