



The King House Museum

# Stony Brook CURRENTS

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A Newsletter of the Suffield Historical Society

June 2011

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.

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## JOHN BURBANK, ORIGINAL PROPRIETOR

by Edward Chase

John Burbank received a grant of 50 acres off the west side of Feather Street (now East Street) south of Rawlins Brook from Pynchon's Committee for Suffield in 1674. His was one of the last of the 36 grants made in the five years prior to the outbreak of King Philip's War. During its battles in 1675, Suffield was completely abandoned, and all existing dwellings and Pynchon's mills were burned by native warriors. Perhaps this unrest was Burbank's reason for not settling in Suffield until 1680.

His father, known as John of Rowley, was among 60 English immigrants who settled in Massachusetts under the leadership of the Reverend Ezekiel Rogers in the 1630s. The area received its name from the parish Rowley in York, England. John was recorded as a freeman by 1640. His first child and our Suffield proprietor, John Burbank, was born that year in Rowley.

Young Burbank was described in the Burbank genealogy as energetic and a well-to-do landowner. Before coming to Suffield he moved to Newbury and then Haverhill and is also mentioned in Essex County land records. While in Newbury, he married Susannah Merrill, and by the time they moved to Suffield they had three sons: Timothy, John, and Ebenezer.

Susannah died in 1690, and three years later John Burbank married Sarah Hart Scone, a young widow. Two years after their marriage Sarah also died. The following year John married a third time. This third marriage – to the widow Mehitable Sanders – brought the family their only daughter, Susannah, who was born in 1695.

From the time of his arrival here in Suffield, John Burbank was often noted in the account books as an employee of John Pynchon, working to clear land and construct buildings. He was one of the qualified ... continued on page 2

## BURBANK ... continued from page 1

voters in our first Town Meeting on March 9, 1681/82. Unusual for Suffield's original proprietors, John never held any town office; this may be because of his employee status.

Each of the sons of our proprietor, however, took an active role in town affairs. His son, John, served as a selectman, the town treasurer and a fence viewer among other offices. Ebenezer, too, was a selectman, surveyor, fence viewer and tythingman, while Timothy was a highway surveyor for Suffield. Each of the Burbank siblings grew to be a useful and productive citizen in our early colonial history.

While many of the family became noteworthy, we'll only mention the famous horticulturist from

California, Luther Burbank, who traces his roots from this family tree.

One of the lasting markers of this family in Suffield is Burbank Avenue (near the the original land grant) which was named after this family.

*Genealogy: John Burbank, b. 1640/41 in Rowley, Massachusetts; d. 1709 in Suffield; m. first Susannah Merrill, b 1663 in Newbury; d. 1690 in Suffield; m. second Sarah, d. 1692 in Suffield. m. third Mehitable, d. 1709 in Suffield. Sons all born in Haverhill, Massacjhusetts: Timothy, b. 1668; John, b. 1670; Ebenezer, b. 1673/74. Daughter Susannah, b. 1695 in Suffield.*

#### References:

*Documentary History of Suffield*, H. S. Sheldon, 1879.  
*Genealogy of the Burbank Families*, by George Burbank Sedgley, 1928.

Both at Kent Memorial Library.

## NEW GRANT AWARDED

We have been most fortunate to receive a grant from the Amiel P. Zak Public Service Fund of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving to cover half the cost of restoring the last carriage remaining in the stable. It is a family carriage, once owned by Parkes Loomis, who built what was eventually expanded by his granddaughter to become the mansion on Boston Neck Road known as Brookside.

Parkes was one of the Loomis brothers from Southwick who came to Suffield and did well in the tobacco business in town. His brother, John Welles Loomis, was thought to be the owner of our tobacco wagon, which was restored by James Chevalier most recently.

We plan to have Mr. Chevalier do this restoration as well.

*Looking forward to seeing you at the  
 Ice Cream Social  
 Tuesday, July 19  
 Enjoy a summer evening of entertainment  
 with your family, neighbors and friends  
 on the lawn of the King House.*

## WORK DAY A BIG SUCCESS

The work day that took place on Saturday, April 16, was our best ever!

A large number of volunteers cleaned up the yard, did numerous small projects, vacuumed and dusted the house, and made discard/keep decisions about a lot of items in the stable. House volunteers noted that our new inside storm windows kept the rooms much cleaner over the winter.

Thanks to all who helped:

Terry and Gary Mandirola

Peg Shaughnessy

Jan Peake

Nancy and Norm Noble

Lester Smith

Jim Kent

Art Sikes

Bob and Anne Borg

Chris Childs

Bill Sullivan and his oldest son, Cormac

A special thank-you goes to Jim Murphy who came with his chainsaw and his truck, cut brush all along our north tree line and hauled several huge loads of branches to the landfill.

Our back lot has never looked so good!



## RISING COLLECTION DIGITIZED

by Barry Sisk

David Rancourt has just completed a major project for the Suffield Historical Society.

The Hawley Rising collection of 2,189 photographs in slide format have been digitized in a year-long project by David, a Society member. He used Adobe Photoshop® to enhance each slide to increase clarity. The results are on one CD!

David said he will continue the preservation of this collection by creating an archive set of high resolution DVDs – six in all – that the Society can put into safe storage. This new format will allow members and friends to view or study the photographs without any risks to the originals.

We owe David a huge thank-you for his competent efforts to help our Society.



*A visitor peruses part of this summer's new exhibit at the King House Museum – "Selections from the Attic." Dozens of items were gleaned from the Historical Society's own collections for this diverse display of town artifacts.*

## SELECTIONS FROM THE ATTIC

by Anne Borg

The King House shed room is artfully filled with a new exhibit for the summer entitled "Selections from the Attic." It showcases items that have been in more-or-less permanent storage because of limited display space in the house. Enjoy this mixture of nostalgia, town history and the daily life of days gone by. Curator Lester Smith and Jan Peake have unearthed a wide variety of interesting objects, from military weapons to local advertising give-aways and from items of dress to geological concretions. Come see what's been hidden away.

While there, please visit the barn – where additional items have been incorporated in the display since last summer.

We hope you will bring your summer guests to see the exhibits as well.



*One shelf of the new exhibit features Suffield businesses and advertising give-aways from the 1920's, including three old match safes, a Suffield Pharmacy pill box, a Spencer Bros. tape measure, and a pocket mirror from Reid's Bazaar.*

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King House Museum  
232 South Main Street

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

Newsletter Editor  
Maggie Philippon

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### KING HOUSE MUSEUM

Wednesday & Saturdays 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
throughout the summer.

*Enjoy the 2011 summer exhibit:  
"Selections from the Attic"  
now on view in the shed room.*

*Bring your friends and family to make their visits to  
Suffield a trip into our commiunity's past.*



### PICTURES FROM SUFFIELD'S POLISH HERITAGE

Wednesday, June 15 7:30 p.m.

Kent Memorial Library  
*Della Winans will show a  
selection of photographs of Suffield collected  
by the Polish Heritage Committee.*



### ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Tuesday, July 19 7:00 p.m.

King House Museum Grounds  
*Bring friends and family to an old-fashioned social on  
the lawn. Pack a picnic, bring lawn chairs and enjoy an  
evening of neighborly visiting. The Society will provide ice  
cream and musical entertainment.*



### SUFFIELD ON THE GREEN

Saturday & Sunday, September 10 & 11

### ANTIQUÉ CAR SHOW

Sunday, September 11

King House Museum Grounds  
*View cherished chariots in a trip down Memory Lane.  
Stop by our booth on the Green for the fall line-up of  
programs or just to say "Hello".*

