



Stony Brook **CURRENTS**

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The Newsletter of the Suffield Historical Society

August 2015

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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SOCIETY SPONSORS CONCERT

American Harmony to perform at First Church on September 23

Timothy Swan was arguably one of the most original and melodically gifted composers of 18th-century America. Although his life was divided equally between the 18th and 19th centuries, most of his composing was done in the last two decades of the 1700s, and almost all his music – secular duets, choral psalms, hymn tunes and anthems – was composed in Suffield and printed in his two collections, *The Songster's Assistant* (now thought to date from 1786) and *New England Harmony* (1801).

Nym Cooke, who holds a Ph.D. in music history/musicology from the University of Michigan, has loved Timothy Swan's music since 1973 and has researched Swan's life and compositions more extensively than anyone alive. His definitive edition of Swan's complete music, *Timothy Swan: Psalmody and Secular Songs*, was published by A-R Editions in 1997 as Volume 6 of the national series *Music of the United States of America*. The music is prefaced by an essay that brings together all the significant known information on Swan's life and work, including much not previously published.

Now Cooke is completing *American Harmony*, an anthology for both singers and scholars of 176 pieces in the distinctive American "shape-note" style that Swan and his New England contemporaries pioneered (forthcoming from David R. Godine in 2016). To publicize this collection, Cooke brought together a small group of accomplished singers named after his book, and to date American Harmony has presented almost a dozen concerts in various Massachusetts towns.

On **Wednesday, September 23, at 7:30** in Suffield's First Congregational Church, American Harmony will make their Connecticut debut, singing a program exclusively devoted to Swan.

Biographical and musical commentary will be provided by Cooke, whose legendary "infectious enthusiasm," along with the beautiful voices and finely-tuned musical ensemble of the chorus, should make this a memorable occasion.

THE HUGGINS FAMILY AND ORIGINAL SUFFIELD PROPRIETORS:

Edmund Marshall, John Huggins and Richard Woolery

by Ed Chase

Although it would be difficult to find the name Huggins in Suffield today, five of the children of John Huggins and Briget Green of Hampton and Newbury, Massachusetts were among our earliest settlers. Their families were original proprietors, and the siblings became neighbors in the southeastern corner of Suffield.

Anthony Austin and Timothy Palmer, both of whom married Huggins sisters, each received grants on the west side of Feather Street (now East Street South) just north of Stony Brook in 1674. Austin was discussed in an earlier issue of *Stony Brook Currents*. Palmer will be discussed in an upcoming publication.

The three other siblings came after receiving grants on neighboring lands in 1680.

Martha Huggins¹ arrived with her husband Edmund Marshall and the first two of their seven children. Five children were born to them after they took up residence on their 80 acres along the Connecticut River, just north of what is now the Windsor Locks town line. Following Martha's death in 1697, Edmund married the widow Lydia Pierce.

Edmund was influential enough to be mentioned 15 times in early town records, was a voter in the first Suffield Town Meeting, a Tything Man and a shipbuilder by trade. In 1688, John Pynchon paid him to build a Ketch (ship) called the *Northern Venture*.

Pynchon also paid John Huggins, Jr.², brother of Martha Huggins Marshall, to outfit this ship. John, Jr.'s home lot was just north of the Marshalls', also along the

river bank and Feather Street. John, Jr. married Hannah Burckby about the same time that he received his 50-acre land grant. They had a daughter in 1682, and Hannah died the following year. When his daughter was not yet two, John married Experience Jones. The family left Suffield in 1691 and moved to Springfield.

The final sibling was Hannah Huggins³ who married Richard Woolery (Woodworth). They settled on his grant across the road from two of his wife's brothers-in-law who came simultaneously. Woolery's land grant was also just south of his two other brothers-in-law, Anthony Austin and Timothy Palmer. Richard was an immigrant from England and a weaver by trade.

The Woolerys had six children, and their only son Richard appears in Suffield records as late as 1729, but thereafter that surname disappears as did the Huggins name.

1. Martha Huggins, b. 1654, d. August 27, 1697 in Suffield, married on December 13, 1674 Edmund Marshall, b. January 16, 1644 in Salem, Mass., d. January 7, 1632.
2. John Huggins, b. 1652, d. July 9, 1704 married first October 19, 1681 Hannah Burckby, d. May 3, 1683; married second February 4, 1684 Experience Jones.
3. Hannah Huggins, b. March 15, 1659, d. July 30, 1691 in Suffield, married December 1678 Richard Woolery, b. ca. 1648 in England, d. 1696 in Suffield.

References:

Documentary History of Suffield, Hezekiah Sheldon, 1879;
Selections from Account Books of John Pynchon, Volume II, 1651-1697,
 Edited by Bridenbaugh and Tomlinson, 1985;
 Suffield Historical Society webpage genealogies and internet genealogies.

DECEMBER IS COMING!

None of us wants to think about the summer disappearing, but our Holidayfest will arrive sooner than we can imagine. This year's exhibit is Decorative Glass, so be thinking about what you might lend us.

We are looking for decorative, useful pieces as well as art glass. Seven secure glass cases will be available for items that need special protection. Your generosity will make the exhibit an outstanding event for our museum.

This year we are happy to be part of the Suffield Garden Club's Holiday House Tour on Saturday, December 5. Besides the King House, houses on Main Street south of Kent Avenue will be included on their tour. Be sure to put the event on your calendar, as the Garden Club always does a superb job of decorating (although the decorating at the museum house will be done by our curator and Society volunteers).

Our museum house will also be open on Sunday, December 6. Note times under "Upcoming Events."

ANTIQUÉ INTIMATES: Underwear of Yesteryear

Just a reminder to anyone out there who missed this summer's special "Antique Intimates" exhibit at the museum. It is still available to be enjoyed during these last few weeks of our museum season. The King House Museum closes for the season September 30.

CURATOR'S REPORT

by Lester Smith

School Groups

Soon after the season's opening each year, we have the pleasure of introducing all of Suffield's fourth graders to the King House Museum and a sampling of town history. With their developing ability for rational thought and a considerable curiosity, fourth graders are enjoyable to teach. The kids visit in groups of about 20 – one teacher's roomful at a time, and only one or two groups each day.

This year, McAlister Intermediate School found it necessary to reduce the time that each group spends at the museum to only a scheduled 30 minutes. The students also visit the Phelps-Hatheway House, so at the suggestion of Jan Peake, who is also a docent there, we coordinated our tours, and at the King house we concentrated on showing only the kitchen and the attic, plus the barn, while Phelps-Hatheway focused on their bed chambers, north wing, and wonderful wallpaper. The plan worked well, but it would be great to return to a program of longer visits.

A gratifying consequence of these school group tours is the occasional visit later in the summer when a child returns with a parent to spend more time at the museum.

Donations

Some years ago the Society abolished the small admission fee we once charged, replacing it with the hope that a donation can at the Shed Room exit door would be a helpful replacement. This seems to have worked out well, and one instance early this summer stands out. A couple from suburban Boston came to visit with one son, about ten years old. (We learned later that an adolescent son, bored with museum visits that day, had remained in the family car.) The parents were particularly interested in architectural details of the King House, and the boy was curious and responsive, so the tour went very well.

After viewing the Shed Room and the Cigar Loft, they agreed with my offer to show them the barn, and at the end of their visit there, the boy's mother said she would like to make a donation. I mentioned the can in the Shed Room, but instead she wrote a check before they drove away. The donation was \$100!

Since then I have built a little shelf next to the barn door with a DONATIONS ARE WELCOME sign and an open cigar box.

HOUSE REPAIRS

The Executive Committee voted this Spring to address – finally – the longterm problem of our damp basement, which flooded when we get significant rainfall. In July, interior perimeter drains were installed, along with a large dehumidifier and a new sump pump. Prior to this, we had replaced support columns that had been compromised by the dampness. This project already improved the basement atmosphere, and it should also help with the mildew problem on the first floor.

You might have noticed that the house and fence are getting washed, repaired and painted. Your generous donations and an improved investment market have made all this possible. THANK YOU!

ICE CREAM SOCIAL

July's Ice Cream Social was our largest and most successful to date! Mother Nature cooperated with absolutely beautiful weather. Paul Kulas presented a program of enjoyable music, Mona's Scoop du Jour provided the Society with ice cream at cost. A big thank you to all three!

DUES

Every September your dues to the Society come up for renewal. We used to put the last year you paid (e.g. 2015) on your mailing label as a reminder. Because of changes in postal regulations, we can no longer do that, but we will continue to send you a reminder if your dues have not been paid after several months.

“KING HOUSE IN ART” WINNERS!

We are pleased to announce the winners of the SHS art contest to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the King House. Winners: K-5: **Sofia Zacchia**, a vibrantly colored drawing of the King House barn; High School: **Anna Mervosh**, an innovatively composed photograph of the King House and its sign; Adult: **Linda Rusin** for her hand-knitted mittens featuring front and side views of the King House. Laurie Tavino, artist and Society trustee, served as contest judge. The winners were awarded their \$100 prizes at the July Ice Cream Social. All contest entries are on view at the King House until September 30. Please stop in and see them!

Many thanks to all contest participants. Special thanks to Linda Rusin for donating her mittens to the Society for our raffle at Suffield on the Green.

UPCOMING EVENTS

COLLECTIBLE CAR SHOW

Sunday, September 13

King House Grounds 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Free admission. No fee to exhibit car. Organized by Norm Noble.

AMERICAN HARMONY IN CONCERT

Wednesday, September 23

First Church of Christ 7:30 p.m.

See front page article.

BOOK SIGNING & LECTURE

“Soldier, Engraver, Forger”

Friday, October 2

West Suffield Academy Hall 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Author Deborah Child will autograph and talk about her new book on local Richard Brunton, a talented engraver who lived as a forger on the fringes of American society after the Revolution.

IROQUOIS IMPACT

Wednesday, October 14

Senior Center 7:00 p.m.

Luis Lee, aka Guin Yah Geyh, will give the Society a history of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) and their contribution to American history in this area. His presentation will include the Great Thanksgiving that is spoken before every ceremony.

HALLOWEEN CANDY DISTRIBUTION

Saturday, October 31

King House Porch Dusk to 7:30 p.m.

Costumed Society members will be on the porch to greet your youngsters. Come in costume to say “hello.”

WINDSOR LOCKS CANAL HISTORY

Wednesday, November 18

Senior Center 7:00 p.m.

Chris Kervick, Windsor Locks Historical Society President, discusses new discoveries that bring light onto the lives and fate of the 400 dirt-poor Irish laborers who were brought here between 1827-1829 to circumvent the Enfield Rapids with the construction of the Windsor Locks Canal.

HOLIDAYFEST

Decorative Glass:

New or Old, Useful or Simply Art

Saturday and Sunday, December 5 and 6

King House

Saturday 1:00–6:00 p.m.

Sunday 11 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

A wide variety of glass objects will supplement the museum’s permanent exhibits. Saturday’s time is planned to coordinate with The Suffield Garden Club Home Tour.

Refreshments and sociability augment the festivities.

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