



Turkey Tracks

Newsletter of the New Providence Historical Society

Volume 49 No. 1

Issue #117

March 2016

Our 50th Anniversary!

Back in 1966, a small group of citizens banded together to save an old historic structure, a small salt box house possibly headed for demolition. And thus the New Providence Historical Society was born. Since that time, the Society has turned that doomed house into the Salt Box Museum and established the Mason Room, the historical archive attached to the New Providence Memorial Library. This year, 2016, we celebrate fifty years of local research and preservation and honor those who made it possible.

Annual Dinner Features the D&R Canal

Our speaker for the Annual Dinner will be Linda Barth, who will share the history of the Delaware and Raritan Canal. As a fourth-grade teacher, she tried to focus students' attention on the positive aspects of our state: its diverse geography, agriculture, industry, and famous firsts and inventions. A life-long resident of the Garden State, Linda has served on the board of Celebrate NJ!, a grassroots movement that builds pride in and fosters a brighter future for New Jersey through educational programs and promotional initiatives. Linda has written two books on the D&R Canal for Arcadia Publishing, as well as two children's picture books.

The Annual Dinner will be held on April 14th at a new venue, the Murray Hill Inn & Suites.



A restored bridge tender's station along the D&R Canal. (Photo by J.R. Bale)



President's Letter

This is an exciting time for our society. The year 2016 is the 50th anniversary of the New Providence Historical Society. And that's nothing to sneeze at. Over the last half century, a great many volunteers have worked on recording, preserving and reporting the history of our town.

To specially commemorate our golden anniversary, the Society will be having a Founder's Day Ice Cream Social on Sunday, August 14th.

We have also discussed burying a time capsule to mark this occasion. Here's the question: what would you want to include to represent the current day? What would you want to say to the people of New Providence on the 100th anniversary of our society? And you may get the chance to contribute. More to come on that.

As a historical society we focus on the past, but we embrace the present and the future. This year we are taking steps to modernize our archiving operation. Special thanks goes to John Everitt of Evertech for helping with our new archival software and work station. We also thank the Lions Club of New Providence for the grant making this modernization possible. In addition, special thanks to Colin duSaire who has jumped in and started learning the software. He's also begun the data entry, a task that will last years into the future.

This of course segues into a call for volunteers. There's always lots to do. If you're interested, just give us a call or come to a trustee meeting. There are a wide range of things to help with. Whatever your talents, we can probably use them.

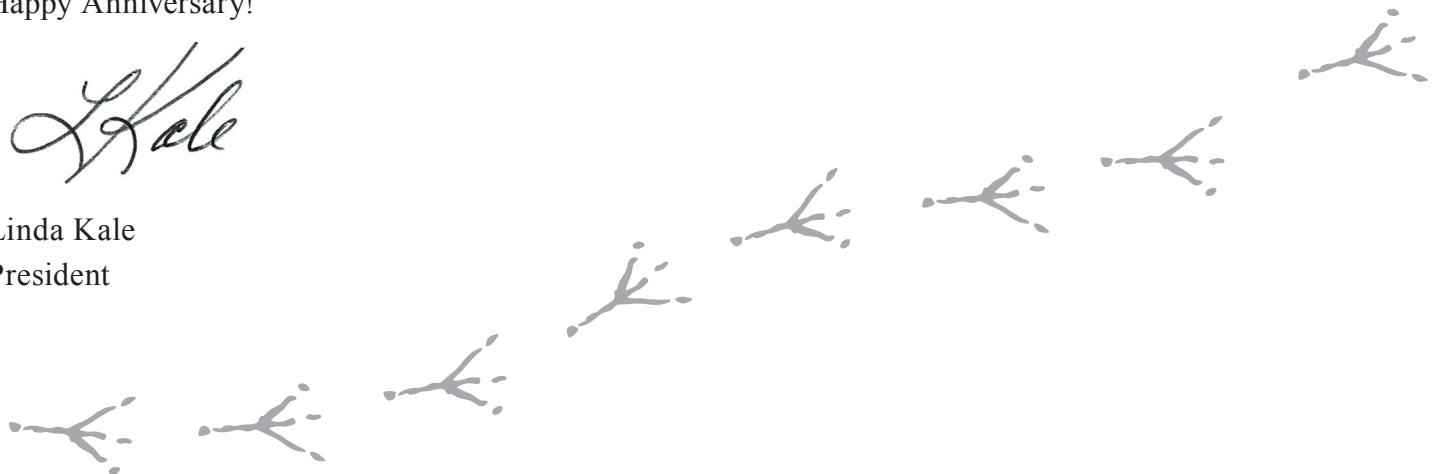
On April 14th, we will once again have our Annual Dinner. This year, we will be supporting a New Providence business by changing the venue to Moe's Bistro at the Murray Hill Inn & Suites.

On May 7th, we will hold the Salt Box Craft Fair on the grounds of the Salt Box Museum. We need things to sell and volunteers to sell them! Please encourage your friends and neighbors to stop by for some bargains and treasures.

Happy Anniversary!



Linda Kale
President



How It All Started

In the mid-1960s, John D. McGeehan DDS, Frank Robina, DDS and Juan J. Ryan, Esq. had purchased land, which had an old salt box house on it. They planned to build an office building, which would require the demolition of the house previously owned by the Garrison, Dickinson and Geung families.

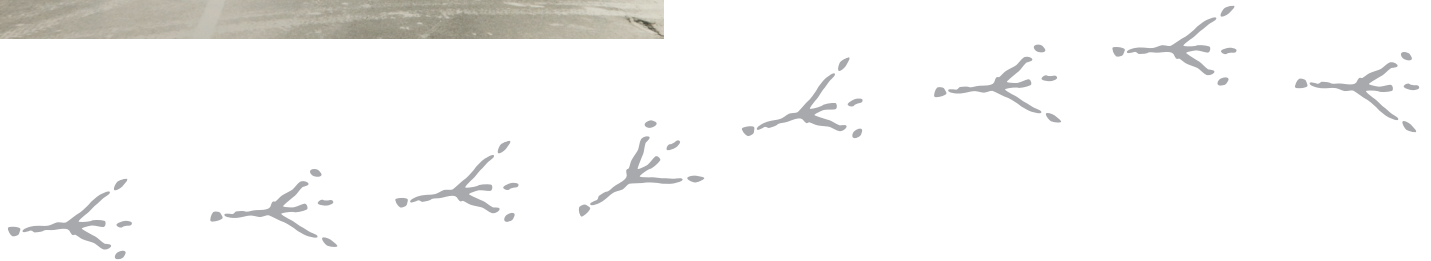
However, few wanted the historical structure destroyed. So, the New Providence Historical Society was quickly formed to save the old house. The three men donated the house to the society, on the condition it would be moved off the property.

So in 1967, the Salt Box House was jacked up and moved to its current location, one year after the formation of the society. The house was transported across Springfield Avenue and rotated 180 degrees on June 14, 1967. Thus, the house's address changed from 1351 to 1350 Springfield Avenue.



Howard P. Smith was the first President of the Historical Society, and a key player in the moving of the house. Smith and other volunteers worked on the house themselves, using few contractors. Other volunteers included, Gus Fernald, Don Pierson, Harry Newell, Dayton Parcels, and Bill Clark. As Smith said in a 1969 interview, "You end up with a half dozen workers and four hundred cheerers."

Today, we still cheer for Smith and the others for their labors, which served as the foundation of all our activities ever since.



Salt Box Craft Fair - Saturday, May 7th

The Salt Box Craft Fair and Sale is scheduled for May 7th from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. with May 14th as the rain date. Proceeds from the fair support the Society's scholarship program and maintenance of the museum.

Vendors: Any vendors interested in renting space at \$25 per eight-foot space should contact Linda Kale at kale.linda@yahoo.com. (Vendors are responsible for supplying their own table and chairs.)

Donations: Please contact Linda Kale at kale.linda@yahoo.com to arrange for a drop off time for any items to be donated for our Society's "Treasure Tables." We would appreciate having these items by April 25th, so they can be priced in time for the sale. Once again, we need and request your support.

Volunteers: Members, please mark your calendar for baking, pricing, selling, set-up, clean-up and hosting at the Salt Box Museum.

2016 Calendar for Upcoming Historical Society Events

March 24, 2016	Thursday	Trustee's Meeting, 7 PM, Mason Room, N.P. Memorial Library
April 3, 2016	Sunday	Open House at Salt Box Museum, 1-3 PM
April 14, 2016	Thursday	Annual Meeting & Dinner
May 7, 2016	Saturday	Salt Box Craft Fair
June 5, 2016	Sunday	Open House at Salt Box Museum, 1-3 PM
August 14, 2016	Sunday	50th Anniversary Founder's Day Ice Cream Social

Other events may be added, so check our calendar at www.newprovidencehistorical.com.



The Changing Face of New Providence

New Providence continues to evolve...

In the center of town, a new electronic bulletin board has been added by the borough at the intersection of Springfield Avenue and South Street.

Investors Bank has finally completed their construction on the site of the old Exxon gas station and car wash at 1291 Springfield Avenue at the corner of Passaic Street.

McGrath's Paint & Hardware at 28 South Street is closing after 30 years. McGrath's began on Springfield Avenue. The current store is being taken over by Riccardi Brothers.

The Annex, an extension of the Presbyterian youth ministry, has opened at 1312 Springfield Avenue.

In the Village Shopping Center, **ACME** replaced the A&P and the **Wine Outlet Store** opened.

Avenue Deli is undergoing major renovation.

Central Avenue has also been an area of great activity:

After a long hunt for a home for its new elite swimming facility, **Berkeley Aquatic Club** has opened a facility with an Olympic-size pool at 629 Central Avenue.

Moe's Bistro, a new restaurant specializing in Mediterranean cuisine, has opened up within the Murray Hill Inn & Suites. Previous restaurants in this location have included Pontevecchio.



Sproutlings Child Care, a new day-care facility, has opened at 755 Central Avenue.

Member Notes:



Ruth M. Nitti (90)
longtime member
and Mason Room
volunteer, passed
away, surrounded by
her loving family on
December 11, 2015.

Robert A. Lachenauer (86)
passed away on Feb. 26, 2016.
Mr. Lachenauer was an educator
and longtime superintendent of
the New Providence School
System. He also served as the
Treasurer of the New Providence
Historical Society.

New Members:

The Society welcomes:
Colin duSaire
Stefanie Livesey

Proposed Trustees - Class of 2016: Linda Kale, Carol Smith, J.R. Bale

Membership Renewal Application

Our annual dues run from April 1st to March 31st, our fiscal year. Please fill in the requested information and mail your check to Margaret Maurer's attention at the Memorial Library address, New Providence Historical Society, 377 Elkwood Avenue, New Providence, NJ 07974. This will enable us to keep our membership and mailing lists current.

Be sure to include your preference for Mr., Mrs., Ms., or Mr. and Mrs.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Email _____

Memberships (Many corporations will match contributions.)

Individual \$15.00 _____ Family \$25.00 _____ Business Sponsorship \$25.00 _____
Contribution \$30.00 _____ Sustaining \$50.00 _____ Life \$125.00 _____

I will volunteer to help:

Computer _____ Research _____ Museum _____ Lawn Sale _____ Writing _____

Clerical _____ Grounds _____ Restoration _____ House Tours _____

Reservations for Annual Dinner

Murray Hill Inn & Suites, April 14, 2016, Hors d'oeuvre at 6 PM, Dinner at 7 PM

Number of reservations _____ @ **\$35.00** for NP Historical Society Annual Dinner

Amount of Check \$ _____. Please make check payable to **NP Historical Society**. Reservations must be received by April 5th. Check for dinner and membership may be combined. Send checks to the Mason Room, New Providence Memorial Library, 377 Elkwood Avenue, New Providence, NJ 07974, c/o Margaret Maurer.

New Providence Historical Society Officers & Committees

President	Linda Kale
Vice President	Rick Anderson
Corresponding Secretary	Carol Smith
Recording Secretaries	Kerry Lee Sarah Jane Vignali
Treasurer	Gail Souren
Publicity	Linda Kale
Displays	Ann Powers Barbara Pape
Grounds & Property	Rick Anderson
Annual Dinner Coordinator	Kerry Lee
Membership	Margaret Maurer
<i>Turkey Tracks</i> & Website	J.R. Bale

Trustees

Rick Anderson, Patrick Anelli, J.R. Bale,
Linda Kale, Margaret Maurer, Barbara Pape,
Gail Souren, Carol Smith.
(One vacancy at this time.)



Museum Hours

March to November
First Sunday of each month
1 - 3 PM
Or by appointment
Telephone: 908-665-1034

Mason Room Hours

Tuesday & Thursday Mornings
10 AM to Noon
Telephone: 908-665-1034

Website:

newprovidencehistorical.com

Turkey Tracks is also
available in color on the
website in PDF form.

Facebook Page:

facebook.com/NewProvidenceHistoricalSociety



New Providence Historical Society
Memorial Library
377 Elkwood Avenue
New Providence, New Jersey 07974