

Revolutionary Rye

We have it on pretty good account that Paul Revere made more than one ride and that would be to Portsmouth in December 1774. He warned the locals of impending British re-enforcements.. This prompted militia units, including those from Rye, (see our Bicent. and RHS logo) to raid Ft. William and Mary in New Castle and subdue the British there. They stole the gunpowder on gundalows and hid it in the Durham church and elsewhere to be used at Bunker Hill six months later. By 1775 those on the Isles were vulnerable and had to be evacuated including some who rolled their homes off the rocks and ashore to Rye and other destinations. The tension must have been unbearable as only one third of the population supported the break and tavern fights must have been fierce. Were there rum fueled knock down drag out fisticuffs on the town common where the war memorial now stands? If only the walls of the old Garland Tavern could talk. Rye paid dearly in the War for Independence losing 38 men including two blacks. And what of those in town who didn't support the rebellion? Were there Rye Tories who fled to Nova Scotia? What of the fence sitters? How did they explain themselves to the families of the 38 who didn't return and to all the others who did? Rye and the world - turned up side down.