

Free Talk about the History and Preservation Plans for General Glover's Farm House in Vinnin Square
Sunday, March 10 at 2 pm Old Town House in Market Square No RSVP needed

The historic farm house of General John Glover of Marblehead at the outskirts of town will soon be demolished and gone forever, unless funding to save it can be raised by Spring.

A free illustrated talk on **Sunday, March 10 at 2 pm** in Marblehead's **Old Town House** on Washington Street (at State Street) will discuss the urgent preservation effort currently underway to "Save the Glover" farm house in Vinnin Square, where the borders of Marblehead, Swampscott and Salem meet.

Remarkably surviving within the overgrown and collapsing twentieth-century structures that so many people have driven past for nearly three decades, are several rooms and massive brick fireplaces and chimneys that are more than 250 years old.

The rooms were part of a farm house built in the **mid-1700s** that General John Glover owned for sixteen years following his seven long and grueling years of service in the American Revolution as one of General George Washington's most reliable and trusted commanders.

General Glover purchased the farm in 1781, a year before his retirement from his arduous war years. That same year, he married Frances Fosdick, the mother of a former trusted adjutant during the war, as his second wife. His first wife, Hannah, the mother of all eleven of their children, had died in 1778, the year after their oldest son, Captain John Glover Jr., was lost at sea while both John Glovers were serving.

During that decade and a half after the war, Glover served several terms as a Marblehead Selectman, as Glover and nearly everyone else in town worked to rebuild their businesses, and the fishing and commerce that had been ruined by seven devastating years of war.

Most people do not realize that in his later years, Glover was not merely retired. Instead, he actively contributed to the development of the new American nation and the state of Massachusetts in official elected positions, including as a state legislator and as a member of the state delegation that ratified the new United States government's hard-won Constitution in 1787, as well as on a state committee for distribution of lands in northern New England for settlement and development.

He apparently had intriguing commercial plans for the farm property as well.

This June, however, everything on the site will be demolished for construction of three large rental units.

Proposals were made by the Swampscott Historical Commission to allow the original house to remain in its original location and be renovated as a centerpiece within the new development, but without success.

Now, to save Glover's 18th-century farm house, it must be disassembled and moved to a different place. Plans for that are being discussed, and grants and other funding options for relocation and reconstruction are being explored.

But the original structure must be removed from the site this Spring.

Therefore, funds to do that are urgently needed by April, just two months away.

Because Glover is Marblehead's most celebrated historical resident, this site related to his post-Revolutionary years cannot be permitted to be destroyed.

On Sunday afternoon, three speakers will discuss the history of the Glover site, and what can be saved, showing photos of the original mid-1700s and 1780s rooms that General Glover knew. The tourist and restaurant buildings that evolved around the 18th-century structures will also be noted.

(By the 1930s, the Glover farm house and buildings were refurbished as the **Glover Inn and Tea Room**, with the Sunbeam Inn opening in a larger building. In the 1950s, the complex was further developed into the **General Glover House Restaurant** until it closed in the 1990s. The extensive farm land next to the Glover former farm house had become a large experimental farm and livestock property called the Sorosis Farm, and eventually evolved into the golf course of the Tedesco Country Club. The latter had started in Swampscott in 1899 as a golfing club with a few holes near the coast, but by 1927 it had expanded to 36 holes close to the farm property. By 1934 it had reduced to its current 18 holes by the Glover farm house. The Tedesco Country Club and the tourist hospitality complex evolved soon after.)

Famously, Glover's stellar and unfazed leadership, combined with the audacious fortitude and fearless grit and of his hundreds of men mostly from this one town during the first year and a half of the war — not just fishermen and mariners, but also tradesmen, and merchants' sons, and a few Black and indigenous soldiers who served under his command — saved the cause of independence not just once, but three crucial times.

Some of Glover's men in those early years (1775-1776) had come from nearby towns, including Lynn and Swampscott, which was part of Lynn until 1852. Thomas Vining, the tenant who lived in the farm house and worked the land before Glover purchased it, served in the Revolution also — first in the Fifth Essex Regiment under Glover's older brother, Colonel Jonathan Glover, from 1777 to 1780, then in a company of coast guards led by Captain Edward Fettyplace of Marblehead in 1782, during the tense year of treaty discussions to end the war. Ten years later, Thomas Vining (for whom Vinnin Square is named) sold twelve acres of abutting farm land to General Glover, and purchased a house in Marblehead the following year.

Glover's troops enlistments expired soon after the pivotal crossing of the Delaware River on Christmas night in 1776 (then back again, with prisoners, in worsened conditions, after the surprise attack and battle in Trenton, New Jersey). Most of his men then opted to aid the American cause on privateer vessels, as scores of others from the original regiment had done starting in September 1775, also under Colonel Glover's management in those early months of privateering on behalf of the American cause.

Colonel Glover was promoted General in 1777, and continued to serve his commander-in-chief, George Washington, for the next six years, throughout the entire war.

Glover owned the farm property for sixteen years, until his death at age 64 in 1797, just two years before President Washington's. Both had been born in 1732, just over 290 years ago. So, the two Revolutionary commanders and colleagues lived almost parallel lifetimes.

While Glover's heroism in the Revolution as Colonel of the "Marblehead Regiment" in 1775 and 1776 is well known, his ending story in Marblehead and Swampscott afterward is not. And that chapter can most effectively be told through his farm house that still survives.

Saving General Glover's farmhouse will not only help to reveal and represent that unfamiliar period of his life, but also Marblehead's history of outlying farms over nearly 400 years, with probable use of the land by Indigenous peoples before that, as well as the history of the extensive farm property for more than two centuries after his ownership, including a 20th-century tourism history that expands upon the region's more familiar identity as a seaside resort area.

But the most urgent need is to save the surviving structure and remove it from the site. And if funds can be secured quickly, General Glover's 18th-century farm house can be saved before it disappears forever.

Significant to Marblehead as well as to Swampscott and Salem (where Glover and his three brothers were born before they moved to Marblehead with their widowed mother while they were very young), the farm house connects all three towns to Marblehead's most celebrated resident.

The program on Sunday is free, and no reservations are required. Donations are welcome, that day or online. A donation link and further information can be found on the website "SaveTheGlover.org"

And anyone who knows of potential sources for larger donations is welcome to talk with volunteers who will be there that day. And volunteers are always welcome to help "Save The Glover."

Donations can also be mailed to: Save the Glover, PO Box 605, Swampscott, MA 01907

Checks should be made out to: **Glover's Marblehead Regiment, Inc.** (the project's fiscal agent)

Please write "Glover Farmhouse" in the memo line.

Photos next page

Property History Summary

Based on recent research by Rick Detwiller of Georgetown, MA and Nick Curtis and John Clemson of Marblehead and Dorothy Anderson's "The Era of Summer Estates"

The farm house seems to have existed by the **1750s**, but its construction date is unknown. In the twentieth century, one of the chimneys proclaimed 1732, the year both John Glover and George Washington were born. But no documentation for that has been found.

William Browne, a wealthy merchant in Salem, purchased the farm house and land sometime before or after its mid-1700s construction. As a high-ranking official, and eventually a Loyalist as the Revolutionary war began, Browne fled his Salem home in 1775, and his property was confiscated by the state of Massachusetts after 1778.

Thomas Vining, after whom Vinnin Square is named, (and son of a Thomas who lived on the outskirts of Salem), farmed the Browne farm property as a tenant in the farm house. During the Revolution, he served under two Marblehead commanders: Col. Jonathan Glover (John's older brother) of the Fifth Essex regiment from 1777 to 1780, and around 1782 (the tense year during the war's treaty discussions), in a company of coast guards led by Captain Edward Fettyplace. In 1793, Vining and his wife moved to a house he bought in downtown Marblehead.

General Glover purchased the farm in 1781, a year before his retirement from the war in 1782. The same year, he married a woman named Frances (Fanny) Fosdick, the mother of one of his young adjutants as his second wife. His first wife of 24 years, Hannah, had died in 1778, a year after their eldest son, John Jr., a captain in his father's regiment, was lost at sea in service. Glover died in the depth of winter at age 64 on January 30, 1797.

As the 1800s began, much of the property was owned by **Hooper** family members (not "King" Hooper's family) who were General Glover's grand-children through the marriage of his second-to-youngest daughter Mary. (*MACRIS / J. Clemson*) In the mid-1800s, members of the **Pitman** and **Brown** families owned much of the land (*also MACRIS / J. Clemson*), along with substantial acreage around Marblehead and its shorelines. They were probably Glover descendants through the marriage of some of the 13 children of Mary Glover Hooper.

After 1870, as Gold Coast estates and summer properties began to flourish, the principal land owner[s] were the **Goldthwait** family (*MACRIS / J. Clemson*), who also owned extensive open or newly developed land the Marblehead peninsula around the turn of the century.

By the 1930s, much of the former farm property had been bought by **Lillian and Alexander (A.E.) Little** and the farmhouse and barn structures had been converted into a tourist complex that included the Sunbeam Inn and the **Glover Inn and Tea Room**, with Lillian as the decorator and proprietor. Lillian remained involved into the 1950s, in her 90s. A.E. Little had operated a large shoe-manufacturing business in Lynn until the Great Depression, and had owned and/or partly leased out an extensive experimental livestock and farm property known as the Sorosis Farm. At the turn of the 1900s, Little had been one of the founders of the Tedesco Country Club, whose current golf course occupies much of Glover's former farm land.

In 1957, the farmhouse's 18th-century rooms formed the central portion of a restaurant that was expanded and remodeled by restaurateur Anthony Athanas as the **General Glover House Restaurant** until it closed in the 1990s.

In the twenty-first century, as the buildings languished abandoned for nearly three decades, no one realized until last year that within the deteriorating exterior structures, several rooms, fireplaces, and chimneys from the mid-1700s farm house, along with a large c.1780s ell that was likely added by General Glover, still amazingly exist.

This year, in 2024, we have a chance to save General Glover's Farm House, or watch it vanish forever.

See also [Save the General Glover House | Preservation Effort \(savetheglover.org\)](https://www.savetheglover.org)

The former General Glover farm house as the Glover Inn and Tea Room c. 1930s Courtesy Swampscott Public Library



General Glover farm house c. 1910
Courtesy Swampscott Public Library



Below:
General Glover Inn c. 1930s - 50
Courtesy Swampscott Public Library



Caption: Early fireplaces that people still recall fondly from dining in the General Glover House Restaurant would have also warmed the retired General and his wife two centuries before, as the retired general might have reflected on his thriving earlier years and happier family times in Marblehead before his arduous eight years of Revolutionary service, followed by a decade of involvement in the development of the region and new nation that he and so many others helped to create.

WHY THE HOUSE IS IMPORTANT & WHAT WILL BE LOST

The Glover Farmhouse is historically significant, both on the local and national level, with a history spanning the last 250 years:

- Inhabited from the end of the Revolution until his death in 1797 by American military hero General John Glover, who helped organize the first American Navy, hero of the Battle of Long Island, rowed General George Washington's Continental Army across the Delaware River, and leader of one of the first integrated regiments in the American Revolution.
- The house itself is directly connected to the politics of the American Revolution, having been seized by the Massachusetts government due to policies established during the war.
- Prior to the American Revolution, the house was owned by local and international figure William Browne: Salem militia leader, Massachusetts judge, and Royal Governor of Bermuda.
- Architecturally one of the oldest houses in Swampscott, and one of the few surviving that was built in the 1700s in the town.
- One of the last intact 18th and 19th century farm properties in the towns of Swampscott and Marblehead
- An important local gathering spot and hospitality institution in the 20th century as a historic inn, owned by A.E. Little, and later restaurant owned by Anthony Athanas, contributing to the more recent cultural heritage and community history.
- An area that has been occupied by indigenous groups and colonists for over 400 years. It sits on one of the first colonial roads, and is a potentially important archaeological site.
- Eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places under multiple criteria, and designated a National Historic Landmark.

Despite these multiple points of historical significance connecting the house to local, state, and United States history, the Glover House is scheduled to be demolished in 2024.

**A second talk ~ on Monday evening March 18,
at 6:30 pm at Abbot Public Library's
temporary quarters at 3 Brook Road will discuss
five houses of John Glover and his three brothers
in pre-Revolutionary downtown Marblehead.**

**It will also include information about their
immediate families of 40 people total.**

