

3.1: We're Back! Adrienne Turnbull-Reilly and Tegan Kehoe transcript

Adrienne 0:10

Welcome everyone. This is Adrienne Turnbull Riley, welcoming you back to another episode of Revere House Radio. Today, we're going to be talking with Tegan Kehoe, Director of Research and Adult Programming at the Paul Revere House. She is taking over the podcast from myself and Dr. Robert Shimp, and today, we thought it would be a good idea to have a little chat, talk about the history of the podcast, answer some questions, and generally reintroduce the podcast to our audiences since we've taken a little hiatus since 2021. So I'm going to hand it off to Tegan to segue us into some questions for today.

Tegan 0:51

Sure. Thank you so much, and it's a privilege to be taking over this podcast. I've been at the Paul Revere House for almost a year now, probably a year by the time the episode is released, and as Adrienne mentioned, I am the Research and Adult Program Director, meaning that I am Robert's successor, and I have big shoes to fill, both with him and others in on the staff. And yeah, I'm happy to be here. So this episode is, as Adrienne mentioned, both a kickoff for the new season and a transition episode, because I'm going to be the primary host of the show. But I want to start by asking you, can you tell us the story of the Revere House Radio? How did the podcast come to be?

Adrienne 1:36

Yeah, absolutely I, myself am an avid podcast consumer. I listen to a lot of podcasts, so I'm already biased towards this particular type of media. But in 2019 I attended the NEMA conference, New England Museum Association, for those who are not familiar, and they ran a session about how to do a podcast in your museum or with your organization. It was a great session. It was very informative, and it really kind of planted the seed for me that it would be really fun and interesting to do a podcast about Paul Revere or out of the Paul Revere House in some capacity. And I wasn't exactly sure how that would manifest, but unfortunately, in 2020 when covid hit and we were forced to shut down, I chatted with my boss, Nina Zannieri the Executive Director, and it seemed like a really good opportunity to continue making content and continue reaching our audiences, even if we were physically shut down, or as later became the case, our visitation was extremely low. And so I approached Robert Shimp, who also has a background in audio from his undergrad days, and he and I kind of hatched the scheme that we were going to do this podcast together. So that's kind of the origin story, and a lot of it was originally done at our houses, our respective houses, during covid lockdowns, but once we were able to come back into the office, we started recording and researching more on site.

Tegan 3:09

So what's something that you learned while doing the podcast that surprised you? I'm thinking of something that you might have learned about history or Paul Revere, but something you learned about podcasting would be interesting as well.

Adrienne 3:20

Yeah, well about podcasting, I learned that it's a lot harder than it seems upon first blush. There's a lot of work that goes into the research and recording and editing. Fortunately, at that time, I had Robert to help me out with all of that stuff, so he was, he was a huge help.

Adrienne 3:36

But I think on the more academic side, one thing that I really enjoyed being able to dive a little bit deeper into is women's history, or the history of women and children during the colonial period. I don't think I fully appreciated how influential women were in most aspects of colonial life. I'm thinking particularly economically, the decisions that they made about the products that they would purchase, or how they would save money, or how they would make their own food or purchase food, all of those types of household management decisions, I don't think I really, yeah, appreciated how influential they could be, and I'm thinking in particular, of times when, you know, boycotting certain products or choosing to make certain products at home, versus purchasing them on the market for political reasons, as we were going into the revolution, for example, now buying imported goods and things like that. And so I found that really interesting, just as an underappreciated aspect of women's history.

Tegan 4:47

Absolutely, and it sounds to me like that's both underappreciated now in our understanding of it, but was also underappreciated at the time by men, in that the skill of running a household in that period with much less technology to aid you, it was, it was really skilled labor that wasn't being viewed that way, even though, you know, girls are training for this from childhood.

Adrienne 5:09

Exactly, Exactly, exactly.

Tegan 5:11

...and whether they're related to women's history or something else, do you have any favorite past episodes of Revere House Radio?

Adrienne 5:19

I do. Listeners will be able to sense a theme in my answers. But I was going back over some old episodes just to refresh my memory, and I really enjoyed making the episode titled Becoming Mothers. That one is about Sarah Revere and Rachel Revere, and sort of their process of going from being unwed young women to marrying Paul and then later having children with Paul. And I found that one just really fascinating to research, particularly reading *A Midwife's Tale* is a fascinating read if you're interested in the history of midwifery and pregnancy and birth. It was probably particularly potent for me at that time, because I was recently pregnant with my now toddler, so I had all of these issues on my brain. But I really, really enjoyed researching, writing and recording that episode.

Tegan 5:19

As listeners may have picked up on, the reason for the podcast transition is because we've had a couple of staff transitions, and Adrienne has moved on. And can you tell us a little bit about what you're doing?

Adrienne 6:26

Yeah. So, in 2021 I moved to Rochester, New York, which has its own fascinating history as a city, but I have been spending my time mostly operating as an independent museum professional. So I've been continuing to work with the Paul Revere House on certain remote projects and some projects still in the Boston area. And I've also been working with more local museums with some programming specifically in the education sphere. So kind of the K - 12 education and museums.

Tegan 7:02

And can you tell us a bit about the projects that you've been working on with the Paul Revere House in your capacity as an independent museum education consultant?

Adrienne 7:11

Yeah. So at first it was mainly maintaining the website and kind of doing those types of remote things, but my big project that I'm really excited about most recently, has been creating an education-focused website specifically geared towards teachers and students. So that website will go live sometime in the summer of 2024. It is full, full, full of primary resources, primary documents, secondary sources, objects, a lot of historical context that you can read to learn more about a specific letter or object or image. And even though the target audience is teachers and students, it will be open to the world so anyone can, can go through there and learn more. So that's been really fun. It's been pretty challenging. I've learned a lot about Paul Revere, continuing to dig deep into that history, but that's been a really engaging project, so I'm excited to see that kind of come to fruition.

Tegan 8:17

Yeah, having read through the website in its draft form. I can attest to the fact that while it's aimed at K-12 students and teachers, especially with all of the primary sources and images, it's definitely something that people not in that K-12 sphere might also enjoy. Can you tell me your favorite thing about the Paul Revere House from when you were a full time staff member here?

Adrienne 8:40

I think it's hard to put my finger on one specific thing, but if pressed, I would say my favorite thing about working there and working in public history in general is making connections. And I really enjoy making connections with visitors over their current day interests or professions, whatever that may be. I think people assume that history, particularly if it's, you know, getting into the 1700s getting into the 1600s feeling kind of old at that point, assume that it's not relevant to their current lived experience. And so I really enjoy kind of helping people see the connections between what was going on back then, or how people lived, or how people interacted with one another and their lives today. And in the Paul Revere House, it's such a unique setting because we have three different buildings of three different time periods. So, one

example of this would be if an architect came as a visitor off the street and didn't really know what to expect and came away very pleasantly surprised about how interesting it was to observe and talk about and learn about the architecture of our site. So things like that, I think just made working there really rewarding and fun.

Tegan 10:05

Yeah, and I'm thinking back to when you were talking about kind of connecting your own experience of becoming a parent to Sarah and Rachel's experiences. I think that I find when I'm talking with visitors, mentioning that Revere had 16 kids, maybe five to nine of them living in the house at once, that is a way to connect with visitors that I end up really enjoying, you know. And I'll say, I just have one, and that feels like the house is plenty full. And, you know, people will share their parenting stories with me. And it's a fun, very immediate way to connect the past and the present, because it's some of the same challenges, even though it's a very different context, and some of the same joys as well.

Adrienne 10:49

Yeah, absolutely. I think that's a great example. I totally agree.

Tegan 10:52

So I want to talk a little bit about the upcoming season, because now that the podcast is moving away a little bit from its roots in covid lockdown, we're changing the format a little bit. So one of the things that we're definitely keeping from the original season, or seasons, of Revere House Radio is interviews with people who have written articles for the Revere House Gazette. So that will be something that you'll be hearing in the coming season. Another change is that there's going to be a season based format, so we'll be releasing a number of episodes all in a chunk, and then you'll hear from us again next year with another season of the podcast. The other thing to expect in the coming seasons of the podcast is that it will be very interview focused. So I've got some interviews that I'm very excited about lined up with friends of the Paul Revere House who have some connection to the stories that we're telling, and we'll get to kind of explore the history from that angle. And if you're looking for the kind of content that does sort of a deep dive into Paul Revere or Sarah or Rachel or their kids, you can find more of that on our blog, and of course, if you're a member, also in the Gazette.

Tegan 12:10

So, another feature that I'm hoping to introduce to the podcast is we're going to have a segment about our favorite visitor questions. And so what better way to kick off that segment than by asking you those questions? So, we can transition to that segment right now.

Tegan 12:27

Adrienne and listeners, if you'll follow me, we'll virtually step into the Paul Revere House for that segment.

Tegan 12:48

Adrienne, what is your favorite question that visitors asked you regularly?

Adrienne 12:53

My favorite question was probably, "Where did they put all the kids?" You mentioned earlier that they had a lot of children, and when people hear that number 16, it's sort of a shock factor. Whatever the kid version of sticker shock is. The immediate, organic next question is, "where did they put them all?" And I like that question because it allows me to both talk about the family tree, the family history of, you know, the span of all the children over the course of many years, but it also segues really nicely into architectural conversations of how the house has changed physically over the years, and also allows space to talk about Paul's businesses if somebody's interested in that. I'm thinking particularly of apprentices and how they might live with the Revere family, so that's an additional teenager. So I think that question is, it sounds a little bit silly on the surface, but I like it because it really opens up a lot of avenues of conversation with visitors.

Tegan 14:09

Yeah, absolutely. And in brief, how do you often answer that question?

Adrienne 14:16

Well, I think the short answer is the one you already said, which is they didn't all live in the house at the same time. You know, part B of that is that privacy and this concept of having your own room really didn't exist at the time, so a lot of kids would bunk up together. And then finally, the house, we believe at that time, was actually much bigger, and the Revere family would have had access and use of the attic space, which is not renovated and not available for public viewing at this time. So the house that visitors see looks much, much smaller than we think it was when the Reveres live there.

Tegan 14:57

Right. And I think that visitors often aren't thinking about the space that they're walking in is part of the room that they are in. So the room gets a little bit bigger, and then there's a small ell that no longer exists, plus the attic, so you're looking at maybe two thirds of the space that they had.

Adrienne 15:16

Yeah, exactly.

Tegan 15:18

So what's one of your favorite questions that a visitor had ever asked you?

Adrienne 15:23

This one is really hard for me. I was thinking about this for a while. You know, there's really silly questions that I would not consider my favorite, you know, "Are there ghosts in the Paul Revere House?" for example. But thinking more seriously about a favorite question, I really like having questions about the built environment. I enjoy talking about and learning about the architectural history of the house, particularly since so much of its original structure still remains from 1680 but I also really like talking about the built environment of Boston in general, how it used to be

quite a small peninsula and has grown very significantly through human influence and human change. So whenever anyone would ask about those types of things, of, you know, "what is left of the 1680 house? What can we see? How is it constructed? Where did the timbers come from?" You know, all of those types of questions I find just personally very engaging and fun to talk about.

Tegan 16:39

Yeah, awesome. And what's a question that you wish that visitors would have asked you more often, or a topic that you wish that they asked you about?

Adrienne 16:48

I think for me, I always wish that people were a little bit more curious about the history of the house outside of the 1770 to 1800 time period. Understandably so, they're there to visit the Paul Revere House and learn about Paul Revere and when he occupied the home. But the house is so much older and was occupied for so much longer than Paul Revere occupied it. I wished that people asked more a little bit about the 17th century history of the house, as well as the 19th century history of the house, and that segues into, you know, again, the history of Boston in general, the history of the North End, the neighborhood that the house is located in, is is very rich and dynamic, and there's a lot to talk about there. So, I would encourage folks to ask more questions about that, and the visitor center Lathrop place, I think really helps, because it is a 19th century building, so you get some of that content in that building. But, yeah, there's a lot going on under the surface, if you just ask.

Tegan 17:58

Yeah, absolutely. And the whole site has such a multi-layered history that, you know, I understand how people don't, don't know about the layers to ask about, but, but it's definitely, there's a lot there.

Adrienne 18:11

Yeah, I agree.

Tegan 18:13

Well, thank you so much. The end of a transition episode is an interesting one, because I think you started out welcoming me to the show, and now I'm going to thank you for being on the show today, but we're certainly going to keep you involved. And throughout the season, you'll hear – listeners, you'll hear a bit from a number of different Revere House staff members as we bring more content to you.

Adrienne 18:41

Thank you so much, Tegan, I really appreciate the opportunity to say goodbye. I loved making this podcast, so I wish you all the best, and I'm excited to hear future episodes.

Tegan 19:00 Well, thank you for starting the podcast, because it gave me a great... uh, again, big, big shoes to fill.

Tegan 19:05

Thank you for tuning in to Revere House Radio. I'm your host, Tegan Kehoe and I am the Research and Adult Program director here at the Paul Revere House. Our production team for this season includes Derek Hunter, Tyler McDonald, Cadee Stefani, Gabe Quealey, and Adrienne Turnbull-Reilly. Revere House Radio is a production of the Paul Revere Memorial Association, the nonprofit which operates the Paul Revere House Museum. You can find more information. Subscribe to our mailing list or social media, or become a member on our website at www.paulreverehouse.org. Or come visit us in Boston!