



Kingston Historian

Newsletter of the Kingston Historical Society

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Fall 2019

Kingston Historical Society Annual Meeting to Feature an illustrated talk by Fire Chief George Luck, Jr, on *Kingston's Fires and the Kingston Volunteer Fire Company*

The talk will be given 7:30 pm Tuesday October 29th, 2018 at the Kingston Firehouse 8 Heathcote Road, Kingston.

After a very brief business meeting, George will talk about early fires in the community prior to the formation of the current fire company, share what little information we have on an earlier fire department, and then speak to the formation of the current fire company, including anecdotes from newspaper articles and early pictures, and talk about fires, fund raising, and community events up to the present.



Chief George Luck, Jr.

George Luck, Jr. is a life-long resident of Kingston with a deep knowledge of the community's history.

He has been a Trustee of the Kingston Historical Society since its beginning and for many years he has served as its Vice President. He has given several talks and walks for the Society and other groups about Kingston's history. In all of these he has demonstrated his deep interest and knowledge of the community and his dedication and service to it.

No one more qualified to talk on the fire Company, George has been a member of the Kingston Volunteer Fire Company for 53 years; he is currently serving as Chief for his 22nd year (not consecutive) and has held numerous other offices in the company. He is a member of the Franklin Township Fire Chief's Association, of which he is a past-president. He is currently the Chairperson of the South Brunswick Township Fire Chief's Association. He is also a former Commissioner of the Board of Fire Commissioners, Franklin Township Fire District #4 where he also has served as the Chairman.

William Flemer, IV to talk on Princeton Nurseries October 3rd 2019

William Flemer, IV, fourth generation member of the Flemer family which founded and operated Princeton Nurseries, will give an illustrated talk on the history of the Nurseries at the Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands Annual Meeting 7:30 pm Thursday October 3rd, 2019 at the Kingston Firehouse – 8 Heathcote Road, Kingston. The meeting is free and open to the public; all are welcome.

The core of the Princeton Nurseries National Register (of Historic Places) Historic District is the Mapleton Preserve. Its fate, as discussed in the Spring 2019 Issue of the *Kingston Historian*, is still unknown, but NJ DEP is trying to find a way in which the cultural landscape (including its buildings) can be restored/rehabilitated and maintained sustainably; and has been consulting with the Township of South Brunswick in that regard.

KHS Annual Holiday Open House and Tree Lighting: Sunday December 1st



PLEASE JOIN US Sunday, December 1st, 2019 3:30 – 5:30 pm at the Kingston Lock-tender's House on the D & R Canal at Old Route 27. It is time to meet KHS members, friends and neighbors while enjoying holiday refreshments and holiday decorations. Tree lighting with Kingston Women's Chorus music at 5:00 pm.

The Kingston Locktender's House is Open on Weekends and Major Holidays: 10 am – 5pm, April through October and 10 am to 4 pm in November.

Exhibits on the *Kingston Volunteer Fire Company*, *New World Dutch Barns*, *Farming Around Kingston* and *Princeton Nurseries* are currently on display and permanently on display are HABS drawings of the House, Lock, former bridge and Canal and area information. Also maps and brochures are available for the public.

In the past year we have had a large number of visitors; while most are local, many come from all over New Jersey; we also have had visitors from many other states: AL, CA, CT, DE, FL, GA, IL, MA, MD, ME, MI, NC, NH, NY, OH, OK, PA, TX, VA, and VT as well as from Puerto Rico, Canada, England, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Singapore and Australia

KHS Hosted the Newly formed South Brunswick Historical Society in June.

Sixteen members of the recently formed South Brunswick Historical Society met in the Locktender's House and were given a tour of the house including a demonstration of Paul Kane's study models of the Lock and former "A-frame" bridge and a tour of the lock, 1798 quadruple arch stone bridge and mill areas.

Excellent Turnout for KHS Spring Program on *New World Dutch Barns* in the Dutch Barn at Rockingham on June 6th.

First, Victory Chase's video on the Rockingham Barn Raising was shown; those who missed the video or would like to see it again may see it on line by 'Googling' "rockingham barn raising".

The video was followed by an illustrated talk by Elric Endersby: *ARCADES and ANCHORBENTS: The Origins and Characteristics of New World Dutch Barns*

Endersby examined these remarkable New Jersey vernacular structures and their Old World precedents. This examination of an early and iconic building type offered an opportunity to discover an early architectural tradition within a notable example – the Dutch Barn at Rockingham State Historic Site.

Elric Endersby is a founding partner of The New Jersey Barn Company which disassembled the Nevius Barn, a ruinous structure in nearby Middlebush, in 1999, repaired it, and raised it at Rockingham in 2013, thereby providing a complementary and contextual agricultural feature at the historic site.

The New World Dutch Barn traced its "basilica form" to the middle ages, and was widely disseminated throughout the Lowlands. Early Dutch settlers in the Hudson Valley, Western Long Island and central New Jersey applied its conventions, along with their framing skills, to the structures they created, amplified by the wealth of old growth timbers available from the forests they cleared to create their farms. The form survived more than 200 years after the Dutch relinquished governmental control. After the Revolution, as Dutch, English and, later, German families settled central New Jersey they not only assisted one another in raising barns and other structures, they began to adapt and adopt aspects of their separate building traditions, creating wholly new variations.

Assembled from their archives, photographs and measured drawings were shown, depicting characteristic forms and features, their origins and evolution and the Nevius Dutch Barn, itself, served as a full-scale illustrative model.

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For those who were unable to attend the talk or would like more information, examples of the New Jersey Barn Company's structures and design work are chronicled in two books. *BARN: The Art of a Working Building*, by Elric Endersby, Alexander Greenwood and David Larkin (Houghton – Mifflin 1992) currently out of print and *BARN: Preservation & Adaptation*, by Elric Endersby, Alexander Greenwood and David Larkin. (Universe, 2003, revised edition Rizzoli, 2014)

KHS is most grateful to Rockingham Curator Lisa Flick for being able to use the Rockingham Barn and her assistance with the event.

More on New World Dutch Barns

The unique character of New World barns in New Jersey was observed by Peter (or Pehr) Kalm in 1748. Kalm, one of the first students of Linnaeus, had been sent by the Royal Swedish Academy to North America in order to collect plants and seeds. He stayed in America until 1751; of a trip from Trenton to New York he wrote:

THE barns* had, a peculiar kind of construction hereabouts, which I will give a concise description of. The whole building was very great, so as almost to equal a small church; the roof was pretty high, covered with wooden shingles, declining on both sides, but not steep: the walls which support it, were not much higher than a full grown man; but on the other hand the breadth of the building was the more considerable: in the middle was the threshing floor, and above it, or in the loft or garret they put the corn which was not yet threshed, the straw, or any thing else, according to the season: on one side were stables for the horses, and on the other for the cows. And the small cattle had likewise their particular stables or styes; on both ends of the buildings were great gates,

* THE author seems to comprehend more by this word, than what it commonly includes, for he describes it as a building, which contains both a barn and stables. P.

so that one could come in with a cart and horses through one of them, and go out at the other: here was therefore under one roof the threshing floor, the barn, the stables, the hay loft, the coach house, &c. This kind of buildings is chiefly made use of by the Dutch and Germans; for it is to be observed that the country between Trenton and New York, is inhabited by few Englishmen, but instead of them by Germans or Dutch,* the latter of which especially are numerous.

[From P. 223-4 of the first English edition of *Travels in North America* by Peter Kalm, Warrington, England 1770]

KHS participated in the NJ State History Fair at Monmouth Battlefield State Park, on September 14th, 2019.

The Kingston Historical Society staffed a table at the day-long History Fair; we also represented Kingston Greenways and Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands. Unlike many previous History Fairs, the weather was perfect – no rain and only a gentle breeze. Many visitors stopped by; KHS members explained Kingston and the role of various groups and answered questions.

KHS was one of over 100 historical societies/ groups with tables at the Fair. The Fair also included living history, craft and military demonstrations as well as military and civilian re-enactors.

250th Anniversary of the American Revolution – 2026

Although still several years off, preparations for a multi-year celebration of the War of the American Revolution have already begun.

Kingston is truly the “Crossroads of the Crossroads” of the Revolution; two of the most important movements of the Continental Army went through Kingston: in 1777 the withdrawal to Morristown after the Battle of Princeton (including the dismantling of the Millstone River bridge and the “Conference on Horseback”) and in 1778 the march to the Battle of Monmouth. At the end of the War Washington stayed a Rockingham for several months in 1783 while the Congress met in Nassau Hall in nearby Princeton. Throughout the war the King’s Highway was a major route for supplies and travel.

KHS is also beginning to make plans for its commemoration of the 250th Anniversary of the Revolution.

KHS members have been attending public meetings of the NJ Historical Commission for the celebration of the 250th Anniversary; the Crossroads of the American Revolution Association has been designated as the leading private partner to the Commission. As a member of the Millstone Valley Preservation Coalition, KHS is also involved the Coalition’s plans for celebration/ commemoration. KHS has also been in contact with a group focusing on “Ten Crucial Days”.

2020 is the 100th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage

Women have played an important, if often unrecognized, role in the history of Kingston. KHS would like to know more about any role Kingston and any in Kingston played in advancing, or opposing, women's suffrage. Any information would be most welcome. Please contact any KHS Trustee or mail to KHS Box 323, Kingston NJ, 08528-0323 or by email : history@khsnj.org

Franklin Township Historic Homecoming Sat May 4th

The *Historic Homecoming* was an opportunity to explore the rich history of Franklin Township with a day of free activities, events, movies, exhibits and more at a variety of historic sites throughout Franklin Township.

The Kingston Historical Society is a member of the Franklin Township Historical Alliance, which is made up of a number of Historical Societies and individuals in, or (as in the case of Kingston) partly in, Franklin Township.

Among the sites were The Kingston Locktender's House and the Kingston Presbyterian Church Cemetery. At the two Kingston sites, Kingston Historical Society trustees were available to describe and answer questions about the sites and their role in history and about Kingston in general.

Millstone Valley Preservation Coalition Advocating for D&R Canal State Park Needs

The Coalition, of which KHS is a participating member, is continuing to advocate for additional funding for New Jersey's second most used State Park. The Park includes KHS's headquarters - the Kingston Locktender's House.

Locktender's House Repairs

The Locktender's House is the headquarters of KHS, which helps maintain the House as well as keeping it open to the public. Several years ago, KHS contracted with the Kane Brothers to repair and repaint all the windows; the work is now complete. Chimney flashing and repair of the north wall is urgently needed; once those are addressed, KHS is planning is to work on the Toll House/ Telegraph Station, which seriously needs repair.

Archives

Doug Miller, KHS's Digital Archivist, has been continuing to archive articles and visual material.

A public repository for KHS archival items relating to Kingston history, <http://archive.khsnj.org>, has been built; already a number of items have been placed in this repository and more are being added. The link to the repository can be found on the top of the web page by clicking Menu -> Archives. Feel free to visit and browse the archives. There is a "search field" (not case sensitive) to perform topical search functions. Using the database is the best method to view historical items of interest in our collections.

KHS also publicly hosts items on, and use as a historical resource, the website archive.org. Archive.org is a global repository which houses media for perpetuity.



KINGSTON LOCKTENDER'S HOUSE

KHS Archives

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