

Kingston Historian

Newsletter of the Kingston Historical Society

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KHS 2023 ANNUAL MEETING ***7:30 pm Tuesday, November 14th***

The 2023 Kingston Historical Society Annual Meeting will be “hybrid” – in-person at the Kingston Firehouse (8 Heathcote Brook Rd, Kingston, NJ 08528) and also virtually by Zoom. To attend by “zoom.us”, pre-register at <https://www.khsnj.org/talk>

After a very brief business meeting, including reports and election of Trustees, there will be a special presentation by Markus McParland “*Community Collection for Kingston, NJ*”, which is also the title of the book compiled by Markus as the product of his 8th grade community project at YingHua International School. The idea and work started about 2 years prior through discussions with local residents and historians around the need to pull together the vast historical data from various sources.



The book has 570 pages about the history of Kingston with documents, articles, pictures and artifacts all collated into six sections: Inns, Taverns and Hotels, Homes and Historic Sites, People and How They Lived, Artifacts, Uncovered Secrets, and Public Records.

Markus McParland

Markus currently attends Notre Dame High School as a freshman, lives in Kingston and continues to promote the book at local signings and meetings.

There will be an opportunity at the meeting to buy the book and have it signed by Markus. All proceeds will be donated to the Kingston Historical Society.

The meeting is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served at the Firehouse.

ANNUAL KINGSTON COMMUNITY ***HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING*** ***4:30 – 5:30 pm Sunday December 3rd***



PLEASE JOIN US at the Kingston Lock-tender’s House.

We will gather outside, between the parking area behind the Lock-tender's House and the tree on the D & R Canal at Old Route 27 (Old Lincoln Highway). Due to limited space indoors, the event will be outdoors; however, the house will be open to view the current displays until 5:00 pm

Meet KHS members, friends and neighbor’s while enjoying holiday refreshments and the music of the Kingston Women's Chorus outdoors. The Tree Lighting will be at 5:00 pm. The Chorus will sing before the Tree Lighting and then lead the traditional “sing-along” after the Tree Lighting.

COMING ANNIVERSARIES

- 2024: Kingston Volunteer Fire Company – 100th
- 2024: D&R Canal State Park – 50th
- 2024: D&R Canal Commission – 50th
- 2026: War of the American Revolution – 250th
(Multiple years through 2033)

KHS RECIVES GRANT

The Kingston Historical Society was the recipient of a very generous grant of \$10,000 from the Alissa R, Fleck Charitable Fund for “the restoration and preservation of the Kingston Lock House” and for “the Kingston Historical Society to create an enjoyable and educational historical haven for generations to come.” KHS is most grateful for the grant. A committee has been formed to study how to best implement the intent of the grant;

TRAGIC HELICOPTER CRASH

A small helicopter, apparently experiencing mechanical problems, crashed in Heathcote Brook between the D&R canal and the Millstone River just 200 yards upstream of the Lock-tender’s House.



Helicopter in Heathcote Brook (SBT Police Dept)

A Kingston fireman and a South Brunswick Police-man responded within five minutes, but, as Deputy Police Chief Jim Ryan reported in a media briefing, “The two men lifted the helicopter and pulled the pilot from the helicopter”. Sadly, “The pilot had suffered massive injuries and life-saving efforts were not possible.” The pilot was the sole occupant of the helicopter; however, the area was thoroughly searched to confirm no one else was involved and to look for debris from the helicopter.

Old Lincoln Highway was closed for much of the next few days while the search continued and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigated the site and supervised the extraction of the helicopter; it was sent to Maryland for a detailed investigation to determine the cause of the incident. The results may not be known for a year,

The Lock-tender’s House

We will be keeping the House open from on weekends and major holidays through November from 10 am to 4 pm. We continue to have visitors from near and far including a number from abroad.



PAINTING THE LOCK-TENDER’S HOUSE

After many years the house is finally being painted. We are most grateful to the Canal Society of New Jersey for providing funding, and to a local Kingston painting contractor, Gerald Clark, who was able to do the job. We are delighted and sure all will be pleased with the work. Even before the work was finished, many admiring compliments were made.

We are continuing to work with the Park Service to provide a heating system which will not be subject to flooding. The existing furnace is located in the basement; it has had to be replaced twice due to flooding. Plans had been prepared and we were hopeful work would be completed this year, but problems developed. Now a new approach is being considered. We hope, the project will proceed quickly in the coming year and before any flooding.

The electrical panel is also located in the basement and had to be replaced once. It is hoped that the revised project can include moving it to a location not subject to flooding.

The North Room continues to be closed for repairs, which cannot be completed until a new heating system has been determined. Once repairs are complete, we hope to furnish the room as it might have been during a time it was the lock-tender’s sitting room. The c. 1875 Moor-Potts desk-bookcase will determine the period. A committee has been formed to work on the project.

The Toll House

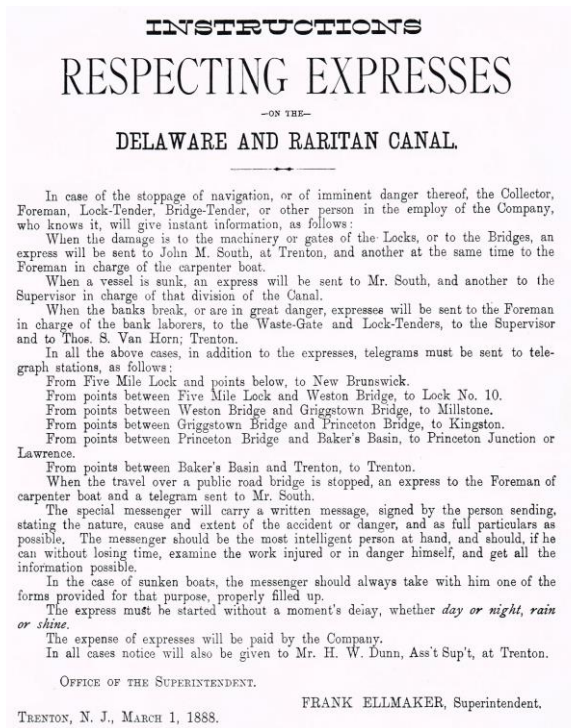


TOLL HOUSE with new door and roof

The Toll House has needed work for some time. KHS is continuing to work with the Park Service and the Canal Society, which again generously provided the funding to replace the existing door and roof. That work is now completed.

The next step will be the stabilization and rebuilding of the foundations, particularly those of the rear (shed roof) section. Once that is done the interior can be rehabilitated.

The Toll House was once also a telegraph station. One of the first uses of commercial telegraphy was on the D&R Canal. Starting on 1846, the telegraph was used to expedite boat traffic, speed repairs and track speeding boats that exceeded 4.5 miles/hour.



D&R CANAL CO, BROADSIDE
Showing use of telegraphs on the Canal

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.

Archivist team is making progress:



Three responded to KHS’s call for volunteers. Gabriella Hudyka (left), Peter Shell (center), and Robert Pollard (right). They are shown transcribing descriptions and appropriately packing for storage glass bottles. They have been working under the guidance of Charlie Dieterich and have already made progress. Packing up the items in the archive room remains a primary goal since access will be needed by workers installing a new heating system throughout the House. Still more has to be done including photographing items, entering all the information into a digital data base and research.

KHS will also be buying a new scanner, which will facilitate scanning photographs and printed matter for the archive collection and the need for more help.

Volunteer Opportunities

While we have made progress, KHS’s archives hve a substantial backlog requiring entry; KHS would welcome additional careful archivist team volunteers to help preserve and catalog items. If you are interested go to <https://www.khsnj.org/interest-groups-forming/> for more information.

KINGSTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH: 300 YEARS CELEBRATION: 1723 – 2023

Kingston Presbyterian Church is celebrating its 300th Anniversary throughout 2023. To highlight special events in its three centuries of history, the Kingston Presbyterian Church and the Kingston Historical Society organized a special community celebration, *Reflections On Our Past 1723 – 2023*, on Saturday, June 3, 2023 at the church. The celebration began with a reception hosted by KHS at 6:00 PM in the Church's assembly room and was followed at 7:00 PM by a 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.

The history presentation was followed by remarks and resolutions from State Senator Andrew Zwicker and representatives from three municipalities – Councilman Ed Potosnak of Franklin, Councilman Joe Camarota of South Brunswick, and Mayor Mark Freda of Princeton. KHS also read its resolution and presented a plaque to KPC Elder and President Florence Perren-Diaz, which read “In recognition of its service to, support for, and partnership with the Kingston community for 300 years.”



Left to right: KPC Pastor Sharyl Dixon, KPC Elder and President Florence Perren-Diaz, KPC Elder and KHS Vice President George Luck, Jr., and KHS President Robert von Zumbusch.

4 KINGSTON SITES FEATURED IN 2023 SOUTH BRUNSWICK HISTORY DAY SCAVANGER HUNT

Four of the five sites on this year's History Day Scavenger Hunt were in Kingston; the Kingston Lock-tender's House, 1798 quadruple arch stone bridge, Mapleton Preserve, and Kingston Presbyterian Church were all included. Participants acquired a sticker at each site to put on their special “passports” and learned about the sites. KHS staffed the Lock-tender's House and the bridge. Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands staffed Mapleton Preserve and church members staffed the Church. Participants of all ages seem engaged and those staffing the event enjoyed taking with participants.

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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.

The Society has its headquarters in the Delaware & Raritan Canal State Park's historic Kingston Lock-tender's House which it helps maintain. All with an interest in Kingston and its history are invited to join. For more information, see the KHS website:

www.khsnj.org

Past issues of the Kingston Historian can be found at <https://www.khsnj.org/archives/>