

# ❖ PARDON'S PROGENY ❖

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*A Publication of  
the Tillinghast  
Family In  
America.*

*"Be Just and  
Fear Not"*

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## REUNION 2024 – A SUCCESSFUL GATHERING

*President's report*

Friday July 19<sup>th</sup> – Sunday July 21<sup>st</sup> An energetic group of descendants of Pardon Tillinghast gathered in Providence at the site of the historic Tillinghast Burial Ground. It is the last of what were once many small family burial grounds, before Providence had a common burial ground, North Burial Ground. The Tillinghast Society, Inc. (TSI), hosts of the reunion, was founded in 2015 to address some needed repairs to the site. At previous reunions in 2003 and 2011, we made stops at the site but this reunion centered around the work that has been accomplished there in recent years. We were fortunate to be able to use the neighboring Barker Playhouse for our social events.

Friday afternoon began with registration. We had 52 attendees from 15 states across the US, including 3 couples from San Diego! After mingling and getting to know one another we enjoyed a casual pizza fest. Saturday morning Kent Watkins gave us a glimpse of Pardon's homeland, Sussex, England. This was followed by a re-dedication of the 1890s improvements and an announcement by TSI Vice President Peter Allen of a challenge gift (see below). After a break for lunch and time for self-guided walking tours we got back together for our official photos.



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Photo of Tillinghast descendants with spouses



Just Tillinghast descendants





VP Peter Allen – Re-dedication



TSI - Board L-R Peter Allen, Jeannine Dietz, Kim Tillinghast, Bruce Tillinghast, Jane T. Roberts, Rob Nadeau, Shaw Tillinghast, Greta T. Tyler, Tom Eisenbraun; absent Cara Davis-Jacobson.

Following the photo session we enjoyed a New England Clambake – a new experience for several guests. From clam chowder to full lobster boil with corn on the cob, to watermelon and brownies – DELICIOUS !

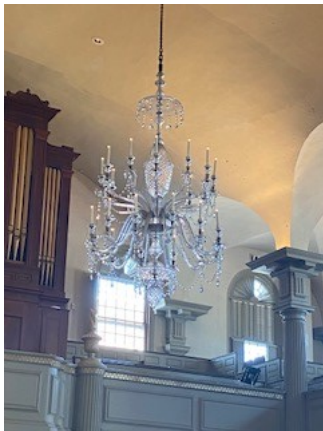
Our evening concluded with a film – “Vampires of New England”. Sarah Tillinghast, one of several children of Stukley and Honor Tillinghast who died from consumption (tuberculosis) and was said to appear to several of her siblings before they died, sitting heavily on their chest, resulted in Sarah being referred to as a vampire. This was typical in many northeastern states before medical practices isolated infections and viruses along with antibiotics and vaccines.

On Sunday morning, a number of us attended the service at the beautiful First Baptist Church in America. Pardon was an “Elder” in the congregation, a term for “lay preachers”, and built the very first Baptist meeting house. It was a “Summer Service”, held outside on the green hillside lawn behind the church. The Rev. Dr. Jamie Washam is pastor and led the service.



**Bo Hartley and Greta Tyler, Melinda and Scott Tillinghast, Betty Rae Swintz, Jody Mincks and Bruce Tillinghast**

The weather was perfect. Following the service our group had a tour of the simple but beautiful interior of the sanctuary. It was built in 1775 as the third Baptist meeting house. At the time it was built, there were still virgin forests and each of the eight, free standing, fluted Tuscan columns were crafted from single trees. Clear glass windows flood the sanctuary with light. For a full history: <https://www.firstbaptistchurchinamerica.org/history/architecture/>



### **A MATCH for MAINTENANCE !!**

At the reunion it was announced that a generous donor has provided funds for a challenge grant and will match \$1000. donations specifically for maintenance of the Historic Tillinghast Burial Ground up to \$10,000. Family members and friends can donate by sending a check to our treasurer, Jane T. Roberts 355 Blackstone Boulevard #220, Providence, RI 02906

**OR**

By donating via our website with PayPal or a credit card.

[www.tillinghastsociety.org](http://www.tillinghastsociety.org)

There were 2 donations at the reunion, with the match we are on our way with \$4,000.

A group of family members can get together with smaller donations that would equal \$1000. For a match. And any small donation to the Perpetual Maintenance Fund would be greatly appreciated.



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## 2024 Reunion Reflections

The best thing about reunions is that they bring together people who are interested in each other. Sometimes we renew old relationships. Sometimes we start new ones. Usually, we build appreciation for those who came before us. And always we appreciate those who took the time to make the event happen. All of this is true for the 2024 Tillinghast Reunion in Providence. We asked participants to share thoughts about our time together. Here is some feedback received.

**Barbara Nearpass** traveled from Cayuga Lake, New York. She especially wanted to link up with cousin **Jody Mincks** from San Diego, seen in the Baptist Church picture. She also met her cousin **Maggie Beaumont** and Mike from Wisconsin. They share their grandmothers, Josephine and Ethyl Tillinghast. And of course, spent time with her brother, **Peter Allen** who is on the board and led our rededication of the gravesite. She had fun showing those western cousins how to eat a whole lobster. She wrote that she was sorry to have missed the First Baptist Church service as her grandmother Ethyl Tillinghast (daughter of James and Maria) had been married there in the late 1800s.



**Betty Tillinghast Swintz** came from the mountains in Breckenridge, Colorado where it had been much cooler than Rhode Island. She also enjoyed meeting the San Diego cousins because she has a daughter there. She sends a special thank you to **Bruce Tillinghast** for bringing us together and for letting her help when she arrived early. And she felt it was good to participate in the rededication of the gravesite. "It brought us together." As for the lobster... "I wasn't very good at getting the lobster opened up." She enjoyed the church service and the talk inside. You'll see her picture inside the church. In Betty's words,



**I loved meeting my relatives at the reunion!!! This was a first time visit to Providence and it certainly felt like HOME ♥ it was good to connect ROOTS and REVIVE what's a part of my heritage. Thankful for ALL those on the board who took the time and effort to prepare for the reunion. I stayed until Sunday and did enjoy the church service. Loved the history of the church. I was sad more relatives left because I would have enjoyed more time with them. I would have liked more time together interacting someway.**

Bo Hartley, husband of **Greta Tillinghast Tyler**, appreciated the appearance of the gravesite which has been under the watchful eye and personal care of Bruce Tillinghast for more than ten years. About three years ago, we brought a redbud tree from West Virginia and stood by while Bruce planted it. It survives along with many more beautiful plants from his garden and formal nurseries.

We give special thanks to **Todd Lawrence**, our genealogist. He was prepared with lineages for all who registered to attend and took time answering questions behind the scenes. His collections are priceless.



Thank you to **Kent Watkins** for presenting his own works and those of Donna Tillinghast Casey who focused on our British heritage and her own family line in Ohio. Kent is in England again and will meet with relatives of John Tillinghast, the brother of Pardon. Maybe we will have an article from Kent after that meeting.



As your editor, I'd like to comment on the hospitality and value of meeting at the Barker Playhouse. They were very accommodating for our various meetings, inside and outside (patio drinks and chat sessions). Bo and I thought caterers did a good job making the lobster boil fit into the space. Bruce again took care of enhancing the evening with pretty tablecloths and decorations. Proximity to the gravesite was definitely a plus.

Tom Eisenbraun and his wife Cat Acree traveled from Nashville, Tennessee. He said, "Cat and I came home ready to move to Providence....it was great to see everyone, and especially great to connect in person. I hadn't realized Jane, Shaw & Rob were in the lineage of Charles C Tillinghast Jr, and the walking tour of the Hope St property with Rob & you & Bo was special, getting recent history & old intermingled. I would definitely be curious to know more about what Jeannine found with that fund for the gravesite-- it sounds like it was exactly what Bruce had been searching for, any kind of record of it existing in the first place. If it hasn't been liquidated, then *somebody's* still on the hook for it, and I would love to see what comes from chasing that down. But all told, a wonderful weekend. Cat & I walked all over town, and would happily do it again. Providence is a truly lovely place.



Betty Tillinghast Swintz, Kim Tillinghast, Judy Tillinghast Guthrie