

THE TAVERN BUILDING:  
Tom Turick, updated, 4-6-94

The evidence strongly supports that the TAVERN was built as the home of Giles Griswold between 1809 and 1810.

Giles was the son of Jeremiah Griswold, a farmer who settled in Burlington prior to 1770. Griswold is listed on the town assessment for 1806 and 1807 as a merchant. In 1806, he leased a small parcel of land from widow Mary Hotchkiss and constructed a store and a horse shed on the property. Also in April 1806 Griswold bought a second small parcel from Joseph Lankton on which Griswold would eventually build the Tavern (see below). He sold his store and horse shed (which appear to be built on the north side of the present-day George Washington Turnpike and diagonally across from the Tavern) to Lowrey and Norton in 1808 for \$750.

It is likely that Griswold began construction on his new house (the Tavern) in either 1809 or 1810 with the monies he received from the sale of his store. It is most probable that the TAVERN was substantially completed in 1810. The Grand List for the Town of Burlington reveals that Giles Griswold did not own a house until tax year 1810 when he was taxed a total of \$103.75 for a house with a total of nine (9) fireplaces. This house is undoubtedly the TAVERN. The house (Tavern) was definitely standing by June 1810 when he bought a small piece of land adjacent to his dwelling house (the east side yard) from Joseph Lankton. Market value of the new house (Tavern) at this time was about \$1150. It is also verified in a 1913 deed that the house was already standing as Griswold bought a small parcel that year (less than 1/10 acre and what is now the western side yard of the Tavern) from Julius Hotchkiss.

(Hotchkiss owned much of the land in the immediate area of the tavern having inherited it from his father's estate.) It is likely that Griswold lived on in the house until the fall of 1817 or early 1818 at which time he relocated to the state of Georgia, (although the 1820 U.S. Census lists Giles as head of his own household and still living in Burlington, CT.)

In 1820, all of Griswold's properties were foreclosed upon, a process which took the next several years. Samuel Ledlie foreclosed on Giles's house (TAVERN) in two purchases in 1822. Julius bought the tavern and its property (about one-half acre in all) in two purchases in 1823 & 1824 (1/2 house from Ledlie for \$1 and 1/2 house from Robert Wilkinson for \$565 who previously had purchased his portion from Ledlie).

Town tax assessments for these years verify that this was the first and only real house of value Julius ever owned. He lived in it but a short time as he died in 1825, dropping dead in his barn behind the house. Julius's wife Laura Hotchkiss lived on in the widow's dower (1/3 of the Tavern) for several years selling the 2/3 portion in 1826 to Ira Mason for \$970 and the 1/3 portion in 1833 to Martin Hale (who in turn sold to Frederick Bull; the Bull portion of the TAVERN was transferred to Ira Mason sometime between 1838 and 1852). The entire Tavern with its outbuildings on 1 acre was foreclosed on and transferred from Ira Mason to James Henderson in 1852.

#### THE TAVERN LAND

The evidence supports that Giles Griswold bought a barren piece of land on which the Tavern now sits from Joseph Lankton for \$25 in April 1806, the very same month and year he entered into the lease with Mary Hotchkiss as noted above. The Tavern parcel was very small and rectangular measuring 66 feet along its front on the turnpike with a depth of 92 feet (less than 1/5 acre in total). We are yet uncertain as to when construction of the house (Tavern) began but in 1810 Griswold's house was fully built as he bought for \$30 yet another small piece from Lankton as noted above which became the eastern side yard. Griswold needed this parcel to construct his horse shed in the northeast corner at the road (turnpike). In 1813 Griswold bought a small parcel on the west side of the house from Julius Hotchkiss for \$17. This sliver of property was very important to Griswold as it extended southerly for 192 feet and allowed Griswold the room to build his barn behind his dwelling house. By 1813 the entire parcel (bought in three pieces) on which the Tavern is located comprised a little over 3/10 acre and had cost Griswold the princely sum of \$72. (Land at this time in Burlington was selling for \$25 per acre. The high cost of the Tavern land can be attributed to the premium prices placed on what was becoming largely commercial properties in the growing center of town.

So where did Joseph Lankton acquire the land he sold to Griswold on which the Tavern would eventually be built? Lankton bought the land from Stephen Hotchkiss Jr. on December 3, 1794. Hotchkiss had purchased it from Jabez Wetmore on February 2, 1786. The only property Jabez Wetmore ever owned in Burlington was property he received from the Highway Commission (i.e. out of the right-of-way of the Turnpike) on April 16, 1785.

#### BURLINGTON, CONNECTICUT GRAND LIST: 1806 - 1822.

##### GILES GRISWOLD

1806 ---- not listed

1807 ---- not listed

1808	----	one horse, 2 yrs. old, one silver watch -----	\$ 20.00
1809	----	one horse, 3 yrs. old, -----	\$ 70.00
1810	----	one horse, 3 yrs. old; 9 fireplaces (2nd class)--	\$103.75
1811	----	4 fireplaces (2nd class;) 4 fireplaces (3d class)	\$112.00
1812	----	{same as 1811}	
1813	----	9 fireplaces; {many animals from father's estate}	\$273.19
1814	----	13 fireplaces -----	\$421.00
1815	----	13 fireplaces -----	\$203.36
1816	----	13 fireplaces -----	\$297.47
1817	----	13 fireplaces -----	\$384.85
1818	----	11 fireplaces -----	\$612.85
1819	----	6 houses -----	\$392.96
1820	----	3 houses -----	\$272.47
1821	----	2 1/2 houses -----	\$118.10
1822	----	not listed	

#### NOTES

1. Giles Griswold is not on the Grand List for 1806 & 1807, although he owned a store during that time. Apparently the town did not tax structures used for business purposes, rather the individual was taxed on his profession. In Griswold's case he was a merchant and was taxed \$40 as such in both these years.

2. From 1806 through 1818, the town did not tax houses per se, however the number of fireplaces was counted and taxed accordingly. A fireplace was assigned for tax purposes a class from 1 to 4.

3. In 1810, tax assessment records reveal that Griswold's house (Tavern) had more fireplaces (9) than any other house in town.

4. In 1813, Giles Griswold apparently assumed the tax for his father's estate which consisted of a farmhouse, much acreage, and many farm animals. Giles father (Jeremiah) died in 1813.

5. For tax years 1813 - 1820, Giles is listed together with his younger brother Samuel on the Burlington Grand List. It is probable that they both claimed part of their deceased father's estate during this time.

6. In 1814, Giles Griswold (along with brother Samuel) jointly were levied the second largest tax bill in town. Only Zebulon Frisbie & Son would have a heavier tax burden. There are about 300 individuals on the grand list for 1814.

7. In 1818, Giles & Samuel's tax bill of \$612.85 represented the largest assessment on the grand list. Their tax burden was about 50% more than Zebulon Frisbie & Son who were second. The town's grand list totals \$32,500 in taxes.

8. Beginning in 1819, the Grand List begins to tax houses and acreage as categories, eliminating the number of fireplaces. In this year, Giles and Samuel Griswold own a total of 6 dwellings (assessed at \$2925) and 528 acres (assessed at \$7951). The purchase of so much property may be due to speculation on their part as many Burlington residents were still migrating to southern states after the incredibly harsh winter of 1816.

9. In 1820, the Griswold's holdings are reduced to 3 houses (assessed at \$1660) and 321 acres (assessed at \$4173). The TAVERN is surely among these 3 dwellings.

10. For 1821, the total Griswold tax bill is greatly reduced, due to the fact that Giles and Samuel sold off about 100 acres reducing their acreage holdings to 235. It is interesting to note that for 1821 and for the first time since their father's death in 1813, the two brothers are listed separately on the Grand List.

11. By 1822 it is obvious that the Griswold's had located to Georgia and had no more taxable property in Burlington. There is strong evidence that Giles Griswold was actually gone from town by early 1818. In all likelihood, Samuel Griswold probably managed their jointly held properties since 1818. The Tavern itself was sold in 1822. End.