



## **KINGSTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH: 300 YEARS: 1723 – 2023 Celebration Saturday 3 June**

Kingston Presbyterian Church is celebrating its 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary throughout 2023. To highlight special events in its three centuries of history, the Kingston Presbyterian Church and the Kingston Historical Society will host a special celebration, *Reflections On Our Past 1723 – 2023*, on Saturday, June 3, 2023 at the church. The celebration will start with a reception at 6:00 PM in the assembly room of the Church basement and be followed by a 7:00 PM presentation on the history of the Church in the Church Sanctuary by the Church's pastor, the Rev. Sharyl Dixon and KHS Vice President George Luck, Jr., an Elder and life-time member of the Church. All are invited.



KINGSTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH c. 1900)

The celebration is free and all are welcome.

For more see article on P. 2 for a brief history of the Church.

## **CEIL LEEDOM 1940 - 2023 Longtime KHS Trustee and Officer**



In her long service as a Kingston Historical Society trustee, Ceil made enormous contributions to the Society and to the community. She said *“What I have learned is the breadth of the community’s stories*

*and that each person has a contribution to make. Most of us are concerned with our immediate world, but a historian usually takes a longer look at the past, present and future. No one can know the complete story of their community and that is what is so fascinating.”*

To build awareness of history Ceil founded and for years wrote and edited the *Kingston Historian*

A true historian, Ceil listened to older residents, and loved to research deeds and old newspapers.

At KHS Ceil also cataloged artifacts, researched and mounted exhibits for the lock-tender's house. For many years she served as KHS's Secretary. She managed the Society's annual appeal and its membership list. She also cheerfully organized refreshments for events.

Ceil was committed to historic preservation and its importance to the sense of community. After the loss by fire of the old Titus barn, she said *“I feel that once a historic building or site is demolished that part of a community’s history is lost and I want to see re-use rather than demolition of historic buildings or sites”* and *“There is the future to be concerned about and I would like to see as many sites/buildings preserved as possible. Once a site is gone, we tend to forget its history.”*

(Continued on P. 2)

**CEIL LEEDOM 1940 – 2023** (continued from P. 1)

Ceil was a member of the task force that created South Brunswick's Historic preservation ordinance; as the Township's official Historian she was an ex-officio member of its Historic Preservation Commission (HPC); she not only attended all HPC meetings, but compiled and provided to HPC an enormous amount of information on the Township's historic resources and individual applications.

In addition to all her contributions to the Kingston Community and South Brunswick's HPC, Ceil (who had a Master Degree in Library Science from Rutgers) worked as a reference librarian in the South Brunswick Library (1987 – 2000) and then served as a volunteer. Appropriately, the numerous local history documents and information which Ceil had gathered and organized were recognized by the Library's Board of Trustees as the Ceil Leedom Local History Archive and the History Room named in her honor on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017.

Ceil received KHS's Historical Contribution Award "for her longtime tireless service to our Society and the Kingston community through her extensive historical research, engaging exhibits and newsletters documenting and displaying the history of Kingston and its Environs. She has also tirelessly and cheerfully served as the Society's Secretary and organizer of archives and events for many years."

Ceil's many contributions to KHS and the community will continue to sustain and enrich both for many years to come.

**Holiday Tree Lighting December 4<sup>th</sup>**

We gathered outside the Lock-tender's House. New Jersey State Park regulations and concern for the health and safety of all still rule out the traditional open house, but holiday refreshments were served and the Kingston Women's Chorus sang and led the traditional "sing-along" after the Tree Lighting.

**KINGSTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH: 300 YEARS: 1723 – 2023**  
**A Brief History**

Kingston Presbyterian Church, chartered on January 21, 1723, is celebrating its 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2023. The original church was in what is now the Kingston Presbyterian Cemetery. The church and the cemetery have been central to Kingston's history from colonial times, through the Revolutionary War and to the present day.

The land for the first church was purchased sometime between 1709 and 1715 from Jedediah Higgins, who originally owned 1,000 acres in the Kingston area. The original church was a simple log meeting house with the cemetery adjacent to the church. The foundation can be found in the cemetery marked with an interpretive sign designating its location. (See P. 3 for a map of the cemetery and the location of the original church building.)

During the Revolutionary War, George Washington met in front of the wooden church with his officers for a conference on horseback after the Battle of Princeton on January 3, 1777. It was here that General Washington decided to head north to Morristown, where his exhausted troops could remain safely for the winter, rather than proceed to New Brunswick.

The original church burned down in 1791 and another was built on its foundation in 1792. In 1852 a new church was built on its present site two blocks north of the cemetery on Main Street. The church and its iconic steeple, which was restored in 2015, is a landmark in the village of Kingston.

**Coming KPC Event**

On October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023 (Details to be announced) Kingston Presbyterian Church will have a special event called *Cemetery Tales* featuring special church members portraying former Kingstonians at their graves and discussing their roles both in the church and the village.

**Coming Anniversaries**

2024: Kingston Volunteer Fire Company – 100<sup>th</sup>  
2026: War of the American Revolution – 250<sup>th</sup>  
(Multiple years continuing through 2033)

## The Lock-tender's House

As of April 1<sup>st</sup>, the Lock-tender's House is again open to the public on Saturdays, Sundays and major holidays through November. Since April, in addition to local area visitors we have had visitors from Luxemburg, France, Denmark, the UK and Canada.

The North Room continues to be closed for repairs, but most of the repairs have been completed. In addition the door and gutter on the north elevation of the Lock-tender's House were recently replaced; we are again most grateful to the Canal Society of New

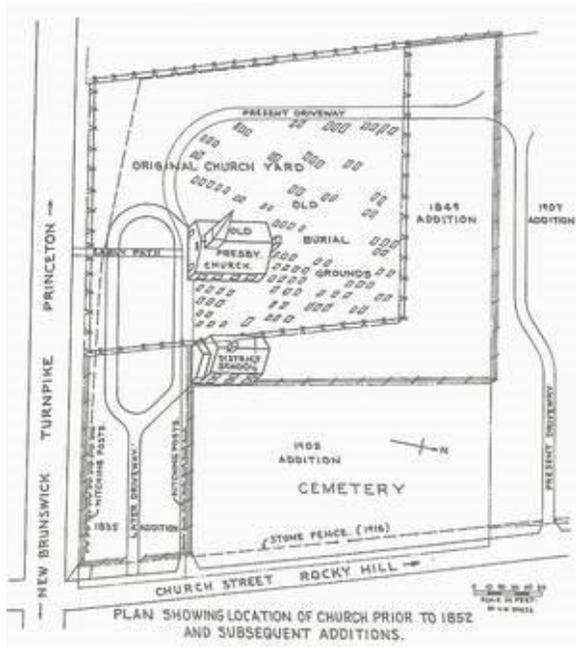
Jersey for providing Funding. We are also working with the Park Service and the Canal Society to work on the toll house; the existing door and roof will be replaced; work has already started.



NORTH ELEVATION

The relocation of the furnace from the basement, where it has had to be replaced twice due to floods, to the attic is expected to be complete later in 2023.

## Kingston Presbyterian Cemetery



## KINGSTON'S INNS & TAVERNS II

### 45 persons attended the walk on 6 May

The walk had to be postponed for a week due to bad weather, but Saturday 6 May was a perfect day for the second Inns and Taverns walk, again led by lifelong Kingston resident George Luck, Jr., who once again demonstrated his deep knowledge of Kingston history. George's first Tavern Walk had to be shortened due to extreme heat; since then, George



UNION LINE HOTEL (c. 1900)  
(Now Witherspoon Media)

found a great deal of new information, which he incorporated in the walk along with the material not covered last year.

The walk started at the Kingston Presbyterian Church, where George discussed the numerous taverns and inns in the area north of the Church before proceeding down Main Street toward the D&R Canal. On the way he talked of various former inns and taverns along Main Street that 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. George told about their owners, patrons and history. The walk continued down the hill to the canal area, where George talked about former inns and taverns in the canal area. All adjourned to Eno Terra's wine bar, which Eno Terra graciously opened for the walk, to enjoy conversation and drink in what was



HOFFMAN HOUSE FISK GENERAL STORE (c. 1910)  
(Burned down 1910) (Now Eno Terra)

once Fisk's and later Feldman's general store. Still later the King's Inn and the Wine Press.

Now restored to reveal its historic structure, the old store, later King's Inn and Wine Press restaurants, is an integral part of Raoul and Carlo Momo's sensitive rehabilitation of the historic property – and continuing Kingston's historic role to provide food and drink to locals and visitors alike while also being part of the "farm to table" movement of today.

## Archives:

KHS welcomes donations of appropriate artifacts related to Kingston

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.

## Volunteer Opportunities

- **Kingston Archivist Team forming**

Our archiving has a substantial backlog requiring entry; KHS would welcome careful volunteers to help preserve and catalog items.

The archivist team has a daunting task. In years past KHS had a good number of items archived, using technology from 20 years ago. The all-volunteer team has the task of determining appropriate modern ways to archive materials for display and preservation.

We will meet via Zoom and at the Kingston Lock-tenders House to go through our backlog and collect new materials. Adults are welcome as well as interested teens with supervision.

- **Kingston Webmasters Roundtable forming**

The web team for [khsnj.org](http://khsnj.org) and web developers for other Kingston area, volunteer run websites are forming a roundtable group to share ideas and progress.

The roundtable is a group for volunteers who maintain local, non-commercial websites. The goal of this inter-organization group is to encourage sharing and appreciation of what each organization is doing with their website and to provide a community of support. Local churches, non-profits, friends organizations and other Kingston NJ area groups with all-volunteer

For details, current status, and how to join either of these teams, visit our groups page at <https://www.khsnj.org/interest-groups-forming/>

## Kingston Community Picnic

The end of summer 2022 brought the return of a former favorite event to the Kingston community – the Kingston Picnic. In response to many who missed the former picnics, the Kingston Historical Society (KHS) and the Kingston Village Advisory Committee (KVAC), the BYO picnic was a way to visit with friends and neighbors, meet new ones, and enjoy the last days of summer sunshine. Many have asked if there will be a picnic this year.

After an eight-year hiatus, attendance at the 2022 picnic was more modest than in previous years, but with sufficient interest and volunteers to plan, organize and implement a picnic for this Fall, the experience of last year could be built upon that for another picnic this Fall.

If you'd like to be a part of the planning committee or otherwise volunteer, please contact us at <https://www.khsnj.org/picnic/>

## Contacting KHS:

Website: [www.khsnj.org](http://www.khsnj.org)  
 Email: [history@khsnj.org](mailto:history@khsnj.org)  
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 Kingston, NJ 08528-0323

## Kingston Historical Society Trustees:

Charles Dieterich  
 Thomas Jacoby, *Secretary*  
 George Luck, Jr., *Treasurer and Vice President*  
 Glen McParland  
 Robert von Zumbusch, *President*  
 Anne Zeman  
 David Potts *Trustee Emeritus*

## The Kingston Historical Society

The Kingston Historical Society was formed in 1997 as a no-partisan, nonprofit organization to preserve, enhance, and promote the history of the village of Kingston. It is a 501(c) (3) organization.

All with an interest in Kingston and its history are invited to join. For information, see: [www.khsnj.org](http://www.khsnj.org)