



MOUNT HOPE FARM

History of Mount Hope Farm



Today, Mount Hope Farm is a non-profit, managed to ensure the preservation of these very special and historic 127 acres of historic buildings, landscape and seaside. The Farm is a nationally recognized Arboretum and offers magnificent gardens, fields and trails.

The Farm runs a 12-room Inn which is open year round---George Washington stayed at the Farm's 1745 Governor Bradford House while his troops camped in the yard. The Farm has several venues available for parties and special occasions, including its Civil War era barn and the picturesque seaside Cove Cabin. The Farm's donkeys, Nigerian dwarf goats, sheep, pheasant and chickens delight visitors.

Mount Hope is the name given to the hills, fields and surrounding lands a short distance from the center of historic Bristol, on the shores of Mount Hope Bay; the town was settled in the 1600s.

Mount Hope was one of the very first names to be applied to any place in North America by both Europeans and the first white men who settled on these shores. For over 10,000 years, Mount Hope was populated by Native Americans of the Wampanoag Tribe.

Prior to European colonization, the Pokanoket were the leadership of the tribal groups that make up the modern-day Wampanoag Nation. However, ethnically Pokanoket groups and their neighbors did not begin to refer to themselves as Wampanoag until after King Philip's War when Pokanoket identity was criminalized in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Thus, while all Pokanoket are Wampanoag (being one tribe among several), not all Wampanoag are ethnically Pokanoket.

Before the European settlers arrived in New England, the 7,000 acres that make up the Town of Bristol were called the Mount Hope Lands and belonged to Massasoit Ousa Mequin, the Sachem of the Wampanoag Nation.

Native Americans and the English Colonists

The first relationship between the Native Americans and the Englishmen, who came to be known as Pilgrims, was peace and friendship.

This largely cleared land where Mount Hope Farm is today, was first discovered by Edward Winslow, who walked here from Plymouth in 1621. Winslow met Massasoit, the ruler of the tribe of Wampanoags, who struck a treaty with the colonists that each group would live peacefully.

Massasoit personally welcomed the Englishmen on the Mayflower to the shores of Cape Cod Bay and participated in the first Thanksgiving in 1621 (some historians indicate that Thanksgiving initially took place at Mount Hope Farm prior to the gathering in Plymouth at a dinner with Winslow and Massasoit).

For more than 40 years, Massasoit was a staunch friend of the colonial settlers. When Roger Williams was forced to flee from his Salem home to Rhode Island in search of religious freedom, he found exile, shelter food and hospitality in the wigwam of Massasoit who at the time was making his headquarters at Sowams (now Warren) and Pokanoket (Mount Hope).

In 1639, Massasoit bought his eldest son, Wamsutta to Plymouth with his younger brother, Metacomet, to renew his pledge of peace with the colonists. Massasoit died in 1662 and shortly before his death, Wamsutta and Metacomet presented themselves to the Plymouth colonial authorities and took the names of Alexander and Philip... both names were taken in memory of Macedonian kings.

At that point, the Wampanoag's domain extended from Narragansett Bay to Plymouth, including much of southern Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

Soon after his brother Alexander died after being taken to Plymouth and forcibly questioned, Metacomet, now King Philip, began making alliances with the Narragansetts and other tribes and the King Philip's War soon began. The first battle took place near Mount Hope Farm in 1675.

King Philip made Mount Hope his base of operations. "King Philip's Chair," a rocky ledge on the mountain, was a lookout site for enemy ships on Mount Hope Bay and a place where Philip met with his warriors. Philip was eventually defeated.

The site where Captain Benjamin Church's men killed King Philip in 1676 is located in nearby Misery Swamp. After King Philip's War, Plymouth Colony, Massachusetts Bay Colony and Rhode Island all claimed this prized territory.

Today, on the land near Mount Hope Farm, an inscribed granite stone marks the spot where King Philip died. The spring is near the elevated rock foundation believed to have been used by King Philip as a chair of state when his warriors were gathered around him, known as King Philip's Seat.



Mount Hope Farm

Mount Hope (originally *Montaup* in *Pokanoket* language) is a wooded promontory on the eastern shore of Bristol, Rhode Island overlooking the part of Narragansett Bay known as Mount Hope Bay.

For those who study early American history, Bristol and Mount Hope Farm have more authenticity than the dubious “Plymouth Rock.” What became Mount Hope Farm was the summer camp of the Pokanoket Tribe of the Wampanoags – the same tribe that greeted the Mayflower in Plymouth in 1620 – so it is likely that the first “Thanksgiving Feast” was held on or near Mount Hope Farm.

Just after King Philip’s war which ended in 1676, King Charles II of England awarded all the Mount Hope Land to Plymouth Colony on January 12, 1680 by a royal grant. On September 14, 1680, the Mount Hope Lands were sold to John Walley, Nathaniel Byfield, Stephen Burton and Nathaniel Oliver, four wealthy Boston merchants, for 1,100 pounds.

Nathaniel Byfield (1653-1733) became the first owner of Mount Hope Farm and adjoining lands. In 1702 Byfield sold Mount Hope Farm, consisting of about 550 acres, to his son-in-law Henry MacIntosh. His granddaughter Elizabeth MacIntosh Royall, the wife of Isaac Royall, Jr., of Medford, Massachusetts, inherited the Farm in 1744.

The Royall family was among the wealthiest and largest slave-holding families in New England. Isaac Royall (1720-1781) began to build a two story, gambrel roof, Georgian mansion shortly after 1745. In 1762, he leased it to Bennett Munroe “to be farmed.” Royall was a prominent loyalist and fled with his family to Halifax, three days before the Battle of Lexington. The State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations then confiscated the Farm in 1776.

During the Revolutionary War, the house was used by Generals Stark and Sullivan and the Farm's fields for an encampment by the 2nd Rhode Island Continental regiment. George Washington visited, stayed in the house and his troops camped outside.

In 1783, the Farm was sold to Brigadier General Nathan Miller of Warren, who shortly thereafter sold it to William Bradford. William Bradford (1729-1808) served Rhode Island and America with great distinction. He was a physician, a lawyer, a member of the colonial Assembly, and the first Deputy Governor (1775-1778). A leading Federalist, Bradford worked for Rhode Island's ratification of the Constitution and became a United States Senator (1793-1797).

In 1797, he returned to the quiet life at Mount Hope Farm, where he died in 1808. Bradford willed Mount Hope Farm to his son John (1768-1834). The Inventory of William Bradford's estate reveals a complex agricultural operation that included 86 sheep, 55 lambs, 16 cows, 1 bull, 7 old and 33 young turkeys and large crops of corn and potatoes.

In 1836 John Bradford's heirs sold Mount Hope Farm to Samuel W. Church (1803-1881), a wealthy Massachusetts grain and flour merchant. Church added the two story, hip-roof, Greek Revival middle section to the house, before moving with his 13 children to the old family farm on Poppasquash in 1854. A kitchen wing was added to the house in the 1890s and the Farm remained in Church ownership until sold by Church heirs to Rudolph L. Haffenreffer II (1874-1954), a Massachusetts brewer, in 1917.



Governor Bradford House, c. 1920

Haffenreffer Ownership

The Haffenreffer family were industrial giants in Rhode Island, owning the Herreshoff Manufacturing Co. from 1932-1942, the Mount Hope Bridge from 1932-1955, and the Narragansett Brewery from 1933-1965. Rudolph F. Haffenreffer II purchased Mount Hope Farm in 1916; the land adjacent to Mount Hope Bay, now part of the land given by the Haffenreffers to Brown University, had been turned into an amusement park in 1898.

They undertook extensive restoration of the Governor Bradford House and developed the Farm, adding extensive gardens and Cove Cabin, the Caretakers Cottage and the North Pasture House as

well as the Civil War era barn, which they relocated to the Farm. Prize Guernsey cattle replaced traditional sheep in the Farm's pastures.



Governor Bradford House decorated for July 4; Bristol has the oldest largest July 4 celebration

Rudolph Haffenreffer II, a collector of Cigar Store Indians, carousel figures and figureheads had a true passion for Native Americans. His large collection of artifacts, housed in the King Philip Museum, became the Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, and was part of the 1955 donation of more than 300 acres of Mount Hope Farm to Brown University. The museum was open to the public for many years and closed after the Station Night Club Fire resulted in changes to fire regulations, which the museum could not meet.

On July 4, 1976 Mount Hope Farm was listed in the National Register of Historic Sites and Places because of its historic and architectural significance.

After the death of Rudolph ("Pete") Haffenreffer (1902-1991) and his wife Virginia, the Mount Hope Trust in Bristol acquired Mount Hope Farm in 1999. The Trust purchased the 127-acre property for \$3.3 million with the support of a \$1.5 million bond issue, approved by the citizens of Bristol with more than 80% margin, a State Open Space grant of \$400,000, a \$500,000 loan from St. Michaels Episcopal Church (that was repaid in 2001 with the help of an angel), and a gift of \$1 million by an anonymous donor.

Today the Farm is owned and operated by the non-profit Mount Hope Trust in Bristol as a 12-room Inn with its land and buildings used for a variety of events and community activities. The Barn accommodates parties of 140 people and weddings and parties at Cove Cabin are enjoyed by groups of

up to 500 people. Sheep, Nigerian dwarf goats, donkeys and chickens make their home at the Farm today. The Farm is supported by memberships, donations, grants and income from the Inn and venue rentals.

The mission of the Trust is to preserve, enhance and protect its historic structures and landscape. It provides visitors with an extraordinary opportunity to enjoy, learn, explore and respect this property. The Farm is a perfect location for parties, family reunions, children's birthday parties, corporate events and weddings. The revenue from rentals, together with rental of the Farm's 12 inn rooms, in addition to donations and membership income support the Farm and preserve its buildings and landscape for future generations.