



Kingston Historian

Newsletter of the Kingston Historical Society

Vol. 21 No. 1 Spring 2025

KHS 2025 SPRING PROGRAM

The 7:30 pm Tuesday June 10th, 2025 program is free to all and hybrid:

- In-person at the Kingston Firehouse, 8 Heathcote Brook Road, Kingston, NJ 08528. Registration is not required. Doors open at 7:15 pm.
- Virtually, by Zoom. Registration is required; go to <https://khsnj.org/talk> and fill out the registration form. After registering, you will receive a confirmation e-mail containing a link and information about joining the meeting.

The upcoming multi-year (2026 – 2033) celebration of the American Revolution and the Crossroads of the American Revolution – the National Historic Area and the Association, which is the National Park Service designated management entity for the Area are the subjects for the Society’s Spring Program.



The speaker for the illustrated program is Carrie Fellows, Executive Director of the Crossroads of the American Revolution Association (CARA).

Carrie Fellows

Crossroads, a nonprofit organization, is partnered with the New Jersey Historical Commission, a division of the New Jersey Department of State, to form RevolutionaryNJ, New Jersey’s official planning entity for commemorating the nation’s 250th anniversary.

Carrie Fellows joined Crossroads of the American Revolution as Executive Director in August 2022. She brings thirty years’ experience working primarily in government and nonprofit museums, with extensive experience in grants management, capacity building through strategic planning and

visioning, creating constituencies, managing change after transition, and raising organization profiles.

Fellows has presented to a variety of public and professional audiences on such topics as creating historic site costume standards, managing museums, collections, and volunteers, and about women’s clothing, tasks and roles in 18th and early 19th century civilian and military life. She lives with her husband in antique house in Hunterdon County, New Jersey – an ongoing restoration project.

Kingston, was the site of several important events during the American Revolution. It has aptly been called “the Crossroads of Crossroads” – several major routes of march passed through Kingston including the route to Morristown after the Battle of Princeton (the crucial “Conference on Horseback”, where Washington decided to take his tired troops to safety in Morristown rather than take the British stores in Brunswick, was held in Kingston) and the route to Monmouth Battlefield passed through Kingston. During the entire war the King’s Highway (now Route 27) was a major route for troops and supplies and Kingston’s inns and taverns made it an important stopping place. At the war’s end, Rockingham served as Washington’s final military headquarters, where he wrote his Farewell Orders to the Armies of the United States.



ROCKINGHAM

TEA TIME TALKS

KHS's new Sunday afternoon winter programs were a great success. Our archivists, led by KHS Secretary and Archivist Charlie Dieterich, have been learning about Kingston's unique history, but realized that many, particularly those new to the community, know very little. They had discussions about how to reach out to new Kingston people and give them a basic understanding of the village and its environs and how they evolved. Out of these discussions the Tea Time Talks programs evolved. Winter, when people tend to be home, seemed a good time for the programs.

The talks were given at the Kingston Methodist Church, which generously gave KHS the use of its hall. Due to the threat of severe weather, only two talks were given. Both were well attended and well received. The first of the Tea Time Talk programs was on February 23rd. The talks were:

- *The Road Through Kingston in 1679* by KHS volunteer archivist Kristina Hill and KHS Secretary and Archivist Charles Dieterich.
- *The Kingston Green Belt* by Tari Pantaleo, Kingston Greenways Association President.
- *Kingston in the Revolution (1776-1783)* by George Luck, KHS Vice President.

The second Tea Time Talk program was on March 23rd. The talks were:

- *Mapleton Preserved* by Karen Linder, president Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands.
- *Everybody Wanted the King's Town* by Charlie Dieterich, KHS Secretary.
- *Bottled in Kingston* by KHS volunteer archivist Alexandria Trevena

After the talks, all enjoyed tea and conversation with the speakers and fellow attendees, including not only those new to Kingston, but also longtime residents and former residents who shared their knowledge of Kingston and its environs.

KHS plans to continue Tea Time Talks next winter.



The Kingston Methodist Church, where the Tea Time Talks were held was built in 1878.

OPEN HOUSE



To celebrate the seasonal opening of the Lock-tender's House on weekends from April through November, the Kingston Historical Society held an open house on Saturday April 5th. The Open House was an opportunity to chat and enjoy refreshments with members of the Society, ask questions about Kingston, the D&R Canal and the Society and to share thoughts and stories about Kingston and its history.

Although the day was cool and damp, KHS's Locktender's House opening day "open house" was a wonderful success. Visitors from New Jersey and beyond saw our press release in local papers and came in spite of the misty rain.

Members of the Historical Society trustees and archivists pitched in to set up, bring refreshments and do demonstrations using our canal lock and



KHS archivist Alexandria Trevena demonstrating the operation of a canal lock

swing bridge study models made by Paul Kayne. Visitors were able to enjoy a cold drink, brownies and Toll House cookies.

The Lock-tender's House is open to the public on weekends and major holidays from April through October from 10 am to 5 pm and in November from 10 am to 4 pm. Although usually not staffed, exhibits on the Canal and Kingston are on display and brochures and maps are available. For more information visit www.khsnj.org

KHS 2024 ANNUAL MEETING

After the brief business meeting, John Hutchison, Executive Director of the Delaware & Raritan Canal Commission presented an excellent illustrated program on the Commission. He described its role in preserving the Canal and its corridor and the process of developing a new master plan. The D&RCC Master Plan was last updated in 1989. As part of the process for a new master plan, the Canal is being documented by drone. A new video taken by drone, *“Taking Flight on the D&R Canal: Raven Rock to Prallsville Mills”* was shown.

2024 is the 50th Anniversary of both the D&R Canal State Park and The D&R Canal Commission. Both the Park and the Commission were established by the D&R Canal State Park Law of 1974. The Park is the second most used State Park in New Jersey. Many are familiar with the Park.

People are less familiar with the Commission and its mission to “prepare, adopt, and implement a master plan for the physical development of the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park, review State and local actions that impact on the park to insure that these actions conform as nearly as possible to the Commission’s master plan, and coordinate and support activities by citizens’ groups to promote and preserve the Park.”

The Commission’s regulations and continuing actions are essential in preserving not just a historic canal and a park, but a unique corridor of natural, historic and recreational resources in the center of the most densely populated state in the nation.

The Executive Director of the Commission advises the Commission on its actions and serves as its chief administrative officer. He is assisted by and oversees the operations of a professional staff of administrative and engineering personnel from the Commission’s office at the historic Prallsville Mills complex in Stockton, New Jersey.

The program was most informative and many stayed to engage in further discussions with the Director, who graciously stayed long after the meeting was adjourned.

LOCK-TENDER’S HOUSE UPDATE

The Kingston Lock-Tender’s House is part of the D&R Canal State Park. By longstanding agreement, the Kingston Historical Society uses the House as its headquarters and in return helps maintain it as well as provide the public with displays and information about the Canal and Kingston on weekends from April through November each year.

Heating System

At long last a heating system has been installed 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 put out to bid twice, but no bidders responded;

An electrical system was used to replace the gas-fired system in the basement, which has had to be replaced several times due to flooding. The electrical panel, also located in the basement, was also relocated to the Kitchen.

North Room Plans

Currently, the North room is mostly being used for displays relating to the canal and history of the village; however, it is also a period room work-in-progress.

In 2015 the Kingston Historical Society acquired the Moor-Potts desk (c. 1870), made locally by John F. Moor, who was a lock-tender for the canal in the late 1880s. Plans are underway to acquire furniture and decorative objects dating from the same period. A KHS committee, chaired by trustee Anne Zeman, is researching what items would be appropriate and how they could be obtained.

Toll House Plans

Work is needed to stabilize the building’s foundation, and repair its floor and floor joists

At one time the Toll House also served as a telegraph station. Starting in 1846, one of the first commercial uses of telegraph was on the D&R Canal. The telegraph was used to report problems and speeding boats.

Plans are being discussed to include interpretation of the use of the telegraph on the D&R Canal in the rehabilitation of the Toll House.

ANNUAL KINGSTON COMMUNITY HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING

KHS's Annual Holiday Tree Lighting took place on Sunday December 1st, 2024. A good crowd gathered outside between the parking area behind the Lock-Tender's House and the tree. Due to limited space indoors, the event was outdoors; however, the house was open to view the current displays before the actual tree lighting.

It was an opportunity to meet KHS members, friends and neighbors and enjoy holiday refreshments and the music of the Kingston Women's Chorus, led by Heather Robbins, outdoors.

The 2025 Annual Tree lighting will be on Sunday December 7th.

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.

Progress continues:

The KHS Archiving team is continuing to make good progress digitizing and documenting the many former displays at the Lock-Tender's House. Five new members have recently joined.

The team is currently meeting weekly on Wednesday evenings, bringing the new members up to speed. More workers are always welcome. As we process displays, we talk about the material and consider what new research might help preserve that aspect of Kingston's history.

Volunteer Opportunities

While we have made progress, KHS's archives have a substantial backlog requiring entry; KHS would welcome additional careful archivist team volunteers to help preserve and catalog items. Volunteer opportunities also are available for anyone interested in conducting historical research or interviews.

For more information and to volunteer, go to <https://www.khsnj.org/volunteering/> or to [khsnj.org](https://www.khsnj.org) and click on Volunteer!

KINGSTON HISORICAL SOCIETY

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:

Robert Brown, *Treasurer*

Charles Dieterich, *Secretary*

Sharon O'Donnell Hansen

George Luck, Jr., *Vice President*

Peter Shell

Robert von Zumbusch, *President*

Anne Zeman

Thomas Jacoby, *Trustee Emeritus*

David Potts, *Trustee Emeritus*

The Kingston Historical Society

The Kingston Historical Society was formed in 1997 as a non-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 more information, see the KHS website:

www.khsnj.org

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



KINGSTON LOCK-TENDER'S HOUSE IN 1908