

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Wednesday, July 22 5:30 - 7:30 PM  
King House Museum lawn  
Raindate: Thursday, July 23

Bring friends and family and your own lawn chairs to an old-fashioned Ice Cream Social. Pack a picnic supper or just come for dessert.

The Society will provide free ice cream and entertainment. Join in an evening with neighbors.

### KING HOUSE MUSEUM

Open for the Season

Special temporary exhibit to celebrate the life of Suffield's Polish community. Mounted by the Polish Heritage Committee for the summer, the exhibit includes items and information about the history and culture of the many Polish families who immigrated to Suffield. It has already generated much interest - don't miss it!

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

www.SuffieldHistoricalSociety.org

King House Museum  
232 South Main Street

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

Newsletter Editor  
Maggie Philippon

### UPCOMING DEDICATION

Sunday, October 4 2:00 - 4:00 PM  
Watch for details for the formal dedication of the "new" old barn on the museum grounds.

We'll have all that info and more at our booth at Suffield-on-the-Green. Visit us on September 12 and 13 to learn about our fall line-up of programs.

## NEW MEMBERS

The Society welcomes new members: **Deborah Newby** and **Judith and Henry Hammer**. Members receive regular mailings with information about upcoming programs, outings, projects, exhibits and acquisitions. It is their membership dues that support our on-going activities.



The King House Museum

Vol. IV, No. 3

A Newsletter of the Suffield Historical Society

July 2009

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*  
Edward Chase, III

*Vice President*  
Arthur Sikes, Jr.

*Treasurer*  
Gary Mandirola

*Secretary*  
Nancy Noble

*Historian & Curator*  
Lester Smith

#### Committee Chairmen

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Robert C. Stewart, *Programs & Events*

Arthur Sikes, Jr.

*Membership*

Barry Sisk, *Long-Range Planning*

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James Reeves Robert Stewart

Margaret Shaughnessy

Barry Sisk

#### King Property Trustees

Edward Chase, III

William Connelly

Hazel Phillips

# Stony Brook CURRENTS

## Committeemen Cooley, Colton and Thomas

by Ed Chase

Since the inception of Stony Brook Currents, this column has discussed the lives and achievements of Suffield's original proprietors. The final three individuals in this series were important men in their time, but have left few recorded marks on Suffield's history.

**Benjamin Cooley** was first elected a selectman in 1646 and served in that role for 18 years. One of John Pynchon's "trusted and necessary men," Benjamin is often referred to as Goodman Cooley in Pynchon's account book. He was a weaver by trade and served the wider area as an Ensign in the Hampshire Regiment.

**George Colton** served as Quartermaster of the Hampshire Troop (a cavalry unit), a deputy of the General Court in 1669 and, thereafter, became a leader in the Springfield settlement.

Colton earned the rank of Captain in the early French and Indian Wars being mentioned by Major John Pynchon for his role in both King William's War, Queen Anne's War (aka the War of Spanish Succession) and in letters to the magistrates in Boston concerning military affairs on the Connecticut River Valley from 1693 to 1695.

The most documented of the three is **Rowland Thomas**, an accomplished woodsman. He often selected timbers as well as building stones and carted them to required locations for major buildings. This work as a carter and laborer brought Thomas valuable knowledge of the settlements around Springfield. Thomas scouted the river valley with Elizur Holyoke, Thomas on the west bank and Holyoke on the east side. The naming of the Mount Tom Range was said to come from the expedition and to be named for Rowland Thomas ... as the Mount Holyoke Range\* was believed to thenceforth carry the name of his partner in the exploration. His knowledge gained of the local geography served him well as he settled boundary disputes in Suffield and served five times as Selectman of Springfield.

Though given land grants in Suffield, none of these men ever settled in our community.

\*The settlement of Holyoke was named in the 1800s. When the canal system and dam were built, it was known as Ireland Plain because of the large number of Irish laborers attracted by the job opportunities. This moniker was deemed not appropriate for the settlement and it was formally named Holyoke.

References:

H. S. Sheldon's Documentary History of Suffield, 1879; The Pynchon Papers, Vol. I & II; The Biography of a Town, Alcorn, 1970; Soldiers in King Philip's War, Bodge, 1906; The Great Migration Series, Vol II C-F, Neghs, 2001; New England Outpost, Melvoin, 1989.



## CURATOR'S REPORT

by Lester Smith

*This collection of photographs tells the story of the construction of the barn purchased by the Suffield Historical Society for museum exhibits.*

*The antique barn was fully disassembled in Canada prior to being erected at the King House Museum in the spring of 2009. The following captions describe the progress.*

With the topsoil and clay subsoil cleared and graded, Hinckley Construction's big excavator begins to dig a trench for the new barn's footings. Work began on March 30.

The first load of timber frame pieces arrived on April 11. Here Martin Buffam, who took the old barn apart, directs the careful job of unloading the second 50-foot plate. The 28-foot cross beams had been unloaded first.

A second trailer load completed the shipment a few days later.

Martin watches as the north bent goes up. He wrestled the tenon at the bottom of each post into its mortise in the sill.

With all four bents standing and the four cross beams in place, Martin, left, guides the end of the east plate onto its tenon.

Two rafters are joined. The lower ends rest on the plates in "bird's mouth" joints; the top ends rest against each other, secured by nails and a strap across the top. There is no need for a ridge pole.

The naked barn frame brought many admiring comments from passers-by.



When Martin completed the frame, local builder Brian Doyon proceeded to add some needed nailing beams and installed the new sheathing. Here he sets a roof plank in place.

With all the windows installed, Brian completes the side sheathing.

Wading in the newly-poured concrete on June 11, Brian manipulates a wide float to smooth the barn floor. Note the awning-style window.

Brian secures the metal roof panels to the roof sheathing with small clips, to be covered later by the next panel. The standing seam metal roof was selected for its long life and historical authenticity.

On June 26, the barn stands nearly complete. Brian had completed the custom-made cupola only a day or two earlier.

*Join us at the King House for the formal dedication on Sunday, October 4. Details will be publicized in our Fall brochure.*

## SPECIAL THANKS

When Verne Spear entertained the Society at its June 10 meeting with stories and pictures from his old neighborhood on North Grand Street, he brought a nice gift: the school bell his mother used to ring when she taught at the Rattlesnake Swamp school on Spruce Street.

In the photo, Verne, right, hands the bell to Curator Smith, who was delighted to receive it for the King House Museum.

