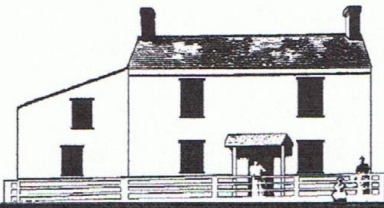


Kingston Historian



Newsletter of the Kingston Historical Society

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Fall 2021

KHS 2021 Annual Meeting to be virtual Tuesday December 14th 2021.

The KHS annual meeting will again be virtual and will be only a business meeting without a speaker; however, instead George Luck and Charles Dieterich will present a hybrid (in person and virtual) illustrated public program on January 11th 2022 entitled “*Why Is Kingston Here.*” See the article on Page 2 for more information and details.

KHS Annual Holiday Tree lighting Sunday December 5th

The KHS annual Holiday Open House and tree-lighting has long been a Kingston Community tradition. We had hoped to have our traditional



KHS Holiday Tree – 2020
Photo by George Luck

Holiday Open House this year– with refreshments, but unfortunately, due to the size of the House, regulations of the State Park Service and concerns for safety, this year the event will be only outdoors; however, the Kingston Women’s Chorus will sing a few songs before the tree-lighting and also lead the traditional sing-along after the tree-lighting.

**We hope all of you can join us at 4:30 pm Sunday
December 5th, 2021 (tree lighting at 5:00 pm.)**

Update on Covid-19 Pandemic and KHS

Due to the pandemic KHS has had to severely curtail its public activities in the interest of safety and in accordance with the New Jersey regulations and those of the State Park Service. Although we have not been able to have our regular public programs, starting in July we were able to open the Lock-tender’s House to the public on weekends; masks are required. During the pandemic the Park has had heavy use and once the Lock-tender’s House was open, many visited it; most visitors have come from the nearby, but many others have come from further away; we have had visitors from NY, PA, FL, TX, NC, MA and AZ as well as from the UK, Hungary, Israel, Bangladesh and Kenya!

We continue our digital archive work and do minor repair work, but getting major repairs to the Lock-tender’s House and Tollhouse continues to be difficult due to the backed-up demand on contractors.

The Lock-tender’s House

The House will continue to be open through November, on Saturdays, Sundays and major holidays from 10 am to 4 pm. (In 2022 we expect to resume our schedule starting in April.)

The North Room remains closed for repairs, the schedule for which is still to be determined.



Kingston Lock-tender’s House

KHS has planted fall flowers in front of the House.

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The Lock-tender's House (Continued from P. 1)

Tropical Storm s Henri and Ida flooded the basement of the House, by fortunately did not impact the first floor; the Park Service has had a contractor remove mud and debris and disinfect the floor, wall and ceiling surfaces.

Flooding from Tropical Storms

In Tropical Storms Henri and Ida the Millstone River also surrounded the Kingston Mill and in Storm Ida even closed Route 27 for several hours.

South Brunswick History Day

The Lock-tender's House, along with several buildings in Dayton was part of the Day's Scavenger Hunt. From 11 am to 2 pm participants of all ages visited buildings and received stamps for their "passports". The event, run by the South Brunswick Historical Society, was expected to have 30-40 participants, but had 75! A KHS trustee staffed the Lock-tender's House from 10 am to 3 pm to answer questions and demonstrate Paul Kayne's study models of the Kingston Lock and former "A" frame bridge. Visitors were interested and asked many questions.

Archives

Throughout the pandemic Doug Miller has been able to continue his work on our digital archives. 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. 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 uses as a historical resource, the website archive.org. Archive.org is a global repository which houses media for perpetuity.

KHS also welcomes donations of appropriate artifacts related to Kingston. Recently KHS received a number of artifacts from life-long Kingston resident Pat Kane including old Kingston Record newspapers (see article on P. 4), books and studies on the D & R Canal and many other artifacts.

Catelli Road

Ever wonder why Catelli Road has that name? Pat Kane rescued this bottle from under the Catelli barn before it was destroyed to for the new development.

Catelli Inc. bottled drinks in Kingston in the early-mid 20th century.

Catelli's Pale Dry Ginger Ale bottle. date unknown; acquired 2021

**Tuesday January 11th at 7:30 pm Talk: "Why Is Kingston Here?"**

Join George Luck and Charlie Dieterich as they explore the many faces of Kingston's 300-plus year existence. They will tell stories of the village from early European exploration to prosperity in war and peace, related to our location and geology.

The talk will be appropriate for newcomers to the Kingston area as well as anyone with an interest in our history.

Current plans are to hold a hybrid session, with some attending (socially distanced and with masks) at the Kingston Firehouse, and some attending by Zoom. Those on our e-mail list will receive the link as the date approaches, but anyone can receive the link by sending an e-mail to contact@khsnj.org and requesting a link, which will be sent out in January.

GPS Address Confusion for KHS

The legal address for the Kingston Lock-tender's House, and KHS, is 4498 State Route 27, Kingston 08528; however, for anyone using GPS/ mapping software, the address will end up at Kingston mall! Although NJDOT calls the road on which the Lock-tender's House is located "Old Alignment of NJ Route 27", the address that works for GPS is "39 Old Lincoln Highway, Princeton, NJ 08540 even though the house id within the 08528 Zip Code. The mail address remains PO Box 323, Kingston, NJ 08528.

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Former NJDOT Signs at the Millstone Crossing (unfortunately both were stolen)

Crossing the Millstone at Kingston

In preparation for a future meeting of the Kingston Historical Society, George Luck Jr. and I are studying how Kingston has changed over the centuries. One source of information is "The Story of New Jersey's Civil Boundaries, 1606-1968." It shows just how important the Millstone River bridge in the center of Kingston has been to New Jersey History.

Until 1688 the land which would become Kingston, Princeton, and half of Little Rocky Hill, was in the Province of West New Jersey, though the actual boundary line had not been surveyed. That would put the future village (and the ford of the Millstone River) in Burlington County. In 1687 a new survey of the "Province Line" was agreed to, and those areas became part of Middlesex County, Province of East New Jersey, with land ownership held by the East New Jersey Proprietors. The line moved back later, but that didn't change the county or municipal boundaries.

In 1713/14 the Somerset County took over part of Middlesex County. The county line moved south to the "old road by Jedediah Higgens's house" (basically, NJ Route 27.) The ford at Kingston and the growing communities were now divided. The northern half in Somerset County, and southern half in Middlesex County. At some point in the 1700s a bridge over the Millstone replaced the ford, with half its width in Middlesex (one quarter in New Brunswick, one quarter in Windsor Township) and half in Somerset (one quarter in Somerset's Eastern Precinct/Franklin and one quarter in Somerset's Southern Precinct/Montgomery Township.) The bridge was destroyed during the American Revolution, but the four jurisdictions figured out how to rebuild it soon after. The thriving village of Kingston was divided four ways as well.

On February 22, 1838, the southern-most quarter of the bridge (the Kingston Mill portion) was given to the newly created Mercer County. That corner was part of what had become West Windsor Township, which held the southern side of the "old road" down to the Province Line. Five days later, the legislature expanded Mercer County, so now both western quarters of the Kingston Bridge were in Mercer County. The new Princeton Township was given the north-west quarter of the bridge. In 1853 the border between Princeton Township and West Windsor moved from "old road"/Route 27 to the Delaware and Raritan Canal, uniting both halves on the western side of the Millstone River.

Today our old stone bridge is in three counties: Middlesex, Somerset, and Mercer, and three municipalities: South Brunswick Township, Franklin Township and Princeton. Since the 1600s parts of our village have been traded between two colonies, four counties, and ten different municipal jurisdictions. I doubt any other landmark in the USA can make that claim.

-Charlie Dieterich



1798 Quadruple Stone Arch Kingston Bridge (Seen from the 1979 Route 27 Bridge)



The plaque on the bridge read:

KINGSTON
BRIDGE
45 M. to Phil
50 M. to N.Y.
1798

It was damaged by a N.Y. bound bus in the days when the bridge carried Route 27 over the river.

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Floods

In Tropical Storms Henri and Ida the Millstone River also surrounded the Kingston Mill and in Storm Ida even closed Route 27 for several hours.

While the frequency and intensity of floods have increased in recent years, floods have always occurred. Elizabeth G. C. Menzies, in her book *Millstone Valley*, quoted a 1769 newspaper article:

“On Sunday evening, 30th of April, as the Revd. Mr John Blair, Mr Benjamin Skillman, his wife and daughter, who had a young child in her arms, were returning from Kingston, where Mr. Blair preached that day, had occasion to cross Millstone in a Battoe (as it was swollen with the rain) were accidentally overset in the middle of the current, which run very rapidly; Mr. Blair ‘tis said was so long under water, that a few moments more would have landed him in eternity; after they emerged, they clung to the battoe, until they caught hold of some limbs, by the help of which they all got on shore, except Mrs. Skillman, who missing that opportunity, was unfortunately drowned.”

Kingston News – Past: *The Record*

In the 1930s Ned Ray published a weekly newspaper called "The Kingston Record." The Historical Society has received several copies of the paper, and will be cataloging them.

The Friday, June 17, 1932 edition reported that “Kingston's baseball team swamps the Princeton All Stars, 7 to 2 in a twilight game. Abe Dey pitched for Kingston, and it was their fourth consecutive victory.”

“Herman Rooy, manager of the Kingston Tailor Shop announced its opening. It will include in its services the French Dry Cleaning of ladies and men's clothing in addition to tailoring.” The location was not given, but it was in Kingston.

And "The Kingston Fire Company extinguished a truck which had become ignited here Monday evening. The fire was brought to the attention of the truck driver by Bertrand Gulick, Jr. who notified the Fire department. The immediate response of the Fire Company prevented the fire from spreading and was extinguished with ease. Damage was believed negligible"

Kingston News – Present: KVAC evolves

In 2001, the work of the Joint Citizens Advisory Task Force for the Village of Kingston over several years resulted in the State Planning Commission giving Kingston Village Center Designation (VCD) for the village in the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. A small part of Franklin and South Brunswick Townships was designated as the Village Center and the immediate surrounding area as its “Environs” ensuring that Kingston’s planning goals are incorporated formally into the State Plan.

Since Kingston is multi-jurisdictional, a requirement of VCD was the creation of an advisory committee jointly appointed by the two Townships; thus, the Joint Citizens Advisory Committee for the Village of Kingston, called by all KVAC, was established in 2002 with its primary goal to ensure that the Planning and Implementation Agenda (PIA) for the VCD (and its Environs) is actively pursued by all and to maintain communication between the Village and the Office of State Planning as well as to advise and assist the Townships on Village matters.

VCD expires in January 2022; to renew VCD status, the State is now requiring the Townships to do so as part of complete revision of their individual Master Plans, which could only be done at great expense. The Townships and KVAC decided that there was little benefit to VCD, but there was considerable benefit to a having KVAC; therefore, KVAC is being re-established by the Townships without State participation; its official name will be “Kingston Village Advisory Committee”.

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