



THE WAYSIDE INN®
FOUNDATION

Innkeeper's Tales

Vol. 7 Number 1

The Wayside Inn Foundation Member Newsletter

Summer 2026



CELEBRATING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION
250
THE WAYSIDE INN®



As we celebrate summer here in Sudbury, our nation celebrates a milestone: 250 years of American Independence. It is humbling to remember that when the Declaration was signed in 1776, The Wayside Inn had already been welcoming travelers for sixty years. This Fourth of July, when the Sudbury Companies of Militia and Minute raised the Betsy Ross flag above our door and our community gathered at The 1716 Beer Garden, we were not simply marking history. We were living it, on ground that witnessed the Revolution firsthand.

That connection between past and present runs throughout this issue. In these pages, you will read how our archives, records that survived the fire of 1955 and more than a century of change, are now available online to anyone, anywhere, for the first time in their history. You will learn how the bricks of our Longfellow Memorial Garden wall may carry a link to John Hancock himself, and how our trails brought new friends to Carding Mill Pond, including a barn owl named Bella.

All of this work is in service of our mission to protect this historic landscape, to share it widely, and to create opportunities for learning, connection, and reflection. In a time when common ground can feel harder to find, The Wayside Inn offers a place where neighbors gather, where history is close enough to touch, and where every generation adds its own stories to the tale.

For that, I am grateful. To our volunteers, staff, and fellow Trustees, to our partners and supporters, and to you, our members, whose generosity makes this work possible - Thank You! I hope to see many of you at the Inn this season, whether in the garden, on the trails, or under The Pavilion with a refreshing beverage.

With appreciation,

John Ho
President, Board of Trustees



THE WAYSIDE INN® FOUNDATION

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Sudbury Minute & Militia on
Cover image: *July Fourth* by Michael McCluskey,
c. 2026

OUR PROPERTY INCLUDES

Longfellow's Wayside Inn
Grist Mill
Martha-Mary Chapel
Redstone Schoolhouse
Gate House
Cider Mill
Ice House
Old Barn
Longfellow Memorial Garden
The Pavilion



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THE LONGFELLOW MEMORIAL GARDEN

Then and Now

By Michael McCluskey

Our Longfellow Memorial Garden was designed in 1905 to celebrate the American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow—but it also serves as a reminder of one of our most influential Innkeepers, Edward Lemon. Lemon was a businessman and antiques collector based in Malden, MA when he bought the Inn in 1897. At that time, the property had been in disrepair for almost 30 years. It had stopped operating as an inn when owner Lyman Howe died childless in 1861. Lyman was a direct descendant of David How, who founded the Inn in 1716. The family first used “How” then “Howe” as the spelling, and their inn was called How’s Tavern, or perhaps The Red Horse Tavern because of the red horse on their sign. After Lyman’s death, however, the tavern closed and was rented out as a private home—until it was purchased by Edward Lemon.



A view of The Wayside Inn when it was owned by Edward Lemon. Note that the Longfellow Memorial Garden and its brick wall have not yet been built. The Wayside Inn Collection.

Lemon wanted to turn the inn back into a successful business. His first decision was to rename the property “Longfellow’s Wayside Inn”. The poet Longfellow had published *Tales of a Wayside Inn* in 1863, based on his visit to the property. This collection of poems was a huge success, and Lemon wanted to capitalize on this fame by giving the inn a name that would potentially attract more visitors. Lemon made several other changes that we can still see today. He filled the inn with many of his own antiques, built what is now called our Ford Room to use as an art gallery, and created the Longfellow Memorial Garden.

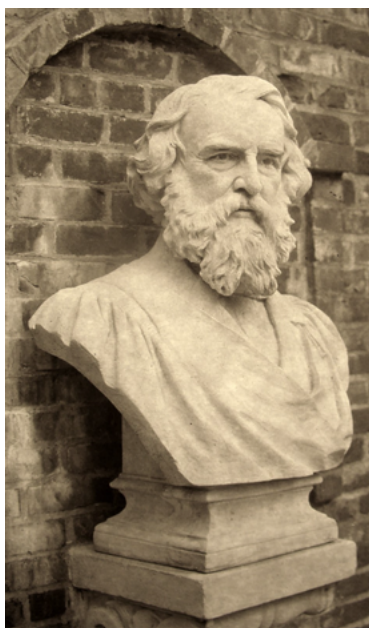
Lemon's sister Ella Lemon designed the garden with the assistance of landscape architect Arthur Shurtleff. Shurtleff had first visited our property in 1891, when he bicycled here from Wellesley as a young MIT student. Afterward, he trained with Frederick Law Olmsted, the famous designer of New York's Central Park and Boston's Emerald Necklace. Shurtleff would go on to design the grounds for Colonial Williamsburg and Old Sturbridge Village. But before these projects—he made his mark here at The Wayside Inn.



A historic view from the Longfellow Memorial Garden looking back to the Inn. The Longfellow Memorial Garden was designed by Ella Lemon and Arthur Shurtleff in 1905, with the brick wall and Longfellow bust added in 1915. The Wayside Inn Collection.

The garden that Shurtleff and Ella Lemon designed was meant as a tribute to the poet Longfellow. But it was also intended to improve the landscape around the property and to attract artists as well as tourists. In 1918, Edward Lemon added the brick wall that currently surrounds the garden and installed a bust of Longfellow at one end. The bust is an exact copy of the one of Longfellow in Westminster Abbey's Poet's Corner.

The bricks used in the wall are supposedly from the Brewer and Beebe Townhouses that stood at 30 Beacon St., Boston until they were demolished in 1917 to make way for the expansion of the State House.



These townhouses were built on the site of the former Hancock Manor, the home of John Hancock, and—allegedly—bricks from Hancock's house were used in their construction. Therefore, the bricks used for our garden wall may possibly be from Hancock's house.

This story about the bricks was recorded by a Wayside Inn hostess in 1942 based on information given to her by a visitor. While we have not been able to verify any of this—it is nice to think that the bricks surrounding our current

Left: The Longfellow Memorial Garden includes a replica of the bust of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow installed in Westminster Abbey's Poet's Corner. The original bust was created by Sir Thomas Brock, who also designed the Victoria Memorial in front of Buckingham Palace. The Wayside Inn Collection.

Longfellow Memorial Garden have a direct connection with American Founding Father and signer of the Declaration of Independence, John Hancock.



The brick wall that encloses the Longfellow Memorial Garden includes a plaque with an image of a young Longfellow. The Wayside Inn Collection.

In May 2026, we hosted our first Garden Tea Party Fundraiser in the Longfellow Memorial Garden to celebrate the beauty and history of this important part of our 110 acre campus. You, of course, are free to visit the garden on your next visit to the Inn to admire the flowers, appreciate the work of the designers, study the bricks, and honor the legacy of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and his connection to The Wayside Inn.



OWL PROWLERS

By Michael McCluskey

Our 110 acre campus includes walking paths as well as a 1.5 mile hiking trail called The Innkeeper's Loop. This trail, laid out in partnership with the Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT), connects all of our historic buildings and takes visitors through woodlands and open fields. One section, located behind the Ice House, is a loop along Carding Mill Pond. In addition to its beautiful views of the water, this loop is a popular spot for birdwatchers, especially during migration season in the spring and fall.



To take advantage of this location and to let more people know about our trails, The Wayside Inn Foundation partnered with SVT and the Giaquinto Wildlife Center from Marlborough. Together, we presented the Owl Prowlers and Growlers event on June 13, 2026 that began and ended at our 1716 Beer Garden and included an evening walk along the Carding Mill Pond part of our Innkeeper's Trail. Alyssa Giaquinto started the event with a fascinating talk about owls—along with the event's special guest, Bella the barn owl. Mike Giaquinto then led the participants on a walk along the trail to listen for owls, and, afterwards, Alyssa and Bella shared more details about owls and some wildlife trivia. We are planning more activities that take advantage of our trails, including a bird-watching and bird trivia event during the fall migration season.



Left: A large crowd gathered to hear Alyssa Giaquinto of the Giaquinto Wildlife Center speak about owls before an evening hike along our Innkeeper's Loop Trail.

UNLOCKING CENTURIES OF HISTORY

Exploring The Wayside Inn Collections Online

By Lauren Prescott



The Wayside Inn engulfed in flames, with smoke pouring out of the roof, December 1955. The Wayside Inn Collection.

When a devastating fire tore through The Wayside Inn in the early hours of December 22, 1955, flames spread through the north and west wings. Firefighters from Sudbury and surrounding towns battled the blaze in subzero temperatures, pouring nearly one million gallons of water onto the structure. The fire severely damaged the Inn, but crews ultimately saved the historic building from total loss. In the aftermath, Assistant Manager Priscilla Staples, along with Bertram Little of

Historic New England and Russell Kettell of the Concord Antiquarian Society, carefully picked their way through the charred remains to assess what could be salvaged. At the stairs leading to the ballroom and Lafayette bedroom, Staples opened a closet and discovered something extraordinary: the Inn's records, dating back to the eighteenth century, had survived intact.

Seventy years later, those same records (and thousands more) have entered a new chapter. For the first time, anyone can explore The Wayside Inn's collections online. This milestone represents the culmination of years of work to preserve, organize, and share the historical materials entrusted to our care.

The archives themselves have a long history. In 1927, Henry Ford established



Taking the Inn's archives to bank, the morning after the fire. Pictured here from left to right: Lawrence "Bert" Tighe, Chester "Chet" Purdy, Don Neelon, and Francis "Fran" White. The Wayside Inn Collection.

an archive at The Wayside Inn and appointed genealogical researcher Gladys Marion Salta as its first archivist. Since then, generations of staff, volunteers, and donors have helped preserve and grow a collection that documents more than three centuries of The Wayside Inn's history.

The collection survived the 1955 fire, but it faced other challenges over the decades. By the time I joined The Wayside Inn Foundation as Archivist in 2021, researchers still needed to schedule appointments and work with materials in the basement of the Martha-Mary Chapel, where the collection was located. While previous staff had physically organized much of the collection, they had not cataloged it into a searchable database, and most materials remained undigitized.

The basement environment also posed preservation concerns. Damp conditions and fluctuations in temperature and humidity had taken a toll on portions of the collection. Some twentieth-century records had become brittle and fragile after decades of storage in the basement.

Before we could make the collections accessible online, we first needed to make them physically accessible and safe. For several years, TWIF staff worked to renovate the historic Gate House and transform it into a dedicated Archive & Research Center. In December 2023, we completed the move. For the first time, the collections occupied a stable, climate-controlled environment designed for long-term preservation and research access

With the archive safely rehoused, I turned my attention to the next goal: making it accessible to everyone. Since 2021, I have worked to catalog and digitize the collections with the help of dedicated interns and volunteers. Today, visitors can search and explore a



Archive Moving Day, December 2023.



*Archive Work Room,
showing original staircase on right
that was uncovered during
renovations.*



Part of archive storage.

growing number of archival records, photographs, manuscripts, maps, and artifacts through our online collections database. Researchers no longer need to travel to Sudbury to begin their work. Anyone with an internet connection can now discover the stories preserved in the archives.

The online collections database marks the beginning of a new chapter rather than the end of a project. More archival material (including historic photographs, postcards, and documents) needs to be scanned and cataloged. In addition, one of our most significant collections, the Herbert F. Howe Family collection, has hundreds of documents that need to be transcribed. Every week, we continue to work diligently in the archives to scan, catalog, and transcribe documents. Thousands of additional records remain to be processed, and new material will continue to appear online as the work progresses.

Our archive preserves more than paper and photographs. It preserves the stories of the people who built, visited, worked at, and cared for The Wayside Inn across more than three centuries. Thanks to the efforts of countless individuals over the last one hundred years, those stories are now available to you.

We invite you to explore the collections online and experience the rich history of The Wayside Inn in a new way.

Start exploring at: <https://wayside.catalogaccess.com/home>

RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE ARCHIVES

By Lauren Prescott

The Wayside Inn recently received a donation from Carolyn Purrington, wife of former innkeeper Robert “Bob” Purrington, who passed away in 2019. Carolyn gifted several items from Bob’s years of service and these materials now join the Inn’s archives and help preserve a recent chapter of our history. The donation includes a commemorative plate of the Old Grist Mill, a pewter mug from the Sudbury Ancient Fyfe & Drum Companie, a Christopher Gurshin woodcut of Longfellow’s Wayside Inn, and a Valentine Green (1739–1813) print, among other items.

Robert Purrington served as innkeeper from November 30, 1989, to 2008, succeeding Francis Koppeis. A Winchester native, Purrington studied hotel and restaurant management at UMass Amherst before joining Sheraton Hotels’ management training program and launched a career that took him from Jamaica to Vail, Colorado. Before arriving in Sudbury, he managed the Ocean Edge Resort in Brewster. His path to The Wayside Inn came almost by chance. During a conversation with a headhunter about hiring a food and beverage manager for the Cape Cod resort, Purrington learned that the same recruiter was searching for a new innkeeper to replace Koppeis. After visiting the Inn for lunch, he immediately felt a connection and pursued the role. During his tenure, Purrington strengthened the Inn’s dual mission: to preserve a historic site while offering modern comfort to its guests. Under his leadership, the Inn established a History Department dedicated to protecting the Inn’s artifacts and papers. This department also took on interpretation of the Inn and surrounding buildings, mounting exhibitions and hosting educational programs.

In 1999 – 2000, Purrington led one of the most ambitious renovation projects in the Inn’s recent history. For the first time since Henry Ford added the North Wing, the Inn’s physical footprint expanded. The updates included new elevators, improved handicap access for people with disabilities, and a modernized infrastructure that introduced computerized systems to the Inn operation’s.

We are thankful for the many donors whose contributions come from every era (not just the centuries-old past) helping us preserve the Inn’s history for generations to come.



Left to Right: Carolyn and Bob Purrington posing next to the Inn’s c. 1867 Concord stagecoach, c. 1990s. The Wayside Inn Collection; Collector’s plate from the Old Mill Stream series featuring the Old Grist Mill. Artwork by Craig Tennant. (Ref. #2025.13.001.); Pewter tankard presented to innkeeper Robert Purrington in 2003 by the Sudbury Ancient Fyfe & Drum Companie in appreciation of his support. (Ref #2025.13.004)

WHAT'S NEW AROUND THE INN



Left to Right: Inishfree School of Irish Dance at our annual St. Paddy's Day Luncheon; The Red Horse Tavern Pop-Up Bar; Sudbury Minute & Militia reenactors; Guests enjoying live music at The 1716 Beer Garden.



Left to Right: Paws in the Park; Our newly reconstructed screened-in porch; Guests celebrate the 250th on The Fourth of July at The 1716 Beer Garden; Local band Seven 2 Many at our Strawberry Concert.

LEGENDARY TALES. TIMELESS FELLOWSHIP.

We want to express our sincere thanks to all current members of The Wayside Inn Foundation. Your ongoing support enables us to further our mission and support our work with educational programming, collections care & management, site management, and buildings & grounds maintenance.

Not yet a member? We welcome new members at any time of the year. All memberships are valid for one year from the receipt of dues and are renewable annually. All members enjoy benefits, such as reduced program and event fees, a newsletter subscription, and free archival research services (limited). Additional benefits are provided through a range of membership levels, including several special membership benefits given to our Innkeeper Circle donors (\$1,000+), Community Partners, and Photographers. Memberships to The Wayside Inn Foundation also make good gifts for friends, family, and clients. If you have questions about membership, please call **1.978.295.1716** or email **TWIF@wayside.org**.



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MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR OUR UPCOMING SIGNATURE EVENTS

Apple Fest Family Day
Saturday, October 3rd, 2026

Jerusha's Halloween Ball
Friday, October 23rd, 2026

Follow The Wayside Inn on social media:



Facebook: @LongfellowsWaysideInn



Instagram: @thewaysideinn, @1716wayside



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