

New Acquisition on Display!

Patty Sawyer Kendall's Chair

by Patricia Kelleher Bartram

Special and grateful thanks to John and Mary Pierce of McLean, VA for their generosity in donating to the Boylston Historical Society Museum, their Patty Sawyer Kendall chair, which ties to the earliest days of Boylston.

One of the most recent acquisitions of the Boylston Historical Society and Museum (BHSM) is a wooden Windsor-backed chair that belonged to Boylstonian Patty Sawyer Kendall (1786-1859). It was very generously donated this spring to the BHSM by Mary and John Pierce of McLean, Virginia. John Pierce is a 5th generation descendent through one of Patty's children. While neither the chair's exact age or maker is known, the Pierces protected and preserved the chair over the last half century. Afraid to put weight on it, the chair was the home of a teddy bear collection for many years. Yet John Pierce remembered his mother always sitting in that chair "while sewing at the old Singer," so it was well used over time.



Windsor-backed Chairs

Patty's chair is a typical Windsor-backed chair. These wooden chairs are characterized by turned spindle backs that are attached to solid, sculpted seats. The chair legs typically splay outwards, but are usually reinforced by h-stretchers and have backs that recline at a slight angle. This chair style originated in England, dating back it is said to 1710 and was named after the English town of Windsor.

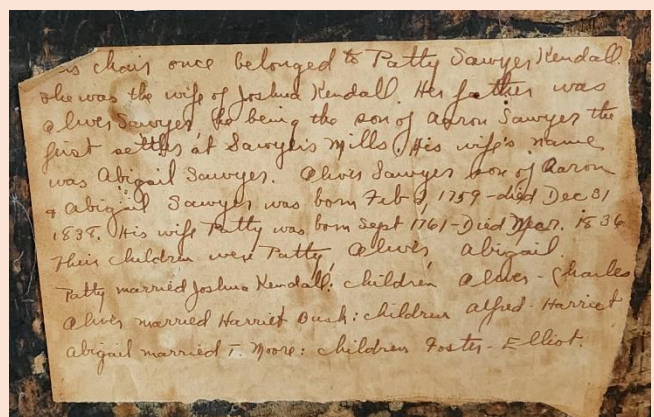
According to legend, King George II was offered a multi-spindled chair to sit on while seeking shelter from a storm at a peasant's cottage. He found it so comfortable, yet impressed by its simplicity, that he had his furniture maker copy it. The style of chair gained favor (as styles do when "endorsed" by royalty) and ultimately crossed the ocean to the American colonies around the 1730s.



**Round-tenoned Spindles
pushed into steam bent arched back**

Patty Sawyer Kendall; Family Ties to Earliest Boylston

Patty Sawyer was born in Boylston on 18 April 1786, the daughter of Oliver Sawyer Sr. (1759-1838) and his wife, Martha "Patty" Hinds (1760-1836). She was the oldest of their three children, with her younger siblings being Oliver Sawyer Jr. (1788-1824) and Abigail Sawyer (1791-1822). Her paternal grandparents were Aaron Sawyer and Abigail Moore.



**Faded handwritten note on bottom of the
Patty Sawyer Kendall chair**
Highlighting family lineage of Patty Sawyer



Chair bottom
Depicting placement of note

Patty was the great grand-daughter of Joseph Sawyer, one of the three English settlers who in the early 1700s re-settled the area of what we know today as Boylston. He was also responsible for the development of the Sawyers Mills area of Boylston, which was a vibrant community of mills and small manufacturing during its heyday. That area now resides under the Wachusett Reservoir.

It was Patty's father, Oliver Sawyer Sr., then residing in Lancaster, Massachusetts, who was among those who petitioned the town of Lancaster to be set off from that town and be annexed to

Shrewsbury, Massachusetts. The request was granted on 23 June 1780 and confirmed by the General Court of Massachusetts - and thus was born the Shrewsbury North Precinct. Six years later, on 1 March 1786, the Shrewsbury North Precinct was incorporated as the Town of Boylston.

With clear family ties dating back before the founding of this community, Patty grew up and at the age of 21 years married fellow Boylstonian Joshua Kendall on 25 May 1807. They went on to have three sons: Oliver Sawyer Kendall Sr. (1808-1881), Charles Sheldon Kendall (1809-1864) and Horace Hastings Kendall (1811-1812). It was their son, Oliver, who in 1905 donated a family photograph album that was the genesis of the 2022 book, *Early Families of Boylston, Massachusetts* (available for purchase at BHSM https://www.boylstonhistory.org/category/Books_For_Sale/c222). It is through their son, Charles, that John Pierce is descended; Patty Sawyer and Joshua Kendall were his 3rd Great Grandparents as outlined below:

Joshua Kendall Patty Sawyer
1781-1813 1756-1859
Great-Great-Great Grandparents

Charles Sheldon Kendall
Great-Great Grandfather (1809-1864)

Robert Newell Kendall
Veteran, American Civil War
Great Grandfather (1836-1892)

Althea Fletcher Kendall
Grandmother (1870-1932)

Roberta Andrews Wright
Mother (1898-1977)

John Pierce
Living Descendent

Patty Sawyer Kendall, who lived her whole life in Boylston, died at the age of 73 years on 15 October 1859. She succumbed to congestion of the lungs from which she had suffered for two weeks. She outlived her husband by 46 years. He had died from a fever at the age of 32 years in 1813. Both were interred in Boylston's Pine Grove Cemetery.

In donating this chair to BHSM, Mary Pierce said she is glad that the chair that belonged to her husband's 3rd great grandmother "finally has a place of honor..." as it is "not just a chair."

Patty Sawyer Kendall's chair is currently on view as part of the "19th Century Boylston" exhibition at the BHSM. We hope that its story, which is tied so closely to the earliest families of Boylston, will help others to consider donating Boylston-related items that may be among their family's histories. For information, please call (508) 869-2720 or email BHSM at info@boylstonhistory.org

Acknowledgements

Ancestry.com

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livingspaces.com

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Pierce, John and Mary, of McLean VA

Vital Records of Boylston, Worcester County, Massachusetts