

# RYE HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND TOWN MUSEUM

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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.

**Make your appointment online**, email us at [info@ryenhistoricalociety.org](mailto:info@ryenhistoricalociety.org), or call 603-436-9278

[Schedule Museum Visit](#)

THE RYE HISTORICAL SOCIETY IS AN INDEPENDENT, NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO COLLECTING AND PRESERVING THE RICH HISTORY OF RYE, NEW HAMPSHIRE BY ENGAGING RESIDENTS AND VISITORS THROUGH OUR MUSEUM AND PROGRAMS

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## TIDE MILLS FOR SALE.

A very valuable WATER PRIVILEGE, situate at Little Harbor, in Rye, about two miles from Portsmouth, with the MILLS thereon, consisting of a GRIST MILL with three run of STONES, a SAW MILL and SHINGLE MILL, all in good condition and nearly new, with Water Power sufficient for quite an addition of Mills, or Machinery; all situate within a few rods of a good Free Wharf, at which vessels of 100 tons burthen may lay with perfect security.

Payment will be made easy. Enquire of  
**WILLIAM SEAVEY,  
JOHN FOYE, Jr.**

Rye, March 10, 1842.

## Colonial Mills in Rye

*A presentation on behalf of the Rye Historical Society*

Grist mills ground grain, sawmills cut logs into lumber, shingle mills cut logs into tapered wedges, and fuller mills scoured and pounded cloth. Between the mid-1600's and 1900, mills of all those types were built and operated in Rye.

Craig Musselman's May 13 presentation will document what is known about each of Rye's eleven mill sites including, where known, the type of mill, dates of operation, specific locations and both historic photos of mill buildings and current photos of what remains on each site.

Craig N. Musselman is a civil and environmental engineer and former Rye Selectman. His presentation includes graphics and photos from a c.1980 slide presentation by Ralph Morang, Jr., a nuclear engineer and former Rye Selectman, who passed away in 1983.

**[Join the Zoom meeting](#)**

Thursday, May 13th at 7 PM.

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## John Foss c. 1638-1700



FOSS BEACH

John Foss was a Danish sailor serving aboard a British war vessel that arrived in Boston. Disillusioned with this service, he deserted ship by jumping overboard and swimming to freedom. Soon after he came to Sandy Beach, where he was taken in by the family of John Berry, eventually marrying Berry's daughter. He was granted 19 acres in Sandy Beach in 1668, and appears on the 1680 census of Sandy Beach. He died approximately 1700. The original Foss homestead stood near the corner of Bracket and Washington Roads.

John was the Foss patriarch, but perhaps we should properly look to his son Joshua as a founder of Rye. Of John Foss's ten or so children, most born in Sandy Beach, Joshua was the only one with progeny who remained there. Joshua's name appears in the earliest records, and he was a signer of the petitions of 1721, 1724, and both petitions of 1725 seeking to separate Sandy Beach as the "Parish of Rye" from Newcastle. These petitions succeeded in 1726, although the new parish remained part of and subservient to Newcastle. Rye did not gain official independence as a town until 1785.

In 1723 Joshua was granted a share of land adjoining "Locke's Line" which probably included his father's homestead. In 1724 he paid tax to the town of Newcastle. In 1726 Joshua Foss deeded the meetinghouse to Rye and was elected a selectman for the Parish of Rye, and in 1728 he paid tax to Rye Parish.

Sandy Beach grew into Rye Parish thanks to descendants of the first settlers who swarmed inland to build roads and houses, and to establish Rye Center, which became the heart of the community. Many – enough to drag down Rye's population – kept on going and settled in new towns to the west. Joshua's progeny marched to a different drummer. Although some settled in Exeter, Barrington and other inland towns, a good number stayed put. Later Foss generations remained well represented in Rye, some living in their old Sandy Beach neighborhood. More than two centuries after John Foss acquired his land, an 1892 map of Rye shows one Foss living on Brackett Road near the site of the original Foss homestead and four more Foss houses around the corner, lining both sides of Washington Road down to the ocean.

Next to the Foss home near the ocean end of Washington Road – the dwelling has been much expanded by subsequent owners – sits the Foss family cemetery, bounded by stone walls. Several 19th-century headstones are legible, but time and weather have reduced dozens of older markers to

anonymous stubs. The house looks down on the sandiest part of Sandy Beach, still known as Foss Beach.



[Click here to leave a comment](#)

*Geoff Smith*

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## 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.*

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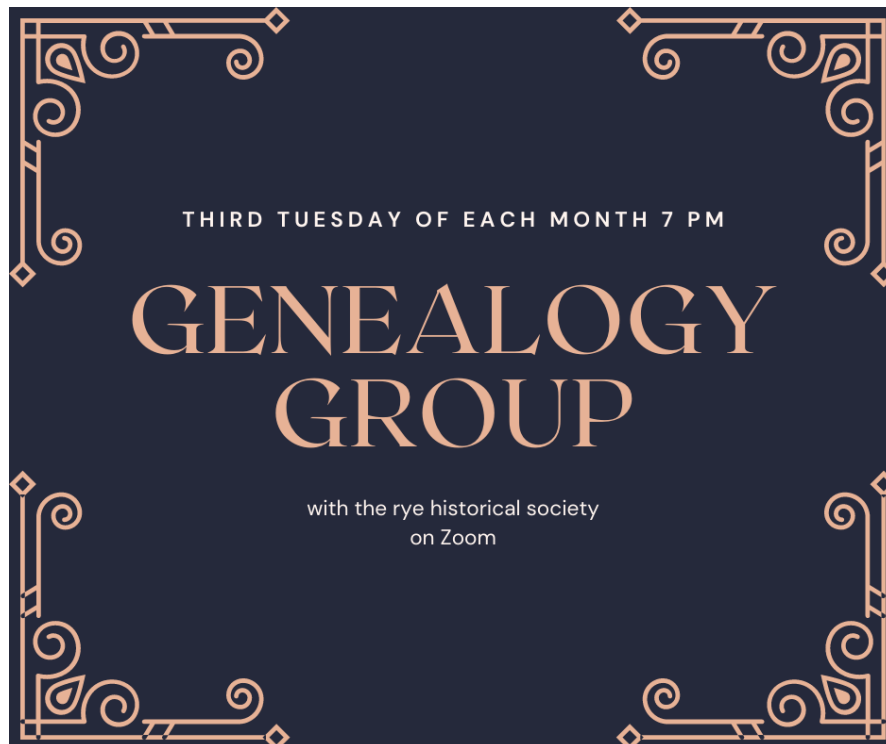
## Last Month's Winner

**Debra Crapo** was the first to correctly identify Nick's Ocean View Grill & Restaurant, Route US1A and Washington Road, 1957. Went on to become Rye on the Rocks and now a private residence.



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Join the the Genealogy Group's meeting on Zoom  
**Tuesday, May 18 at 7 P.M.**



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THIS MONTH IN RYE HISTORY

## **THE DARK DAY**

**MAY 19, 1780.** Smoke from Canadian forest fires turned Rye's day into night. By midday householders were lighting candles. Chickens went to roost, and cattle headed for their barnyards.

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Audio tour

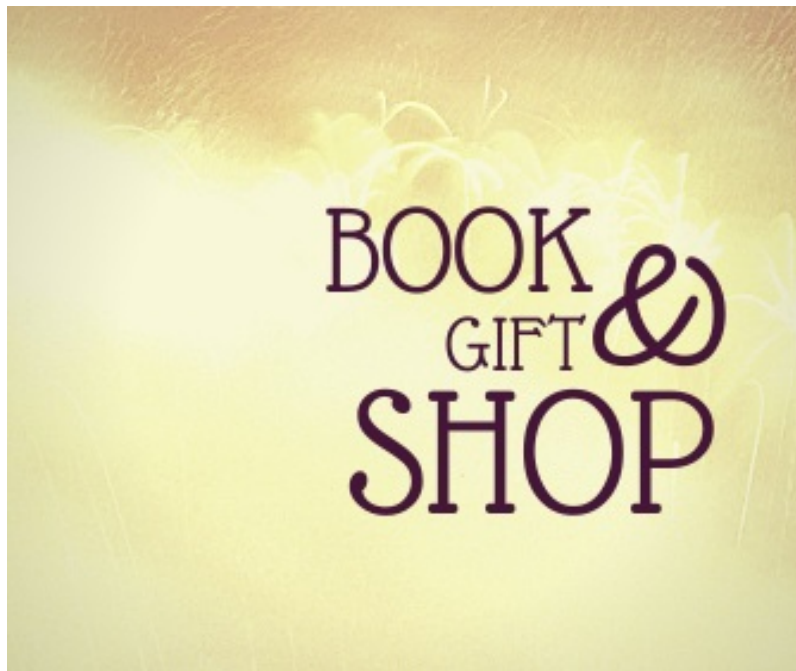
# Rye Beach Block

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Rye Historical Society

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