

❖ PARDON'S PROGENY ❖

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Winter 2024

*A Publication of
the Tillinghast
Family In
America.*

*“Be Just and
Fear Not”*

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WINTER PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE '24

Welcome to 2024.

Mark your calendars - we are planning a Tillinghast Family reunion for this summer. The dates will be registration on Friday afternoon, July 19th and Saturday morning, July 20th. Saturday afternoon will have some interesting presentations and a re-dedication of the site of the original Tillinghast Burial ground from the mid-1600s. What we see there today is the result of a major upgrade and improvements to the original hillside burial ground. For the past 5 years, we have made numerous needed repairs and improvements which we will celebrate. In the early evening, we plan to serve a Clambake, an indigenous Rhode Island tradition with local seafoods. (options available for allergies or vegetarians). On Sunday there will be a church service in the historic, First Baptist Church in America 1775. Our progenitor, Pardon Tillinghast, was designated the sixth “Elder” in 1681-1718, the pastor for the fledgling congregation.

Later in this newsletter is a list of nearby Providence hotels that are within a twenty minute walk to either the church or the burial ground. I might suggest when making reservations you check the KAYAK website as they often have deals on rates.

www.kayak.com/hotels/providence .

Also please watch the official Tillinghast Society, Inc. website: www.tillinghastsociety.org or the Tillinghast Facebook page for updates and schedules.

Bruce



Bruce Tillinghast, President

Editor's message: What fun it is to prepare for another reunion. In 2001, we invited Tillinghasts to West Virginia to bring the family closer together. The 31 or so who attended were enthusiastic about meeting again and they wanted to go to the family points of origin in the United States, Providence, RI. Two years later we held our first reunion for this generation in that location. In 2011, ten years after the WV gathering, we met in Providence again. In this issue, we are reproducing an article offered in Issue 12 about The First Baptist Church in America which we may visit in July. Please register quickly so we may prepare for you. We look forward to seeing you in Providence in July.

Greta

Hotels within walking distance to Baptist Church and Tillinghast cemetery
20 minutes or less of First Baptist Church in America - 75 No. Main St. & Tillinghast
Burial Ground – 398 Benefit St.

Aloft Providence – aloft-hotels.marriot.com
191 Dorrance – (401) 252-0710

The Beatrice – thebeatrice.com
90 Westminster Street – (401) 443-2960

Courtyard Marriot – marriot.com
32 Exchange Street – (401)272-6111

Graduate Providence – graduatehotels.com/providence
11 Dorrance Street – (401) 421-0700

Hampton Inn & Suites – hamptoninn.hilton.com
58 Weybosset Street – (401) 608-3500

Homewood Suites – providencedowntown.homewoodsuites.com
5 Exchange Street – (401) 942-2001

Hotel Providence – hotelprovidence.com
139 Mathewson Street – (401) 861-8000

Additional Providence Hotels more than 20 minute walk

Dean Hotel - thedeanhotel.com
122 Fountain Street – (401) 455-3326

Hilton Garden Inn Providence – providence.hgi.com
220 India Street – (401) 272-5577

Hilton Providence – providence.hilton.com
21 Atwells Avenue – (401) 831-3900

Omni Providence – omnihotels.com
One West Exchange Street – (401) 598-8000

Providence Marriott – marriottprovidence.com
One Orms Street – (401) 272-2400

Renaissance Providence Downtown Hotel – marriot.com/pvdbr
5 Avenue of the Arts – (401) 919-5000

The First Baptist Church in America

by Greta Tillinghast Tyler (*John Fox⁹, Clark⁸, Henry Clay⁷, Clark⁶ Daniel⁵, Pardon⁴, Philip³, Pardon², Pardon¹*)

The first Baptist Church in America was founded by Roger Williams over 350 years ago in 1638. The present Meeting House, over 200 years old, was erected in 1774 and 1775 at 75 North Main Street in Providence, Rhode Island. When you visit there, you will find a warm welcome and recognition that our Elder Pardon Tillinghast and his progeny were founding fathers and mothers of significance.

My now deceased husband, Jim, and I rushed inside the church on a rainy afternoon in late August 1997. We traveled by motorhome to the area, determined to see some Tillinghast history. Enthusiastic staff members gave us copies of valuable material to take with us and urged us to go at our own pace on a walking tour of the historic Church. Much of the material that follows came from them.

Roger Williams preached a doctrine of Soul Liberty and demanded Separation of Church and State. His ideas threatened the religious and political foundations of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. For this he was tried and convicted of sedition, heresy, and failure to take an oath of allegiance to the Massachusetts Colony. Banished by England and the Colony, he walked through the snow from Salem to Narragansett Bay and spent the winter with Indians. In spring, he crossed the Seekonk River to land he purchased from the Indians and called it "Providence." He gathered the faithful for regular worship in his home. This little congregation became the first Baptist church in America.

Students of Christian denominations will recognize that this Anglican Priest now believed in Believer's Baptism, not infant baptism. He rebaptized his congregation and became the first pastor. Very shortly, Williams began to doubt. He came to believe that all of the rites and practices of the church had become invalid. In 1639, just months after establishing the congregation, he resigned and returned to live with Indians.

The tiny Baptist church lived on without Williams, but it had no meeting house until 1700. Pardon Tillinghast was the sixth pastor of the church. He was admitted to citizenship in Providence, January 19, 1646, at the age of twenty-four. Having united with the church, he was subsequently ordained, and continued in the pastoral office until his death, in 1718. He like others before him gave his service without salary, though he declared that "the laborer is worthy of his hire," and that the church ought to support his successor. Then Governor Joseph Jenckes wrote: "Elder Tillinghast taught, that a pastor might receive, by way of



The First Baptist Church in America

Meeting House Erected 1775
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

contributions, although for his own part he would take nothing." Elder Pardon was a man of some means, and erected with his own hands and at his own expense, in 1700, the first meeting-house occupied by the church. In 1711, he deeded it to the church. The deed is on record in the City Hall. In it the church is called a Six-Principle church. Up to this time, public worship had been held in the homes of the people, or in pleasant weather, under the trees. This house stood in what was then the north end of the town, near the corner of Smith Street and North Main Street, and was used for worship until 1726, when it was replaced by a larger one built on the same site. The second house was about forty feet square. In February 1774, it was resolved to vacate the house of worship which had been occupied for nearly fifty years and to build upon the present site [75 North Main] "a meeting-house for the public worship of Almighty God, and to hold Commencement in." The building of this, the third house, which is still in use, began June 1, 1774. It was dedicated May 28, 1775, midway between the battles of Lexington and Bunker Hill. Modeled after Saint Martins-in-the-Fields in London, which was designed by James Gibbs, a pupil of Sir Christopher Wren, it cost £7,000, some of which was raised by a lottery authorized by the State.

Many changes have taken place over the years, which included installing and removing a window, removing a black-only seating area and improving the baptistry. For the most part, the integrity of the design has been maintained. The second function of the Meeting House has also continued. From the completion of the Meeting House until the present, Brown University has held its commencement exercises here. On graduation day, seniors march down the hill and formally receive their degrees. Then they proceed up the hill to where the rest of the ceremonies take place. This is necessary because the classes are now so large that the students alone pack every seat, leaving no room for friends, family, or faculty in the building.

Tillinghasts who have served First Baptist Church have been many. Some names that speak from early records are: Nicholas Tillinghast, the first clerk, chosen before March 1755; Members and pew owners—Dan, Amelia, Annie, Charles E., Ethel, Frederick H., Harriet C., James E., Joseph, Josie, Lydia, Lydia A., Maria, Mary, Membo, Nicholas, Panthea, Pardon, Rebecca, Savina and Wilbour Tillinghast. In remarks under the membership list, Membo Tillinghast is referred to as colored.

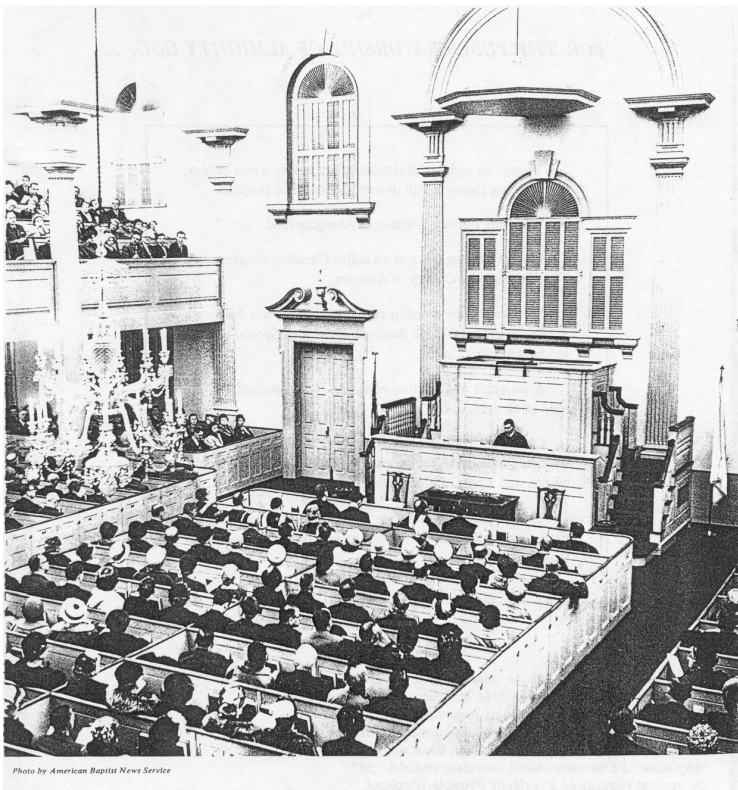


Photo by American Baptist News Service

Joseph Brown was the architect whose handiwork guided the construction of this historic building. He also designed his brother John's house, now home of the Rhode Island Historical Society, his own house at 50 South Main Street, and the Market House in Market Square. It is Brown money that richly endowed this church and the University and thus for whom they are named. In his banquet speech to the Tillinghast Reunion of June 1976, Charles C. Tillinghast, Jr. said, "Today you obtained at least a glimpse of Brown University. Had the Tillinghasts been as quick as the Browns in getting up a fairly modest contribution, it might today be known as Tillinghast University. Two of the incorporators, including the first treasurer, bore our name. Altogether, seven Tillinghasts have served as Trustees. Roughly fifty bearing the Tillinghast name and countless other descendants of Pardon who bore other names have held Brown degrees. The history of Brown and our family are quite intertwined."

Jim and I took a self-guided tour of the

church and were swept back in history. The remarkable spire, paneled seats and fluted columns caught our attention. A spectacular chandelier hangs in the nave, its light reflecting off organ pipes, a historic Bible and the high pulpit. The moment that tied this historic experience together for me was when I discovered their church bulletin that is used every Sunday. On the front is a black and white picture of The First Baptist Church in America. On the back is Historical Notes. The first note is about Roger Williams. The second note says: 1700 Pardon Tillinghast, then pastor, constructed at his own expense a meeting house on a lot he owned on North Main Street.

“The first church in Rhode Island and the First Baptist Church in America,” is written on the bell in the steeple.

This steeple was raised in 3 1/2 days. The spire was put together in sections and hoisted up inside the tower, each higher section being pulled up through the lower ones, like a telescope. The tower frame could act as a derrick.



Much of this text has been taken from material that was copied for me by staff of The First Baptist Church and staff of the Rhode Island Historical Society, for which I am grateful. I have borrowed from the church's walking tour guide; *A History of the Fabric* by Norman M. Isham, FAIA; and from *Historical Catalogue of the Members of the First Baptist Church in Providence, Rhode Island* compiled and edited by Henry Melville King, with the aid of Charles Field Wilcox, 1908.

**Tax exempt donations to
The Tillinghast Society
May be sent to:
Jane Tillinghast Roberts
355 Blackstone Blvd., Apt. #220
Providence, RI 02906**

Tillinghast Family Reunion

The Tillinghast Society invites all people named Tillinghast and those who claim Tillinghast heritage to a family reunion in Providence, RI, on July 19 and 20, 2024.

We will meet at Barker Playhouse in Providence.

Please make separate reservations for the reunion and hotel accommodation. A list of nearby hotels is included in this newsletter.

Please note that you may register for pizza on Friday night and/or clam bake on Saturday. Late registration is allowed at increased cost but be aware that late registration may not guarantee that you will be included in a meal requiring advanced planning.

You need not be a Tillinghast Society member to attend and children under 18 do not pay to register for the reunion. If children will eat meals, they must register for food. We encourage you to register and bring your extended Tillinghast family members.

Please share this invitation with others and urge them to come meet their historic extended family.

For additional information contact Bruce Tillinghast at wbt213@gmail.com or Greta Tyler at gtyler@cascable.net.

Feel free to copy this invitation for others.



The Tillinghast Society Family Reunion 2024 – Providence, RI

The Tillinghast Society, Inc. 2024 Family Reunion will be held in Providence, RI, the historical home of Elder Par-don Tillinghast and descendants. We invite extended family members and all others interested to join us **July 19 – 20, 2024** to share genealogy, family stories and connections.

Please send a copy of this registration form along with your check to cover all activities you have chosen to:

Jane T. Roberts (Make check payable to her)
355 Blackstone Blvd., Apt. #220
Providence, RI 02906
jane32542@cox.net

Registration

I will attend The Tillinghast Society Family Reunion. Please reserve the following events for which I enclose a check.

Confirmation will be sent following receipt of payment.

Name of first person _____
Second Person _____
Address- _____
City, State, ZIP _____
Telephone _____
Email _____

Reservations for Hotel must be made separately.

Where I am staying: _____

Reservation

Registration fee, paid by June 1	\$50.00	_____	(No charge for children under 18 with parents)
Late registration, paid by June 15	60.00	_____	
Registration paid at the door	70.00	_____	
Friday evening pizza meal	10.00	_____	
Saturday clam bake	75.00	_____	
(Circle choice: lobster, chicken)			
Total		_____	