

# Kingston Historian

Newsletter of the Kingston Historical Society

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Spring 2019

## KHS Spring Program

### *New World Dutch Barns*

in the Nevius Dutch Barn at Rockingham  
(84 Laurel Avenue, Franklin Township, NJ)

**THURSDAY 6 June**

**7:00 PM:** during refreshments, a video by Victory Chase's *Rockingham Barn Raising* will be shown

**7:45 PM:** Illustrated talk by **Elric Endersby**

What's a podstone? Any inklings about gunstock posts, through tenons, two-foot marks, raising holes, middle men, mangers or marriage marks?

**"ARCADES AND ANCHORBENTS: *The Origins and Characteristics of New World Dutch Barns,*"**

is the title of an upcoming talk regarding these remarkable New Jersey vernacular structures and their Old World precedents. This examination of an early and iconic building type offers a rare opportunity to discover an early architectural tradition within a notable example.

The featured speaker, Elric Endersby, is a founding partner of The New Jersey Barn Company which disassembled the 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.

More on Elric Endersby and Victory Chase On P. 3,

## **Princeton Nurseries Kingston Site: Fate of a historic cultural landscape Winery Owner Withdraws Proposal**

After Township Council Voted 3-2 against his most recent revised proposal., David Wolin, owner of Old York Cellars, withdrew his proposal to the Mapleton Preserve Commission's RFP (Request For Proposal) for the rehabilitation and sustained maintenance of the core historic buildings and cultural landscape of the former Princeton Nurseries Kingston Site.

The Township had previously requested that his proposal include demolition of two historic bare-root storage buildings, which he felt made the project no longer viable. He said he had previously revised and down-sized his proposal several times during negotiations, but the latest request made the project no longer viable.

The RFP had been developed by the Mapleton Preserve Commission on behalf of and with the with the input and approval of South Brunswick Township and NJ DEP in response to the Commission's effort to meet the "goals and objectives" set forth in the Township's 2005 Mapleton Preserve Commission ordinance and also in the (2004, 2005 and 2017) Management Agreements (between the Township and NJDEP) to preserve the historic cultural landscape – including its buildings.

Working in partnership with South Brunswick Township, DEP and the non-profit Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands, the Mapleton Preserve Commission tried to fulfil the goals and objectives of the ordinance; the site was placed on the NJ Register of Historic Places, a Cultural Landscape Report was completed, grants were obtained to begin rehabilitation of the Propagation House; however, in the meantime, the buildings deteriorated; the Township did mow paths and fields and volunteers removed invasive trees and shrubs, but the Township was unable to commit the funds to maintain the buildings; weather and (in spite of a security fence provided by the Township) vandals took a major toll on the buildings.

It became clear that the Township would not be able to provide the funding, either on its own or with State assistance to rehabilitate the buildings - let alone in

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accordance with the Sec’y of the Interior’s Standards for historic rehabilitation/ restoration.

The Management and Use Agreement also stipulated that if no appropriate use could be found and the buildings were not rehabilitated, the Warehouse buildings must be demolished by the Township, by 2015. These buildings, together with the Propagation House and its greenhouses are an essential part of the cultural landscape, the significance of which had been made clear by the Cultural Resource Survey, the National Register Nomination and the Cultural Landscape Report.

Therefore, the Commission looked for ways to meet the goals set for it. A National Park Service project, at its Sandy Hook Recreational Area, provided an example of the use of for-profit and/ or non-profit entities to preserve and re-habilitate/ restore historic buildings in an open space area.

In 2017 the Township and NJ DEP signed a new Management Agreement that provided additional time before demolition would be required and laid out a process for possible development, by either non-profit or for-profit entities, for a RFEI (Request For Expression of Interest), followed by an RFP (Request For Proposal).

In accordance with the new (2017) Management Agreement the Commission, on behalf of South Brunswick Township and NJ DEP and with their approval, issued a RFEI followed by an RFP (based on the response to the RFEI). While the RFEI and RFP both were open to for-profit and non-profit entities; several of both expressed interest and visited the site, in the end only one response was received to each request both from essentially the same entity - Old York Cellars/DWVSB Development, the principal of both being winery owner David Wolin.

It was clear that the only a for-profit operation could provide the funding to properly rehabilitate the buildings and provide the infrastructure for the historic property.

The proposal was creative and thoughtful and substantially responded to the RFP, but it was felt to be too intensive. The Commission, which is solely advisory to the Township and NJ DEP, discussed the proposal and heard opposition comments from the public (in particular from the neighbors adjacent to the site); the Commission then came to a consensus on a recommendation for a reduced scale development and submitted it (and the comments of each individual member) to SBT and DEP for consideration in their deliberation how to proceed with negotiations.

The rejection of the proposal may well result in the loss of the key historic resources of the NR cultural landscape

A key portion of the former Princeton Nurseries Kingston Site, including the Mapleton Preserve was preserved, after the advocacy of the Kingston community groups and others, by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and the Township of South Brunswick (SBT), which became the Owners. The acquisition was funded solely by DEP’s Green Acres program, but the Township agreed to develop and maintain the Preserve. DEP and The Township made clear their intent for the site in their December 2004 Agreement, which states

*“... the Owners agree that the Property will serve as a potential interpretive outdoor educational, horticultural and historic preservation center and a historic landscape greenway/passive recreational trail corridor between the D&R Canal State park, the Cook Natural Preserve, Middlesex County parkland and South Brunswick Township parkland ...”*

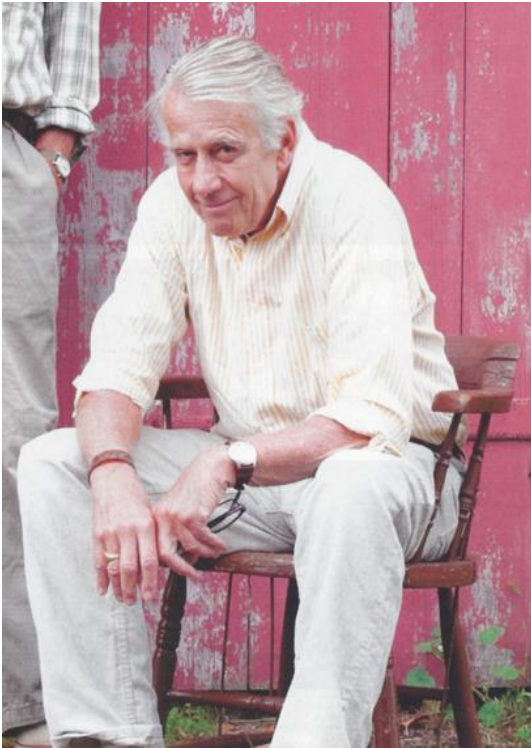
It is not known exactly why South Brunswick Township has decided to not accept a proposal that substantially meets its management plans with NJDEP (from 2004 to 2017) and its own Mapleton Preserve ordinance as well as the RFP. Nor is it known how the Township will meet its current management agreement obligations to demolish and mitigate the historic buildings (as required if no proposal for their rehabilitation and use is obtained) and the maintenance of the site on its own. Nor is it known what would happen if the State Historic Sites Council refused to allow demolition.

There was well organized opposition to any development of the Preserve by immediate neighbors (in the houses preserved to be part of the context of the cultural landscape) and some in the village of Kingston, which included an inaccurate and very misleading petition, which obtained nearly 2,000 signatures.

The Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands website: [www.fpnl.org](http://www.fpnl.org) has the winery’s withdrawal letter on its home page and further information under RFEI/RFP and MAPS and [www.kingstongreenways.org](http://www.kingstongreenways.org) has Kingston Greenways’ draft Inventory of Open Space Kingston map under MAPS. There is a related article online at: <https://walkableprinceton.com/2019/05/02/princeton-nursery-redevelopment/>

The Mapleton Preserve is not a natural area, but one that has been in agricultural/ horticultural use for over 300 years. Princeton Nurseries played a major role in the history of Kingston. It would be a sad end to a significant historic cultural landscape on the National Register of Historic Places if its key buildings were demolished.

## Elric Endersby, KHS Spring Speaker



Elric Endersby

Over more than 40 years, Endersby and his partner Alex Greenwood have discovered and inspected nearly 100 Dutch barns across the state, documented more than 60 of which a third have since succumbed to development. Of the remainder, they have disassembled several threatened examples for relocation. Assembled from their archives, photographs and measured drawings will be shown, depicting characteristic forms and features, their origins and evolution. Better yet, the Nevius Dutch Barn, itself, will serve as a full scale illustrative model.

A native Princetonian, Elric Endersby has long been involved with local history. After five years gathering an oral history of the area, in 1975 he was the founder of the Princeton History Project and, over a dozen years, co-editor of the *Princeton Recollector*, its popular journal of local lore. He has been a member of Princeton's Historic Preservation Commission since 1996. No stranger to Rockingham, he served on its board nearly 50 years ago. The New Jersey Barn Company has disassembled and relocated more than 180 structures over the past 40 years. Greenwood and Endersby are co-authors of two well-regarded books on barns.



1999 At Middlebush



2014 at Rockingham

## Video by Victory Chase on Nevius Barn-raising at Rockingham

The video was recorded over five weeks, from October 21 to November 25, 2013, while the New Jersey Barn Company was raising and reconstructing a late 18th-century barn, from the Middlebush area of central Franklin Township, on the grounds of Rockingham State Historic Site, near Kingston. Editing was done during January-February 2014, and the video was shown on FTTV in March-April 2014, before going onto YouTube. It was the last production of FTTV's Volunteer Videographer Pilot Program, which produced videos for FTTV from 2012 to 2014.

Victory Chase taught herself videography and video editing on computer in order to lead FTTV's Volunteer Videographer Pilot Program, 2012-2014. She was also a member of Franklin's Cable Television Advisory Committee from 2008-2014, and served two terms chairing that committee. She has lived in Franklin Township since September 1969, and presently serves as secretary of the Rockingham Association, the "friends group" of Rockingham State Historic Site. She has an undergraduate degree in English from Stanford University, and master's degrees from both UC-Berkeley and Princeton University.

Victory commented about the barn video: "Filming the barn-raising was one of the happiest experiences of my life, and editing the video was one of the most difficult. And, of course, there are parts I would do differently now ..."

## KHS Historic Contribution Award.

At its 2018 Annual Meeting, KHS gave a Historic Contribution Award to the Carlo and Raoul Momo "for the preservation and rehabilitation of the former Union Line Hotel and Fisk's Grocery Store buildings with historic sensitivity and their contributions and generosity to the Kingston community."

## 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 *New World Dutch Barns*, *Farming Around Kingston* and *Princeton Nurseries* are currently on display. In the fall, an exhibit on the *Kingston Volunteer Fire Company* will replace *Farming ...*

## **KHS Annual Holiday Open House and Tree Lighting Again a Success**



Once again, on Sunday December 2nd, 2018, the KHS Annual Holiday Open House provided an opportunity to gather and enjoy holiday refreshments in the Locktender's House, which was festively decorated for the occasion by the Kingston Garden Club; the open house ended with the traditional tree lighting and the music of the Kingston Women's Chorus.

## **Kingston Historical Society Annual Meeting Featured Film *Farming in the Millstone Valley: Past & Present* November 13th, 2018**

The film is a project of the Millstone Valley Preservation Coalition, of which KHS is a participating organization.

The Millstone Valley of central New Jersey, settled by Dutch farmers three centuries ago, helped New Jersey earn its Garden State nickname, and became the breadbasket of a booming New York City metropolis. That story, culminating in today's farm-to-table movement, is told in this documentary film.

Farming in the Millstone Valley: Past & Present, is a 35-minute video documentary based on a historic account by Jessie Havens of Montgomery Township, and made by the Millstone Valley Preservation Coalition of Rocky Hill in association with the Van Harlingen Historical Society of Montgomery.

Kingston residents were able to find mention and images of Kingston, Princeton Nurseries, Rockingham and local restaurants.

## **NJ State History Fair will be held at Monmouth Battlefield State Park, on Saturday September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019.**

KHS will have a table at the History Fair.

## **Locktender's House Window Repairs**

Several years ago, KHS contracted with the Kane Brothers to be repaired and repainted all the windows; the work is now complete. Now we are planning to work on the Toll House/ Telegraph Station, which is in serious need of repair.

## **Franklin Township Historic Homecoming**

Franklin Township Historic Alliance is a group founded earlier this year to bring attention to Franklin Township's many diverse historic sites. Along with other Historical Societies and individuals in Franklin Township KHS is a member of the Alliance. The Alliance's first event, the "Franklin Township Historic Homecoming", was held Saturday 4 May.

It was an opportunity to explore the rich history of Franklin Township with a day of free activities, events, movies, exhibits at 10 different historic sites throughout Franklin Township.

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

## **Millstone Valley Preservation Coalition Urging for D&R Canal State Park Needs**

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

## **Contacting KHS:**

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## **Kingston Historical Society Trustees:**

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