

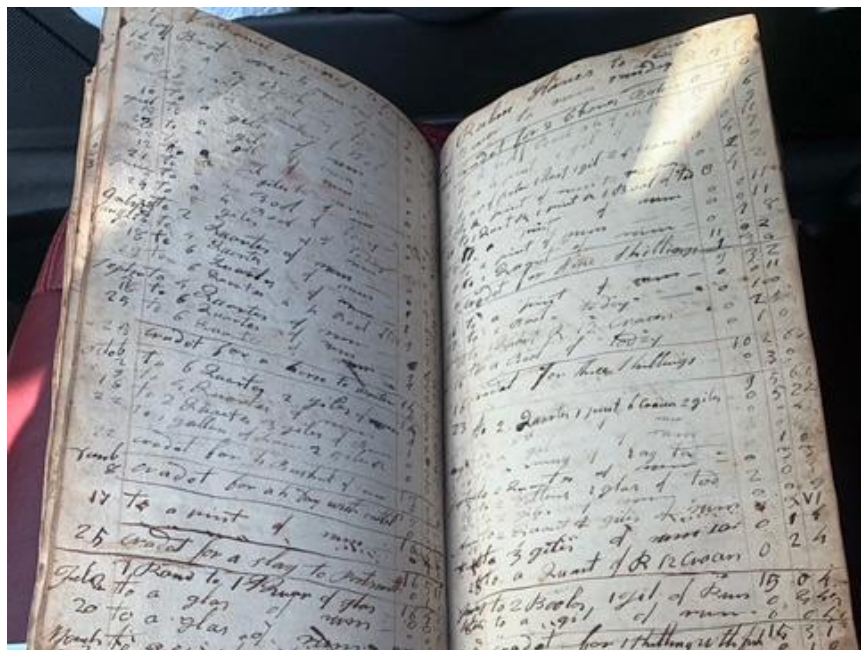
RYE HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND TOWN MUSEUM

Covid-19 Statement

Until further notice, the museum will be open by appointment only, limited to 2 visitors per appointment. Masks are required inside, as is hand sanitizing upon entering the building.

NEW: Make your appointment online, email us at info@ryenhistoricalociety.org, or call 603-436-9278

Schedule Museum Visit



PRESERVING RYE'S OLD TAVERN LEDGERS

By Lew Karabatsos

The Society is undertaking an evaluation of its collections to not only understand the scope of its holdings, but also assess the condition of some of its earliest possessions. Conducted by the Collections Committee, that analysis has identified two items that warrant some attention. The first is a ledger from the Garland Tavern, documenting business transactions from 1772 - 1809; the second is a 1798 business ledger from the Jones Tavern. Both books were stabilized and conserved by the Northeast Document Conservation Center in 2005 and 2003 respectively. Since then, they have been stored in a fireproof file cabinet at the Rye Museum.

As part of the Society's mission to preserve and make Rye history more visible and accessible, the Portsmouth Athenaeum was approached to help. Working with Athenaeum Librarian Robin Silva, the Society has put "on deposit" (loan), both ledgers. Each will be indexed and selected pages scanned for use by researchers and local historians. More importantly, the ledgers will be housed

in a climate-controlled environment that will better preserve their condition for generations to come.

This is not the first time the two seacoast organizations have worked together. Back in 2007, the Society put, “on deposit,” the medical notebooks, account books, etc., of the Parsons family doctors who served the Rye community.

The Society is grateful to Robin and the Atheneum for their interest and support. The relationship exemplifies how two organizations with similar missions can and do work together for the benefit of the community at large.

Photo: Detail of pages from the Jones Tavern Ledger, 1798

FOUNDING FAMILIES

Francis Jenness 1634 – 1716



The oldest part of 125 Cable Road may date to before 1700. The Jenness family continuously occupied the house until 1908.

By Marie Withrow

Francis Jenness was likely a young man in his early 30's when he sailed from Rye, Sussex, England for New England. Though his arrival date is debated, it is generally accepted as 1665 when he took up residence at the Great Island, later to become New Castle. This is where on October 2, 1666 he took the Freeman's Oath of Fidelity.

The next year Francis received a grant from the selectmen of Portsmouth for one acre of land on Great Neck. It was stipulated that he build a house on the property within one year. Despite the fact that he had not fulfilled this requirement, the town gave him “absolute conveyance” of the lot, for which he paid 20 shillings. For several years Francis worked here as a mariner and fisherman until his marriage on February 15, 1669/70 to Hannah Swaine, daughter of William Swaine and Prudence Marston of Hampton, where they made their first home.

In 1675 Francis built the house wherein he and Hannah would live for most of their lives and raise seven children. The land, laid out by the town of Hampton, extended along the seacoast from Lock's Neck heading south more than half a

mile. He also erected a sawmill, grist mill, and a bakery where he made bread and sea biscuits which he sold along the seacoast from Saco to Boston. With his property so close to the water Francis was able to use small boats, likely ketches, or pinnaces, to ship his wares. During this time he is also listed among the men who served in the military campaign during the Native American uprising.

There is great variation of the spelling of Jenness in deeds, histories, and town and vital records. Just some of these include Jennings, Gennings, Genis, Jenis, Janis, and Jinnis. It was not until around 1730 that the spelling stabilized as Jenness.

In partnership with others, Francis established a successful sawmill on Cedar Swamp Run in 1695. (For the story of *The Mills and Cedars of Rye*, please visit <https://www.ryenhistoricalociety.org/mills-cedars-of-rye> .) His business ventures must have been very profitable as Francis continued to purchase property throughout the area. Hannah Jenness died in 1699 and a little more than a year later Francis married twice widowed Salome White of Portsmouth.

Like other early settlers Francis was involved in several boundary disputes. Apparently, he ruffled enough feathers that when he tried to protest during a meeting of the commoners in 1707, he was denied the right to speak. He is often listed as a dissenting vote in meeting notes. Some years after Francis died, his sons successfully gained back all the land that had been disputed.

By the time of his death at the age of 82, Francis Jenness had acquired enough land to leave significant acreage to his wife and his sons, and to also provide for his daughters. His youngest son, Richard, the most educated of his children, was one of the selectmen who began petitioning for separation from Newcastle in 1721. When this effort finally met with success in 1726, Richard was elected to represent the Parish of Rye, a position he held for almost 40 years. It is surmised that the name Rye was chosen to honor Francis Jenness as he was the only founder born in Rye, England. In 1730 Richard Jenness, with other families, petitioned successfully to annex their properties from Hampton, adding roughly eighteen hundred acres of good land to Rye.

Over the next 100 years the Jenness family continued to flourish and to contribute to the growth and stability of Rye. By the late 1800's there were over 25 separate Jenness families living in south Rye west of Jenness Beach. Many of the heads of these families were farmers and some lived on land originally purchased by Francis Jenness.

[Click here to leave a comment](#)

Rye Advocates for Historic House Preservation

By Alex Herlihy

The Rye Historical Society and three town government boards, the Rye Heritage Commission, Rye Historic District Commission, and Demolition Review Committee all share an interest in preserving and protecting Rye's older buildings, and each group volunteered two representatives to form the Rye Advocates. We are not a town government committee, but a group of

committed town residents whose purpose is to raise awareness of the importance of historic houses throughout the Town of Rye, and to support their protection and preservation. The Advocates are interested in supporting historic house owners to identify, document, and preserve these houses. In April, those who live in houses built before 1901 will receive a letter from the Rye Advocates describing its purpose and requesting historical information about their houses to add to what the historical society already has on file.

Where is This?

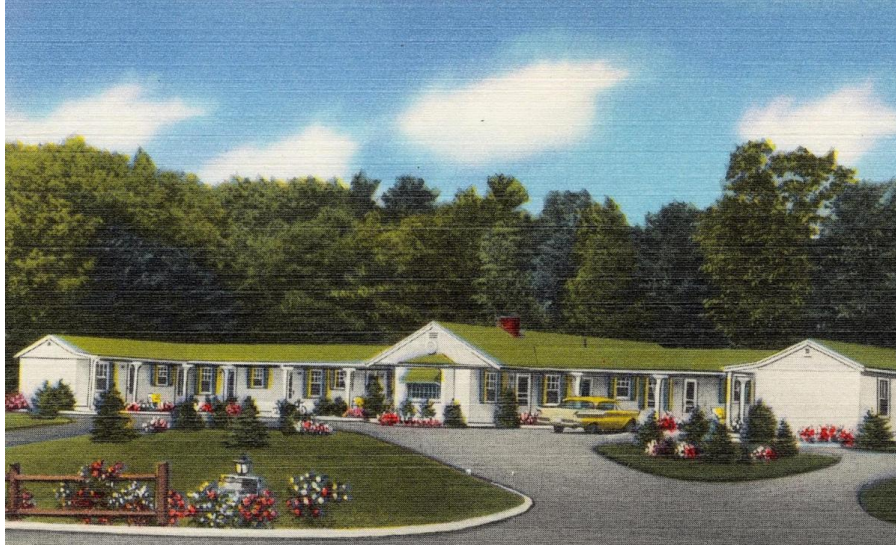
[Click here or on the picture if you know!](#) Answer will be in next month's newsletter.



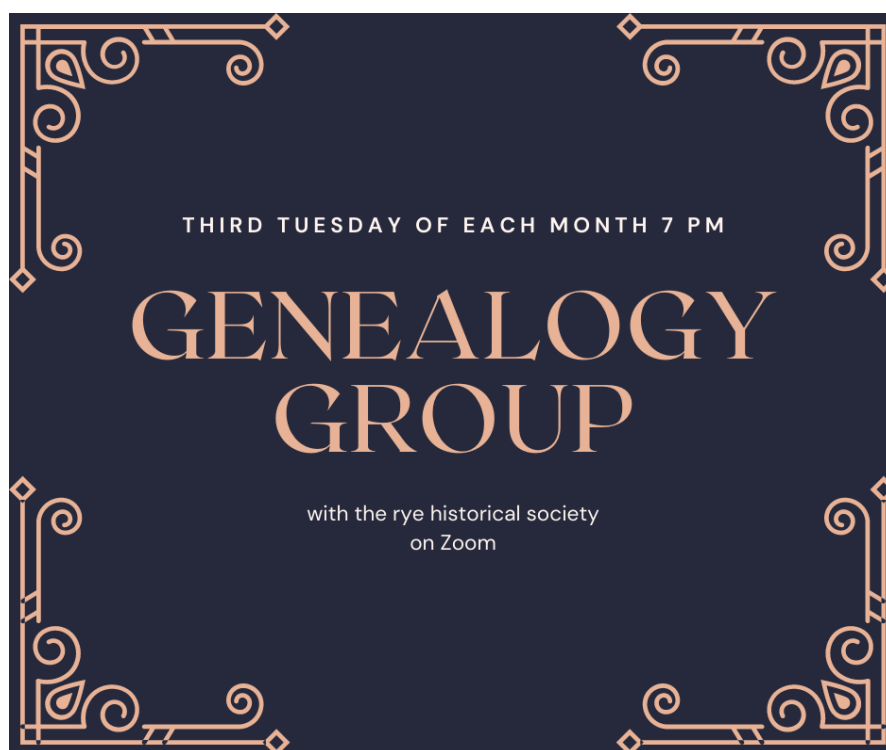
First person to reply correctly will be mentioned in next month's newsletter.

Last Month's Winner

Nobody correctly identified the Sleepy Hollow Motel, 311 Lafayette Road, Rye. 19 units — all with TVs!



Join the the Genealogy Group's meeting on Zoom
Tuesday, April 20 at 7 P.M.



THIS MONTH IN RYE HISTORY

DIGGING OUT RYE HARBOR

April, 1792. Names of more than two-score men of Rye, led by Nathan Goss, appear on a list of workers tasked with digging out the harbor between Ragged Neck and Little Neck. Some agreed to work a day or two, others longer. Jeremiah Berry and the Mardens contributed labor plus the use of their oxen. Goss himself agreed to provide 15 days work – and "10 Gals.Rum."



Audio tour

Rye Beach Block

★★★★★ [4 reviews](#) | [Rye](#) | Free

Did you know there is a guided walking tour in Rye Beach? [Download the IziTRAVEL app and get started!](#)

Don't want to walk? You can take this tour from the comfort of your easy chair!

Share The History of Your Home with a Historic House Plaque

Many Rye homes, business and public buildings are adorned with these handsome plaques. [The cost of a plaque is \\$85.](#)

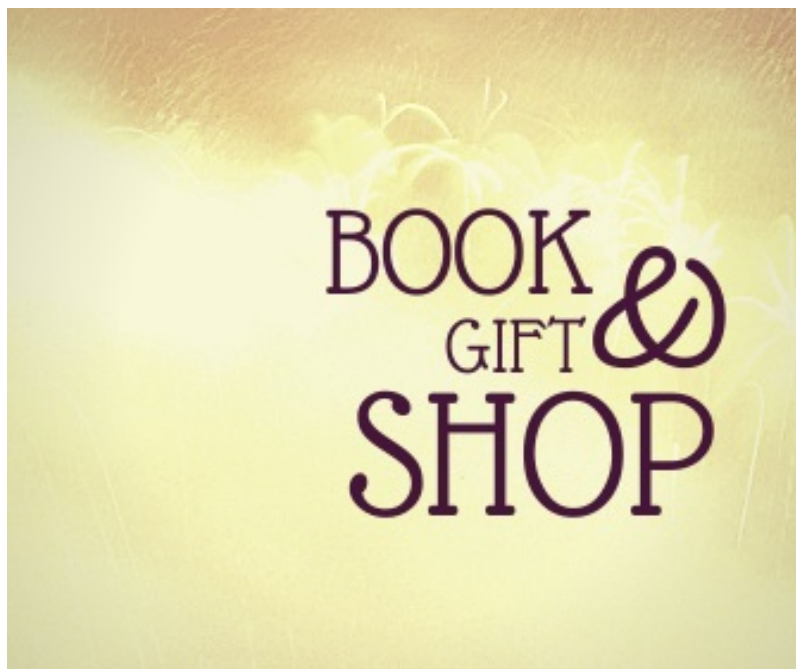
If you would like one for your home to add to the heritage of the town, house plaque applications may be picked up at the Rye library on the coffee table (behind the RHS brochures).

Check and application may be mailed to PO Box 583, Rye, NH 03870 or left in our mailbox by the front door of the museum.



Support Rye Historical Society by doing your shopping on Amazon Smile!

amazonsmile



Shop Now



RHS is a 501(c)(3) non profit organization

Rye Historical Society

603-436-9278

info@ryenhistoricalociety.org

10 Olde Parish Road, Rye, NH 03870

[Click here to be added to our email list](#)

[Click Here to Join Or Renew](#)

Are you on Instagram? Facebook? Twitter? YouTube?

RHS is!

Follow RHS on Social Media

Click the Icons below

