



# *Stony Brook* **CURRENTS**

Vol. XIV, No. 3

*The Newsletter of the Suffield Historical Society*

September 2019

The mission of the Suffield Historical Society is to collect, preserve and stimulate interest in the history of Suffield and the region and to actively share it. The Society hopes to inspire a sense of community, as well as to provide an understanding and appreciation of Suffield's past.

## **Suffield Historical Society**

### *President*

Arthur Sikes, Jr.

### *Vice President*

Jackie Hemond

### *Treasurer*

Rick Seaman

### *Secretary*

Jan Peake

### *Historian & Curator*

Lester Smith

### **Trustees**

Anne Borg

Edward Chase

Christopher Childs

Terry Mandirola

Nancy Noble

Norman Noble

James Reeves

Dianne Seaman

Robert Stewart

William Sullivan

Laurie Tavino

Sara Zak

## **SHS BEGINS SEASON WITH A NEW SLATE OF OFFICERS**

Our newly elected President, Art Sikes, Jr., begins his service with a thank you to Ed Chase, who has served as President of the Suffield Historical Society for 20 years! During those years, Ed also researched and wrote numerous articles for the Society's newsletter which described the original proprietors of our community. There are a few yet unpublished that we hope to bring to you in the months ahead. Ed will continue to serve as a Trustee.

Art has served many years as the SHS Vice President and Membership Chairman, but his efforts to our organization also included countless hours digitizing old photographs, developing our website, and researching old homes within Suffield.

Former Trustees Jackie Hemond and Jan Peake have stepped into the roles of Vice President and Secretary, respectively. Rick Seaman took on the office of Treasurer earlier this year, when Gary Mandirola retired after 15 years in that office. As with Ed Chase, the Society is grateful for his many years of service in that capacity. Nancy Noble, who served as SHS Secretary for 16 years, will continue to be part of our roster as a Trustee.. Also new to our list of Trustees is Sara Zak, our October meeting speaker and active member in the Suffield Polish Heritage Society.

Please come by our booth at *Suffield on the Green*, Saturday September 7th and Sunday the 8th, to say hello and pick up the latest news about upcoming programs. We will have many pictures of old Suffield homes on display on the east side of the middle green. These will be of particular interest to many townspeople who live in old Suffield houses.

Over the next few months, Art will be describing volunteer jobs which are available within the Society. Below are three that we would like to fill with members like you. If you are interested, please call Art at 860-668-0414.

### **MEMBERSHIP CHAIR**

This individual would keep a list of active members with their address, telephone number(s), email address and particular inter-

ests within the Society. The Membership Chair would also monitor dues status and send late notices to those who have not renewed, as well as making initial contact by phone or email to welcome new members.

#### KING HOUSE PROPERTY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

This committee keeps track of the King House and its property. Working with the Curator, the group presents problems and/or suggested projects to the Trustees.

#### PUBLICITY CHAIR

This individual would be responsible to get information about up-coming programs and events to the local media on a timely basis. The Publicity Chair would also be responsible for submitting articles about recent activities with a photo, if available, about newsworthy events involving SHS.

## CURATOR'S REPORT

This has been a very special summer for the King House Museum, with the new exhibit, "Clothing from the Attic, Yesterday's Fashions," drawing a significant increase in visitation. The Society hosted a special viewing for the members of the Suffield's Woman's Club, who made the exhibit possible. The club not only funded the associated research through a generous grant, but gave us many volunteer hours to mount the display at the King House. (See details on page 4 for upcoming event with Stacey Danielson, the fashion consultant hired for the project.)

And there seems to have been an increase in the number of folks who come to research Suffield history, especially genealogical matters. That will change soon, when several important resources – most importantly the great works of Delphina Hammer Clark – return to the Kent Memorial Library's historical room, now that the library has reopened.

Work continues on the installation of the Past Perfect cataloging system, under the guidance of Dianne Seaman. This is a major project that has the promise of major benefits to the Society. I would like to mention two other helpful volunteers, one who has been with us for several years, the other a long-time friend who recently has undertaken a couple of notable projects. Bill O'Brien has been coming every Wednesday morning during our weekly volunteer day, helping with various carpentry tasks and general projects. Typical of these is the recent installation of one of Suffield's 1898 highway boundary markers. These small granite monuments, marked only with an "H," still show up around town. The one we just installed next to the old mill stone by the King House back door was displaced and scrapped when South Street was widened some years ago in a State project. I collected the stone

---

*Top right: This purple taffeta and velvet, two-piece dress with full bustle, circa 1885, is perfect for teatime. Donated by Frieda King.*

*Bottom right: Myra Edmonds, our SHS summer intern, poses beside a sequined 1920's dress. Donated by Martha Richardson.*

## POLISH HERITAGE PROGRAM

October is Polish-American Heritage Month, a national celebration of Polish history, culture and pride. In recognition of that, on October 16, Sara Zak will present an overview of the development of the Polish Community in Suffield from 1900 to the present.

As described in previous *Stony Brook Currents* articles, Sara has learned a great deal about the Polish immigrants who settled here in the early 20th century and their descendants. At this meeting she will talk about her sociological observations, chain migration, and six degrees of separation theory. Sara will also introduce her Suffield Polish Families Tree and her DNA matching project.

*by Lester Smith*





then, but never got around to setting it up to view until Bill's help became available.

And recently Jim Kent, a remarkably multi-talented craftsman, has been helping with some needed projects. He noticed that the two-wheeled hunting trap exhibited in the barn along with three nicely restored vehicles, looked pretty dull by comparison. This impressive and unusual cart was made around the turn of the last century by the J.W. Case wagon works in West Suffield for Hugh Swinton Legare, who had married Alberta Kent, the daughter of Sidney Albert Kent, who gave Suffield our first library building. Hugh and Alberta lived well in Kent Place, on Mountain Road at Sheldon Street.

The hunting trap didn't need a general restoration, but Jim saw that it could use a good application of linseed oil, something I had planned but not got to yet. Jim did the clean-up and application and touched up the black paint where it had chipped, with remarkable results. The five-foot-diameter wheels look sturdier than ever, and the simple body structure turned out to be an impressive shade of red. Even the undercarriage looks better. All that's needed now is new upholstery on the small backrest of Hugh Legare's seat. I've identified an upholsterer for that.

The hunting trap, an unusual vehicle with a great provenance, would look great in the 350th Day parade in October next year, along with John Wells Loomis's cigar delivery wagon, which was the first restoration job done after we had made plans for a barn to show such items. (Thanks again for the many donations in 2007 that made that restoration possible!) Legare's trap was pulled by two horses in tandem: one behind the other, presumably to allow driving on narrow paths in the woods. For the 350th parade, we have a contact with someone who says he can find a team of horses trained in tandem. It should be easier to find a single draft horse for the cigar wagon.

## JOIN THE FUN

We can use your help on Saturday, October 26 in our annual Work Day. Raindate is the following Saturday, November 2. See details on page 4.

## HOLIDAYEST

We can also use your help in finding collectible and vintage clothing accessories for our Holidayfest exhibit. We're looking for hats, purses, pocketbooks, satchels, etc. If you have any to lend will be looking for them in November.

Our Saturday hours extend to 5 p.m. to coordinate with the Christmas House Tour sponsored by the Suffield Garden Club. See calendar of Upcoming Events for more details.



*Jim Kent applies linseed oil to the rim of a giant wheel on the King House Museum's old hunting trap, once owned by Hugh Swinton Legare of Kent Place.*

Following his work in the barn, Jim Kent re-roofed a section of the stable, where the "garage" portion of that old building needed urgent repair. The Society may eventually tear down some or all of the stable, but if some is kept – and we are in dire need of storage space – the garage would be a good choice to keep.

Among the contents of the stable are a number of items that can be considered trash. But there are other items that should be sold or offered free to an organization/individual who might value them. For instance: two old grinding wheels, the remains of the old loom damaged in the King House fire, a small bed frame, old trunks, a winnowing machine (in disrepair) – perhaps the Hilltop Barn or some other farm museum like that. A volunteer who could help publicize these items to the right audiences would be much appreciated.

**Suffield Historical Society, Inc.**  
P.O. Box 893  
Suffield, Connecticut 06078  
(860) 668-5256

Our Website:  
[www.SuffieldHistoricalSociety.org](http://www.SuffieldHistoricalSociety.org)

Contact Us:  
[SHSQuestion@gmail.com](mailto:SHSQuestion@gmail.com)

Like Us on Facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/SuffieldConnecticutHistory/](http://www.facebook.com/SuffieldConnecticutHistory/)

King House Museum  
232 South Main Street

Open to the Public, Free  
Wednesdays and Saturdays  
1:00 - 4:00 p.m.  
May through September

Newsletter  
Maggie Philippon, Editor  
Anne Borg, Compiler

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT NO. 118  
WATERBURY, CT

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Fall Field Trip

**Saturday, September 28**

From the King House parking lot 7:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.  
*Explore from the Beckley Furnace in Cannan to the Kent Falls State Park, then on to the Antique Machinery Fall Festival and the Topsmead State Forest. After a tour of the beautiful Chase (Brass) Summer Mansion in the Forest, the trip concludes in Litchfield at the Tapping Reeve Law School. Limited to 10 participants. Call 860-729-6429 for details and to hold your spot.*

### Closing Out in Style!

**Wednesday, October 2**

King House Museum 1 p.m.

*A guided museum tour will follow a brief lecture by Fashion Consultant Stacey Danielson as we close our special summer exhibit of clothing from 1830 through the 1960s.*

### Suffield's Polish Community

**Wednesday, October 16**

Suffield Senior Center 7 p.m.

*Polish American Heritage month is celebrated with Sara Zak. Facts and observations from her research into Polish immigration and social development in Suffield.*

### SHS Work Day

**Saturday, October 26**

King House Museum 9 a.m. - noon

*Raindate: Saturday, November 2.*

### Szopka

**Thursday, November 7**

Zak Ambulance Center 10 a.m.

*The PHS monthly meeting hosts Marek Czarnecki and his presentation on the Polish Folk Art of Szopka (Nativity Scene).*

### November SHS Meeting

**Wednesday, November 20**

Kent Memorial Library 7 p.m.

### Polish Christmas and New Year Traditions

**Wednesday, December 4**

Zak Ambulance Center 10 a.m.

### Holidayfest

**Saturday, December 7 11:00 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

**Sunday, December 8 11:00 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

King House Museum

*Vintage accessories continues our 2019 theme of 1830-1960 clothing with a focus on accessories.*