



Kingston Historian

Newsletter of the Kingston Historical Society

Vol. 17, No. 1

Summer 2021

Covid-19 Pandemic and KHS

Unfortunately, due to the Covid -19 pandemic KHS had to severely curtail its public activities. In the interest of safety and in accordance with the New Jersey State regulations for all and the specific regulations of the State Park Service we were unable to open the Lock-tender's House to the public on weekends or have regular public programs. For a short time, all State Parks were closed. Outdoor areas were reopened with conditions – such as maintaining social distance and wearing masks, but buildings – such as the Lock-tender's House and Rockingham were required to remain closed to the public. We were able to continue our digital archive work and we responded to on-line inquiries. We had to hold a virtual annual meeting on Zoom. Also, getting repairs to the Lock-tender's House became even more difficult and remains a problem even with restrictions lifted due to the backed-up demand on contactors.

KHS Holiday Tree lighting

The KHS annual Holiday Open House and tree-lighting had long been a Kingston Community tradition. Unfortunately, due to the Covid -19 pandemic we were unable to have our traditional a Holiday Open House, but we were able to have a “socially distanced” holiday tree lighting; furthermore, thanks to the generosity of Karen Linder, who provided new lights and the McParland family, who provided the necessary lift to install them on the tree (which had outgrown its old lights several years ago.) New lights for the tree and, even more, installing them, had been a challenge for several years – the tree is 65 ft tall – just 10 ft short of that at Rockefeller Center. Finally, the tree has been properly and beautifully lighted.

We are most grateful to Karen and the McParland family. In addition to the McParlands, Doug Miller, George Luck, Jr, and Tom Jacoby assisted in the preparation and installation of the new lights.

We look forward to having our traditional Holiday Open House – with refreshments and a tree-lighting with singing. We hope all of you can join us next year on Sunday December 5th 2021!



KHS Holiday Tree – December 6th, 2020

Photo by George Luck

THE LOCKTENDER'S HOUSE

After having been closed to the public in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, starting on July 3rd 2021, the house will again be open to the public through November, on Saturdays, Sundays and major holidays; through October the House will be open from 10 am to 5 pm. In November the House will be open from 10 am to 4 pm. (In 2022 we expect to resume our schedule starting in April.)

The subjects currently on display are:

- Kingston Volunteer Fire Company.
- Kingston's Railroads.
- Dutch Barns

Permanently on exhibit are the HABS (Historic American Building Survey) drawings of the Kingston lock and canal house and other information about the D&R Canal and the adjacent area.

Continued on P. 2

(Continued from P. 1)

The North room is temporarily closed for repairs, the schedule for which is still to be determined.

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.

New Trustee

At the KHS virtual annual meeting, Charles Dieterich was elected a trustee. A life member of the Kingston Fire Co., Charlie co-chaired Kingston 1999, highlighting Kingston and its history; he was active on the Kingston Task Forces and a principal founder of Kingston Greenways and Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands. He also led a successful effort to document and commemorate the “Road to Monmouth Battlefield in 2003”: An ordained minister, we are delighted that he has retired back to Kingston and joined KHS as a Trustee.

One-line Millstone Valley Scenic Byway Driving Tour

KHS is a partner in the Millstone Valley Preservation Coalition (MVPC); MVPC is the sponsor of the Millstone Valley National Scenic Byway; the Byway is a loop between Amwell Road in Millstone Borough/ East Millstone and Kingston formed by the “canal road” on the east side of the valley and the “river road” on the west side; the various causeways serve as east-west connectors and the D&R Canal State Park is its base.

The Tour was originally devised to provide a “socially distanced” safe event for Somerset County’s Journey into the Past event during the

Covid-19 pandemic, but has proved to be a popular way for visitors to the Valley that can be used anytime to get an overview of the many natural, and historic resources of the Valley and the recreational opportunities it offers.

MVPC also maintains a Byway Center in the Griggstown Bridge-tender’s House, which is open seasonally (April – October) on weekend afternoon. One room serves as an information room and another has been restored as a c. 1840 kitchen.

Repairs at the Kingston D&R Canal Bridge

For many months the NJ Department of Transportation has had a contractor working in the area of the Old Route 27 bridge across the D&R Canal. The work involved replacement of a major storm drain and the surrounding/ adjacent retaining wall of the canal and bridge abutment. The work is now largely complete and the area opposite the Lock-tender’s House open again to the public.



Newly Completed Repairs to Canal at Bridge

Contacting KHS:

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

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