

Residents of The Medad Stone Tavern

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Foreword

This booklet was created, in part, as a project for the Guilford High School's International Baccalaureate Diploma Program. The CAS (creativity, activity, service) component of this encourages students to actively interact and serve their community. This booklet stands as a service to the Town of Guilford. However, this was written not only to satisfy a requirement but also to create a personal exploration into Guilford's History that has created many learning opportunities.



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*Woodruff never resided in the Tavern,
but he has a connection to it.

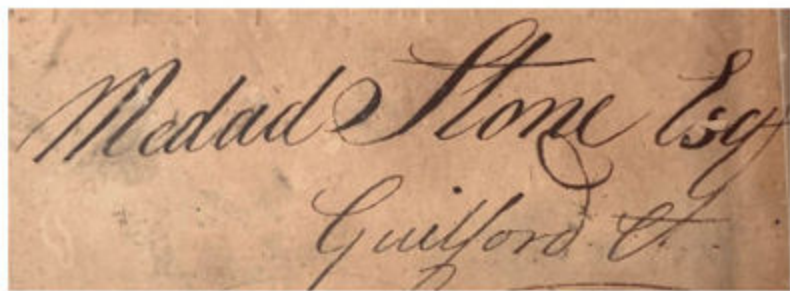
Introduction

The town of Guilford, having been founded nearly 400 years ago, is a place that has come to house an immense collection of historical places. One such place, sitting at 171 Three Mile Course, is the Medad Stone Tavern. Through the Guilford Keeping Society it has become an icon for the town's history—a building that is known by many here. Yet, while the Tavern itself is recognized to this day, few people know of the lives of each resident that occupied the space. All of whom have their own story, many lost to time.



Many of these residents kept numerous documents, including diaries and letters. It is thanks to their preservation of these sources that this booklet could be made. With that, this booklet is dedicated to clarifying who lived here and to provide brief information on their lives that we could uncover.

Medad Stone (1754 - 1815)



Let's begin with the man who started it all: Medad Stone. Prior to building the tavern on Three Mile Course, Stone had inherited and run another tavern that was located on the Green. However, trouble arose when he received complaints from the town about his hay scales on the Green. On Sunday, he would allow farmers to weigh their items using them which made for a crowded scene that inconvenienced Sunday services. After being petitioned by citizens to remove some of the scales, he took his business elsewhere.

Therefore, in 1803, he built the tavern we know today, which he referred to as "Mount Pleasant." As for why it was built on on Three Mile Course and not in a more crowded street, he believed that the Boston Post Road would be altered such that it would run right past the Tavern.

At the time, this road became a part of the great mail route from Georgia to Maine and there was much talk about altering it to make it shorter and more direct. So, he took a gamble by building the Tavern, expecting great success to come. Unfortunately, Boston Post Road was never rerouted and the house forever stands as Medad's Folly.

Beyond the Tavern itself, however, lies a very interesting man. On top of serving in the Revolutionary War as a minuteman, he was a sheriff and the owner of a sawmill. From 1792 to 1804 (and then again from 1806 until his death), he served as the town's first postmaster. He had also somehow found himself to be in a position where he could sell lottery tickets, Anti-Bilious and Stomachic Bitters, and illegally imported crimson broadcloth. In fact, he was taken to court in 1782 for the broadcloth which, to his benefit, ended in a court ruling in his favor.

At one point, under the 1813 "Act to lay and collect direct tax with the United States", he was authorized to collect taxes. All this activity and ownership made him a relatively wealthy man. According to his ownership records of 1798, his total value was \$431, a figure well above average. If Stone still seems in the ordinary, we can look at his peculiar advertisements for a lost horses or his arrest warrant for swearing on a Sunday.

He was a jack of all trades, no less. Even Guilford's town historian, Joel Helander, considers him "one of the most expansive figures in Guilford History."

When he died in 1815, Stone was buried on the Green. However, the Green's cemetery was at one point removed, and his remains were relocated to Westside Cemetery where they remain to this day.

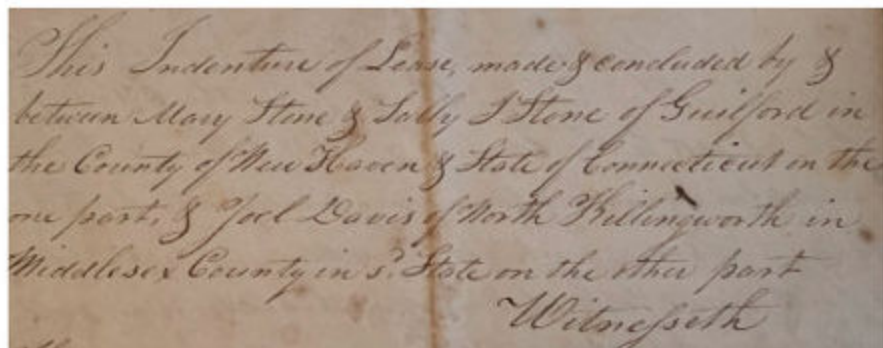
Other Residents of the Tavern

Medad Stone was involved with a lot of Guilford's past. And with that, there is a lot that remains unknown about him. One of the more interesting mysteries is who lived in his Tavern prior to the occupation of the Davis family. According to the 1810 U.S. Federal Census, there were four unknown residents: two males who were aged 16-25, one female who was under 10, and one "other free person." The two males could be farmers and the female a servant girl, but the other free person may very well be a slave. It is believed that Medad may have owned one named Bristol, who was eventually granted freedom.

Joel Davis (1788 - 1861)

According to his diary, began working for Stone on November 7, 181. On the farm he would sell various items and complete tasks that would keep the tavern in use. Such tasks consisted mostly of delivering food items such as corn, wheat, potatoes, butter, and more. Sometimes he undertook personal tasks such as taking a load of wood to the sawmill or transporting young cattle. Other times he would do business with those related to Medad Stone, such as Medad's daughter Sally and her husband Rosewell Bartholomew. However, most business would be done with various residents of Guilford, including Charles Chittenden, Jonathan Bishop, and Morris Leete. What he specifically did for these customers was not always known. Some accounts in his diary can leave many scratching their head: at one point he said he "Drove old yellow cow to Chittenden's Bull."

By April of 1812 Joel Davis began to live in Medad Stone's Tavern under lease, with many conditions that needed to be met. Some of these were in the ordinary, such as paying half of the taxes, giving half the produce to the Stones, paying for half the blacksmith work, and maintaining the fences.



This Indenture of Lease, made & concluded by &
between Mary Stone & Sally Stone of Guilford in
the County of New Haven & State of Connecticut on the
one part, & Joel Davis of North Hellingworth in
Middlesex County in S. State on the other part
Witnesseth

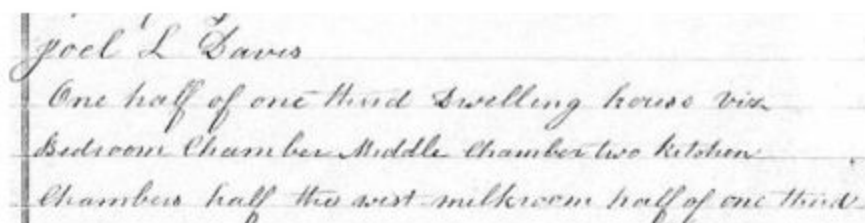
The 1812 lease that set the conditions for Joel Leonard

One condition required Joel Davis to cut no wood on Bat Swamp and Towner Swamp, swamps that we do not hear of today. But other conditions were more interesting. For example, one involved the use of white fish (believed to be used as fertilizer) “not to exceed 20,000.” Twenty thousand fish, twenty thousand pounds, dollars, or anything is...an unusually high number. Regardless of what Stone wanted, Joel managed to satisfy all the requirements. He continued to rent the house and eventually buy it from the Stones in 1834, and the house’s title was officially transferred to the Davis family in 1843. Joel would continue to live in the place until death paving the way for the legacy of the residents that stands today.

When Joel died in 1861, the property was divided among the rest of his family. His wife, Achsah, and two of his children (Sara Davis and Joel Leonard) each got one-third of the house—a division made possible by assigning each recipient their own rooms. His four other children (George, Harriet, James, and Frank Wilcox) received the land that the Tavern surrounded.

Achsah Davis (1792 - 1874)

Little is known about Joel Davis's wife, Achsah, other than that upon her death in 1874, the one-third of the Tavern she owned was passed down to Sara and Joel Leonard, who had already owned the other two-thirds.



Joel L Davis
One half of one third dwelling house viz
bedroom Chamber Middle chamber two kitchen
Chambers half the west milkroom half of one third

Achsah's will, which included details on how the house would be divided. Shown is Joel Leonard's share.

Joel L Davis (1827 - 1901)

Joel L Davis, of all of Joel Davis's children, is the one whose name is most well recognized today, as he was the one who maintained residence at the Tavern for a large portion of his life. He had traveled often throughout the country, but when in Connecticut he worked for IS Spencer's Sons and for the Adams Express Company. In 1853, he married Amelia Norton which resulted in a divorce six years later.



It was not until 1863 that he married Mary Perkins. In 1901, he slipped on ice and broke his leg, which caused him to fall ill and pass away, eventually having two children (Alphonsine and Susie) to inherit the house.

Joel's Travels

One of the most interesting aspects of Joel's life his traveling to different places. During the 1850s, he had lived in Twinsburg, Ohio. In the 1860s and part of the 1870s, he had lived in Lansingburgh, NY (present day northern Troy). He even is said to have lived in the West at some point.

Lansingburgh, NY (10 miles northeast of Albany)



Of these locations, his time in Lansingburgh is best documented thanks to his frequent exchange of letters with the owner of the farm he managed, William Ward Baldwin. This farm, in his letters, was referred to as "the Island," likely due to it being an actual island in the Hudson River.



Lansingburgh was located in an area where there were multiple islands present. It is likely the farm was on one of these if it truly was an island

It was here that they grew many crops including onions, hay, beets, potatoes, lime, and rye. They also raised animals such as oxen, pigs, and hogs. In order to operate such a large farm, they had hired four men from Germany. None of them could even speak English, but it made for cheap labor. However, in later years, declining business forced them to fire their men.

Mary Perkins (1837 - 1909)

Mary was born in New Haven and, once married to Joel, moved to Guilford to live in the Tavern until her death. She had also brought with her ties to Governor Rollin Woodruff since her sister, Kaomeo Perkins, would marry him and create connections with the Davis family. Mary was the last Davis to remain in the Tavern before the Hubbard name took its place and, after being struck with paralysis, passed away as its last Davis.



Frank Wilcox (1854 - 1902)

Achsah and Joel Davis had quite a few children, but Frank Wilcox was the only one who was not biologically related. He was born in New Haven as the son of John Wilcox, but his biological mother died shortly after his birth. He was subsequently brought to Guilford to live with his aunt, Sarah Davis, where he joined the rest of the Davis family.

Little is known about Frank's life—even the Shoreline Times admitted that he lived his life as a “quiet but well respected” man in his obituary. He gained employment at IS Spencer's Sons where he made tables (IS Spencer's Sons was a foundry that manufactured Raw materials as well as castings of school furniture and sewing machines, giving jobs to hundreds of people throughout its existence). Throughout his life, he continued to live in the Tavern and eventually passed away at 48 as an unmarried man.



The Horoscope

Among the little information about Wilcox lies a horoscope that provides interesting information, though questionable in its validity. It claims he was “attracted to several ladies, but when it would come to associating with them alone, [he] would cease having anything to do with them.” In addition to this, he is said to have been easily misled by others easily due to trusting them too much. These could explain aspects such as his marital status, but it *is* a horoscope after all—the same paper that also “advises” him to subscribe to the *Freedom* newspaper. Nonetheless, it presents another potential facet of Frank.

Harriet E Davis (1817 - 1861)

George W Davis (1821 - 1890)

Sarah M Davis (1824 - 1900)

James Marvin Davis (1834 - 1911)

Very little is known about these four children of Joel Davis other than that each of them had lived in the house at some point. The US census reveals Harriet living there until death, Sarah until at least her mid 50s, George moving out in his 30s, and James Marvin moving out during his 20s.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
316	254	Joel Davis	62	m		Farmer	4000	known				
		Adah "	16	f								
		Harriet E. "	33	f								
		George W. "	29	m		"						
		Sarah M. "	24	f								
		Joel L. "	22	m		"						
		L. Marvin "	15	m								

United States 1850 census reveals these four children still living at the Tavern at this time

Rollin Woodruff (1854 - 1925)



Woodruff was never actually a resident of the Tavern. However, his connection with the Hubbards was very strong since Mary Perkin's sister, Kaomeo, was married to him. In fact, he provided the financial aid for Len Hubbard to attend Hopkins Grammar School and the University of Connecticut.

Woodruff was born in Rochester, New York but moved to New Haven at the age of fifteen. It was here that he was employed as an errand boy and later as an employee of C.S. Mersick. Throughout his life, he was a very successful employee holding high level positions in many of his jobs such as director and president. In 1905, he had become the lieutenant governor of Connecticut and, in 1907, became governor.

During his tenure, he was involved with controversies surrounding his advocacy for the creation of a public utilities commission and for the existing railroad commission. However, he was supported for his ideas to reform state administration and fight corporal control.

Locally, Woodruff was known to own the Rollwood Farm which was his principal residence. He purchased the farm in 1902 which consisted of 2 barns, 200 cows, and a dairy farm. Some of these buildings, in fact, were built by Norris Hubbard, another resident of the Tavern. This portrayed him as a hard working man. However, according to a Yale student who visited the property, it was not purely for utility but rather as a means of displaying his wealth. Regardless, he worked hard and remained a prominent New Haven businessman who was respected by many.



Rollwood Farm

In the years leading up to his death, he had suffered many years of heart problems. In fact, it was a heart attack that he lost the battle to at his home in Guilford in 1925.

Susie Davis (1872 - 1927)

During Susie's young adulthood, she and her sister, Alice, were very involved with the Christ Episcopal Church and social circles. Together, they were known as the "Davis sisters." Indeed, she loved to be around others. Even in her letters, she was said to be a very comedic and lively writer. A friend by the name of Lottie accounted how, in one of her letters, she was "Writing along, saying the funniest things, and making me burst out laughing, every other line."

By the time she turned 25 in 1898, Susie was a teacher at one of Guilford's elementary school. That same year, she married Ray Loper at Christ Church and moved out of the Tavern to live with him for the remainder of her life.

1-2 Days Absent.	120					
Department.	95/100					
All Rank is on the Scale of 100. Lower than 75 is unsatisfactory.						
REMARKS: <i>Five weeks on each report</i>						
<i>Susie E Davis</i>						TEACHER.

Report card filled out by Susie as a teacher

Alphonsine Davis (Hubbard) (1866 - 1927)

Besides being the second half of the "Davis sisters," Alphonsine (who went by Alice) likely worked as a seamstress. She made accounts in her diary of going to "the store," which was likely a milliner, to make hats and embroideries. However, much of her time was spent sewing at home, using her free time to visit other relatives in the area or her future husband, Norris Hubbard.



Alphonsine and Norris Hubbard Marriage

Much of Alice's life remains unknown.

However, her marriage was captured quite vividly in the Shoreline Times, in which it specifies that the two were married on December 25, 1901 in the Medad Stone Tavern. As the newspaper described it, the house had rooms "Prettily trimmed with Christmas greens and ribbons which...gave more than the usual brilliancy to the doubly joyous occasion." Alphonsine was dressed in a wedding veil with orange blossoms and a crepe de chine with white liberty and satin trimmings. The most intriguing part of this wedding was "mammoth wedding cake," which the newspaper stated would be cut at a special reception "five years hence." This is likely a variation of the tradition of eating the wedding cake one year later for good luck. And thus marks the start of the long marriage between Norris and Alphonsine.

Norris Hubbard (1868 - 1944)

Norris, while not being a descendent of the Davis family, was born in North Guilford as a man who would eventually live in his hometown for his entire life. After dropping out of high school his first year, he became a farmer to start his career. He would eventually become a well known agriculturalist in the town, and on top of this he began to pursue carpentry in 1897. After marrying Alice in 1901, Norris continued to live with her in the Tavern. During this time, he and his wife were very active with the Christ Episcopal church, with himself serving as a vestryman. Throughout the community, these two were recognized for their hospitality. Until his death in 1944, Norris remained in the Tavern, which under his name was now known as the *Hubbard* estate.



Norris's Family and the Tavern

According to the US Census, there were individuals related to Norris Hubbard who lived in the Tavern as well. In 1910 a 15-year-old named Margaret Hubbard was listed as a resident, and in 1940 Norris's 67-year-old sister, Margaret Appleby, was here as well. Unfortunately, the reason these two lived in the Tavern is not known.

Leonard Davis Hubbard (1909 - 2001)



Leonard Hubbard was the son of Norris Hubbard and the last of the Hubbard family to live in the Medad Stone Tavern. He grew up as an only child, being a part of a family that practiced subsistence farming. He began elementary school in the schoolhouse on 85 Fair Street, then attending the Boston Street School for 5th grade, the 29 Water Street school for 6th, and the Guilford Institute starting in 7th grade.

In 1926, he went to Hopkins Grammar School for 3 years, paid for by Woodruff. It was here that Len became a star athlete and captain of the football team senior year. After high school, Len attended Middlebury College in Vermont, but then transferred to University of Connecticut where he would graduate with an engineering degree.



Leaving college, Len held multiple positions in the engineering industry, with his job at the Old Guilford Forge serving as his last until he retired in 1974. He also held the position of town treasurer for 32 years.

Len passed away in 2001. But prior to his death, he made a deal with the Guilford Keeping Society: publish his book, "Old Tavern Tales," and the Tavern was theirs. They agreed, and in his will, he declared that the tavern would go to their possession:

"I give, bequeath, and devise to The Guilford Keeping Society...all my right, title and interest in and to the real property, together with the circa 1803 dwelling, barns, outbuildings and all other improvements thereon, and the surrounding acreage, known as the 'Medad Stone Tavern' property"

Marjorie Hubbard (1910 - 1998)



During Len's lifetime, he had a significant other, Marjorie, whom he was engaged with for 52 years. It was not until August 6th, 1983 that they finally agreed to get married since their engagement in 1931.

During their very long engagement, Marjorie did not live in the Tavern. Rather, Len would visit her every weekend, bring her back to Guilford for the day, then bring her back.

After their marriage, she did eventually move in with Len, living in the Tavern for 15 years. Despite the vast knowledge of Len, thanks to his book, there is little information on Marjorie. After her death, her family received any primary documents that would have revealed the small details of her life. However, we need no source to confirm that she was a vital part of both Len's life and the history of Tavern.



Final Remarks

When Len Hubbard donated the Tavern, it ultimately ended its days of serving as a home. However, the memory of the people that once lived in it will continue to represent nearly the entire life of the house, from the beginning to the end. Today, the Tavern may no longer be a true home, but it will always stand as a home for Guilford's everlasting history.

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- D. Frank Wilcox Obituary
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About the Authors



Jared Lynch has been an active member of the Guilford Keeping Society since he was a middle school student, being interested in keeping the spirit of Guilford's history alive in its youth. Throughout high school, he has worked closely with Museum Curator Pat Lovelace to achieve this.



As a student from out of the country, Dhruv Shrivastava enrolled at Guilford High School in 2018 with an interest in learning about his new community of residence. Within a few months of getting accustomed, he found an interesting opportunity to fulfill his initial curiosity about Guilford, that was this exploration.