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JOSEPH BECKWITH

Innkeeper, Lyme, Connecticut, 1714

submitted by E. Kenneth Beckwith

Joseph Beckwith was born about 1679 in Lyme, Connecticut, a son of Joseph Beckwith (born 1653) and Susannah Tallman (born c1662). On May 18 1699, he married Mary (Marah) Lee, a daughter of Thomas Lee. The couple had 6 sons and 5 daughters.¹

In the years of 1714 and 1718, Joseph was chosen to be a Tavern Keeper in Lyme:²

December ye 20 1714 Four Tavern Keepers Chosen At ye same meeting William Brockway, Josiah Rayns, Joseph Beckwith & Joseph Southworth are chosen Tavarn Kepers for ye year ensuing.

December ye 31 1718 Two Tavern Keepers Chosen At ye same meeting Lt. Lord and Joseph Beckwith and John Lay was Chosen Tavern Kepers.

In addition to being an innkeeper, Joseph was commissioned as Captain of the East or Second Company for the Town of Lyme.³

Several entries in Joshua Hempstead's *Diary*, a chronicle of the 17th century colonial America, mention that guests frequented Captain Joseph's Inn for dining and lodging. After Joseph Beckwith's death, the Inn, located in what is now named Niantic, Connecticut, continued to serve its community. "I went to the tavern Jos Beckwiths at Nihantick to hear evidence taken before Judge Lynde with Refference to Martha Blake a poor woman."⁴

Joseph died on Jan 9 1741 about age 62 and was buried at the Old Stone Church in East Lyme. His widow Mary married (2) Capt. Daniel

1 *Vital Records of Lyme Connecticut*, Verne Hall, p. 220.

2 *Lyme Records 1667-1730*, The Pequot Press Inc., 1968, p. 135, 148.

3 *Vital Records of Lyme, Connecticut to the End of the Year 1850*, Heritage Books, p. 220; *Public Records, Colony of Connecticut*, Charles Hoadly, 1873, p. 100.

4 *Diary of Joshua Hempstead of New London Connecticut*, The New London County Historical Society, 1901, p. 23, 40, 220, 435, 684.

Sterling on May 16, 1748. Mary married (3) Mr. Riggs before her death in 1759. "In her will, dated June 18, 1759, she named Capt. Joseph Beckwith's children as her heirs" and her son Capt. Thomas Beckwith as her executor.⁵

The probate records of New London show the following: "Court held at New London, December 8th 1741. The last will and testimony of Captain Joseph Beckwith, late of Lyme, deceased, was exhibited, proven, approved and ordered to be recorded." His inventory was valued at more than £2200, a large inventory for the period.⁶

Children (All born in Lyme)

Joseph	b. 1 June 1700, mar Esther Smith.
Thomas	b. 1 July 1702, mar Sarah Lewis.
Hezekiah	b. 5 Sep 1704
Mary	b. 20 Aug 1706, died bef 1710
Susannah	b. 14 May 1708, mar Amos Tinker.
Mary	b. 3 April 1710, mar Matthew Marvin.
Lydia	b. 16 Feb. 1712/13, mar Benjamin Huntley, then Crossman.
Elijah	b. 15 Dec. 1715, mar Lydia Smith.
Nathan	b. 22 Feb. 1717/18
Dorothy	b. 19 Sept. 1720, mar Simeon Smith.
Stephen	b. 6 Mar. 1722, mar (1) Jerusha Watrous, (2) Hannah Newton

The innkeeper tradition continues as the ninth generation in the Beckwith family line has produced E. Kenneth Beckwith. After retiring from a career teaching chemistry, he became a New England innkeeper himself. In 2003, Beckwith and his wife Carole opened an inn in Fitzwilliam, New Hampshire.⁸ *Yankee Magazine* recognized this inn as the "Best Small Town Inn" in New Hampshire in the year 2010.



5 Albert C. Beckwith, *Beckwith Notes*, 1899, p 29-30.

6 Estate of Joseph Beckwith, New London, Colony of Connecticut Probate District, 1741. *Connecticut Vital Records, Lyme Births-Marriages-Deaths 1667-1852*. Barbour Collection, Connecticut State Library, 1919; "Additional Beckwith Notes," Albert Beckwith, 1907.

7 <https://prabook.com/web/e.kenneth.beckwith/3634140>.

8 <https://iloveinns.com/ashburn-house-id29403.html>.