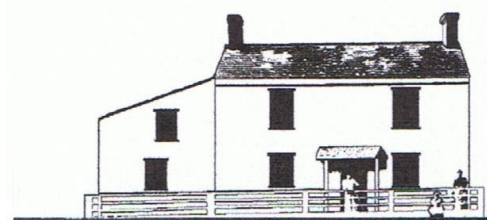


Kingston Historian



Newsletter of the Kingston Historical Society

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Spring 2022

KINGSTON: ***MAIN STREET REFLECTIONS*** featuring stories of Main Street through the eyes of longtime residents Wednesday 22 June 2022 at 7 pm



The term “Main Street” is usually referred to as the focal point for shops and socializing, but, it also symbolizes life in a small town. Main Street Kingston was a place where families lived and raised their children or a local shop where various members of the family worked together on the business. Join us and watch history come alive as we feature five guest speakers, all longtime residents, who will discuss memories of days gone by. Each participant grew up or ran a business on Main Street in Kingston.

Those featured include:

- Kathy McCarthy, whose father was the Kingston barber for over 50 years.
- Sharon O’Donnell Hansen, whose family owned and operated the Union Line Hotel.
- George Luck, Jr., former Chief and 50-year member of Kingston Fire Department.
- Theresa Russo, a third generation Kingstonian.
- Bob Brian, Kingston’s most popular native son and lifelong resident

The discussion will be illustrated with an array of historical photographs.

Join us for this special program on
WEDNESDAY JUNE 22nd, 2022 at 7:00 pm

The program will be “hybrid”. You may attend:

1. **In-person (socially distanced and with masks):**
Kingston Firehouse
8 Heathcote Brook Road, Kingston
OR
2. **By Zoom:** Those on our e-mail list will receive the link in June, but anyone can receive the Zoom link by sending an e-mail to contact@khsnj.org and requesting a link, which will be sent in June.

KINGSTON’S INNS & TAVERNS **The May 21st Walk had to be shortened;** **the complete walk will be given in fall.**

Due to a medical emergency, it was necessary to shorten the walk. The complete Inns and Taverns walk will be rescheduled for the fall; those who chose to do so continued directly to Eno Terra, where the Momos had arranged for us to have the final part the event. There, George Luck, Jr. continued with an informal discussion of Inns and Taverns while all enjoyed appropriate drinks inside the Eno Terra restaurant. Steven Feldman, whose family once ran a general store in the historic section of the building related stories of that era. Carlo Momo told of the Wine Press and earlier King’s Inn restaurants that occupied the old general store prior to its restoration and expansion into today’s farm-to-table restaurant by the Momos.

Half way between New York and Philadelphia, Kingston was a natural place for Inns and taverns for travelers. The first inn/tavern, was established by Henry Greenland in 1683 on the west side of the Millstone River; subsequent taverns/inns were all on

the east side. Early taverns included William Van Tilburgh's Sign of the Mermaid on the north side of Main Street and the Beehive on the south side.

We are trying to reschedule the walk for a weekend in October. Kingston resident (and KHS Vice President) George Luck, Jr, will once again demonstrate his deep knowledge of Kingston history.

The walk will again start at the parking lot of the Kingston Presbyterian Church, then proceed down Main Street toward the D&R Canal. On the way George will point out the sites of the various former inns and taverns that once made Kingston an important and busy stopping place for travelers as well as a gathering place for locals during colonial times, the Revolutionary War, the early republic, the Lincoln Highway era and today. He will tell about their owners, patrons and history. The walk will continue down the hill to the D&R Canal area. There George will talk about the former inns and taverns in the canal area. The role of historic preservation in rehabilitation of the former King's Inn / Wine Press into the present Eno Terra will also be described.

Date, time and details to be determined; check the KHS website www.khsnj.org



Hoffman House Fisk General Store
Photograph c.1905 from the D&R Canal

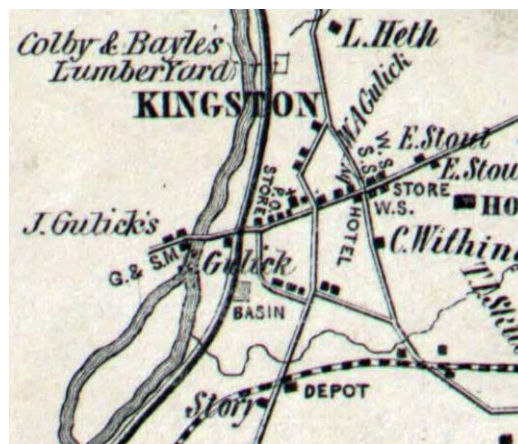
KHS 2021 Virtual Annual Meeting On December 14th.

The KHS annual meeting was a business meeting without a speaker; instead George Luck and Charles Dieterich presented a hybrid (in person and virtual) illustrated public program on February 8th 2022 entitled "*Why Is Kingston Here.*" See the following article.

"Why Is Kingston Here?" Hybrid Talk On February 8th Was Well Attended

George Luck and Charlie Dieterich explored the many faces of Kingston's 300-plus year existence. They told of the village from early European exploration to prosperity in war and peace, related to its location and geology.

The February 8th 2022 program was "hybrid" – given in-person in the Kingston Firehouse and also virtually on Zoom. Both the in-person and virtual versions were very well attended and received. The illustrated talk was recorded and is now available on line at: <https://www.khsnj.org> . An exhibit, *Kingston On the Map*, in the Lock-tender's House builds on the talk.



1850 MAP OF MIDDLESEX COUNTY

KHS Annual Holiday Tree Lighting On December 5th, 2021.

The KHS annual Holiday Open House and tree-lighting has long been a Kingston Community tradition. We had hoped to have our traditional 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 was only outdoors; however, we were able to have music again, thanks to the Kingston Women's Chorus, which not only led the traditional sing-along after the tree-lighting, but also added to the festivities by singing a few songs before the tree-lighting.

Hopefully, on Sunday December 4th, 2022, we will once again be able to have our traditional open house as well as the community holiday tree lighting. Save the date!

Archives

We continue our digital archive work

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.

The Lock-tender's House

We resumed our schedule starting on April 2ⁿ. The House will continue to be open Saturdays, Sundays and major holidays through October from 10 am to 5 pm and in November until 4 pm.

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



Kingston Lock-tender's House

We are most grateful to the Canal Society of New Jersey for providing a grant to help restore the north chimney and flashing. Work is expected to begin soon.

We continue to 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 contactors.

Kingston Seen In the Past:

A 1797 stay in a Kingston Inn

Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, a Polish nobleman, poet, playwright and statesman stayed in Kingston and described his stay in a local inn:

“Breakfast consisting coffee, tea, and beefsteak, 4 shil., dinner 5 and 6, and supper one dollar. You have to sleep in a room where there are 5 or 6 beds.”

A 1834 entry on Kingston

In 1833 Thomas Gordon traveled through New Jersey to gather information for his *Gazetteer of the State of New Jersey*, which he published in 1834.

The entry for Kingston is as follows:

Kingston, p-t., on the turnpike road from Princeton to Brunswick, 13 miles from the latter, 180 from W. C., and 13 from Trenton, and on the line separating South Brunswick t-ship, Middlesex co., from Franklin t-ship, Somerset co., so that part of the town lies in each county, and half way between Philadelphia and New York. There are here a Presbyterian church, an academy, 3 taverns, 4 stores, a large grist mill, saw mill, and woolen factory, driven by the Millstone River, which runs through the town. The Delaware and Raritan canal also passes through it, with a lock at this place. There are here also, about 40 dwellings. The soil around the town is of sandy loam, upon red sandstone, fertile, and in a high state of cultivation, and valued, in farms, at \$60 the acre. This place was once remarkable for the number of stages which passed through it, for New York and Philadelphia, the passengers in which, commonly dined at the hotel of Mr. P. Withington. Before the completion of the Bordentown and Amboy rail road, 40 stages, loaded with passengers, between the two cities, have halted here at the same time; when more than 400 harnessed horses were seen standing in front of the inn. Mr. Withington has lately made a very large fish pond on his lands, well stocked with trout, and other fish of the country, with which he can, at any time, supply his table in a few minutes.

1879: John Russo’s Hotel Burned.

John Russo, who formerly kept a fruit stand on the corner of State and Greene Streets, was the proprietor of the hotel at Kingston, which was destroyed by fire on Monday afternoon. His loss will be about \$1500. William Warrick loses a like Amount.

The hotel was an old landmark, and in the old days of stage driving between Trenton and New Brunswick, was the principal stopping place and had large trade. Under its present management Mr. and Mrs. James McDowell, the hotel has been doing a very prosperous business and was the leading place of the kind at Kingston. The total loss occasioned by the fire will exceed \$5,000. There was an insurance of \$1,2000 on Mr. Putney’s store goods.

[Trenton Evening Times, July 7, 1879:]

No person or persons shall at any time under any pretence or Colour whatsoever undertake to be a Common Victuler, keeper of a Cookes shop, or House of Common entertainment, or publique seller of wine, Beare, Ale or strong waters by retail or a less quantity than a quarter Caske, without a certificate of his good behaviour from the constable and two Overseers at east of the parish wherein he dwelt and a Lycence first obtained under the hand of two Justices of the peace in the Sessions upon pain of forfeiting five pounds for every such offense, or Imprisonment at the discretion of the court.

A later, 1864, Monmouth County schedule of tavern rates follows:

TAVERN RATES,
AS AFFIXED BY THE INFERIOR COURT OF COMMON PLEAS,
Holden at Freehold, in and for the County of Monmouth of the term of April One Thousand Eight Hundred and Sixty A.D. 1864

A good Breakfast,.....	37½ cts.	Madeira Wine, (per gill,).....	12 cts.
A good Dinner,.....	50	Best imported Spirits, per gill,.....	12
A good Supper,.....	37	Brandy, per gill,.....	12
A common Breakfast,.....	25	Gin, per gill,.....	10
A common Dinner,.....	25	Whiskey, per gill,.....	10
A common Supper,.....	25	Horse to fresh Hay, 24 hours,.....	25
Lodging, (common,).....	13	Oats, per quart,.....	3
Good Lodging,.....	25	Corn, per quart,.....	4
Lisbon, Malaga, Teneriffe, Sherry, and Port Wine, per gill,.....	12	Horse to Hay, per night,.....	12
		Horse to pasture, 24 hours,.....	12



UNION LINE HOTEL (1900)

The Union Line Hotel was rebuilt (above picture) and remains today as the only Kingston Inn building that retains its historic appearance although, like many buildings on Main Street, its original use has changed; today it has been adapted for use as offices for Witherspoon Media.

Tavern Regulations and Rates

From an early date, tavern regulations and rates were set. An early law regulating taverns, perhaps the earliest in New Jersey, appears in the William Penn Charter of April 2, 1664:

Contacting KHS:

Website: www.khsnj.org
 Email: history@khsnj.org
 Mail: Kingston Historical Society,
 PO Box 323
 Kingston, NJ 08528-0323

Kingston Historical Society Trustees:

Charles Dieterich
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