

# Squire's Tavern Quarterly

Barkhamsted Historical Society Newsletter

web site - barkhamstedhistory.us

June 2022

## Doug Roberts: 1925 - 2022

We are sad to announce the passing of Douglas Roberts, our dear friend, Barkhamsted town historian and pillar of the Barkhamsted Historical Society. Doug was a charter member of the Historical Society and worked tirelessly to support our goals. He also served for many years as a volunteer fireman with the Riverton Fire Department, including several years as chief. Doug was a veteran of World War II, serving in the European theater as an armored car gunner.

Doug was involved in the formation of the Historical Society over 50 years ago and I believe he has served on the Historical Society board in a variety of positions every year since. Doug was an expert on Lambert Hitchcock, and Hitchcock chairs in general. He was also an authority on numerous topics relating to the history of our town and loved to share his knowledge. I am sure some of you sat with Doug in his workshop office looking at his extensive collection of historic photos and artifacts of our town and the surrounding area. Doug had a passion for historic topics and loved to share this passion with everyone.



*Doug Roberts*

The Historical Society is so grateful

to Doug for all that he has done for us over the years. He actively volunteered for our numerous fundraising efforts. He participated in our programs and events. He spearheaded the initial efforts to organize and catalog our collection of historic items.

Doug was an important source of information on many facets of Barkhamsted history including background on the Barkhamsted Lighthouse community, the Roberts asparagus farm (the largest in New England), Hitchcock chairs, Peoples State Forest history, town roads and bridges and the Civilian Conservation Corp to name a few.

Doug served as Town Historian for many years and frequently shared his knowledge of local history. He often peppered that history with interesting and sometimes humorous personal stories. Let me give you one example: Camp White was the CCC camp in town, located on West River Road between Pleasant Valley and Riverton during the Great Depression. As a kid, Doug was drawn to the extensive activity there and would frequently hang around and interact with the CCC boys.

*Continued on next page...*

## The Barkhamsted Paleo Point

If you collect Native American artifacts and search riverbanks, hillsides and fields for them, one of the most rare and exciting finds is a Paleo-Indian point. Paleo-Indians were the first people to spread out over North America as the last glacier was retreating northward.

Paleo means “ancient” and around here you can’t find an older artifact left behind by the Indians. Paleo Indians reached New England almost 14,000 years ago and upon arrival, inhabited a landscape we would not recognize today, a landscape with few trees, cold winds and strange animals.

Ron Mills of Hartland is an experienced collector of Native American artifacts and in 1985 near the Farmington River in Pleasant Valley he made his best find: a beautiful chert Paleo-Indian point (shown at right).



*Continued on page 4...*

*Doug Roberts - continued from page 1 ...*

After a hard day's work and dinner, the CCC boys would have the opportunity to attend evening educational programs. Doug decided he too would take advantage of furthering his education and started to sneak into a class on general biology. He attended several of the sessions before the instructor realized that one of the "CCC boys" in his class was really a boy. Doug got tossed out of the class but not before furthering his knowledge of frogs.

Doug was not only generous with his time in support of Barkhamsted Historical Society efforts, he also donated many, many items to our collection, including photos, artifacts, chairs and documents. We have many Barkhamsted Lighthouse baskets thanks to Doug. We have not only original Hitchcock chairs from Doug but also chairs of other local craftsmen. As Doug grew older he seemed more focused on sending historic artifacts our way. At one point he would show up virtually every week with some new item to show us and donate.

Doug was especially supportive of one big Historical Society project: the restoration and preservation of Squire's Tav-

ern. He was a major resource in the planning for this project, attending meetings and actively participating in work sessions. His carpentry and furniture making skills were invaluable during the Tavern restoration. He built a beautiful fireplace surround in one of the Tavern rooms. The two big oak tables we still use during meetings were made by Doug. He generously donated many items for display in the Tavern including a rope bed, tavern tables and chairs. One bedroom we refer to as "Doug's Room" is filled with items pretty much all donated by Doug.

The Historical Society is also grateful for Doug's financial support not only in the past but certainly in the future as well. He has generously set up a special fund to financially assist areas in the community of interest to him, and the Barkhamsted Historical Society is listed as one of the top priorities of this fund. In this form, Doug's generosity will live on far into the future and we appreciate that very much.

Doug Roberts, thank you so much for being our dear friend. Thank you for all that you have done for the Historical Society and your community over the years of your long life. God bless you and we will never forget you. ☞



*Photo above left: Doug working on the fireplace surround for a bedroom in Squire's Tavern... probably the master bedroom because it was the only bedroom with a fireplace. Doug designed and built this surround.*

*Photo above right: Doug giving a Historical Society program on Lambert Hitchcock at the Barkhamsted Senior Center.*

*Photo at left: Doug inspecting a wall in Squire's Tavern during the early years of the restoration work on this building. Doug played an important role in the long and involved effort to restore and preserve Squire's Tavern.*



*Photo above left: Doug Roberts honored in the 2017 July 4th town parade for his long time service to the community .*

*Above right: Doug shown at Squire's Tavern with some items he donated to the Historical Society collection. These items were made at the Eagle Scythe Shop which operated in Riverton in the second half of the 19th century. Included in the photo are a couple of toy swords, a scythe blade, and a bayonet.*

*Below left: Doug in his Riverton workshop with a cane seat/cane back chair.*



*Below right: Doug seated between two tavern tables which he made and donated to BHS, along with two of the many chairs he donated to us. These items are still used in the Tavern room of Squire's Tavern.*



*Paleo-Indian point - continued from page 1 ...*

Ron secured permission from the farmer plowing the field and had been surface collecting (Ron calls it “picking”) there several times. On this day in early summer the corn in the field was a couple of feet high. Ron carefully walked between the rows of corn, using a stick to turn back some of the leaves so he could closely scan the ground. After about one hour of searching, suddenly there it was, in plain view: a beautiful Paleo-Indian point.

Ron picked it up, dusted it off and was very excited. At this point in his artifact collecting hobby, Ron was not that experienced. This was just the second point he had ever found. He did not realize exactly what he had. But after showing it to a more knowledgeable friend, he realized the significance of this discovery. The point had the characteristic channel, or flute, of a paleo point- the earliest type of Native American artifact found in this area. It was made from a piece of chert- a flint-like rock that is very fine grained. Chert is hard stone but easy to work and shape. It was a popular material with Native Americans for a variety of tools. Chert is not found in Connecticut. This point was probably made from chert brought in from the Hudson River Valley in New York State.

Some refer to these artifacts as “arrow heads” but the bow and arrow was not in common use in North American until surprisingly late, perhaps 2,000 BC or so. Therefore archaeologists refer to this type of artifact as a “projectile point”, a more general term which includes arrow heads but also includes points used on a spear or atlatl dart. These points were hafted on to a wooden shaft using sinew or plant thread.

Interest in Paleo-Indians has grown in this area with the 2019 discovery in nearby Avon of a Paleo occupation site on the Farmington River which has a radiocarbon date of 12,500 years before the present. This is the Brian D. Jones site, the oldest Indian occupation site in Connecticut. The point found by Ron in Barkhamsted could possibly have been used by these same Indians- the timing is about right.

Holding an artifact like this in your hand gives you a certain connection to this much earlier period and the person who made it. What was that person like? What was the circumstance that brought this point to the field along the Farmington River in Barkhamsted? Who knows. But one thing is for sure: that person’s world was vastly different from ours.

Let’s step back into that world. Warming temperatures had pushed back the ice of the glacier, and this area was transitioning from tundra to a spruce parkland. Poplar and spruce were the first trees hardy enough to tolerate the cold but it is thought that these trees grew not in thick forests but in more open grassland dotted with some trees. This was probably the landscape prevalent when the Barkhamsted



*Photo above- Another view (front and back) of the Ron Mills’ Paleo-Indian point found in Barkhamsted. The characteristic channel or “flute” can be seen in the middle bottom of the point.*

Paleo point was made.

This landscape was occupied by some animals that would seem odd to us. 11,000 or 12,000 years ago a major event was occurring: the extinction of many of these strange animals. Large mammals such as mammoths, mastodons, giant beaver (the size of current black bears) and a number of large carnivores such as dire wolves, short-faced bears and saber tooth tigers were now rapidly declining in number.

The cause of the large mammal extinction of this period is not known for sure although there are many theories (which we will not go into here). Did any of these strange animals overlap human occupation in our area? Yes. It is definitely possible that Ron’s paleo point was chucked at a mastodon. At the Avon site, a stone tool (a scraper) was tested and found to have protein residue from an elephant, possibly mammoth but more likely a mastodon.

How this particular paleo point came to rest in Barkhamsted near the Farmington River is of course unknown, but it is fun to speculate and think of the possibilities. Probably the actual story is more mundane than it being lost during a mastodon hunt. In any event it is an important find. Of the 350 or so points that Ron went on to find over the years, this is his favorite and for good reason. Besides being very old, it is a very beautiful and finely worked point. We are so grateful to Ron for sharing his story and this point with us. ☘

### OUR ANNUAL PIG ROAST!

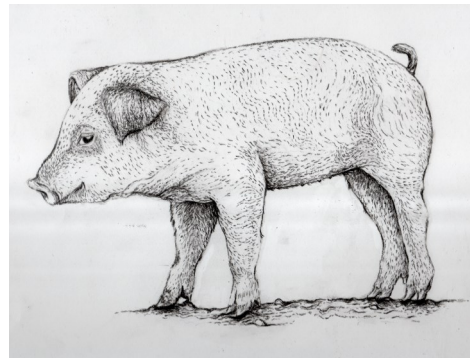
One of our most popular events, the Historical Society pig roast, is set for Saturday, August 20 at Squire’s Tavern from 4:00 to 6:00 pm. Tickets are \$25.

Our pig roast has grown in popularity over the years, and we do have a limit on attendance. To be assured of securing tickets, buy them **in advance** at Squire’s Tavern during our regular open hours (Wednesdays 9:00 to noon and Sundays 1:00 to 4:00).

You may be able to buy tickets “at the door” on the day of the event, but only if we have not sold out.

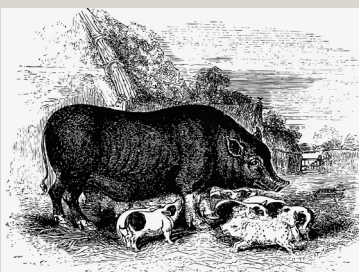
Live music will also add to your enjoyment with the return of the Travelin’ Trout band. We hope to see you there.

Tickets are \$25 per person. BYOB. Kids under 12 free.



The image to the left is a hypothetical view of the William Taylor farm drawn for us by BHS volunteer Bonnie Boyle. This drawing is part of our farm exhibit at Squire’s Tavern. Come down and see the entire exhibit.  
If you were riding the horse in the image and we suddenly brought you into 2022, you would be on Goose Green Road, getting close to the intersection of Route 181 at the sharp curve.

### A blast from the past...



March 26, 1874: “Cloudy & quite warm & pleasant in the morning. Father gone down to New Hartford after some flour & other things. Nelson & William been here today. Calvin & Annie been up to see Aunt Amanda this afternoon. The sow pigged today. It is quite warm this evening.”

An entry from the Albert Slade diary. He lived on what is now Park Road near Slade Road in a brick farmhouse that was torn down in the 1980s. Almost every day neighbors visited Albert’s farm. The big news: “the sow pigged today”!

## Historical Society News

### William Taylor Blanket Chest

Late in December of 2021 a phone call came in to Squire's Tavern from a person wanting to know if we would be interested in a blanket chest belonging to William Taylor. We said YES!

As you may remember, our diligent history researcher, Mike Day, found a portion of William Taylor's diary about six years ago. Mike wrote up a great article on the diary and William Taylor for this newsletter (September 2016 Quarterly).

William Taylor fought in the Revolutionary War and later lived in Canton. He came to Barkhamsted around 1802 and lived across the street and a little up the hill from the current Pleasant Valley firehouse. Taylor's diary provided a lot of insight into early Barkhamsted life. He had a farm, grew corn and flax, had a large orchard and made a lot of cider. Like virtually all farmers of the time, he had cattle and hogs.

So we were pretty well acquainted with Mr. William Taylor. When we heard that a blanket chest of his was available we were excited to say the least. A Mr. Kevin Tulimieri called us. He had purchased the chest and saw the faint inscription on it: "William Taylor - Barkhamsted". He offered to sell it to us at a price much below its true worth. He really wanted to see the blanket chest go back to its original home.

We picked up the chest in December 2021 and it is now on display at Squire's Tavern (see photo above right). Our farming exhibit at the Tavern is built around the farm diary entries of William Taylor, and near that exhibit sits the chest. It is made of pine and is a 6 board blanket chest with a candle drawer for storing candles, a common feature of early blanket chests. At a time when homes typically did not have closets, blanket chest were very handy for storing clothes, blankets and other items.

We are so pleased to have this piece of Barkhamsted history and we are grateful to Kevin for helping us bring the chest home. ☘



*Photo above: William Taylor's blanket chest.*

### Historical Society volunteers in action:



*Photo above: BHS volunteer Charlie Watson replaces a broken pane of glass in one of the Squire's Tavern attic windows.*

## Historical Society Calendar



Squire's Tavern is open for our regular hours:

Sundays from 1:00 to 4:00 pm and  
Wednesdays from 9:00 am to noon.



① **Friday, June 10, 2022** – How Barkhamsted post offices changed over the years is fascinating. Paul Hart shows how the postal service impacted daily life in Barkhamsted and the nation. 7:00 at Barkhamsted Senior Center.

② **Sunday, June 26, July 31, August 28 and September 25** - (last Sunday of the month from June to September) Center School House open from 1:00 to 4:00. Exhibits, photos and a restored one room school classroom bring you back to another era.

③ **Saturday, July 16, 2022** – “A Walk Through Time”: a short hike of about one mile (some uneven ground) with Paul Hart discussing what would have been seen at different historic times along the way. 10:00 am - starts and ends at the Squire's Tavern.

④ **Saturday, August 20, 2022** – Our annual Pig Roast at Squire's Tavern - great food and music by the Travelin' Trout Band. \$25 per person. Buy tickets in advance at the Tavern during our regular hours or take a chance and buy them “at the door” if we still have room. 4:00 pm to 6:00.

⑤ **Saturday, September 10, 2022** – 1:00 pm. Barkhamsted Historical Society members: join us at our annual meeting at the Riverton Inn. Come enjoy appetizers/light refreshments and a special program on “Lost Hamlets of Barkhamsted” by Mike Day and Paul Hart. A very short business meeting will start things off.

⑥ **Saturday, October 15** – 10:00 am. Barkhamsted Hollow and Reservoir tour. A bus trip into our past: see and hear the history in areas now covered by the Barkhamsted Reservoir. Includes a visit inside the Saville Dam. Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased at Squire's Tavern during our regular hours. Board the bus at the Peoples Forest Mathies area right across from Squire's Tavern.

### Barkhamsted Historical Society

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Vice President - Paul Hart  
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Treasurer - Ted Bachman  
Town Historian - Doug Roberts

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Membership - Sharon Lynes  
Exhibits - Bonnie Boyle  
Docents - Cathy Connole  
Newsletter - Paul Hart

#### Trustees

Bill Day (3 years)  
Cathy Connole (3 yrs)  
Harriet Winchenbaugh  
(2 years)

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E-mail- [bhs@barkhamstedhistory.us](mailto:bhs@barkhamstedhistory.us)

Web site- [barkhamstedhistory.us](http://barkhamstedhistory.us)

Squire's Tavern is located at 100 East River Road in Barkhamsted, one mile north of the Pleasant Valley bridge.

Squire's Tavern is open to the public on  
Wednesdays 9:00 am to noon and  
Sundays 1:00 to 4:00 pm

Barkhamsted Historical Society Membership:  
Seniors \$12, Individuals \$15, Family \$25

Mail to Sharon Lynes, BHS Membership,  
P.O. Box 94, Pleasant Valley, CT 06063  
or sign up and pay through our web site.

The Barkhamsted Historical Society is dedicated to preserving Barkhamsted history, helping people connect with past traditions and inspiring appreciation for our heritage to enrich lives and strengthen community.

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Barkhamsted Historical Society  
P.O. Box 94  
Pleasant Valley, CT 06063

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*Illustration, L. Landgraf*

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Newsletter of the Barkhamsted Historical Society



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