



# Kingston Historian

Newsletter of the Kingston Historical Society

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## **Peter V. Shann, Civil War Veteran, Lives Again**



On Saturday, June 7 at 7 pm, in the Kingston Presbyterian Church Assembly Room, George Luck will portray Kingston resident, Peter Shann (1842-1926). Peter served in the Civil War and returned to serve the Kingston community. He lived on both sides of Main Street, married, raised his family and had a business

here. He served the Kingston Presbyterian Church, eventually becoming an Elder. This event is co-sponsored by the Kingston Presbyterian Board of Deacons and KHS. Light refreshments will be served at this free event.

## **The Millstone Valley Scenic Byway begins in Kingston**

On Monday, June 16 at 7:30 pm, at the Kingston Fire House on Heathcote Road, KHS will host a talk by author Linda Barth, who is writing a book about the Millstone Valley; the talk will be accompanied by the showing of a newly released short film highlighting the places, including Kingston, along this Scenic Byway. The Millstone Valley National Scenic Byway is anchored by Kingston on the south and Millstone on the north. The roadway, along the D&R Canal and Millstone River, connects several historic villages and passes through preserved farmland and natural areas. The event is free; refreshments will be served.

(If the venue changes, you will be notified.)

## ***Kingston HS Present at the New Jersey State History Fair***

KHS coordinated with Kingston Greenways Association (KGA) and Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands (FPNL) to present Kingston at the History Fair on Saturday, May 10 at Washington Crossing State Park. Several KHS members and others from KGA and FPNL set up displays and interacted with the public in support of these Kingston groups. Lots of questions about Kingston – its history, open spaces, and the Princeton Nurseries. Great location on a great day with threats of rain.



Robert von Zumbusch with aerial map of Kingston.

## **Artist Donates Pastel to KHS**



Artist Daniel P. Turner Thomas generously gave this beautiful pastel of the Locktender's and Toll House to the KHS. We are honored to have this art work in the Kingston Collection.

## The KHS Website: Active and Used

The KHS website at “[khsnj.org](http://khsnj.org)” has brought inquires about Kingston history. The following is an example of a recent question.

**Question:** Is the Johnson House and graveyard in the Kingston area still in existence?

**Answer:** In the early 1700s William Jansen/Johnson bought land on what is now Ridge Road about three miles east of Kingston. There was no Straight Turnpike or the US Route 1 of today and no Monmouth Junction. The Johnsons lived there for 100 years, when descendants sold most of the farm to the John Stout family. The Stouts lived there another hundred years. Later, some of the farm was owned by the Flemer’s Princeton Nurseries. The house and the Johnson family graveyard are now gone. David Comfort Johnson, a family descendant lived in Kingston. More info available, just ask!

## Locktender’s House Open

The Kingston Locktender’s House is open to the public from 10 am to 6 pm Saturdays and Sundays from April through October. The House, on the D&R Canal, is just off Route 27. Come visit us.

## *A Hundred Years Ago in Kingston*

3/11/1913. “John Sheen, [Civil] war veteran, is dead. Kingston man was one of first volunteers...”

7/12/1913. “Kingston to have big institution... ground broken for... St. Joseph’s Seminary.”

5/17/1914. “Historic Kingston estate is sold... Withington estate at Kingston has been sold to Joseph Gerney (Garneau) of New York City...”

4/9/1913. “Kingston hopeful for trolley road: correspondent claims Princeton wouldn’t suffer if new line was built...” Source: *Trenton Evening Times*. From Genealogybank.com.

## Improvements coming to the Locktender’s House

The KHS is aware of the deteriorating condition of some windows and doors at the Locktender’s House and have contracted to have these exteriors repaired. Also, we recently learned that the D&R State Park may relocate utilities from the basement to upper floors. This would be a great improvement to the house in the case of future flooding.

## The Rocky Hill Railroad

This year KHS celebrates the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rocky Hill Railroad and Transportation Company. A talk on this important rail connection will be given in the fall (date to be announced.) Join KHS for an interesting and informative talk about the railroad that served both Kingston and Rocky Hill; its relationship to the Camden & Amboy and Pennsylvania Railroads, which later ran the railroad will be discussed. The 2.36 miles between Kingston



“John Bull.” Source: Google Images.

and Rocky Hill was constructed, and put into service in 1864. Pictured here is the famous “John Bull” engine that ran for a brief time on the Rocky Hill Railroad line.

## Kingston Walk & Talk in the Fall

Also this fall, join the KHS as George Luck leads another tour of Kingston. We look forward to an learning more about Kingston from George and his stories about Kingston places. He has researched the history of Kingston from the 1600s to the 2000s, Details will be announced in the Fall.

## Railroads began serving Kingston 175 years ago.

In addition to celebrating the beginning of the Rocky Hill Railroad in 1864, this year also marks the 175 anniversary of the first railroad service to Kingston. Beginning in January 1839, the Camden & Amboy Railroad began its second line of rail service between Trenton and New Brunswick via Princeton, Kingston, and Deans Depot at Major Road. Rails connected Kingston to Princeton until shortly after a straightened rail line began service in November 1863. The Rocky Hill line kept the tracks in service between there and Monmouth Junction.

## Kingston Historical Society Officers

President – Robert von Zumbusch,  
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