

## NPT Quarterly News



P. O. Box 184, Newburyport, MA 01950  
[www.nbptpreservationtrust.org](http://www.nbptpreservationtrust.org)

*Linking the past with the present and future*



# 'Old Houses, New Stories': May 16-18

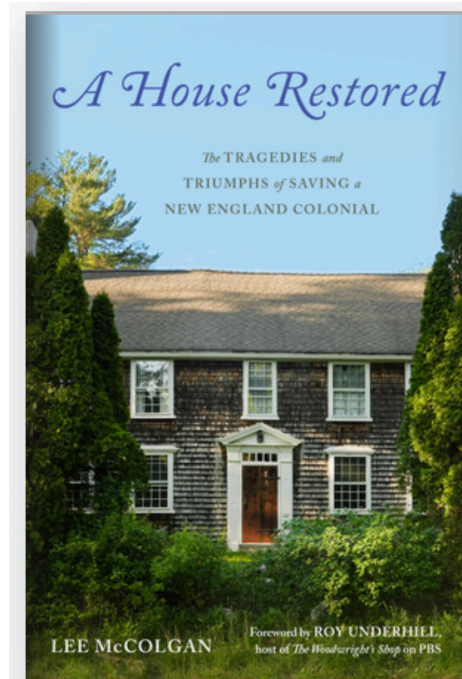
Preservation Week is just around the corner with the theme "Old Houses, New Stories" and a solid lineup of speakers, presentations and events in multiple venues.

Sponsored by the Newburyport Preservation Trust, the annual event kicks off on Friday, May 16, at the Senior Community Center at 331 High St. The Trust's Annual Meeting gets underway at 6 p.m., and is immediately followed by keynote speaker **Lee McColgan** at 7 p.m.

McColgan is a preservation carpenter who chronicled the restoration of his 1702 house in Pembroke in the book, "A House Restored, the Tragedies and Triumphs of Saving a New England Colonial."

After the presentation, which is free and open to the public, the Trust will host a book-signing and reception with light refreshments. McColgan's book, published in 2024, will be available for purchase.

In 2015, McColgan gave up a career as a financial adviser to take up preservation carpentry and since then, he has worked on numerous buildings, including Boston's Old North Church and Louisa May Alcott's Orchard House in Concord. His work has been featured in *Architectural Digest*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *Wall Street Journal*.



Lee McColgan

The lineup on Saturday, May 17, includes two presentations at the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center and a citywide bicycle tour highlighting various architectural styles in Newburyport. These three events are free to NPT members and \$10 per event for non-members.

From 10 to 11 a.m., author **Stacy Grinsfelder** will talk about the soon-to-be-published book she co-wrote with Scott Sidler, "The Case For Historic Windows: The Truth About Energy Efficiency and Old Windows." Her talk will take place at the Refuge

Visitor Center, 6 Plum Island Turnpike, Newburyport.

Grinsfelder and Sidler maintain that historic windows are unfairly dismissed as inefficient due in part to widespread misconceptions by window replacement marketing campaigns.

Grinsfelder also writes the *Blake Hill House* blog, documenting the restoration of her 19th century home; hosts and produces the 'True Tales From Old Houses' podcast; and teaches window restoration workshops.

From 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Saturday, **Reg Bacon** will lead a "green" bike tour of architectural styles. Bikers should meet on Washington Street at Cushing Park.

## Spring 2025

From 2 to 3 p.m. that afternoon, **Scott Hanson** will talk on Historic Preservation and Sustainability at the Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center.

Hanson is the author of "Restoring Your Historic House, The Comprehensive Guide for Homeowners." He is a preservation consultant with extensive experience in historic tax credit rehabilitation and National Register nominations.

On **Sunday, May 18**, the historic **Powder House** and its grounds will be open for tours from 12:20 to 2:30 p.m. The round brick structure dates to 1822.

Located on Godfrey's Hill at 57 Low St., Newburyport, The Powder House Park & Learning Center opened in fall 2012 after years

of planning, research and restoration. NPT's efforts to preserve the long-neglected structure were recognized nationally by the American Association for State & Local History.



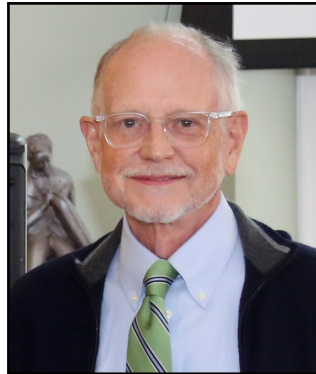
Later Sunday afternoon, the annual **Preservation Awards** ceremony will be held from 4 and 6 p.m. at the Custom House Maritime Museum, 25 Water St., Newburyport.

The public is invited to all events and encouraged to join the Trust. Membership dues for 2025 are as follows: Individual, \$50; Family, \$75; Patron, \$250; and Benefactor, \$500.

Donations are welcome in any amount to support Preservation Trust activities.

## Trust thanks long-time board members

In the past year, two of the Newburyport Preservation Trust board members retired. Both Bronson de Statler and Rita Mihalek were on the board for years and have done much good work for historic preservation.



Bronson was instrumental in overseeing the restoration of St. Anna's chapel which is part of the St. Paul's church campus. He has worked tirelessly to move our local agenda forward to save and preserve our heritage, and he has done a great job moderating the Preservation Awards ceremony during Preservation Week. We deeply appreciate the effort he has put in to the organization and wish him well in retirement.

Rita Mihalek came to the attention of the Preservation Trust when she moved to



Newburyport years ago and responded to our new homeowners welcome package. She has been a steadfast and resolute supporter of NPT's agendas at city government meetings, speaking up for the organization countless times and making our views known to the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Planning Board and the City Council. Taking the time and effort to advocate for historic preservation has been a daunting task and Rita has done it remarkably well.

Both of these board members will be missed. We are actively looking for new replacements who can devote the care and interest that Bronson and Rita have given to their positions as directors.

## Trust supports preservation of historic Brown School

*The following letter was sent February 24 to Newburyport Planning Director Andrew Port and Mayor Sean Reardon.*

The Newburyport Preservation Trust strongly supports the preservation of the Brown School and its adaptive reuse for senior affordable housing.

The ZETA Insite adaptive reuse proposal, and the city's required perpetual preservation restriction, will finally save this historic building much loved by the community.

For this project, we support proposed demolition of 1) 1970 accessory structures or additions to the original schoolhouse, namely the one-story gym, kitchen, connecting hallways and locker room wing; and 2) the 1920's boiler room provided, however, that the original chimney stack be protected and preserved.

We believe these additions only detract from the original historic structure, and look forward to reviewing and commenting on plans to fill the gap in the historic building which demolition will reveal.

Further, we understand access to historic tax credits and grants will be crucial to financing this important project, and strongly support and encourage approval of these applications.

The Trust also supports the required perpetual preservation restriction as an essential element to this iconic building's future.

Newburyport Preservation Trust, Inc. is a Massachusetts charitable organization, established in 2004, dedicated to fostering historic preservation in Newburyport.

On behalf of its Board of Directors:  
Linda Miller and Thomas Kolterjahn,  
Co-Presidents  
Newburyport Preservation Trust, Inc.

## 4 historic properties to receive CPA funds for repairs, upgrades

Four historic properties in the city will receive Community Preservation Act money for repairs and replacements after the Newburyport City Council approved the Community Preservation Committee's recommendations on April 22.

Three of the four buildings already have preservation restrictions and the fourth, the Museum of Old Newbury, is preparing a preservation restriction in line with receipt of the CPA funds.

The four projects, all under the Historic Preservation category, are:

—\$90,000 for replacement of the leaking roof at the People's United Methodist Church, 64 Purchase St. The church, built in 1825, plans to raise an additional \$6,000 in private donations for the project.

—\$45,000 to the Newburyport Art Association for foundation work (repointing of brickwork and rehabilitation of supporting pillars) to the historic structure at 65 Water St. The restoration work will protect the integrity of the building and prolong the useful life of the property.

—\$52,000 for an accessibility lift at the new Children's Discovery Center at the Custom House Maritime Museum, 25 Water St. The work is part of a major expansion of children's exhibits and educational programming at the Custom House to appeal to younger audiences. The CHMM is investing \$95,000 to renovate, upgrade and launch the Discovery Center initiative and related free community programs on the ground floor.

—\$59,500 for the Museum of Old Newbury for the Cushing House Campus Fence Preservation Project. The museum plans to preserve and stabilize the historic fences and the Garden House at the 1808 Cushing House. The wooden portions of the fence, made up of solid board tongue and groove, with lattice and picket in other iterations, have failed entirely, and must be replaced.

CPA money is derived from a special tax on property sales within the city.

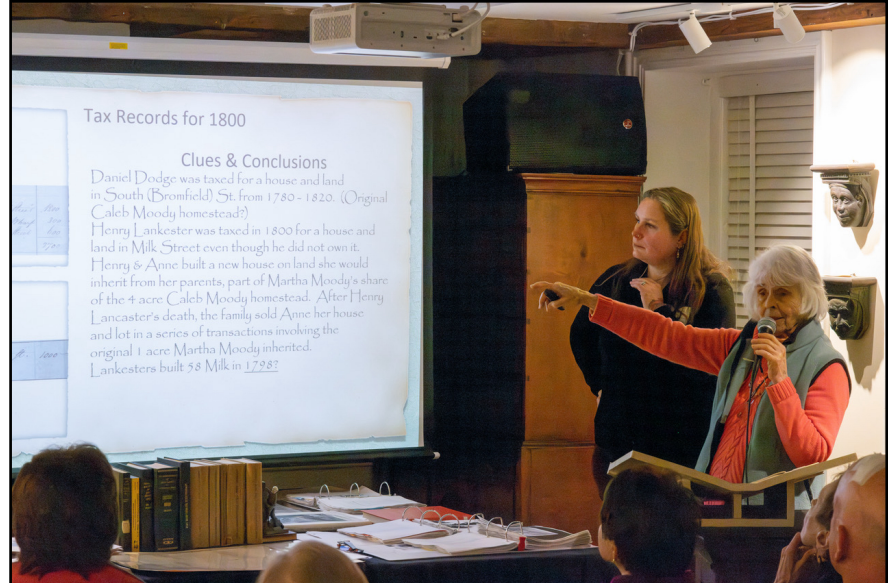
# History buffs get lesson in researching historic homes

More than 70 history buffs got the inside scoop on where to look when tracing the background of a historic house on Feb. 21 at the Museum of Old Newbury.

Longtime researcher Ellie Bailey, who researches old houses for the Newburyport Preservation Trust's historic house plaque program, kicked off the presentation of "Researching Your Historic House – What the Pros Know!"

Ellie gave a walk-thru on how to use deeds, census records, birth and marriage records and probate court documents to trace the history of an old building or piece of land. Using the work she did on a Newburyport house she explained using the online database of the Essex County Registry of Deeds in Salem, as well as online probate records and paper documents as well.

Museum executive director Bethany Groff Dorau also guided those in attendance through



Museum executive director Bethany Groff Dorau listens as researcher Ellie Bailey points out information about old tax records.

the numerous paper resources – including hundreds of old photos of Newburyport streets and houses – available at the museum at the corner of High and Fruit streets.

For more information about the NPT's historic plaque program, go to [nbptpreservationtrust.org/historic-house-plaque-program/](http://nbptpreservationtrust.org/historic-house-plaque-program/)

## Preservation Month in Portsmouth

The Portsmouth Historical Society's Preservation Month opens on May 7 with a panel on "Advocacy and Environment: Sustainability in Historic Preservation." The panel takes place at the Historical Society building, 10 Middle St., Portsmouth, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Four experts will discuss how preservation practices can contribute to a sustainable future.

Panelists include Rodney Rowland, director of Environmental Sustainability at Strawberry Banke Museum; David Reidmiller, chief impact



officer at the Gulf of Maine Research Institute; Johanna Lyons, state park planner and land use administrator for the NH Division of Parks and Recreation; and Joie Grandbois, director of sustainability for Historic New England.

On May 10, the society will host a 45-minute family friendly walking tour and scavenger hunt from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

On May 23, a "Window Workshop" featuring the Window Woman of New England (NPT board member Alison Hardy) from 6 to 7 p.m.

All Portsmouth Preservation Month events are free. For more information and to register, go to [PortsmouthHistory.org](http://PortsmouthHistory.org).