

Early American Life

traditions
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Lancaster landmark
resurrected

Revolutionary War
hospital restored as
New Jersey country
home

Illinois schoolhouse
becomes prairie
school for all

Master painter
decorates home
with her work

Late summer styles
for your home

EARLY ARCHITECTURE
This one and a half story house is typical of the architecture during the period of early settlement of Lancaster, dating from 1730. Most of the local houses in 1800 were of this style.

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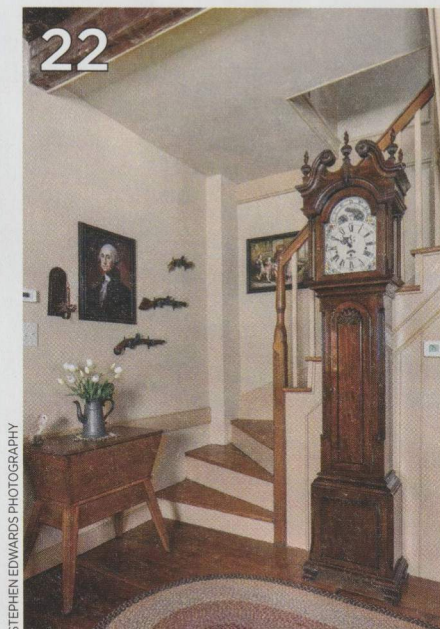
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A Tale of Two Houses

—Part 1:

The General John Glover Farmhouse

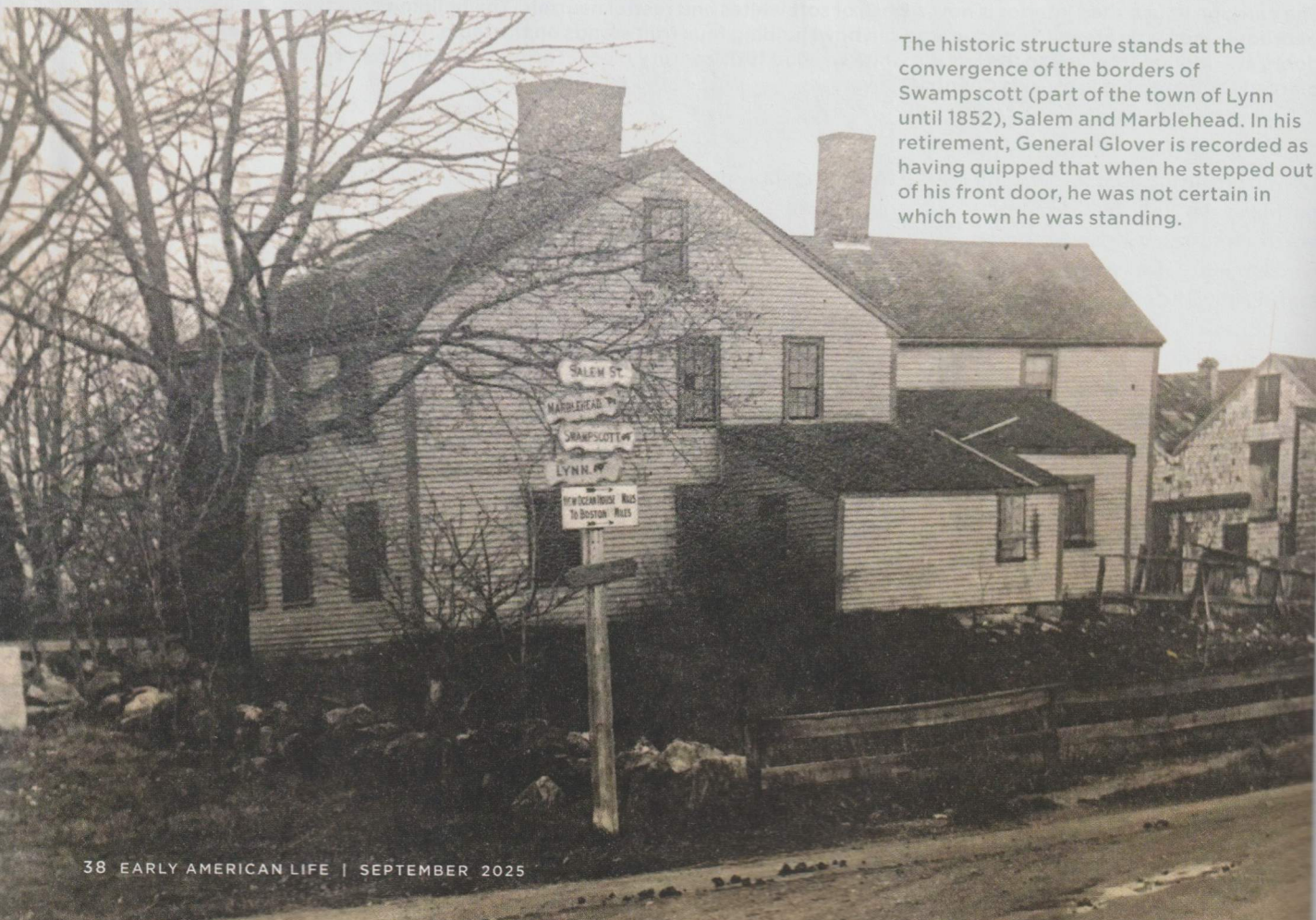
BY NANCY LUSIGNAN SCHULTZ, PH.D.

ON A BUSY corner in strip mall and retail-saturated Vinnin Square, Swampscott, Massachusetts, sits a complex of shabby buildings that suggest a long past of better days. Clapboards dangle at quirky angles from the front of the main building, exposing its inner cladding to the elements. A fallen tree lay on the roof for more than a year, clinging perilously to the slant by a few branches, while a jungle of ancient landscaping, untended for

decades, crawls menacingly over the buildings. Graffitied and broken windows gaze blankly at the sprawling shopping center across the street. A half-dozen exhausted buildings stand upon what was once a parklike oasis of just under four acres. This is how the former home of retired Revolutionary War hero General John Glover (1732-1797) has looked for thirty years following its abandonment. Not something one would expect for the final home of one of the American Revolution's greatest military heroes and who helped found what would become the U.S. Navy.

For years, residents of Salem, Marblehead and Swampscott have driven by this dilapidated eyesore daily *en route* to Boston, or past the adjoining Tedesco Country Club established in 1900. The golf course's expansive greens still occupy most of the former farmland adjoining the parcel on which the 18th-century farmhouse stands, while a scruffy regiment of untended trees and weeds heroically attempts to shield the club's manicured lawns from the overgrown mess. Swampscott officials unsuccessfully attempted to levy fines against what the town deemed "blighted property," until it was

The historic structure stands at the convergence of the borders of Swampscott (part of the town of Lynn until 1852), Salem and Marblehead. In his retirement, General Glover is recorded as having quipped that when he stepped out of his front door, he was not certain in which town he was standing.



discovered in 2023 that the general's final home stands nearly intact within the deteriorating outbuildings.

This farmhouse offers a sharp contrast to the impeccably maintained General John Glover House at 11 Glover Square, Marblehead, Massachusetts, which was built c. 1762 and has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1972. General Glover's farmhouse at 299 Salem Street in Swampscott, his final home after retiring from the military in 1782, is nearly in shambles. After the closing of the General Glover House Restaurant in the late 1990s, these buildings, owned by the heirs of famous restaurateur Anthony Athanas, offer a textbook case of demolition by neglect. His three sons now hold this last remaining property in the former restaurant empire that included the famous Anthony's Pier 4 in Boston. They are very eager to sell it to a developer. Athanas Sr. opened the General Glover restaurant in 1957 and celebrated the rich history of this Revolutionary War hero for forty years. Yet its current owners are less interested in the building's past. At press time, they have filed a demolition application to knock down *only* the General's former home on the property, leaving the outbuildings standing, singling out this military hero's final home.

A CASE FOR THIS HOUSE

The c.1750 General John Glover Farmhouse is most significant for its association with Glover who was highly valued by George Washington and resided there between his acquisition of the property in 1781 (a year before his retirement from the Continental Army) and his death in 1797 at age 64. But the site also holds thousands of years of important history that includes Native settlement and tells a story of America's journey to nationhood. Glover was born the same year as his future commander-in-chief and first U.S. President (1732) and served with valor throughout the entire war as a colonel and then a brigadier general. Washington outlived him by two years.

Under Glover's command, an estimated 1,400 men and boys from



Although dilapidated and at risk of demolition by its owners, the former General Glover farm house still stands, and can be renovated if it is purchased by sympathetic developers. Thanks to a small coalition called "Save The Glover" which hopes to preserve the house in collaboration with a future developer (still unknown) for the larger site, which will become residential condominium units, the house has been preliminarily supported structurally inside and protected outside with a tarp over its weather-damaged roof. For more information or to help, go to SaveTheGlover.org

Marblehead, a thriving commercial fishing and trading port, served in the Revolution. During March 1775, North Atlantic fishing was suddenly halted by the imposition of a new economic sanction called the "Fisheries

Act." It was part of the Restraining Acts that Parliament imposed on New England's rebelling colonists. Patriotic sentiment was thus easily stirred up to win enlistments from the fishermen's ranks. Before long, nearly

Front view of the c. 1762 General Glover House in Marblehead. Built near the Marblehead harbor-front and public town landing circa 1762, when merchant John Glover, a former tradesman then ship's master, was about 30 years old and had been married to his beloved wife Hannah for eight years, this refined home remains one of the finest 18th-century colonial homes in the formerly prosperous, though boisterous, international Atlantic fishing port. Read about this home in the upcoming October Issue.





Street view of the Glover Inn and Tea House in the 1930s.

600 men from Marblehead and a few communities nearby had filled ten militia companies, including seamen and tradesmen, as well as merchants' sons and laborers. The Continental Congress commissioned Glover's cohort as the Twenty-First Continental Army regiment. Some of the men were Spanish, Native American, Jewish, and African American, forming a service unit that was unusually integrated for its times. With many coming from life as mariners, their trained discipline as seamen made Glover's regiment one of the most effective during the war's crucial early years.

Glover is justly hailed as an accomplished military leader under Washington during the Revolution, coordinating the founding of the first official fleet of privateer vessels sent out in service of the Continental Army during the Autumn of 1775, and organizing and provisioning a fleet of small ships to blockade Boston Harbor during the British occupation through March 1776. He has often been called one of the fathers of the American Navy, helping organize its predecessor, and providing the first ship, *Hannah*, named for his wife. He led the so-called "Marblehead Regiment" in three crucial operations in August and December 1776. According to an early biographer, George Billias, this able Massachusetts officer was the key figure in two of the most brilliant small-scale amphibious operations of the entire war. After the battle of

Long Island in August 1776, Glover's Marblehead regiment helped to rescue 9,000 patriots not only from a tight spot on Long Island, but also from certain defeat at the hands of the British that might have ended the rebellion. Glover's men transported the entire Continental army and its cannon and supplies across the East River under cover of darkness and fog. Four months later, on a cold Christmas night, in lashing sleet, these same men ferried Washington's forces across the ice-choked Delaware to launch a surprise attack against the Hessians at Trenton that helped turn the tide in the American Revolution—then crossed back again later the same day in worsened conditions, with the Hessian prisoners, and the British army in intense pursuit.

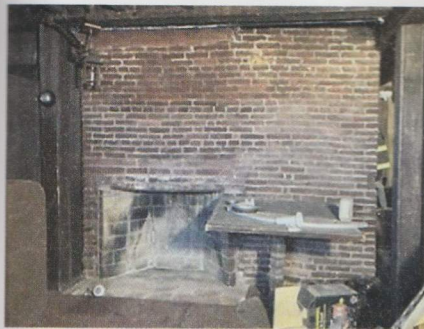
Since Spring 2023, a group of dedicated volunteers has been working to save the Glover farmhouse from demolition to make way for new development. Developers were able to obtain approvals from Marblehead and Swampscott's planning boards that included demolition of the building, as it was not then known that the building, intact and buried inside, was salvageable. The Swampscott Historical Commission hired its own structural engineers who discovered the encapsulated structure and in March 2023, imposed a nine-month demolition delay. The developer ultimately walked away from the project. The "Save the Glover"

preservation effort has now attracted national attention, with articles and endorsements from *American Heritage* magazine, in David Shribman's nationally syndicated column and in the *Boston Globe*. The Swampscott Historical Commission has received grants from Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Essex National Heritage Commission and the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Save the Glover has raised over \$26,000 with pledges from donors for another \$35K. The Town of Swampscott is spending approximately \$54,000 to stabilize the farmhouse.

The structural engineers found that despite at least two major additions to the building during the early to mid-20th century, the 18th-century residential core retains suitably strong early building elements to make its renovation both feasible and of national significance. Abundant physical evidence suggests that, with restoration of the surviving 18th-century core, the building retains sufficient integrity, including location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association for listing in America's National Registry of Historic Places.

Paired with Glover's Pre-Revolution residence at 11 Glover Square, Marblehead, restoration of the farmhouse will contribute to a fuller understanding of the life and activities of this patriot during his retirement following the Revolution. While this colonial house is characteristic of its era, it is a particularly rare survival from the pre-Revolutionary period in Swampscott, which was originally a farming area and local fishing enclave set off from neighboring Lynn, Massachusetts in 1852. Preserving this building will, therefore, contribute significantly to a clearer understanding of Swampscott's origins and history.

The historic structure stands at the convergence of the borders of Swampscott (part of the town of Lynn when Glover was there), Salem and Marblehead. And in his retirement, General Glover is recorded as having quipped that when he stepped out of his front door, he was not certain in which town he was standing.



Original 18th-century fireplaces and chimneys still survive intact from the former Glover farm house, and they and the 18th-century structure can be restored around them.

The farmhouse is believed to have been built in the 1750s, although some evidence suggests it may have been built as earlier. The building was constructed in the traditional colonial style of the period and has a back ell that could be similar in age to the main house or might, instead, date to Glover's period of residency. Together, their footprint comprises a total of 1100 square feet.

If the house can be saved, dendrochronological investigation could perhaps clarify the specific construction date of both the original farmhouse and its late-18th-century ell. It could also expand a period of significance to include previous owners, including important Salem merchant, judge, landowner and Loyalist William Browne (1737-1802), who was exiled early in the Revolutionary War, and eventually became governor of Bermuda. Investigating these periods of the farmhouse's ownership would add to a deeper understanding of both the politics and land ownership patterns and use in the towns of Lynn, Marblehead and Salem prior to, during, and after the Revolution.

HOUSE & SITE HISTORY

The General John Glover Farmhouse is located on what was long known as the Glover Farm, which once covered nearly 200 acres in Marblehead, Salem and today's Swampscott. The busy corner where the house sits has been inhabited by people stretching back thousands of years. The land was used by Native Americans who lived in both settlements and summer encampments, as well as for the nearby fort of the great Sagamore Nanepashemet. A portion of the former farmland

contains known Native burial sites.

The site also fully encompasses four hundred years of the history of English settlement. In the late 1600s, the house and orchards of the Darling family sat on part of the original expanse of the farmland. George Darling, a Scottish refugee and former indentured servant from Oliver Cromwell's tenure, operated a tavern located near two ponds on the Salem-Marblehead line; his son James would become infamous for testifying against Mary Towne Eastey during the 1692 Salem Witch Trials. Darling's house was probably no longer standing by the time Glover's future farmhouse was built, but remnants of the old orchards remained into the 20th century.

In 1676, John Blaney inherited about 120 acres of land located in Lynn that would become a part of the larger farm a decade later. Bordering the old Lynn Highway, now present-day Tedesco Street, where it connects to Vinnin Street on the border of Marblehead and Swampscott, this was one of the few very old colonial roads in the area, and the historic location of the Marblehead Gate at the entry point from Salem into Marblehead. Blaney's wife Hannah King Blaney had been willed the property from her father. Upon her death, her husband claimed the land to support their seven children. A legal battle ensued between the Kings and John Blaney that ended in 1679 with the

Interior photos exude the spirit of the colonial revival era, when the farmhouse served as the Glover Inn and Tea Room in the 1930s, then was developed into the popular and successful regional General Glover Restaurant run by the Boston-based Athanas family of restaurateurs from 1957 until it closed in the 1990s.





General Glover Inn

SWAMPSCOTT, MASSACHUSETTS

Route 1A. State Highway.

Located where the three towns — Swampscott,
Salem and Marblehead meet.

The Glover Inn and Tea Room was developed and operated by Mrs. Lillian Little in the 1930s, after her husband Alexander E. Little, a Lynn shoe manufacturer, purchased the property in 1919, just after the end of World War I, and continued its original use as farmland with an experimental farm called "The Sorosis Farm," named after his former shoe brand.

Kings repossessing the land.

Six years later, in 1685, the Kings sold this property to Colonel Samuel Browne of Salem, grandfather of Judge William Browne, a prominent citizen whose wife, William's mother, descended from four colonial governors of Massachusetts, including John Winthrop. Additional land purchases brought the Browne family farm to nearly 200 acres. Born around the time the farmhouse was built, the future Judge graduated from Harvard College in 1755 as valedictorian and was a friend and classmate of John Adams. Later, he

was appointed collector of the port of Salem. He also served as a colonel of a Salem regiment in the Essex County militia. With Browne's connections to both the port and militia, he and Glover may have even crossed paths long before Glover purchased the Browne family farm property.

In 1774, as the American Revolution was brewing, William Browne accepted an appointment by Massachusetts' military governor General Thomas Gage as a judge of the superior colonial court. Browne thus became not only a Loyalist but a British Crown official who was suddenly

despised by his patriot townsmen. Most of his officers resigned because he did not renounce his newly Crown-appointed judicial position, and he fled Salem with his family to Boston, then evacuated in March 1776 along with the British fleet, before leaving for England. His farmhouse and land were seized by the Massachusetts government in 1780. William Browne never returned to New England. He would eventually become the Royal Governor of Bermuda (1782-1788), dying in London in February 1802. Although they held different political views, John Adams later remembered his friend and former classmate as "a solid, judicious character ... They made him a judge of the superior court and society made him a refugee. A Tory, I verily believe, he never was."

In February 1781, during his final year of military service, and the same year William Browne was appointed Governor of Bermuda, General John Glover purchased the Browne property from the Massachusetts state government. He paid 1369 pounds for the house and 180 acres of land that spanned Salem and Marblehead and Lynn. The farmer who had occupied the farmhouse before the Revolution, during the Browne family ownership, was Thomas Vining. His son, also Thomas, would serve in Colonel Glover's Marblehead regiment, but would move to Marblehead in 1792 after selling twelve acres of abutting farm property that he owned to Glover, his former superior officer. Sometime in the twentieth century, the present-day Vinnin Square, where the farmhouse property sits, was named after those Vinings.

John Glover moved to the farmhouse with his second wife Frances sometime after their marriage in 1781, the year before he retired from his seven long and grueling years in Continental Army service. He moved his business operations to the farm as well. On May 15, 1778, not long before he was granted permission to retire, General Glover wrote to General Washington, "When I entered the service in 1775 I had as good a constitution as any man my age, but it's now

broken and shattered to pieces.”

In 1793, Rev. William Bentley provided a first-hand account of visiting Glover’s farmhouse while conducting survey work in this area of Salem. He noted the General “lives upon the Salem Gore,” the narrow strip of land between Marblehead and Lynn that was once part of Salem. Rev. Bentley also commended the General’s hospitality, and detailed Glover’s ambitious proposed canal through a nearby river that would link his farm to the sea, a dream Glover never realized.

After his retirement from the army, John Glover remained active in local and national politics. He served as a delegate to the Massachusetts ratifying convention for the U.S. Constitution in 1788, was elected to six one-year terms as a Marblehead selectman and was a two-term member of Massachusetts’ House of Representatives in 1788–89. While residing in the farmhouse, Glover welcomed the Marquis de Lafayette who visited Marblehead in 1784. And as a town selectman, he also officially welcomed President George Washington in Marblehead in 1789. Both had come to Marblehead to see their old army friend and thank the townspeople and surviving members of Glover’s regiment who served during the war.

John Glover owned the farm for the remainder of his life, until his death in January 1797. Afterward, the farm was purchased by the husband of one of Glover’s younger daughters (Mary) and remained in Glover’s family for three-quarters of a century, to 1870. As late as 1905, maps depict the property in an open and undeveloped condition, suggesting that it had remained in agricultural use.

THE A.E. AND LILLIAN LITTLE ERA

In 1919, just after the first World War, the farmhouse and land were purchased by A.E. and Lillian Little. Lillian Little (1864–1968) was the wife of Lynn shoe manufacturer Alexander Eldridge Little (1859–1956), owner of the A.E. Little Company, 70 Blake Street in Lynn, which marketed a line of women’s shoes under the brand name Sorosis that were sold

worldwide, from the late 19th century until the company’s bankruptcy in 1932. In 1908, soon after the Tedesco Club was incorporated, the Littles began acquiring large parcels of agricultural land in the southwest section of the Marblehead peninsula that was placed in Lillian’s name. Their holdings, known as “Sorosis Farm,” included the Glover property and additional acreage along both sides of the streets in Marblehead and Swampscott that bordered the golf club. By 1931, the Littles had converted the Glover farmhouse into the “Glover Tea Room” operated by “Mrs. Lillian A Little, proprietor.” She also owned and managed other enterprises on the property that included “The Bushway Cottage” and the Sunbeam Inn, farm, and day school.

In 1957, well-known Boston restaurateur Anthony Athanas began leasing the property, and in 1961, after Lillian Little’s death, it was purchased from a trust in her name. Athanas (1911–2005) was a native of the town of Korcha, Turkish Albania, leaving his town by donkey with his mother, Evangeline, in 1916 to join his father and other siblings in New York. Entering the restaurant industry at age twelve, he eventually owned and managed several prominent restaurants in the Boston area, and in Lynn and Swampscott. Athanas served as president of the Massachusetts Restaurant Association, on the board of the National Restaurant Association, and was named “Restaurateur of the Year” in 1976. The restaurant at this site, called “The General Glover House” operated between 1957 and the mid-1990s. Featuring colonial-themed dining spaces, just as the tearoom before it had, the restaurant in the historic 18th-century farmhouse became a focal point for generations of special events and community gatherings.

Anthony Athanas, Sr. left an admirable legacy of American success and community service. While the building stands, it is not too late to have their family’s history honored alongside all the other great American stories associated with the house.

While many additions to the original 18th-century farmhouse



The old tavern-style sign from the popular and successful regional General Glover Restaurant run by the Boston-based run by the Boston-based Athanas family of restaurateurs from 1957 until it closed in the 1990s currently hangs in their last remaining restaurant, also in Swampscott, but located right on the seaside rather than inland.

from the early 20th century through the early 1960s expanded the historic house, many original interior features remain, including 18th-century doors, molding, fireplaces, and framing. They are truly worth saving, and it is entirely possible to do so while also respecting the sale and imminent development of the property around it.

With the discovery that so much of the 18th-century structure that is related to the Revolutionary period—General Glover, Judge Browne, and the tenant farmer who served under Glover early in the war—survives within the failing structures around it, the Town of Swampscott and an advisory team from Marblehead, Salem and beyond have worked diligently to halt the loss of this history-laden structure with its national Revolutionary importance. The building may be privately owned, but its history belongs to all of us.

For updates to this story, and to learn how things evolve, or how you can help, go to “SavetheGlover.org” ★

For this essay, the author wishes to acknowledge the kind assistance of historian Judy Anderson and preservation architect Nick Curtis, both of Marblehead.