Cover Photo circa 1890
Courtesy of The South County Historic Center

Baker Greene's Gingerbread House
1724 South Road
Kingston, Rhode Island 02881

State of Rhode Island
First Edition
First Printing

This Property Is Listed in The Rhode Island State Register of Historic Places.
And on the National Register of Historic Places by The United States Department of the Interior.

A SPOT ON THE MAP

Steeped in history, Kingston's journey began in the late seventeenth century, initially bearing the name “Little Rest”. By 1826, this charming settlement had been renamed Kingston, becoming the heart of Washington County (once Kings County) as its county seat from 1752 until the bustling year of 1894.

In 1959, South Kingstown took a significant step to preserve this heritage by establishing the Kingston Historic District, and by 1974, Kingston village was officially recognized as a National Register historic district. Nestled just outside the University of Rhode Island, the district showcases an impressive array of architectural marvels from the 18th and 19th centuries. With 38 buildings included, the district stands as a testament to Kingston's rich history and architectural legacy.

“The Gem of Little Rest” is one of those 38 buildings. It has been designated one of the ten most important historic landmarks in the State of Rhode Island, as it was built with, and still contains, the Oldest Gingerbread Ovens in America.

The Hands That Held the Key:
A Chronicle of Owners and Residents

"A house, like a soul, carries the echoes of those who walked its halls before. Each creak in the floor, each mark in the stone, bears silent witness to lives that shaped its story."

There are houses that stand merely as shelter, and then there are houses that *remember.* The home once known simply as a cottage at Little Rest—and later as *Baker Greene's Gingerbread House*—is one such place. Its timbers have absorbed the laughter of children, the murmured debates of town elders, the clatter of saddles, and the scent of ginger rising warm from its ovens. Every generation that passed through its doors left a fingerprint upon its heart.

From the time of **Robert Helme**, who served his community and kept watch as jailer in the days when South Kingstown was still young, this house stood as a witness to the formation of an American village. Helme's era was one of duty and modest prosperity, when civic order and faith guided the rhythm of life. To think that beneath the same roof where he once made his plans for town governance, there would one day be the laughter of boarders and the chatter of schoolchildren, is to grasp the great span of history contained within these walls.

Then came **John T. Nichols**, the Quaker saddle-maker who, in the years after the Revolution, brought industry and integrity to Little Rest. His boarding house filled with weary travelers and young scholars, the hum of conversation floating through open windows. He was, in his way, a craftsman not only of saddles but of community—a man whose reputation, both admired and criticized, reflected the raw honesty of a small town still finding its moral footing.

Later still, the house would brush shoulders with the distinguished **Potter family**, whose lineage wound itself through the corridors of Rhode Island politics and education. They were men of letters and law—**Elisha**, the elder, Speaker of the Assembly and Congressman; **Elisha Jr.**, the jurist and scholar; **William** and **James**, who carried their family name through war and public service. In their time, Kingston was evolving from a rural parish to a place of refinement and

thought. Their stewardship tied the home not only to local enterprise but to the intellectual and civic aspirations of a growing nation.

And then, at the heart of it all, there was **Stephen "Baker" Greene**—the humble artisan whose name became legend. His ovens glowed with a steady flame, producing the famous gingerbread that would travel by hand and by story through every corner of Washington County. Greene's gingerbread was not just food—it was ritual, comfort, and community embodied in a single sweet aroma. His was a craft born of simplicity and joy, and the spirit of his baking lingers still, mingling with the scent of old timber and hearth ash long cooled.

As the decades rolled onward, **the Potters** and **Van Benschotens** carried the legacy forward, keeping alive the traditions of preservation and care. **Mary LeMoine Potter**, a woman of refinement and deep generosity, ensured that Kingston's cultural life flourished through her philanthropy and civic devotion. She, like many women of her age, tended to heritage as much as to hearth—preserving stories, gardens, and architecture against the quiet erosion of time.

In the 20th century, when **Miss Marion Stone** arrived from New York, the house was again reborn. She saw, in its weathered façade and old-fashioned charm, something worth cherishing. A teacher and reformer, she filled the home with the spirit of service—hosting Girl Scouts, civic meetings, and literary clubs. Her summers in Kingston brought new laughter, new learning, and the return of a familiar rhythm: women gathering over tea, children running through the yard, voices rising into the same New England air that once carried the scent of gingerbread and the ring of blacksmith hammers.

Professors, innkeepers, veterans, artists—all would follow. The **Albrights**, **Calorullis**, and **Tafts**—each inheriting not only a structure of timber and glass but a sense of place that transcended ownership. They were not merely residents; they were caretakers of memory, stewards of continuity in a landscape forever shifting.

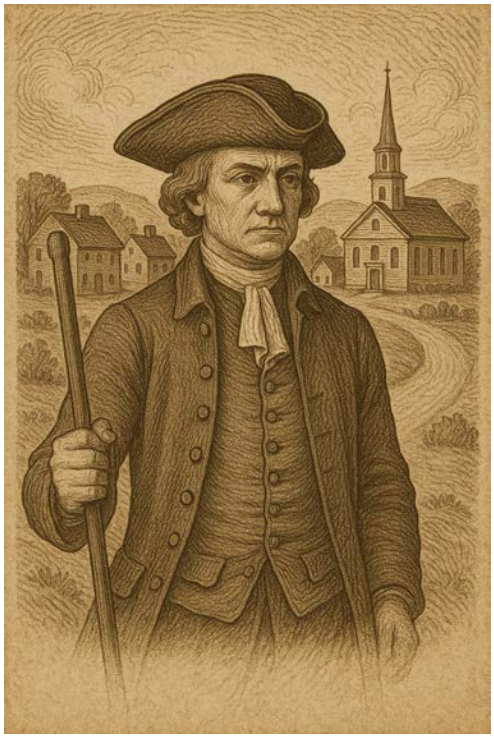
To walk through this home today is to pass through the corridors of time itself. One can almost hear the creak of Nichols' saddle bench, the laughter from Miss Stone's parlor, the echo of Baker Greene's paddle striking dough on a wooden table. In each corner lies a whisper of those who lived, worked, and dreamed within its walls.

This chapter, then, is not a simple record of deeds and transfers. It is a meditation on inheritance—the quiet, humankind that cannot be notarized or sold. For every occupant, in every generation, added not only a layer of paint or plaster, but a layer of meaning. Together, they forged a living lineage, a continuum of spirit that binds the *Gingerbread House* to the soul of Kingston itself.

And so, as we turn the page on this long procession of owners and residents, we do so with reverence. For in their hands, this modest home became more than shelter. It became a mirror of the American story—built by faith, shaped by work, and sweetened, always, by the lingering taste of memory.

Circa 1786
Robert Helme owned property, and it is unclear whether he built the home or if it was on the site prior to his ownership.

"The Keeper of Order: Robert Helme and the Dawn of Little Rest"



"In the quiet years before the nation was born, when the land was still measured by footsteps and faith, men like Robert Helme stood at the threshold between order and wilderness."

In the middle years of the eighteenth century, before the clang of industry and the hum of progress reached Kingston's fields, a man named **Robert Helme** called this place home. Born around 1739, likely in South Kingstown, Helme lived in a time when the colonies were not yet the United States, when the air of Rhode Island was thick with both salt and possibility.

Helme was a man of civic duty—one of those steady, unheralded figures who form the backbone of every small town's history. He served his community in local government and, in his later years, as a **jailer**, keeping the peace in an era when justice was personal and the line between law and survival was thin. In the records of his life, there are no grand speeches or heroic deeds, only the trace of a life spent maintaining order in a world still finding its moral compass.

He married **Elizabeth Greenman** in 1763, and, by all accounts, built a life grounded in quiet perseverance. His name appears not in the headlines of rebellion or revolution, but in the

everyday fabric of South Kingstown's civic life—proof that history's grand tapestry depends as much on those who kept the ledgers, mended the locks, and held the keys as on those who carried muskets or wrote constitutions.

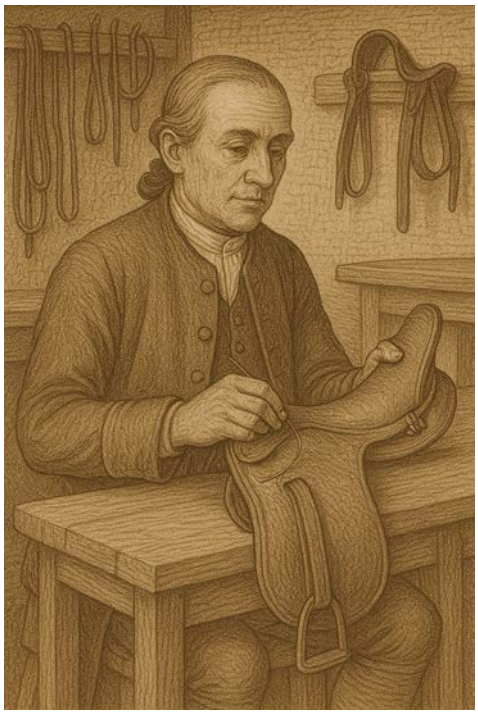
After his years of ownership, the property would pass through many hands, each leaving a distinct impression. Yet in every subsequent generation—through the merchants, artisans, and scholars who followed—there remained something of Helme's steadfastness: a sense of structure, of responsibility, of duty to community.

In the stillness of Little Rest, where the courthouse bell once tolled and the dirt roads bore the marks of horse and cart, Helme's presence lingers. His was not a legacy of fame, but of foundation—a reminder that before Kingston became a place of ideas and industry, it was first a place of order, tended by men who kept watch while a young nation began to dream.

"He was the keeper of keys in both house and jail, a custodian of the fragile peace that bound neighbors together. In the story of this home, his chapter is the prologue—a testament to the quiet strength that built a town, one lock and ledger at a time."

Circa 1788
John T. Nichols from Robert Helme, one quarter of an acre with a frame house thereon, situate lying and being in said S.K. upon Little Rest Hill, butted and bounded and follows, northerly, westerly and southerly upon land of Elisha Reynolds, easterly five rods on a highway. Same lot I purchased of Col. Elisha Reynolds, 1786. (SK Land Evidence Book 8-228)

"The Saddler of Little Rest Hill: John T. Nichols and the Humble Quarter Acre"



"In every small town, there are men whose work leaves no monuments—
only impressions: the worn handle of a tool, the well-trodden path between house and workshop,
the quiet dignity of a life well used."

Born in **1764**, **John T. Nichols** came from the rolling fields of Tower Hill, a child of Rhode Island's old soil. He learned the trade of a **saddle maker**—a humble but vital craft in an age when the horse was the heartbeat of commerce, travel, and communication. By the late 1780s, Nichols had come to **Little Rest Hill**, settling on a **quarter-acre lot** that stood beside the courthouse road. His house was modest—a simple frame dwelling perched between farmland and the growing village—but within those small walls, a life of steady purpose took shape.

The **1790 census** paints a picture of energy and noise—**six males under one roof**, five of them boys not yet sixteen. Perhaps sons, perhaps apprentices, learning the art of cutting leather and setting rivets under their master's watchful eye. The smell of tanned hide and hot pitch would

have mingled with the warmth of bread from the hearth, the murmur of lessons, and the laughter of youth.

Nichols was, by faith, a **Quaker**—plain in speech, plain in dress, and part of a community bound by conscience more than creed. Yet even among the Friends, he was not without controversy. In 1806, the local historian **Charles Comstock** accused him bitterly of dishonesty, calling him *"a disgrace to the society of Friends."* The charge, born of a dispute over debt, seems more personal than moral—a reminder that even in a devout and simple age, men were complicated, and reputations fragile.

Time, however, would judge him more kindly. Later chroniclers remembered Nichols not for quarrel or fault, but for his industriousness and hospitality. By the early 1800s, he had become both saddler and **innkeeper**, running a **boarding house** that welcomed weary travelers and **students from afar** who came to study in Kingston's one-room school.

J.R. Cole, writing in 1889, called him *"one of the shrewdest businessmen of the place."* His house, Cole wrote, stood *"at the eastern corner of the courthouse lot and the main road,"* where Nichols charged **one dollar a week** for *"board and lodging, and the choicest meats and fowls in season."* In a time when cash was scarce and produce was plentiful, Nichols accepted his payment in grain, vegetables, or game, turning the yield of his neighbors' farms into meals for his guests. His table was both business and benevolence—a quiet testament to Yankee resourcefulness.

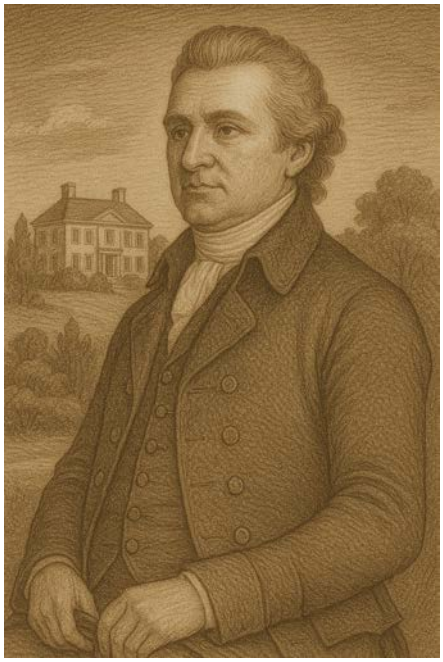
Those who knew him likely saw a man both practical and proud, a craftsman who found dignity in the rhythm of his work. His house, modest though it was, became a center of community life—a place where townsfolk, travelers, and schoolchildren converged. Beneath his roof, the ideals of the new nation—industry, thrift, hospitality—were not preached but practiced.

When **John T. Nichols** died in **1835**, he was laid to rest among the Friends at the **Old Quaker Cemetery** on Old Tower Hill Road. There, among the plain stones and quiet trees, lies a man who helped build Kingston not with politics or power, but with leather, wood, and a steadfast heart.

"His was the story of a craftsman in a small American town—imperfect, industrious, enduring. And in the gentle creak of a saddle strap or the memory of a warm meal shared long ago, we still hear the echo of his life: steady, unadorned, and entirely human."

Circa 1800
Sylvester Robinson from John T. Nichols, one certain tract of lot of land… containing one and one- quarter of an acre bounded easterly on a highway, northerly, westerly, and southerly upon land belonging to Elisha R. Potter with all the buildings thereon standing. (SK Land Evidence Book 9-597)

"The Heir of the Planters: Sylvester Robinson and the Quiet Legacy of Little Rest"



"In every generation there are those who inherit not only the land, but the weight of its memory—the soil turned by their fathers, the expectations of family, and the quiet question of what to make of it all."

Born in **1735**, **Sylvester Robinson** came into a name that already carried weight. He was the son of **William Robinson**, one of the great **Narragansett Planters**—a man of wealth, influence, and standing who had served as **Deputy Governor of the Colony of Rhode Island**. His mother, **Abigail Gardiner Hazard**, came from a lineage equally steeped in the history of South County. From birth, Sylvester was surrounded by the marks of prominence: land, labor, and lineage—a legacy of the prosperous plantation culture that once defined southern Rhode Island.

By the time Sylvester reached manhood, the old world of the Planters was already beginning to fade. The Revolution had upended the social order, and the easy prosperity of the colonial gentry

was giving way to a leaner, more uncertain age. Yet, the Robinsons remained part of the old fabric—a family whose wealth was measured not only in acres but in reputation.

During his lifetime, Sylvester married twice, his second wife being **Sarah Benton**, who would inherit his estate upon his death in **1809**. It was during this later period that his name became associated with the small property on **Little Rest Hill**. Though the record shows his ownership, it seems unlikely that Sylvester ever called the place home. The house stood more as an **asset than a dwelling**, a mark in the ledger of a man whose roots reached deep into the soil of South Kingstown but whose daily life belonged to another part of it.

Yet, even in that distant ownership, his presence ties the story of the Gingerbread House to the grander arc of Rhode Island's transformation—from plantation fields to village streets, from inherited privilege to the industry of artisans and tradesmen. His name bridges two eras: the world of the colonial elite, and the dawn of a humbler, more democratic America.

When Sylvester died in 1809, and Sarah sold the property soon after, it marked the quiet passing of that older order. The Planters' estates, once symbols of permanence, were fragmenting into the patchwork of small holdings that would define the 19th century.

"In the story of Little Rest, Sylvester Robinson stands as a reminder that history is not only written by those who build, but also by those who, through inheritance and circumstance, bear witness to change. His life was not lived within these walls, yet his shadow lingers in the lineage of the land itself—where privilege met its twilight, and a new America began to rise."

Circa 1810
Elisha R. Potter from Sarah Robinson, widow of Sylvester Robinson (auction) 1¾ acres in the Village of Little Rest with a dwelling house, stable and other buildings, easterly on highway leading south from said Little Rest, southerly, westerly and northerly on land of the said Elisha R. Potter. (SK Land Evidence Book 11-31)

"The Statesman of South Kingstown: Elisha R. Potter and the Measure of Public Virtue"

"In the early years of the Republic, when the ink of the Constitution was still fresh and the ideals of democracy yet untested, leadership often grew not in cities or capitals, but in the quiet towns of men who believed that public duty was the highest form of labor."

Born in **1764**, in the waning years of the colonial era, **Elisha Reynolds Potter** came of age as America was being born. He was a son of South Kingstown—rooted in the rhythms of coastal life yet attuned to the pulse of politics and principle. His education and temperament marked him for public service, and over the course of his life, he would rise to become one of Rhode Island's most distinguished figures: **Speaker of the Rhode Island State Assembly**, **U.S. Congressman**, and a man whose influence reached far beyond the borders of his town.

To his contemporaries, Potter embodied what it meant to be a **citizen-statesman**—a man whose authority rested not on privilege, but on reason, intellect, and a profound sense of civic obligation. He served in the General Assembly through tumultuous years, when Rhode Island grappled with its colonial inheritance and its place in a rapidly changing nation. Those who knew him spoke of his measured voice, his calm deliberation, and his unwavering belief in the institutions of self-government.

In **1809**, as his public stature grew, Potter built the **Potter Homestead** on what would later bear his name—**Potter Lane**. The house, dignified and enduring, stood as both family seat and symbol: a place where the ideals of the new republic found expression in the order and grace of domestic life. There, beneath its broad eaves and beside its fields, Potter balanced the twin callings of statesman and neighbor.

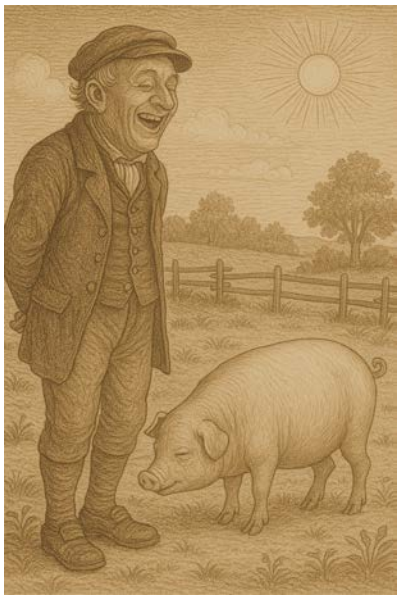
Though he held high office, Potter's influence was local as much as national. He was the kind of leader whose presence lent stability to a community still defining itself. In an age before career politics, public service was not a profession but a moral duty—a trust between man and town. Potter's career, like his home, was built upon that trust.

He died in **1835**, at the age of seventy-one, leaving behind not only the fine house that still bears his family name, but a legacy of leadership grounded in humility. His example endured through his children, most notably **Elisha R. Potter, Jr.**, who would carry the family's public spirit into another generation.

"In the story of South Kingstown, Elisha R. Potter stands as one of its truest sons—a man of reason, restraint, and resolve. His was a time when politics was still a calling, and when the measure of a man's greatness was not found in his ambition, but in his service."

Circa 1820
Benjamin Storer

“The Irishman on Little Rest Hill: Benjamin Storer and the Humor of Hard Times”



“Not every story in the history of a town is written in ledgers or laws. Some survive only in laughter—in the small, human tales that drift down through the years, soft as chimney smoke and twice as enduring.”

In the **1820s**, a new name appeared in the records of Kingston: **Benjamin Storer**. Unlike many who had come before him—men of English descent, bearing titles and long genealogies—Storer was an **Irish immigrant**, a man of humble beginnings who brought with him little more than his labor and his wit. In those years, America was changing fast, and so was Rhode Island. The old gentry of the Narragansett Planters were fading into memory, and a new generation of tradesmen, farmers, and immigrants was taking root in the village once known as *Little Rest.*

Between **1826 and 1833**, Storer lived in the modest frame house on the hill—a house that had already known its share of history. It had passed from saddlers to statesmen, and now, in his hands, it became a workingman’s dwelling, filled with the rhythms of ordinary life. There would have been the sound of livestock in the yard, the lowing of cattle, the scent of tilled earth and woodsmoke. For men like Storer, life was not easy, but it was lived fully—with work, with neighbors, and with a stubborn sense of humor that helped carry them through the lean seasons.

Storer’s most famous appearance in the historical record comes not through an act of politics or property, but through a story—a **practical joke**, retold years later in the beloved collection *The Jonny-Cake Papers.* The tale recounts how Benjamin, proud of his **prize-winning hog**, became

the target of mischief when a group of village pranksters, under cover of night, **shaved the animal clean.**

It was the kind of humor peculiar to small communities—half-mean, half-mirthful, a test of patience as much as a jest. The image of the bewildered Irishman, staring at his bald pig under the morning sun, must have been the talk of the town for weeks. And yet, as the story is told, Storer took the humiliation in stride. There is no record of anger or revenge, only laughter—the kind that binds a man to his neighbors in that unspoken fellowship of endurance.

In this single anecdote, something larger comes into focus: the spirit of a time and a people learning to live together. Kingston in the 1820s was a place where old Yankee families, Quakers, freedmen, and new immigrants all shared the same narrow lanes, the same markets, and the same gossip. Class and heritage mattered, but so too did one's sense of humor, one's willingness to be part of the fabric of local life. In laughing with—or even at—Benjamin Storer, the people of Little Rest affirmed their common humanity.

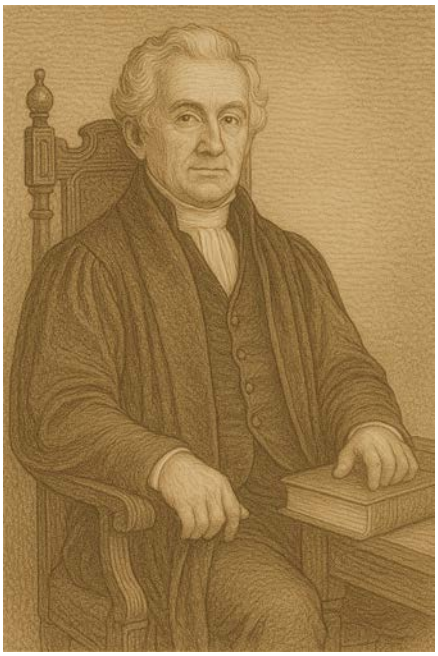
And while the great families of South Kingstown left their mark in marble and land deeds, Storer's legacy lived on in something smaller, more intimate, and perhaps more enduring: a story. His tale was passed from mouth to mouth, then printed decades later in *The Jonny-Cake Papers*, where it took its place among the region's cherished folklore. It is, perhaps, the purest kind of history—not the history of triumph, but of texture.

Little is known of Storer beyond this. The dates of his birth and death remain uncertain; no monument bears his name. But his presence lingers—in the laughter of that story, in the soil of the property he tended, and in the reminder that even the briefest lives leave echoes in the collective memory of a place.

"In the long story of Little Rest, Benjamin Storer's name is a small one, but it endures—proof that history's heart beats not only in the chambers of the powerful, but also in the laughter of an ordinary man on an ordinary morning, standing beside a hairless hog, and finding in the absurdity of it all a reason to smile."

Circa 1835
Elisha Reynolds Potter, Jr., from Elisha Reynolds Potter, Sr. (SK Probate Book 5-261)

"The Scholar of South Kingstown: Elisha R. Potter, Jr. and the Quiet Pursuit of Duty"



"Some lives unfold not in noise, but in thought—not in the pursuit of power, but in the quiet labor of understanding the world, and one's modest place within it."

Born in **1811**, **Elisha Reynolds Potter, Jr.** entered the world already bound to legacy. His father, **Elisha R. Potter, Sr.**, was a statesman of stature—a Speaker of the Rhode Island Assembly, a congressman, and a man whose reason and steadiness had guided the young republic through its early storms. The younger Elisha inherited not only his father's property—the **Potter Homestead** and adjoining lands on **Potter Lane**—but also his sense of civic purpose.

Educated in the classics and law, **Elisha Jr.** was a scholar by temperament, reserved and deliberate, shaped by the intellectual current of early 19th-century New England. He moved easily between the worlds of politics, literature, and jurisprudence, never seeking attention, but earning respect through the depth of his thought and the precision of his words.

In the 1840s, Potter served a single term in the **U.S. Congress**, a brief foray into national life. But his heart, like his home, remained in **South Kingstown**, among the fields, stone walls, and measured quiet of his family's land. His greatest influence would come not from Washington, but from his later years as a **Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court**, where he earned a reputation for fairness and restraint—a judge who believed, above all, in the balance between liberty and order.

Those who knew him described a man of reflection rather than ambition, one who viewed public office as an instrument of service, not self. He never married, finding instead companionship in study and in the company of his sister, **Mary Potter**, with whom he shared the family homestead throughout his adult life. Together they maintained the estate, hosting occasional visitors, scholars, and neighbors who found in the Potters a sense of continuity with an earlier age—one that valued learning, duty, and quiet dignity.

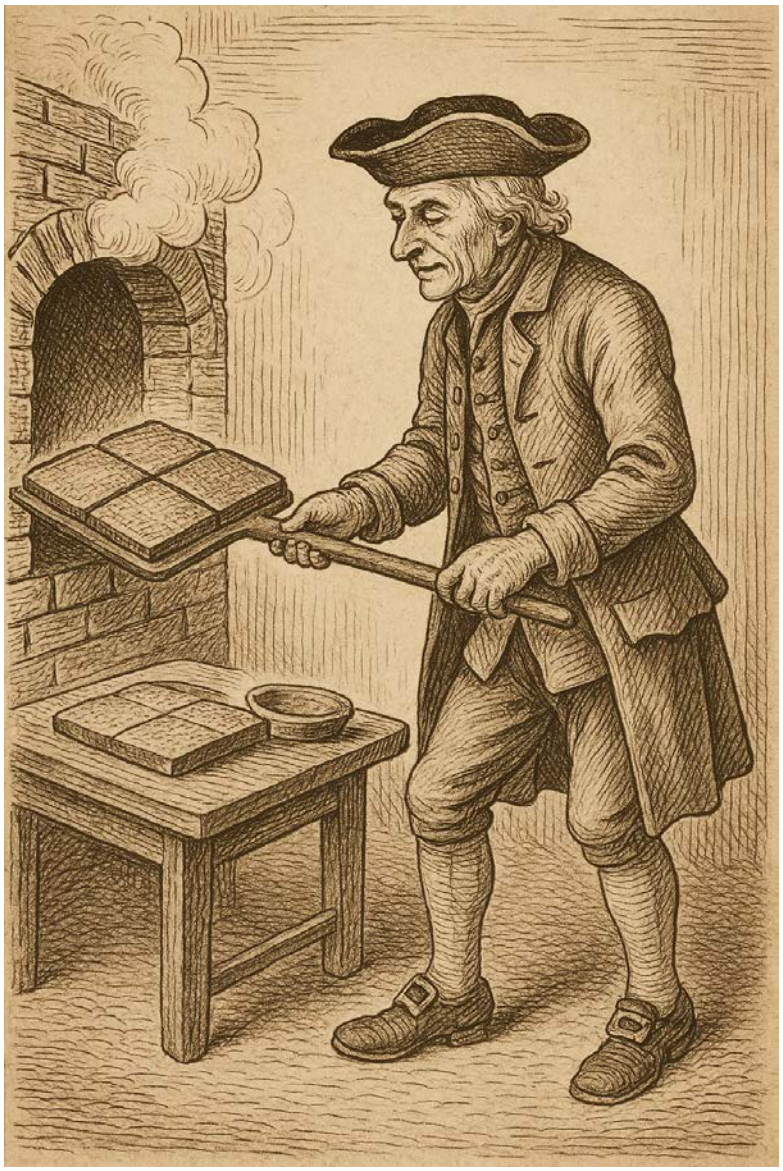
Though his career touched the upper echelons of law and government, Potter's true contributions were often of a quieter kind: essays, letters, and reflections that chronicled Rhode Island's history, culture, and governance. He was, in every sense, a man of letters—devoted to the careful preservation of knowledge, the ordered structure of ideas, and the moral stability of the community around him.

He died in **1882**, leaving no heirs, but a lineage of thought and service that endured long after his name faded from public speech. His house remained, as it always had, a place of calm—its rooms lined with books, its fields tended by memory.

"In the story of South Kingstown, Elisha R. Potter, Jr. stands as the embodiment of a quieter America—an America that prized scholarship as much as strength, wisdom as much as wealth. His was a life lived without spectacle, but rich in purpose. And though he left behind no descendants, his legacy endures in the laws he shaped, the history he preserved, and the stillness he left upon the land."

Circa Mid-1800s
Baker Greene and Family

"The Sweet Spirit of Little Rest: Baker Greene and the Gingerbread that Outlived a Century"



"In every small town, there is a legend that tastes of home. In Little Rest, it was the scent of warm gingerbread—sweet and spiced with memory—that lingered long after the baker was gone."

He was known simply as **Baker Greene**—a man whose true name, **Stephen Greene**, appears in the faded records of the early nineteenth century, and whose legend has outlived every written deed, recipe, or census entry. Born around **1756**, possibly in **East Greenwich**, Greene's life bridged two ages: the fading twilight of colonial Rhode Island and the dawn of an industrious young nation. He lived through revolution and independence, and by the time he died in **1841**, he had become a local fixture—a man whose craft had turned sustenance into story.

Before settling into the small frame house on **Little Rest Hill**, Greene and his wife, **Mary**, lived in a now-vanished home near the corner of Kingstown Road and Old North Road. Together they raised two daughters, **Fanny** and **Sarah**, as the village of Kingston began to grow from a rustic outpost into a seat of law and commerce. Greene was no grand figure of politics or plantation wealth; he was a baker, a man who made his living from flour, fire, and patience. Yet, in the rhythm of his oven, he found a kind of immortality.

The Baker and His Craft

Accounts written decades after his death tell of **"Baker Greene's gingerbread"**—a delicacy so light and golden that it became known across **Washington County**. His was no ordinary loaf. As the historian **E.M. Tyler** recorded in 1955, Greene baked his gingerbread in *"pairs nearly twelve inches square… slightly joined as to be easily broken apart,* "each ribbed across the surface so that it could be divided and sold to all manner of customers. For the people of Little Rest, this was more than a treat—it was a kind of ritual.

During **court week**, when townsfolk and travelers filled the square, the scent of his oven drifted over the hill. Children dreamed for days beforehand of *"gingerbread and lemonade,"* their parents gathering outside to trade stories while Greene's famous buns and cakes passed from hand to hand. He was said to be *"peculiar in spirit and makeup,"* a man who gave his gingerbread an *"unrivalled excellence"* that no one could replicate.

The irony, as later writers revealed, was that Greene's famous "gingerbread" contained **no ginger at all**. In an 1870 recollection, **Jonathan Helme** marveled that the recipe—copied and preserved by hand—contained none of the spice for which it was named. Yet the taste was unmatched, and his buns, too, were considered *"superb."* Helme, who had traveled widely, wrote wistfully: *"I have visited many places since that time and never have found such splendid gingerbread as [Baker Greene] made."*

A Legend Among Ordinary Lives

Greene was remembered as a small, kindly man — *"a little old man, in old fashion dress,"* as the Reverend **J. Hagadorn Wells** recalled in 1897, *"much like the latest fashion of our young bicyclists."* By then, his gingerbread had become the stuff of legend. It was sold in every grocery across the county, at fairs and festivals, even used as a prize for **quoit pitchers**, who tossed iron rings for the reward of a square of Baker Greene's famous loaf.

His oven, it was said, **"never cooled."** A later article from the *Narragansett Times* in 1962 described Greene's long days of labor—first baking in a **tavern shop** near the corner of Fish property, later in an old schoolhouse known as **"The Owl's Nest"** on South Road. His fame spread across southern Rhode Island. Yet, as one 1910 article poetically observed, Greene himself was a mystery: *"like Melchizedec of old, he was without father, without mother… having neither beginning of days nor end of life."*

It was as though he had risen out of the earth itself—a craftsman who needed no lineage to be remembered.

The House with the Oven Below

In the decades after his death, the legend of Baker Greene intertwined with that of his home. In 1927, **Annie M. Hunt** wrote that Greene's original **oven still remained in the cellar**, a brick relic of another age. She added a curious detail: that within those same walls, one of **the first kindergartens in America** had later been held — *"for here were taught small children, even so small as to be carried in the arms of their elders."*

The house, it seemed, carried forward Greene's spirit of nourishment. Where he had once fed a community with sweetness, later generations offered education and care. The rhythm of his oven became the heartbeat of the home itself—a symbol of warmth, sustenance, and shared memory.

The Sweet Legacy of Little Rest

Though Greene's death marked the end of his trade, his reputation endured for generations. His name appeared in **histories, memoirs, and local lore**, his gingerbread becoming a symbol of a simpler age—when the measure of a man was not the wealth he owned, but the comfort he brought to others.

Even a century later, people still spoke of his work with reverence and longing. They remembered the taste, the texture, the kindness of the man who sold his wares for pennies to children on market day. His legacy outlived him not through monuments or marble, but through the way he made others feel … welcome, nourished, and part of something larger than themselves.

Today, the old oven is silent, its ashes long cold. Yet, in every retelling—in every small-town bake sale, every hand-me-down recipe—echoes the memory of **Stephen "Baker" Greene**, the man who gave Little Rest its sweetest legend.

"History remembers kings and generals," as Ken Burns once said, *"but it is the small lives, the quiet acts of care and craft, that give a nation its soul."*

Baker Greene was one of those lives. A humble baker on a quiet hill whose gingerbread, light in color and spirit, carried with it the warmth of a people and the sweetness of an age now gone.

Circa 1882
William H. Potter from Elisha R. Potter, Jr. (SK Probate Book 12-44)

"The Counselor Returns: William H. Potter and the Long Arc of Home"

"In every generation there are those who leave the village to find their place in the wider world—only to find, in time, that the truest measure of a life lies not in what one conquers, but in where one belongs."

Born in **1816**, **William Hazard Potter** came of age in a Rhode Island that was changing as swiftly as the century itself. The fields and lanes of South Kingstown were giving way to industry, and the old family names that once defined Little Rest were now sending their sons to cities, schools, and offices far from the ancestral soil. William was one of them—bright, learned, ambitious—a **lawyer by profession**, and a man who carried the manners and intellect of a generation raised in the shadow of the Revolution.

He was the **son of Elisha R. Potter, Sr.**, the respected statesman and Speaker of the Rhode Island Assembly, and the younger brother of **Elisha R. Potter, Jr.**, jurist, historian, and Supreme Court justice. The Potters were a family bound by public service and education, and from their homestead on **Potter Lane**, they had helped shape the civic and intellectual life of South County for nearly a century.

William's path led him first to **Providence**, where he practiced law and mingled in the political and cultural circles of the capital. There, in rooms filled with debate and candlelight, he joined the chorus of reformers and intellectuals who saw in Rhode Island both its colonial inheritance and its democratic promise. He was, by all accounts, a man of calm temperament and good reason—a steady voice in a time of legal and political change.

But as the years wore on, and the vigor of youth gave way to reflection, **the pull of Kingston grew stronger**. When his brother Elisha died, William inherited both the **Potter Homestead** and the smaller property on **Little Rest Hill**—places thick with memory, where the voices of earlier generations still seemed to whisper through the clapboard walls. He returned home, not as a conqueror, but as a caretaker—one who understood that his truest inheritance was not in land or title, but in the responsibility to preserve what had come before.

He lived out his later years quietly among the same stone walls and maples that had surrounded his childhood, watching from his windows as Kingston changed—rail lines coming, farms giving way to schools and inns, and the hum of modernity slowly encroaching upon the village green. To those who knew him, William Potter was the embodiment of a certain Rhode Island grace: well-spoken, thoughtful, and dignified, carrying the manners of the old republic into the dawn of the twentieth century.

He died in **1908**, at the remarkable age of ninety-two—his life spanning from the age of stagecoaches to the age of motorcars, from the presidency of Madison to that of Theodore Roosevelt. Few men lived long enough to see such change, and fewer still remained so rooted in the soil from which they came.

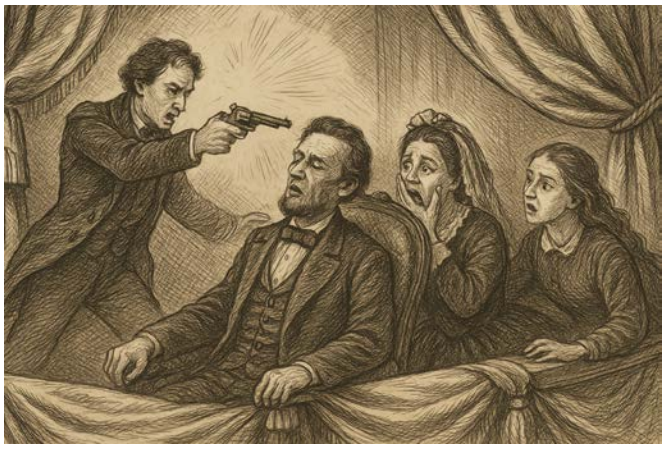
"In the quiet return of William H. Potter," a local historian once wrote, *"one sees the story of New England itself—a people who went out into the world seeking knowledge and came home seeking meaning."*

His was not the history of conquest or renown, but of stewardship—of one man tending the legacy of a family whose influence reached beyond their acreage, into the conscience of a state.

"When the last of the Potters closed his door each night," another observer might have said, *"the light that glowed in that old Kingston house was the same light that had guided them all: faith in reason, duty, and the enduring dignity of home."*

Circa Late 1800s
James Brown Mason Potter

"The Witness to History: James Brown Mason Potter and the Shadow of a Nation"



"There are moments in history that divide time itself—before, and after. And in the quiet town of Kingston, there lived a man who saw one of those moments with his own eyes."

Born in **1818** in South Kingstown, **James Brown Mason Potter** came into the world in an era of slow change and steady rhythm. He was the **son of Elisha Reynolds Potter, Sr.**, the respected statesman and legislator whose family name had already become a fixture in Rhode Island's civic life. His brothers, **Elisha Jr.** and **William**, would go on to serve as jurists, scholars, and men of letters. But James's life took a different path—one that would carry him beyond the quiet stone walls of his youth, into the heart of a nation at war, and to the very edge of tragedy.

As a young man, James Potter was cut from the same cloth as his forebears—educated, deliberate, and deeply devoted to the service of his country. When the **Civil War** broke out in 1861, he answered the call not with a musket, but with a ledger. Appointed as a **paymaster in the United States Army**, he held one of the most trusted posts in wartime bureaucracy—charged with ensuring that soldiers, weary and battle-worn, received their due. It was the kind of work that required integrity and calm amid chaos.

Through the long years of war, Potter served with quiet distinction, moving among the regiments and offices that sustained the Union cause. When the fighting ended and the country staggered toward peace, he continued his service, seeing in his work a means of holding the fragile fabric of the Republic together.

It was this same sense of duty that brought him, one April evening in **1865**, to **Ford's Theatre** in Washington, D.C. There, amidst the laughter and applause of the play *Our American Cousin*,

James Potter witnessed one of the darkest nights in American history—the **assassination of President Abraham Lincoln**.

One can only imagine what passed through his mind as the shot rang out, as confusion and horror spread through the audience. In that instant, he became not just a public servant, but a witness—a man forever bound to the moment the nation's hope was struck down. For the rest of his life, that memory, sharp and solemn, must have lingered like a scar upon the conscience.

After decades of service, Potter **retired in 1882**, returning home to the quiet rhythms of **Kingston**, where, according to *A History of Kingston* by McBurney, he lived until his death in **1900**. He was known to have resided in or owned the small **Baker Greene House**, though no official record of transfer remains. The uncertainty, fittingly, mirrors the man himself—reserved, elusive, and dignified, his presence felt more through echoes than evidence.

In his later years, Potter found solace in the simplicity of South County life. The distant thunder of war had long passed; the Union had been restored. The old family lands were familiar, the trees along the South Road much as they had been in his youth. Neighbors might have known him as a courteous, quiet gentleman—the last of a generation that had stood close enough to history to feel its heat.

He died in **1900**, closing a life that had spanned the breadth of the American experiment—from its agrarian beginnings through its fiery trial and into the age of industry and electricity.

"James Brown Mason Potter lived without fanfare," one historian reflected, *"yet his life was the thread between eras—the Revolution his father had helped shape, and the Union his service had helped preserve."*

In the story of Little Rest, his name endures not for the battles he fought, but for the one moment he witnessed—the night when darkness fell upon a stage in Washington and the weight of history came down with it.

"He returned home to Rhode Island carrying with him the quiet burden of memory, a reminder that even those who stand in the background of great events carry the light of witness into the generations that follow."

Circa 1906
Mary LeMoine Potter from William H. Potter [her uncle] (SK Probate Book 17-517)

"The Last of the Potters: Mary LeMoine Potter and the Grace of a Closing Chapter"

"Every family line has its arc—a beginning steeped in hope, a rise built on labor and intellect, and, finally, a soft descent into memory. For the Potters of South Kingstown, that long and storied arc came to rest with Mary."

Born in **1860**, in the waning years of a divided America, **Mary LeMoine Potter** entered a world already weighted with legacy. Her father, **James Brown Mason Potter**, had served the Union during the Civil War and witnessed history in its most tragic hour—the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. Her uncles, **Elisha R. Potter, Jr.** and **William H. Potter**, were men of learning and law—statesmen, jurists, and scholars who carried the intellectual torch of Rhode Island's early republic.

Mary was their heir, not only in property but in spirit—the last descendant of a family that had helped shape the civic and cultural soul of South County. She grew up surrounded by reminders of her lineage: the sturdy homestead on **Potter Lane**, the well-worn volumes in the family library, the enduring respect that the Potter name still commanded in Kingston village.

But if the men of her family had carved their names into history through public service, **Mary's influence was of a quieter, more enduring kind**. She became, by choice and conviction, a **philanthropist**—a woman whose wealth and education were put to the service of her community rather than to personal ambition. In an era when women's roles were still often confined to the domestic sphere, Mary Potter's name appeared on the boards and benefactor lists that defined South County's civic heart.

She served on the **Board of South County Hospital**, lending her resources and attention to the welfare of neighbors and workers alike. As a member of the **Daughters of the American Revolution**, she honored not only her family's deep colonial roots but also the very ideals of service and integrity that had defined their legacy. And through her support of the **Kingston Improvement Association**, she helped sustain the preservation and civic order of a town that was, by the turn of the century, transitioning into modernity.

Her philanthropy was not loud or showy; it was deliberate, steady, and personal. To those who knew her, Mary Potter was the embodiment of **New England grace**—reserved yet kind, self-sufficient yet deeply loyal to her village and its people. Her generosity reflected the moral compass of her lineage: a belief that privilege carries with it responsibility, and that the true measure of a name lies in what it gives back to the soil from which it sprang.

When her **uncle William H. Potter** passed away, Mary inherited not only **this historic property** but also the **Potter Homestead** itself—the ancestral seat that had anchored generations of her family. She maintained them with quiet diligence, understanding that in preserving the houses, she was preserving a story. Yet, even as she tended the gardens and maintained the grounds, she must have sensed the approach of an ending.

Mary **never married**, and she **had no children**. When she passed away in **1938**, her obituary marked her death as more than the loss of a life; it was the **end of a lineage**. *"It terminates the line of this Potter family,"* the notice read, *"a family of large influence in the State in literary and educational matters."*

It was true. With her passing, the long continuum of Potters—stretching back to the colonial founders of Rhode Island—came to a close. But in that ending, there was a kind of peace. Through her philanthropy and stewardship, Mary ensured that her family's legacy would not vanish but would continue to shape the community in quiet ways long after her name had faded from daily speech.

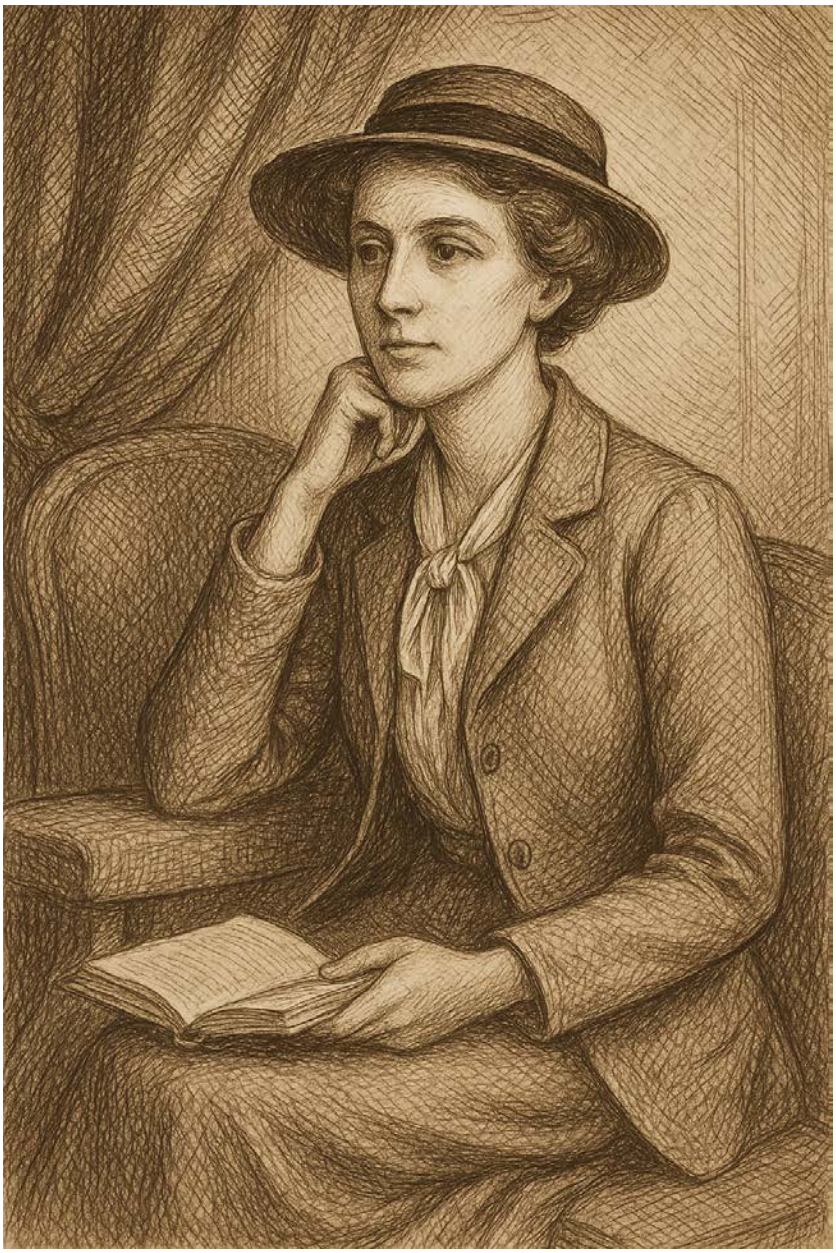
"Mary LeMoine Potter was not merely the last of her line," one might say, *"but its living conscience—the keeper of its memory, its civility, and its quiet benevolence."*

She died as she had lived: with grace, humility, and devotion to the land that had sustained her family for centuries. And though the Potter name faded from the rolls of South Kingstown, the light she tended still glows faintly in the walls of the old houses, in the institutions she nurtured, and in the very soil she left behind.

"The story of Mary Potter is not a story of endings, but of stewardship—the understanding that our lives are part of a longer thread, one we are called not to own, but to preserve."

Circa 1927
Marion R. Stone from Mary LeMoine Potter. (SK Land Evidence Book 45-59)

"The Crow's Nest: Marion R. Stone and the Spirit of a New Century"



"In every generation, certain houses seem to draw to them kindred souls—people who see not only the walls and windows, but the stories they contain. In the years after the Potters had faded from Kingston's daily life, one such spirit arrived. Her name was Marion Stone."

When **Miss Marion R. Stone** first came to Kingston in **1927**, she was not a native daughter but an admirer from afar—a **teacher from New York City's Briarley School**, cultured, independent, and imbued with the quiet confidence of a woman shaped by education and travel. Born in **Massachusetts in 1869**, Marion had already seen much of the world. Yet, it was here, in the small Rhode Island village of Kingston, that she chose to root herself.

The **Narragansett Times** reported her arrival with the warmth reserved for welcome news:

"The charming old-fashioned house on the South Road known as 'The Crow-nest' or the Baker-Green cottage has recently been sold by Miss Mary LeMoine Potter to Miss Marion Stone of New York... She possesses a delightful personality and will be a pleasing addition to the village."
*The article, dated **November 25, 1927**, captured something essential: Kingston had gained not just a homeowner, but a woman whose presence would ripple through nearly every corner of the community.*

Marion was a **friend of the Misses Harkness and Holman**, whose companionship framed much of her early life in Kingston. They were often seen together - traveling to New Hampshire, spending holidays in each other's company, or embarking on motor trips through New England. These glimpses, scattered through the pages of the local newspaper, paint a portrait of a woman whose life was rich with friendship, curiosity, and movement.

By **1929**, after a few "alterations" to the Baker-Green cottage, Marion had made it her **permanent summer home**. Locals soon came to know her not merely as a visitor from New York, but as a devoted resident whose kindness and energy were felt across the community. She became one of Kingston's quiet anchors—someone who believed that civic life was built not through speeches or wealth, but through constant, thoughtful participation.

She served in countless ways—each a thread in the fabric of village life. As a **member of the South Kingstown and Narragansett Girl Scout Council**, she mentored young women, guiding them toward the same independence that had shaped her own life. She was active in "**The Every Tuesday Club"**, hosting meetings at her home, where ideas and fellowship mingled with tea and laughter. Her name appeared again and again in the **Narragansett Times**, attached to causes that defined the civic conscience of the 1930s: the **South County Hospital**, the **Hospital Auxiliary**, the **Red Cross**, the **Kingston Free Library**, and the **Visiting Nurse Association**.

But Marion's generosity extended even further. She served with the **Kingston Improvement Association**, the **Women's Field Army of the American Society for the Control of Cancer**, the **Community Guild**, the **Women's Missionary Society**, the **South County Art Association**,

the **Triangle Club**, and the **Kingston Players**. In every meeting, every gathering, her presence was constant—a quiet but unwavering force for good.

Through it all, she remained a teacher at heart. In January 1930, she presented a paper to "The Every Tuesday Club" titled *"Personal Recollections of Greece."* Those who heard it likely glimpsed the depth of her intellect and the breadth of her world—a woman of learning who never lost her sense of wonder.

Her home, the **old Baker-Green cottage**, became once again what it had been for generations—a place of conversation, creativity, and light. Children came there for Scout meetings; friends gathered on the porch in summer; local leaders met to plan hospital fundraisers and art exhibits. The house on South Road was no longer just an architectural relic—it was alive again, its spirit renewed by a woman who understood the meaning of belonging.

As the years passed, Marion began to spend winters in **Florida**, with her sister and brother-in-law, **Mr. and Mrs. Charles P. Tuttle**, who often visited her in Kingston as well. Yet her affection for Rhode Island never waned. Even as age drew her southward, her summers in Kingston remained her most cherished season—a return to the rhythm of the countryside, to the home that had become her own small sanctuary.

She died in **February 1944**, in Clearwater, Florida. Her obituary, published in the *Narragansett Times*, reflected the same warmth and dignity with which she had lived: a teacher, a friend, a benefactor—a woman whose "delightful personality" had once been heralded now remembered as part of the town's living history.

"Miss Marion Stone," one might imagine a narrator reflecting, *"did not inherit Kingston's past. She chose it—and in choosing it, she renewed it. In her generosity, her curiosity, and her unassuming grace, she became the bridge between centuries—the teacher who reminded her adopted village that the soul of a place is measured not by what it remembers, but by what it continues to inspire."*

Today, the story of **Marion R. Stone** lingers in the same quiet way she lived: in the laughter once heard through open windows, in the echo of meetings held in her parlor, and in the

knowledge that even as families pass and names fade, the love of one person for a small New England village can keep its heart beating still.

Circa 1944
Lucy S. Tuttle inherited upon the death of her sister Marion R. Stone

"The Keeper of Memory: Lucy S. Tuttle and the Gentle Inheritance"

"History rarely ends in a single moment—it softens, passes quietly, and is taken up by another pair of hands. When Marion Stone's life came to its close in 1944, the house on South Road did not fall silent. It waited, as it always had, for someone to tend its light. That someone was her sister, Lucy."

In the spring of **1944**, with the passing of **Miss Marion R. Stone**, the old **Baker-Green Cottage**—once affectionately called *The Crow's Nest*—passed into the care of her sister, **Lucy S. Tuttle**. The transfer was not merely a matter of inheritance. It was the continuation of a story that had already stretched across generations—a story of stewardship, of quiet devotion, and of women who believed deeply in the worth of community.

Lucy, like her sister, was born into the New England temperament: modest, educated, and self-contained. She had shared in Marion's circle of friendship, hospitality, and civic mindedness. Her home, too, was a haven for conversation, generosity, and quiet reflection. When Lucy inherited the Kingston property, she also inherited the **legacy of care** that her sister had built—the gatherings of local clubs, the laughter of Girl Scouts, the hum of civic meetings that had once filled the old rooms with life.

The **Narragansett Times** had long chronicled the presence of both sisters in South County life. Together, they were part of a generation of women who, though often overlooked in the formal ledgers of history, formed the **moral and cultural backbone** of small-town New England. They volunteered, they taught, they gave. They tended not just to buildings or institutions, but to the social fabric itself.

Lucy's inheritance, then, was not one of wealth or possession—it was one of **continuity**. In caring for the home, she carried forward the spirit of her sister's work and the memory of those who had come before: the Potters, the Greenes, the Nichols, and all those whose footsteps had passed over its worn threshold.

If Marion had been the teacher and organizer, Lucy was the **keeper of memory**. She maintained the house through the uncertain years that followed the Second World War, preserving both its structure and its meaning. The old beams, the cellar oven, the lilacs by the gate—all remained, quiet witnesses to a lineage of steadfastness and grace.

There are few records of Lucy's life in the years after 1944. Perhaps that is fitting. Some legacies are not written in newspapers or carved in stone; they exist in the steadiness with which one tends what has been entrusted. Lucy's stewardship ensured that the home—its walls full of echoes, its hearth still warm—endured into a new century.

"The story of Lucy S. Tuttle," a narrator might say, *"is the story of a sister's devotion and a family's final promise—to remember, to preserve, to keep the lamp burning in the window of an old Rhode Island house."*

In her hands, history did not fade. It settled, gently, into safekeeping.

CIRCA 1944
Professor and Mrs. Russel Albright

"The Professor's House: Russell and Ruth Albright and the Quiet Postwar Years"

"Some houses breathe with the rhythm of their time—changing, as the world beyond their walls changes. After the passing of Marion Stone in 1944, the old Baker-Green Cottage found itself at another turning point. Its new occupants brought not the legacy of family inheritance, but the hum of a new era: the voices of a university town coming into its own."

In **September 1944**, the **Narragansett Times** recorded a brief note—easy to overlook among the columns of war news and homecoming announcements. It read simply that **Professor and Mrs. Russell Albright** were now living in the former home of **Miss Marion R. Stone**. The line was modest, almost incidental. Yet it marked the beginning of a quiet but meaningful chapter in the life of the old house on **South Road**.

"Professor Albright," as the paper called him, was in truth **John Grover Albright**, a man whose life reflected the optimism of postwar America. He had joined the **University of Rhode Island faculty in 1943**, in the midst of World War II—a time when universities across the country were reshaping themselves to meet a changing world. As a **professor of physical education**, he represented a new kind of scholarship, one that saw the human body not just as a vessel for work, but as a reflection of discipline, vitality, and balance.

In the years that followed, Kingston itself began to change. The war ended, and the **GI Bill** brought waves of students—young men who had seen too much of war, now returning to classrooms in search of peace, purpose, and possibility. The university expanded. The town grew livelier, its rhythms blending academic energy with the enduring calm of its old village streets.

And through it all, the **Albrights' home** stood quietly on South Road, a bridge between eras. Once the gathering place of reformers, artists, and benefactors, it now welcomed professors and scholars, their presence marking the rise of a new Kingston—one defined less by lineage and more by learning.

It is easy to imagine the scene: the professor walking the shaded lanes toward campus, the crisp morning air of Rhode Island filling his lungs; his wife tending the garden, greeting neighbors who passed by the gate. The house, once alive with the chatter of Marion Stone's civic circles, now filled with the calm discipline of academic life.

The Albrights' years in Kingston, from **1944 to the mid-1950s**, reflected a broader American story—the **transition from wartime endurance to postwar renewal**. They were part of the generation that rebuilt quietly, through classrooms, homes, and families, ensuring that the lessons of the past would not be lost in the rush toward the future.

"For more than a century," a narrator might say, *"the house on South Road had been a mirror of its inhabitants—the bakers, the philanthropists, the teachers, each shaping it in their own image. In the years of Professor and Mrs. Albright, the home found its reflection in knowledge, in health, and in the quiet dignity of education."*

By **1955**, records suggest that Professor Albright had moved on from the university, but his years in Kingston left their mark. The old Baker-Green Cottage—by then well into its second century—had once again served its purpose: to shelter, to inspire, to stand as a witness to lives of meaning.

"The Albrights' time in the house was brief," the voice might conclude, *"but it was emblematic of a moment in history when the world was healing—when the promise of learning and the calm of small-town life were enough to make an old house feel young again."*

In their care, the cottage endured—not as a relic of the past, but as a home in tune with its time, its spirit steady as the world around it found its peace.

Circa 1949
Frederick and Dorothy C. Van Benschoten from Lucy S. Tuttle. Land on South Road. (SK Land Evidence Book 66-69)

"The Van Benschotens: A New Chapter on South Road"

"Every generation inherits more than land. It inherits the stories, the labor, and the quiet hopes of those who came before. When Frederick and Dorothy Van Benschoten purchased the old property on South Road in 1949, they did not merely buy a home—they accepted a guardianship, a promise whispered through the centuries."

By the late 1940s, Kingston was a town poised between memory and modernity. The war had ended, and America was awakening to a new era of prosperity and change. Yet on the shaded curve of **South Road**, time still seemed to move at an older rhythm. Stone walls held their ground, lilac bushes bloomed as they had for generations, and the house once known as *The Crow's Nest*—the former **Baker-Green Cottage**—stood as it had since the early 19th century, a steadfast witness to all who had passed through its doors.

It was into this enduring landscape that **Frederick and Dorothy C. Van Benschoten** arrived, acquiring the land from **Lucy S. Tuttle** in **1949**. The deed described it simply: "Land on South Road, bounded southerly on the Potter Memorial Cemetery, northerly and westerly by land of George W. Van Benschoten." But beneath those words lay a deeper meaning—a continuation of stewardship that had stretched from the Potters to the Stones, and now to the Van Benschotens.

Frederick and Dorothy brought with them the quiet optimism of postwar America. They represented a generation eager to build and to preserve—a generation that saw history not as something fixed behind glass, but as something to be lived within. Their arrival marked a turning

point in Kingston's story, when old homes found new caretakers and tradition was carried gently into the future.

In their care, the **old Baker-Green cottage**—once home to bakers, teachers, and philanthropists—remained what it had always been: a place where community, memory, and belonging intertwined. The rhythms of their life became part of the town's own neighbors visiting at the gate, laughter drifting through open windows, the smell of lilacs in early summer.

The Van Benschotens' presence also symbolized a bridge between eras. The Potters and Stones had represented the old Rhode Island gentry—rooted in education, public service, and quiet philanthropy. The Van Benschotens, by contrast, reflected the new postwar families of civic spirit and middle-class prosperity—rooted not in inherited privilege, but in diligence, decency, and affection for place.

In them, Kingston found what it always seemed to need: caretakers who could hold the past with one hand and the future with the other.

The land itself told their story. To the **south**, the **Potter Memorial Cemetery**, where the markers of the old family stood sentinel among the grass. To the **north and west**, the holdings of their own kin, forming a living continuity along South Road.

For the first time in centuries, the property's borders spoke not of division, but of unity—a small, enduring connection between those who had built Kingston's past and those who would shepherd its next chapter.

"By 1949, the age of powdered wigs and saddle-makers had long passed. But the ideals that built those lives—industry, faith, and community—had found new hands. The Van Benschotens took their place in the old lineage, not as heirs, but as stewards. And the story of the Baker-Green cottage, now centuries old, continued—its windows still facing the South Road, its heart still beating quietly in the rhythm of the town."

In their keeping, **the old house endured**, not as a monument to the past, but as a home—still warm, still full of life. And so, the story of Kingston's most beloved cottage carried on, another chapter written in the long book of a village that never quite let go of its history.

Circa 1954
John A. Calorulli and Jane Loomis Taft Calorulli from Frederick and Dorothy C. Van Benschoten. (SK Land Evidence Book 75-288)

"The Artists of South Road: John and Jane Calorulli and the Spirit of Renewal"

John A. Calorulli and Jane Loomis Taft Calorulli (Right and Center)

"History has a way of returning home—not in the form of grand armies or gilded names, but through the quiet lives of those who love a place enough to keep it alive. In 1954, that return came to South Road in the form of John and Jane Calorulli."

In the **summer of 1954**, the deed changed hands once again. **John A. Calorulli** and **Jane Loomis Taft Calorulli** purchased the old home on **South Road** from **Frederick and Dorothy Van Benschoten**. The record was simple — *"land and buildings on South Road, bounded southerly by the Potter Memorial Cemetery, northerly and westerly by land of George W. Van Benschoten."* But the story behind those lines was anything but ordinary.

For nearly two centuries, the house had been a witness to Rhode Island's transformation—from the age of farms and court days to the quiet pulse of postwar life. And now, in the middle of the 20th century, it found new keepers whose lives reflected
both **sacrifice** and **artistry**, **duty** and **renewal**.

John Calorulli, born in **1918** in South Kingstown, came of age during one of the most turbulent chapters in modern history. When war engulfed the world, he joined the **United States Navy**, serving his country with courage and conviction. He was **wounded in action**, one among countless young men whose bravery was written not in headlines, but in quiet resilience upon returning home. In Kingston, John carried those experiences not as burdens, but as reminders—of what endures, and what must be rebuilt.

His wife, **Jane Loomis Taft Calorulli**, born in **1923**, carried her own light into the community. An **art teacher in the Chariho School District**, Jane devoted her life to creativity and education, shaping young minds with patience and imagination. Her classroom, like the home she shared with John, was a place where curiosity thrived and beauty found purpose. In a time when postwar America leaned toward industry and growth, Jane reminded her students—and her town—that art was not a luxury, but a way of seeing the world whole again.

Together, the Calorullis embodied a new kind of American story. They were part of a generation that had survived war and returned home to build peace—brick by brick, classroom by classroom, garden by garden. Their presence on South Road was not just a continuation of ownership, but a quiet act of restoration. They gave the old **Baker-Green Cottage**, now softened by time, a new chapter filled with laughter, color, and purpose.

One can imagine Jane painting in the afternoon light that filtered through the old windows, her brush capturing the textures of Kingston's stone walls and maple trees. And perhaps John, tending to the garden or mending a fence, found in the land a kind of healing—a way to make peace with what he had seen overseas.

Their home, bordered by the **Potter Memorial Cemetery** to the south, stood as both symbol and sanctuary—a bridge between the living and the remembered. The graves of the Potters, the shadows of the Bakers and Stones, the echoes of centuries—all seemed to watch as the Calorullis carried the legacy forward, not with reverence alone, but with vitality.

"In John and Jane Calorulli," a narrator might reflect, *"the old Kingston spirit found new form. In the hands of a veteran and an artist, the past was not merely preserved—it was reimagined. Theirs was a life of quiet endurance, of service and creation, rooted in the belief that even the oldest places can be renewed through love and work."*

When John passed away in **2007**, and Jane followed in **2011**, the house they had tended so faithfully had already outlasted generations. Yet it bore their imprint—a life of courage, compassion, and craft.

"The house on South Road has always belonged to those who understood its soul," the voice might conclude. *"From the bakers and builders to the teachers and soldiers, each generation added its own verse. And in the story of John and Jane Calorulli, we find one of the gentlest—the story of how art and memory can make a home not just endure, but sing."*

Circa 2008
Judith C. Taft, from her sister, Jane L. Calorulli (SK Land Evidence Book 1336-783)

"The Keeper of Memory: Judith C. Taft and the Home That Endured"

Judith Taft, Left

"By the time Judith Taft returned to Kingston, more than two centuries had passed since the first stones of the old house on South Road were laid. The world had changed beyond recognition, but within those familiar walls—weathered, steadfast, and filled with echoes—time seemed to hold its breath."

In **2008**, **Judith Congdon Taft** became the next caretaker of the Baker-Green Cottage, inheriting it from her sister, **Jane Loomis Taft Calorulli**. The transfer, recorded in **South Kingstown Land Evidence Book 1336-783**, marked not just the continuation of a family line, but the preservation of a legacy. The house, already centuries old, had found its way into the hands of someone who understood the gravity—and the grace—of history.

Judith was born in **1927**, in the same South Kingstown that had nurtured so many generations before her. But unlike most, she spent much of her life immersed in another era entirely working in **Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia**, the nation's great living museum of early American life. There, amid cobblestone streets and candlelit workshops, she came to know the rhythm of the past intimately: the weight of hand-hewn wood, the cadence of old words, the enduring value of craftsmanship and tradition.

It was fitting, then, that she should one day return to a home that itself was a piece of living history. The Baker-Green Cottage was no museum piece; it was a vessel of memory, containing within its beams the stories of bakers, soldiers, teachers, and dreamers. In Judith, the house found

a kindred spirit—someone who understood that history is not static, but alive; that preservation is not about freezing time, but about allowing the past to breathe through the present.

Her life in Kingston was one of **quiet devotion**—to family, to scholarship, and to remembrance. A **passionate genealogist**, Judith devoted countless hours to tracing the intricate threads that bound generations together, preserving the stories of the **Taft, Congdon, and allied families** with the same care one might give to fragile heirlooms. Her research, detailed and loving, became part of the community's collective record—a reminder that even ordinary lives, when remembered, form the architecture of history.

And so, in the early 21st century, the old cottage remained what it had always been: a sanctuary of continuity. While the modern world hurried on—digital, restless, ever-shifting—Judith's home stood quietly beneath the same sky that had witnessed the comings and goings of farmers, Quakers, and revolutionaries. The whisper of the wind through its eaves might well have carried the voices of all who came before.

"By the time Judith Taft came to live there, the house was more than a relic. It was a keeper of memory. Its walls remembered the heat of the baker's oven, the voices of scholars and artists, the laughter of children long grown. And in her care, it continued to do what it had always done … stand, simply and gracefully, against the slow march of time."

When Judith passed away in **2022**, she left behind not only the house she had loved, but also the records, recollections, and research that would keep the story of Kingston alive for generations to come. Hers was a legacy not of grandeur, but of **stewardship**—the quiet heroism of those who choose to remember, to preserve, and to pass along what time might otherwise forget.

"In Judith Taft," the voice might conclude, *"the long history of South Road found one of its gentlest custodians. Hers was a life devoted to the past—not to escape the present, but to honor the truth that every moment we live is part of a greater story. And in that house, still standing, still breathing, her spirit endures."*

Circa 2013
The England Family from Judith C. Taft (SK Land Evidence Book 1513-461)

"When the House Breathed Again: The Englands of South Road"

"Some houses never truly grow old—they simply wait. Through long winters of stillness, through seasons when their windows darken and their rooms fall silent, they hold their breath. They wait for laughter to return, for footsteps to echo again on the worn floors. And in time, if they are lucky, love comes back to them."

By the early years of the **21st century**, the **Baker-Green Cottage** had grown quiet once more. For several years after the passing of **Judith C. Taft**, its doors stayed closed, and its windows watched the world in silence. The house, once filled with the hum of conversation and the scent of baking bread, the warmth of family and friendship, now stood as an empty sentinel—a witness to its own endurance.

But in **2013**, history, as it so often does in Kingston, turned a gentle circle. The deed was signed in **South Kingstown Land Evidence Book 1513-461**, transferring ownership of the old home on **South Road** to a new family—the **Englands**. And once again, the house awakened.

The **England Family**—**Christopher Sr.**, **Emily Jane**, and their four children, **Maxwell**, **Madeline**, **Henry**, and **Chris Jr.**—did more than move into an old house. They **revived** it.

Christopher, a **writer**, brought with him the gift of reflection, of turning the ordinary into story. Emily, a **homemaker**, carried the warmth of a hearth wherever she went, the kind of quiet grace that gives a house its soul. Together, they built a life that was both deeply rooted and quietly extraordinary.

In an age when the pace of life seemed ever quickening—when technology and transience defined so much of modern existence—the Englands chose something older, something simpler: **a life built on family, education, and creativity.** They **homeschooled their children** within those walls, transforming the old rooms once again into spaces of learning and imagination. In the living room where Baker Green might once have kneaded his dough, and where generations later Jane Calorulli had taught art, Emily guided her children through lessons in history, science, and life.

Each of the children grew into their own calling, as though the spirit of Kingston itself had whispered it to them. **Maxwell**, drawn to the natural beauty of South County, became a **nature photographer**, his lens capturing the same light that had fallen across those fields for centuries. **Madeline**, a **fine artist**, found her muse in the quiet strength of the house and its stories. **Henry**, a **musician**, gave voice to what words could not say, filling the home once again with melody. And **Chris Jr.**, the youngest, followed a different path—studying **business** and

mastering the **Japanese language**, a discipline he began to learn in that very living room, surrounded by the history of generations who had come before him.

Their life on **South Road** was a continuation of everything that had made the house endure for more than two hundred years. They did not erase the past; they **honored** it. Every beam polished, every board restored, every window carefully tended—each act was a gesture of gratitude. Under their care, the old Baker-Green Cottage regained its vitality, not as a relic of another time, but as a living home, full of warmth, laughter, and love.

"When the Englands came, the house breathed again. The laughter of children replaced the hush of vacancy. The scent of meals and the hum of music drifted through the windows. And for the first time in many years, the home felt alive—not as a museum, but as what it was always meant to be: a place where families grew, learned, and dreamed."

It is easy to imagine the scenes of their days: Morning sunlight spilling across the kitchen table as Emily reads aloud; Christopher writing in the study, the soft scratch of his pen mixing with the sound of birds outside; Maxwell returning from the nearby woods with his camera in hand; Madeline painting by the window, where the light falls just right; Henry at the piano, his notes weaving through the hallways; and Chris Jr., seated in the living room, practicing Japanese vocabulary as the house itself listens—a language ancient in its own way, spoken within walls that had already heard centuries of stories.

The **Englands' restoration** was not merely of wood and plaster—it was spiritual. In their hands, the house became again what it had always aspired to be: a vessel of love, learning, and continuity. They tended it not as owners, but as **caretakers**, knowing that the privilege of home is temporary, but the responsibility of stewardship endures.

"For over two centuries, this small house on South Road has been a reflection of the people who lived within it—bakers, teachers, veterans, artists, families. Each left behind a trace, a kindness, a story. And in the Englands, that lineage found renewal. They did not simply live in the Baker-Green Cottage. They gave it back its heartbeat."

Today, the Englands' time in the home stands as the most recent chapter in a story that began before the United States itself was born. Through their work and their love, the house continues to whisper—to remind us that history lives not only in books or museums, but in the rooms where families gather, in the laughter that fills old spaces, and in the care that binds generations together.

"In the story of the Baker-Green Cottage, the England family represents more than the present—they represent hope. For as long as there are people willing to nurture what time nearly forgets, history will never truly fade. It will live on—in light, in laughter, and in the love that makes a house, once again, a home."

Conclusion:
“The Echo That Endures”

“A house, like a soul, is never truly still. It hums softly with memory—of those who built, who dreamed, who stayed.”

Across more than two centuries, the little house on **South Road** has stood as both witness and participant in the unfolding story of Kingston. It has sheltered revolutionaries and reformers, artisans and educators, bakers and writers, families whose laughter once spilled from its doors into the quiet New England air. Each generation brought with it new purpose, new hope, and new meaning—layering time upon time until the house itself became a living archive of the human spirit.

From **Robert Helme’s** civic steadiness to **John Nichols’** industrious hands; from **Baker Greene’s** sweet-scented legacy to the **Potter family’s** devotion to intellect and reform; from **Marion Stone’s** civic grace to the quiet scholarship of **Judith Taft**, and finally to the renewal brought by **the England family**, every occupant carried forward a thread of the same enduring truth: that homes are not merely built—they are **kept alive** through care, through memory, and through love.

The cottage’s story is, in the end, a chronicle of **America in miniature**—a tale of migration and belonging, labor and leisure, faith and reinvention. Its walls have absorbed the murmurs of a changing nation, from colonial ambition to postwar renewal, from fading hearths to modern light. And through it all, it has remained what it always was: a humble, steadfast reflection of the people who dared to make it home.

As the light shifts across its wooden siding and the seasons turn again, the house stands not as a monument, but as a **promise**—that the past is never truly gone, that memory lingers wherever there is someone willing to listen.

“The story of the Baker-Green Cottage is not finished,” a narrator might say. *“It continues with every voice that remembers, every hand that tends, every heart that calls it home. For as long as love endures within its walls, the echo of all who came before will never fade.”*