

Sakonnet Area House Tour Offers Rare Glimpse into Historic Private Homes



On Sunday September 19 a total of eight private homes and three museum properties will be open during the Little Compton Historical Society's Historic House Tour. This is the Historical Society's first house tour in six years. The event is one of the Society's largest fundraising efforts and offers participants a rare opportunity to see some the Sakonnet Area's most interesting, private historic properties.

The homes on the tour range in age from the late 1600s to the early 20th century. They include taverns, meeting houses, farmhouses and grand summer homes. Many include one-of-a-kind outbuildings, gardens, historic landscapes and scenic views.

Local homeowners have been very generous about opening their homes to the public not only because of the financial support the event will bring to the Historical Society but because of the opportunity to share their homes' unique architecture and histories with the public.

Detailed descriptions of each property are available at www.littlecompton.org.



Tickets to the House Tour are limited and are now on sale at the Wilbor House Museum (548 West Main Road, Little Compton, RI) or the Little Compton Community Center on the town Commons. Tickets may also be purchased by mail using the form available at littlecompton.org.

Tickets purchased or ordered prior to the day of the event are \$25. Tickets purchased on the day of the event will be \$30. Ticket orders postmarked on or before September 10 will be mailed to the purchasers. Tickets ordered after the 10th may be picked up at the Community Center on the 19th from 11 AM to 4 PM.

The houses will be open from noon until 5 PM on the 19th. Ticket holders will receive a map and will drive their own vehicles to each home in any order they choose. Parking volunteers will direct traffic at each location.

Accompanied children age 12 and over are welcome. High heels, photography of any kind and food and drink are not allowed on the tour. The event is rain or shine. For more information please call the Historical Society at 635-4035.



Tour Locations:

1. Little Compton Community Center The Commons

● Pre-Paid Ticket Pick Up ● Ticket Sales ● Book Sales ● Light Refreshments ● Restrooms●

2. Sea Bourne Mary 35 South of Commons Road

Constructed c. 1730 in Londonderry, NH, the house was moved to Little Compton by Carlton Richmond in 1937. An avid preservationist, Mr. Richmond installed limited HVAC services to protect the structural fabric of the building. Sea Bourne Mary was the childhood home of Mary Wilson, “sea born” on a ship in 1720 just as it was boarded by a pirate. Her first cry enchanted the pirate and he asked that she be named Mary, after his

mother. He gave her a bolt of silk for her wedding dress and then spared the lives of all on board. The goal of the current owners, one of whom is a conservation architect, was to conserve the historic house and expand the living spaces by utilizing 18th century post and beam construction techniques and antique materials where possible.

**3. William Whalley Homestead
33 Burchard Avenue**

Once thought to be c. 1820, recent work on the homestead has uncovered details that indicate it is most likely late 18th century with 19th century additions. Stone walls divide the house from its adjacent fields. A late 19th century barn stands south of the house overlooking the Watson Reservoir. The farm's early history remains obscure, but 20th century deeds refer to it as "the homestead farm of William Whalley and wife Anne Whalley." William and Anne were both born in England and came to Little Compton sometime before 1878. The house is one of the few private homes in Little Compton listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

**4. Carden/Riley House
4100 Main Road, Tiverton**

This property is the 15 acre core of a colonial farm platted in 1722. A mile of stone walls, the original 1724 farmhouse and a variety of one-of-a-kind outbuildings remain. The farmhouse is a modern home with historic bones. It has been joined to a 1729 five bay, colonial tavern recently rescued and moved from New Hampshire. The project employed early 18th century materials and techniques, including construction of a traditional beehive chimney. The results suggest an authentic early American environment. After touring the tavern, visitors are invited to walk the grounds to enjoy tokens of Lloyd Lawton's handiwork from the 1930s and 40s.

**5. Chace Cory House
3908 Main Road, Tiverton**

The Chace-Cory House was built c. 1730, by the Chaces in the heart of Tiverton Four Corners. It is an excellent example of a New England village farm and would have included a large vegetable garden, a cow, a horse, chickens, and perhaps, a pig. The one and a half story gambrel is now a museum with an out-house, a corn crib, and a detached wash house, a rarity in New England. In 1816, the property was sold to the Cory family. In the early 1960s it was donated to the Tiverton Historical Society by J. William Middendorf. Carlton Brownell supervised the restoration of the buildings.

**6. Friends Meeting House
230 West Main Road**

The Friends Meeting House as we see it today was rebuilt in 1815 after a terrible hurricane damaged its c. 1700 predecessor. Builders reused many of the 18th century materials in the new building. As a sign of respect, men and women had separate entrances and an interior wall could be lowered in order to provide both sexes with separate meeting areas. Panels from the Historical Society's recent *Portraits in Time* special exhibition will be on display during the tour.

● Ticket Sales ● Book Sales ● Drinking Water ● Portable Toilet ●

**7. Bumble Bee Farm
316 West Main Road**

Between 1938 and 1940 Blanche Borden Frenning, an expert on early American homes, built a new home carefully modeled after a 17th century saltbox. She used the abandoned cellar hole of the farm's original house to situate her new home and was careful to leave its historic landscape and stone walls intact. She incorporated rooms from authentic 17th and 18th century buildings and recreated gardens and historic outbuildings. Mrs. Frenning named the farm using her initials. Bumble Bee Farm's 21st century owners have recently provided renovated the property, blending their love of the farm's history with the needs of a modern family.

**8. The Brown Farm
339 West Main Road**

The Brown Family occupied this early-mid 18th century house for over 200 years. The house was ‘grand’ for its time with high ceilings on the first floor and a large center-chimney serving numerous fireplaces. The second floor features very wide original floor boards and a curious columned door, said to have been salvaged from a ship. During Prohibition, a small fishing shed near the Sakonnet River known as “Brownie Cottage,” is rumored to have been a popular hiding spot for rumrunners. Early 20th century life on the Brown Farm is well documented through the postcards of O.E. DuBois, a traveling photographer who often rented rooms on the farm.

9. Dora Wilbour Patten House

541 West Main Road

One of Little Compton’s first grand summer homes, the house is an excellent example of the first generation of Colonial Revival architecture. It was built in 1908-09 by the daughter of Isaac Champlin Wilbour, one of the developers of the RI Red Hen, on part of the family farm. Mrs. Patten’s son David spent his boyhood summers on his grandfather’s farm and recounted his adventures in several books on Little Compton (*Three Sides to the Sea*) and numerous articles (*In Perspective*) as the editor for the Providence Journal. The house was frequently rented to summer visitors in the mid 20th century.

10. Wilbor House Museum

548 West Main Road

One of the oldest surviving homes in Little Compton, the earliest rooms of the Wilbor House were built c. 1690 by Samuel and Mary Wilbor. Additions followed in 1740 and 1860. Six generations of Wilbors lived in the house before it became the headquarters for the Little Compton Historical Society in 1955. Today the house museum displays period rooms interpreting the lives of farming families during Little Compton’s Pilgrim, Colonial and Victorian periods. A special exhibition, *The History of Little Compton, First Light: Sakonnet 1660-1820*, will be on display in the Archival Barn.

● Ticket Sales ● Book Sales ● Drinking Water ● Restrooms ●

11. The Maverick House

99B Sakonnet Point Road

Built around 1918 by the Mavericks, with a beautiful view of Sakonnet Harbor, the house was one of the first summer homes on Sakonnet Point. Very simply constructed with studded walls, it was purchased by the Millikins in 1939. They quickly paneled the house but little else changed until 1958. That winter, the house was moved and turned to avoid the hot western sun. The second chimney did not survive the move, but everything else did. The house was moved fully furnished—even the glasses were left on the shelves.

No other improvements were made until 2009 when the kitchen was expanded and the western porch was added.

12. Bailey-Sisson House

95 Sakonnet Point Road

This unusual side-by-side house was built in at least two stages, the first in the late 18th century and the later in the mid 19th century. Owned by Jeremiah Bailey as early as 1850, the house was later purchased by Lemuel Sisson Jr. Lemuel was one of the “shouting Methodists” of Little Compton. The Methodist faith was brought to town by his father, Lemuel Sr., and was spread by his many relatives. John Simmons, the founder of Simmons College in Boston, died peacefully here in 1870 in the care of his sister, Comfort Simmons Sisson.



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