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# *the* REVERE HOUSE *Gazette*

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## Lydia Loring and the Loring Family of Massachusetts, Part II

BY SHARON KONG-PERRING

*Part II of a two-part article.*

**F**rom Revolutionary Lorings to Revere Lorings. While Commodore Joshua and Lieutenant Joshua Loring were forced to flee to the Old Country, Joseph (III) and son John (II), continued to aid, and sacrifice, for the cause of independence. During the Battle of Lexington, on April 19, 1775, Joseph (III) testifies that his “Mansion House,” barn, and “Corn House” were “brutally” and “wantonly” burned by the British Regular Troops. Along with a Cider Mill Press and neighboring stone walls, Joseph Loring calculated his losses at the hands of British troops at £720. John (II), buried in the Old Lexington Burying Ground today, was a member of the Continental Army, though whether or not he actually experienced combat is unclear.

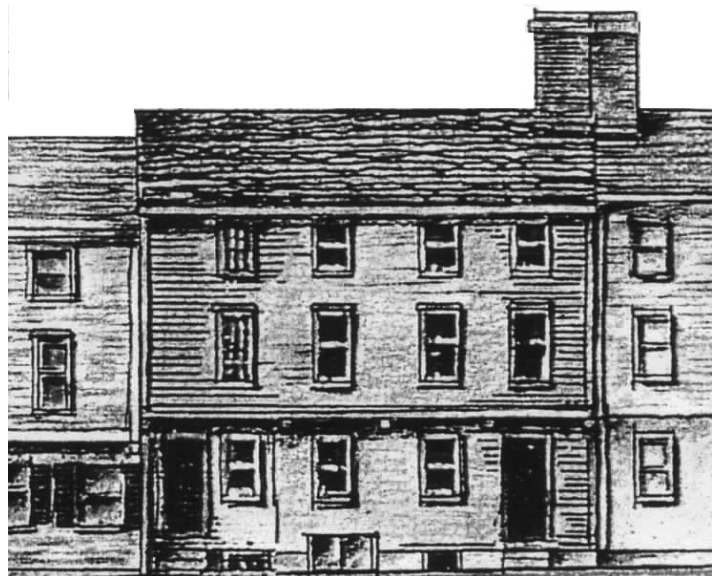
In 1780, well into the Revolutionary War, John Loring welcomed a daughter, Betsey Loring, into the world in the town of Lancaster. While vital records from the town indicate that John’s wife was Elizabeth at the time of Betsey’s birth, it is unclear who Betsey’s mother truly was. Upon Betsey Loring’s death in 1871, her death record lists her mother as a woman named Ann Loring. To further add to the mystery, John Loring’s will shows that another daughter, Ann Merina Howard, was married to the later executor of John’s estate, John Howard.

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**Sharon Kong-Perring** served as research intern at the Paul Revere House during the summer of 2017. She is currently a docent and member of the collections committee at the Loring-Greenough House in Boston as well as an historical interpreter at the Paul Revere House. Recently Sharon was elected to serve on the Loring-Greenough House’s Board of Directors. Sharon graduated this spring with an M.A. in Museum Studies/Museology from the University of Oklahoma and a Certificate in Museum Studies from Harvard University Extension School.

It is unclear if Ann Merina was the eldest daughter of a possible first marriage to the mysterious Ann Loring, while Betsey was Ann’s second daughter. Ann Loring exits the narrative before the birth of John Loring’s third daughter, Lydia in 1786. Lydia’s mother, Elizabeth Howe Loring, is said to have joined the family in 1765; however, in the earliest Loring Family genealogy written in 1917, John Loring is said to have had five other children by Elizabeth who are mentioned in his will as inheritors. In John Loring’s probate records, however, the five other children are not mentioned as inheritors, and Ann Merina Howard, who is in no way mentioned in the 1917 genealogy, is mentioned throughout the will. Further research is needed to truly clarify John Loring’s marriages and children.

After three years in the Continental Army in various regiments, including an artillery group, John Loring returned home to Lancaster (then in the process of being formed into



*The Paul Revere House c. 1865, at about the time Lydia Loring sold it. Conjectural restoration by Frederic C. Detwiler, 1993.*

## *From the Executive Director...*

I am thrilled to report that our Education and Visitor Center has been honored with another award. On May 16, 2018 Secretary of State William F. Galvin and State Historic Preservation Officer Brona Simon presented the Association with a Massachusetts Historical Commission Preservation Award for excellence in adaptive reuse and rehabilitation and preservation our Lathrop Place building. In the award letter Secretary Galvin noted, “the Paul Revere House Education and Visitor Center demonstrates a strong commitment to historic preservation that goes well beyond what is normally expected.” This is the third award for this project: testimony to the hard work of



*State Historic Preservation Officer Brona Simon and PRMA Executive Director Nina Zannieri*

countless architects, engineers, craftspeople, contractors, and consultants along with our incredible board and staff. We are also deeply indebted to our many donors including the Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund which provided significant support.

While the awards are wonderful no part of this effort has been more gratifying than the dramatic improvement this project made on physical access in our courtyard and the Paul Revere House. We no longer have to worry that visitors in wheelchairs or with mobility issues won't be able to have a full experience. We definitely have seen an increase in visitors who before this construction would have had to forego the second floor. How enjoyable it is to field the call from the person who with a note a hesitation in their voice asks, “are there stairs, because they are a problem for me,” because now the answer is yes but you don't have to use them to access the Revere House. What a difference this has made.

Nina Zannieri

the town of Sterling) in 1779. As mentioned above, daughter Betsey was born in 1780 and daughter Lydia in 1786. Named as a tallow chandler and tradesman in his will, John invested in property. He already owned a homestead in Sterling, inherited from his father Joseph (III). Later he purchased a house on Hanover Street in Boston and a dwelling on Ann Street, also in Boston. His most historically significant purchase, however, came in 1803, when he bought a one-hundred-and-twenty-three-year-old home situated at 19 North Square in the North End of Boston. Though his motive for purchasing this property is unknown – why purchase a property that was wholly out of fashion and still made of wood? – it is possible that the Loring family had some ancestral ties to the property. Owned by Paul Revere between 1770 – 1800, the North Square home was two doors away from the Pierce-Hichborn House, owned by Revere's maternal cousins. Linked by marriage to the Hichborn family, John Loring may have been motivated to purchase the property due to this relationship. It was cousin Caleb, who had dined alongside John at the Liberty Tree Tavern on that fourth “birthday” of the Sons of Liberty, who first married a Hichborn daughter, Ann Greely Hichborn. Ann's sister, Frances, then married Caleb Loring's brother Edward. Regardless of whether or not these connections served as his motive, John Loring's decision to purchase the former Revere House in 1803 still impacts the Paul Revere Memorial Association today.

On April 6, 1820, “Mrs. Loring, wife of John” died in Sterling, presumably at the family homestead. John followed in 1824, having signed his will only the year prior. As his will was executed in Suffolk County and not Worcester County, where Sterling was located, John Loring may have taken up residence in any of his Boston homes, although there is no record that he chose the 19 North Square property. John bequeathed his properties to his daughters, Ann Merina Howard, Betsey Loring, and Lydia Loring, with Lydia gaining ownership of the 19 North Square property.

Not much is known about the two younger Loring sisters who remained spinsters for life and carried the Loring family name until their deaths. Their lives seemed to parallel each other – no husbands, ownership of a father's property, and relative silence socially. Neither kept diaries – or at least no diaries have been found – and no correspondence to or from the sisters seems to have survived. Save for a brief mention by Christ Church (also known as Old North Church) of a \$5,000 donation made by a Lydia Loring, there seems to be very little documentation about the Loring sister who was connected to the Paul Revere House. Even the gift seems odd, as Old North Church claims it was a beneficiary in 1879, twenty-two years after Lydia Loring died (Betsey far outlived her). Further research is needed to clarify the social lives of the Loring sisters.

John Loring's will was finally executed in 1833, nine years

after his death. Along with the North Square property, Lydia was bequeathed the “homestead in Sterling.” Property rich, it seems Lydia set up her home at the Sterling property rather than the North Square home. In 1835, only two years after her father’s accounts were settled, Lydia sold the back lot of the North Square property, what would have been Paul Revere’s backyard, to house builders Jonathan Robinson and John Perkins. The set of four homes that Robinson and Perkins built at 5-8 Lathrop Place supplied accommodations for an influx of immigrants in the nineteenth century. The Paul Revere Memorial Association’s Education and Visitor Center, opened in December 2016, is located in the newly renovated 5-6 Lathrop Place.

Lydia Loring died on October 29, 1857 from influenza, at the age of 71.\* It is presumed she had made her Sterling homestead her permanent residence since Massachusetts Vital Records at the time name her a citizen of Sterling, rather than Boston. She died without a will; her brother, Daniel Loring, and Daniel’s son Charles Hollan Loring requested a man by the name of William D. Peck to serve as administrator of Lydia’s property. Daniel, three years Lydia’s senior, had inherited the rest of the Loring properties except those with “certain specifications” (i.e. the land bequeathed to Betsey and Lydia) from his father John in 1833. Though Peck was granted the petition to be made administrator in July 1858, the resulting inventories and eventual fate of her property (both land and objects) are not included in the small summaries located in the Massachusetts Archives. Therefore, to truly understand how her property was ultimately divided, further research will need to be done in the state judicial archives.

Betsey Loring served as witness to the sale of 19 North Square’s back lot property in 1835. In 1871, at the age of 91, Betsey died of dysentery. Death records reflect that she was only 81 at the time of her death; however, when matched with her baptismal record, it indicates she was in fact ten years older at that time. George D. Dodd’s petition to become administrator of Betsey’s estate repeatedly refers to Betsey as “late of Boston, spinster.” George Dodd’s relationship to Betsey or Lydia is unknown; however, he is listed as a merchant of Boston in Betsey Loring’s probate records. Her probate case was heard in Suffolk County, Massachusetts, so unlike her sister, Betsey seems to have taken up residence in Boston; her death record names 27 Charter Street in the North End of Boston as her residence at the time of her death.

Despite the limited knowledge of Lydia and Betsey Loring’s lives, it is undisputed that the sister’s actions greatly affected the Paul Revere House and Paul Revere Memorial Association. Without Lydia’s decision, no matter what the motivation, to sell the North Square property’s back lot, the 1835 buildings

that flank the courtyard of the museum today might not be in existence. As two of the buildings now house a modern Education and Visitor Center with amenities that make the museum wheelchair accessible and provides a venue for additional revenue in the gift shop, Lydia’s legacy with the Paul Revere House is one of modernization and utilization. An atypical woman of her time, electing not to marry and owning several properties in Boston and Sterling, Lydia not only contributed to the urbanization of the North End, but also the landscape of the modern Paul Revere House Museum.

In terms of early Massachusetts history, the Loring family, through generations, helped shape the early events of the Revolutionary War. Lorings helped organize militias in the country towns of Middlesex County, served in said militias, and provided testimony for the Battle of Lexington. On the other side, the Loring family also facilitated the Crown’s wishes in the colonies, tying themselves personally to a Coercive Act – Commodore Loring remaining a member of the controversial Governor’s Council in spite of considerable pressure to resign. Some disgruntled Englishmen might even say the infamous Mrs. Elizabeth Lloyd Loring cost Britain the war, distracting the good General Howe from focusing



*Portrait of Hannah Loring, 1763, by John Singleton Copley. Hannah was the daughter of Commodore Joshua Loring and the sister of Lt. Joshua Loring, both Loyalists at the time of the American Revolution. Hannah later married John Winslow, a cousin of John Singleton Copley. Courtesy, Detroit Institute of Arts, USA. Gift of Mrs. Edsel B. Ford, in memory of Robert H. Tannahill/Bridgeman Images.*

\*However, Lydia sold the Paul Revere House in 1867 according to Suffolk Deed 906:253. This is one of many contradictions and mysteries surrounding the life of Lydia Loring that will need further research to resolve.

# “Seldom Has the Tomb Closed Upon a Life So Honorable and Useful”: The 200th Anniversary of Paul Revere’s Death

At 11:00 am on May 10, 2018, the Paul Revere Memorial Association and other area organizations gathered at the back of the Granary Burying Ground in downtown Boston on a warm spring day to commemorate the passing of Paul Revere exactly two-hundred years ago to the day. Following the USS Constitution Color Guard and stirring music by Patriot Fife and Drum, PRMA Executive Director Nina Zannieri spoke about the legacy of Paul Revere and introduced each of the participants in turn. PRMA Research Director Patrick M. Leehey read Revere’s death notice and excerpts from his obituary.

Revere descendants Paul Revere, Jr., Paul Revere III and Kira Revere, along with Grand Master of the Massachusetts Grand Lodge Paul Fulton Gleason and Commander John A. Benda of the United States Navy, set a wreath beside the stone marking Paul Revere’s tomb. Nina Zannieri then recognized other time-honored friends in attendance including Rangers from National Parks of Boston; Tom Sullivan from Boston Parks and Recreation; Kelly Thomas from the Burying Ground Initiative; Suzanne Taylor from the Freedom Trail Foundation; Thomas Appleton and Miguel de Braganca from the Lodge of St. Andrew; and Mary Ellen Grogan,



*Clockwise from top left: Revere grave marker and memorial wreath; Nina Zannieri; Grand Master Paul Fulton Gleason, Paul Revere III, Kira Revere, Paul Revere, Jr., and Commander John A. Benda.*

Regent of the Paul Revere Chapter of the DAR. Nina concluded the ceremony with these words:

“At some point or another we all will wonder how we will be remembered. Though we can’t know Paul Revere’s thoughts on this, he did not know how blessed he had been. That his contemporaries remembered him as an innovative craftsman, enterprising businessman, public-spirited citizen, and devoted family man would of course have pleased him and I believe he would have been thrilled but surprised by how strong and enduring his legacy has become.”

At 11:45, led by King’s Chapel, the bell fabricated by Paul Revere in 1816, bells around New England tolled the notice of his passing 200 years ago today (all were either made by Revere – date indicated – or have a connection to him): Old North Church (the peal of English-made bells rung by Paul Revere and six of his friends when they were boys); Old South Meeting House (made in 1801 for the Westborough Meeting House, acquired in 2011 from the town of Westborough); Groveland Congregational Church, Groveland, MA (1795); First Congregational Church, Falmouth, MA (1796); Old South Presbyterian Church, Newburyport, MA (1803); First Parish Church, Wayland, MA (1814); and First Congregational Church, Princeton, MA, (1815). ❖

on the battles that lay ahead. In Boston, a Loring Street can be found in South Boston; John and Lydia Loring are mentioned in museum labels at both the Paul Revere House and the Old State House; and those with the Loring last name live throughout the metropolitan area. They made their mark on history, are mentioned here and there throughout, so their impact steadfastly remains. ❖

*One of a pair of silver sauce ladles, probably owned by John Henry Loring, a descendant of John Loring II (1742 – 1824). The ladle was probably made 1839-1840 by Edinburgh goldsmith David Hodges and may have been part of John Henry Loring’s wife Ann Trafton’s wedding silver service. Image courtesy Heather Anne Henderson.*



**Author’s Note:** Though this piece has been researched to the best of my ability, Lydia and Betsey Loring remain mysterious figures. The 1917 Charles Pope genealogy and subsequent 1970s Edward Loring genealogy often presented facts that clashed with other sources of information, like land deeds, vital records, donation receipts, and censuses. As discussed in the article, Betsey’s parentage is still elusive, as are the whereabouts of Betsey and Lydia’s other siblings at the time of their father’s death. Even Lydia’s death date is up for debate, as vital records clash with a transactional land deed concerning the Paul Revere House and its property as well as a donation to Old North Church (unless she was controlling her assets from beyond the grave). These kinds of conundrums and mismatched facts and figures are not new to historical research, so I took this opportunity to tell the story of a woman, though the sources are limited and sometimes quite inexplicable, whose actions impacted the Paul Revere Memorial Association far more than she could have known.

**Sources (for Parts 1 and 2):** 1855 Massachusetts State Census; dwelling 918, family 91, lines 17-18; Boyd, Eva Phillips. “Commodore Joshua Loring, Jamaica Plain by Way of London.” *Jamaica Plain Historical Society (1959)*; “Christ Church, Salem Street, 1723: A Guide,” *Massachusetts State College Library, Box 5980, File B6CS*; Crawford, Mary Caroline. “The Loring Family.” In *Famous Families*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1930; Davidson, Stephen. “The Redcoat and the Scarlet Woman, Part 2.” *Loyalist Trails UELAC Newsletter*, no. 31 (2010); *Death Certificate for Betsey Loring, 21 July 1871. Death Record #41 (for date July 21, 1871); Death Certificate for Lydia Loring, 29 October 1857. Death Record #33 (for date October 1857); Deed of Sale from Lydia Loring to Johnathan Robinson and John Perkins, 1835, Suffolk County, Massachusetts; “From our Cabinet.” Massachusetts Historical Society; Gilman, Benjamin Ives. “The Museum Bulletin.” *Museum of Fine Art*, vol. 2 (1903); James, Alice and Leon Edel, *Diary of Alice James*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1894; Loring, Edward P. and Charles Henry Pope, *Loring Genealogy*. Cambridge: Murray & Emery Company, 1973; Nourse, Henry S. ed. *The Birth, Marriage, and Death Register, Church Records, and Epitaphs of Lancaster, Massachusetts 1643-1850*. Lancaster: W.J. Coulter, 1890; O’Brien, Peter. “A Brief History of Jamaica Plain.” *Jamaica Plain Historical Society*; Palfrey, William. “An Alphabetical List of the Sons of Liberty Who Divid at Liberty Tree, Dorchester.” *Massachusetts Historical Society*; Pratt Tampley, Frances, ed. *Vital Records of Sterling, Massachusetts (Sterling: Sterling Historical Commission, 1976; Probate Court Documents for Betsey Loring, 1871, Suffolk County, Massachusetts, File No. 59126; Probate Court Documents for John Loring, 1833, Suffolk County, Massachusetts, File No. 30310; Probate Court Documents for Lydia Loring, 1857, Worcester County, Massachusetts, Docket Book 1731-1881; “Public Faces, Private Lives.” The History Project; Pope, Charles Henry, and Katharine Peabody Loring, *Loring Genealogy*. Cambridge: Murray & Emery Company, 1917; Windsor, Justin ed. *Memorial History*. Boston: Ticknor & Company, 1881.**



# Summer Events

AT THE  
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AND VISITOR CENTER

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We are thrilled to welcome you to our site this summer: our gardens are thriving, our staff work hard to engage visitors, and our special events cover many aspects of life in Colonial Boston. Discover how cloth was made, what kinds of music people danced to, and learn more about lives of real people who lived alongside Paul Revere. All events are included with the price of admission: adults \$5, seniors and college students \$4.50, children 5–17 \$1. Members and North End residents admitted free at all times. In summer, the Revere House is open daily, 9:30 am–5:15 pm.

**June 2 A Visit with Paul Revere, 1:00–3:00 pm.** David Connor brings Boston's favorite patriot vividly to life. Ask him about the details of his midnight ride, inquire about his 16 children, or engage him in conversation about his activities as a member of the Sons of Liberty.

**9 Colonial Basket Weaving, 1:00–3:00 pm.** Rather than in plastic bags or cardboard boxes, colonists stored cheese, chickens, and candles in specially designed baskets. Fred Lawson and Karen Ziino weave and sell reproductions copied from period originals.

**16 Colonial Weaving Demonstration, 1:00–3:00 pm.** Talented craftspeople, Fred and Zoe Lawson demonstrate the art of creating cloth by hand and simple machines. Practice weaving on the small looms provided.

**23 John Adams: The Colossus of Independence, 1:00, 1:45, & 2:30 pm.** Hear from John Adams himself as he discusses his earliest beginnings in Braintree through his days as delegate of the Continental Congress and foreign ambassador. Hear his opinions of his contemporaries and how he longs to be home with his "dearest friend," Abigail, and their children.

**30 Glass Harmonica Concert, 1:00–3:00 pm.** Vera Meyer plays early American melodies on the intriguing instrument that Ben Franklin invented. The ethereal, haunting tones Meyer creates as she places her wet fingers on the rims of rotating glass bowls will mesmerize all who listen!

**July 7 Hammered Dulcimer Concert, 1:00–3:00 pm.** Award-winning musician Dave Neiman plays jigs, reels, and Baroque and Renaissance tunes that Paul Revere and his family may have enjoyed.

**14 Patriot Fife and Drum, 1:00–3:00 pm.** Enjoy a lively concert of music that accompanied colonists as they marched, danced, wooed their beloveds, and waged war. David Vose and Sue Walko provide fascinating insight into each selection they perform.

**21 Rendezvous with Rachel Revere, 1:00, 1:45, & 2:30 pm.** It is May 2, 1775 and Rachel Revere has only heard from her beloved husband Paul once since his legendary midnight ride on the 18th of April. In this program, help Rachel, portrayed by Judith Kalaora, select a plan for getting her family out of town and away from the British regulars in Boston.

**28 Glass Harmonica Concert, 11:00–3:00 pm.** See June 30 for description of event.

**August 4 Colonial Dance Tunes and Love Songs, 1:00–3:00 pm.** In the guise of itinerant musicians, Al Petty and Deirdre Sweeney perform popular 18th-century tunes such as "Mr. Isaac's Maggot" and "Jack's Health" on the penny whistle, flute, fife, and other instruments.

**11 A Revolution of Her Own! 1:00, 1:45, & 2:30 pm.** The captivating story of the first woman to fight in the American Military: in 1782, Deborah bound her chest, tied back her hair, and enlisted in the Continental Army. Experience her arduous upbringing, active combat, and success as the first female professional soldier (in part, due to the assistance of Paul Revere). Length: 30 minutes

**18 Meet Harriet, Daughter of Paul Revere, 1:00, 1:45, 2:30 pm.** Diane Lent brings to life Harriet Revere, one of Paul Revere's 16 children. Join her in reminiscing about her father's dramatic life, the adventures of her many siblings, nieces, and nephews, and growing up in the historic North End.

**25 Rendezvous with Rachel Revere, 1:00, 1:45, & 2:30 pm.** See July 21 for description of event.

## BOSTON HARBORFEST EVENTS *at the Paul Revere House*

**Friday, June 29. A Visit with Paul Revere, 1:00–3:00 pm.** David Connor brings Boston's favorite patriot vividly to life. Ask him about the details of his midnight ride, inquire about his 16 children, or engage him in conversation about his activities as a member of the Sons of Liberty.

**Monday, July 2. Meet Harriet, Daughter of Paul Revere, 1:00, 1:45, & 2:30 pm.** Diane Lent brings to life Harriet Revere, one of Paul Revere's 16 children. Join her in reminiscing about her father's dramatic life, the adventures of her many siblings, nieces, and nephews, and growing up in the historic North End.

**Tuesday, July 3 Colonial Dance Tunes and Love Songs, 1:00–3:00 pm.** In the guise of itinerant musicians, Al Petty and Deirdre Sweeney perform popular 18th-century tunes such as "Mr. Isaac's Maggot" and "Jack's Health" on the penny whistle, flute, fife, and other instruments.

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*Program Assistant* Alexandra Powell

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*The* PAUL REVERE MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

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My additional donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed to support the museum's educational programs.

I don't care to join at this time but would like to make a contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to the museum.

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