



Turkey Tracks

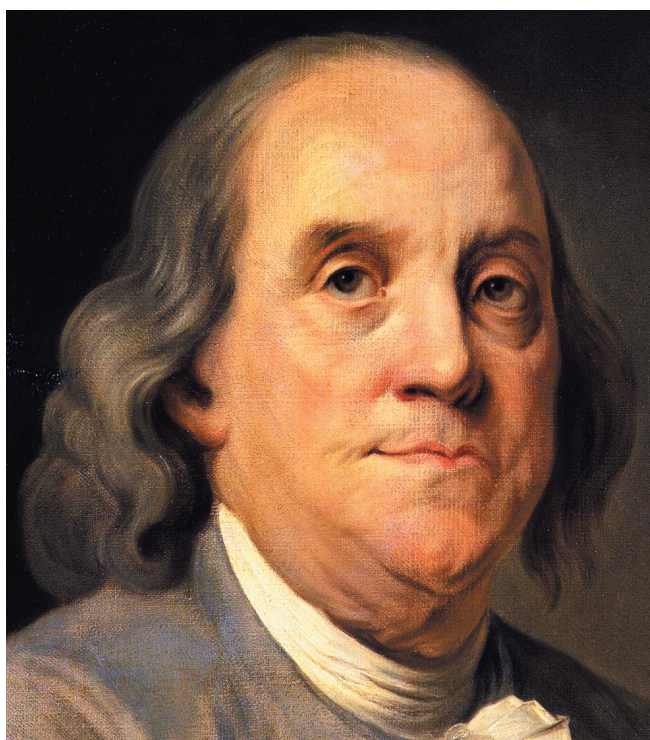
Newsletter of the New Providence Historical Society

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September 2019

Benjamin Franklin, Beyond the Icon



Benjamin Franklin is well known as one of the most iconic Founding Fathers of the United States. Beyond that, Franklin was a leading author, printer, political theorist, politician, Freemason, postmaster, scientist, inventor, humorist, civic activist, statesman, and diplomat.

As a scientist, he was a major figure in the American Enlightenment and the history of physics for his discoveries and theories regarding electricity. As an inventor, he is known for the lightning rod, bifocals, and the Franklin stove, among other inventions.

He founded many civic organizations, including the Library Company, Philadelphia's first fire department, and the University of Pennsylvania.

Mr. Nolan Asch will speak about Founding Father Benjamin Franklin at our Fall Talk on October 10, 2019 at 7 PM at the DeCorso Center.



New Providence Book Festival

On **Sunday, September 22, 2019**, 9 AM to 4 PM, the Salt Box Museum will host, on its grounds, the third annual New Providence Book Festival. Over 15 New Jersey authors, across various genres, will be on hand to discuss and sign their books. A free raffle ticket will be given for every book purchase. All are invited to come to this cultural event. Refreshments will be available at our bake sale. The Salt Box Museum will be open to all visitors free of charge. The raindate is September 29th. More information is available at www.bookloversdispatch.com.



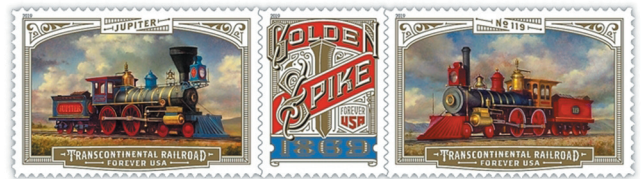
New Providence
Book Festival

President's Letter

Once again the Fall season will be a full one. On Sunday, September 22nd, the Society will be hosting the 3rd New Providence Book Festival on the grounds of the Salt Box Museum. Sixteen New Jersey authors—several from New Providence—will be signing books and participating in panel discussions. For every book purchased, the buyer will receive a free raffle ticket for a \$50 gift certificate for Moe's Bistro & Bar, or a \$25 gift certificate to Barnes & Noble. In addition, the Salt Box Museum will be open, free of charge. Refreshments will be available thanks to our bake sale. Special thanks to Lantern Hill and our other sponsors for supporting this event. The rain date for the festival is September 29th.

On October 10th, Mr. Nolan Asch returns to be our Fall Talk speaker, this time to share about the larger-than-life Founding Father Benjamin Franklin. The talk will be at the De Corso Center, 15 East 4th Street, New Providence.

On the weekend of October 19th and 20th, the Salt Box Museum will again participate in Union County's "Four Centuries in a Weekend." On Sunday, October 27, 2018, the Society will have a booth at the New Providence Street Fair.



It can be said, every year is an anniversary. This year, 2019, is the 150th anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad, an event we acknowledge with the commemorative stamp we've used to mail the *Turkey Tracks*. This is also the 50th anniversary of the 1969 moon landing, a historic event which many of our older members will recall first hand. Next year, 2020, will be the 300th anniversary of Turkey, or as we know it today, New Providence. And plans are underway to acknowledge and celebrate this notable anniversary. And you can help.

While all members are free to attend the society's monthly meetings, we realize some feel intimidated to do so. We wholeheartedly invite you to come, listen and share your opinions about the activities of the society. Our meetings are held in the Mason Room in the back of the New Providence Memorial Library. We particularly invite you to have a say in how we celebrate our town's 300th birthday, as well as other activities. After all, this is *your* historical society.

We encourage you to partake in these events and invite others. Volunteers are always needed and encouraged. If you'd like to volunteer, or just have questions, please give us a call at 908-665-1034.

LindaKale
President

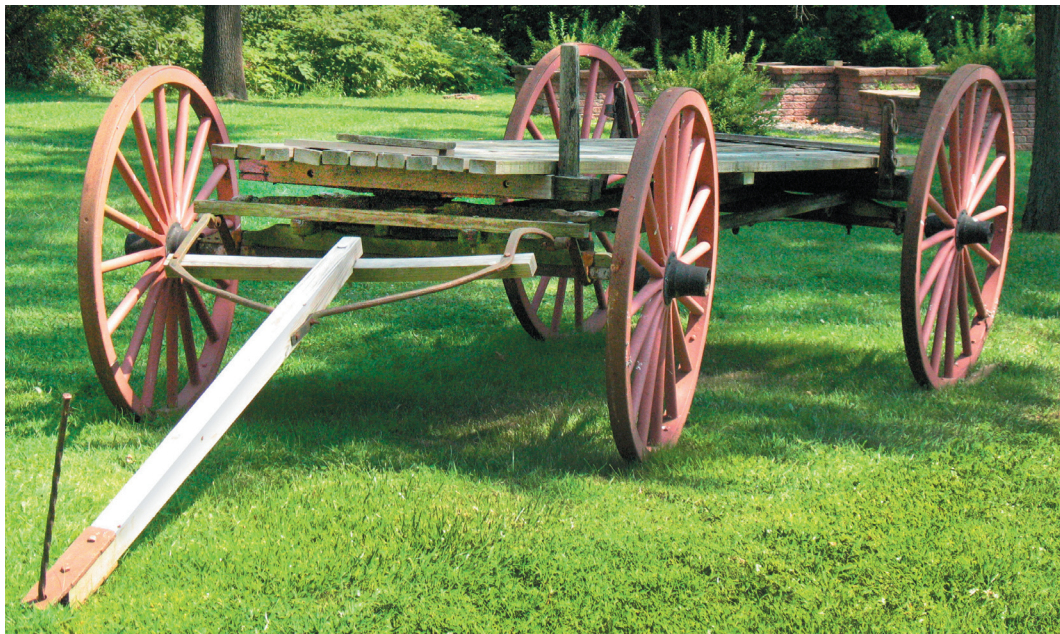
The Genung Wagon Restored

The most visible artifact in the collection of the New Providence Historical Society is the Genung wagon, usually on display outside the Salt Box Museum at 1350 Springfield Avenue. The Genung Wagon (circa 1820) is the oldest remaining piece of farm equipment in New Providence. Used to transport animals and crops, the wagon worked the farm which is now the Acme parking lot. But time had taken its toll. Some people might have noticed the wagon was missing from the Salt Box property for the last several months.

In late 2016, the Summit chapter of Questers International, an organization devoted to education through research and the study of antiques, approached our society with an offer to support a restoration project. The Society chose to restore the Genung wagon. In early 2017, a generous \$500 donation was received from the Betsey Mulford Crane Chapter #725 of the Questers to rebuild the wagon. This kicked off additional local fundraising activities for the project. Special thanks to those who contributed.

Earlier this year, the wagon was shipped to Mr. Aaron Nolt, the proprietor of A&A Carriage, located in Lancaster County, PA, the heart of Amish country. Once there, Mr. Nolt applied his carpentry skills to replace the wooden components of the wagon, including parts of the wheels and bed board.

Once the carpentry work was completed and the wagon returned to New Providence, Rick Anderson, focused on urethaning the wooden parts of the wagon for long term preservation. Special thanks to Rick for his tireless work and shepherding the restoration of this valuable artifact.



Before



After



Calendar for Upcoming Historical Society Events

2019

September 8, 2019	Sunday	Open House at Salt Box Museum, 1-3 PM
September 19, 2019	Thursday	Society Meeting, 7 PM, Mason Room
September 22, 2019	Sunday	New Providence Book Festival at Salt Box Museum, 9 AM - 4 PM (Raindate: September 29, 2019)
October 10, 2019	Thursday	Fall Talk, "Benjamin Franklin" DeCorso Center, 7 PM
October 17, 2019	Thursday	Society Meeting, 7 PM, Mason Room
October 19, 2019	Saturday	Four Centuries in a Weekend, Open House 10 AM - 5 PM
October 20, 2019	Sunday	Four Centuries in a Weekend, Open House 12 Noon - 5 PM
October 27, 2019	Sunday	Booth at New Providence Street Fair 10 AM - 4 PM
November 3, 2019	Sunday	Open House at Salt Box Museum, 1-3 PM
December 1, 2019	Sunday	Open House at Salt Box Museum, 1-3 PM
December 19, 2019	Thursday	Society Meeting, 7 PM, Mason Room

2020

January 16, 2020	Thursday	Society Meeting, 7 PM, Mason Room
February 20, 2020	Thursday	Society Meeting, 7 PM, Mason Room

*Please check our website, www.newprovidencehistorical.com, for details and updates. Anyone wishing to attend a trustee's meeting, should contact Linda Kale or Rick Anderson to check it has been rescheduled, or you can call 908-665-1034.



Alana Ponte is Our 21st Scholarship Recipient



This year's New Providence Historical Society scholarship, named for the late Earle Pearson, was awarded to Alana Ponte, a graduating senior at New Providence High School. Alana was not always a big fan of history, thinking of it mostly as an exercise in memorization. However, when she took an AP History class with Mrs. Stephanie Hornstein in her junior year, Alana became fascinated by the ethical aspects of history that her teacher shared.

Mrs. Hornstein also brought her class to the Salt Box Museum where Alana and her classmates researched artifacts. Alana's assigned artifact was a 1910 Acme Freezer Ice Cream Maker. Alana would go on to share her research results at a Board of Education meeting.

Alana plans to attend Haverford College in Pennsylvania, majoring in biology, minoring in history. Her interest in ethics triggered by her AP history class will now be applied to bioethics.



The Changing Face of New Providence

A four-unit townhouse complex is being built at 125 South Street, next to Our Lady of Peace Church.

The facility on Gales Drive, formerly called the Glenside Nursing Home and Manor Care, is now called **Spring Grove Rehabilitation & Healthcare Center**.

Anew Things of Beauty Supply & Salon has opened at 1312 Springfield Avenue, This location was previously The Annex which served the Presbyterian Church.

The new **Bell Pavilion** residence at **Lantern Hill** on Mountain Avenue is opening this fall, with 169 apartments, a fitness center, a restaurant and a bocce court.



Member & Citizen News

Please welcome new members: **Ann Marie Ragsdale, Peter Badgley Coddington, Lisa Coddington, John Everitt, Bernadette F. Yeager, Joan Coddington Boillod** and **Robert & Adrienne Ward**.

Elizabeth (Sessions) Kelsey (86) passed away on May 27, 2019 at her home in Exeter, N.H. She and her husband Tom were life members of the New Providence Historical Society. While living in New Providence, she and her husband Tom were residents of the Murray Hill Square Condos.

Former Mayor **Edward M. Bien** (98) passed away on June 24, 2019. He served as a Master Sergeant with the United States Marine Corps during World War II and participated in the invasion of Okinawa. After the war, he had received his BA and MA in Finance from Rutgers University, Newark, having attended 10 years of night school. He worked for RCA in Harrison. After moving to New Providence in 1954, he served as a member of the Board of Education and later a councilman for New Providence before being elected mayor in 1966 until 1978. Then he became the borough administrator from 1978 until he retired in 1996.

Former New Providence educator **Brian Mather** (74) passed away on July 9, 2019. Mr. Mather, a popular history teacher, was employed by the New Providence school system from 1966 until his retirement in 2002. Brian Mather was a descendant of the historic Puritan minister, Cotton Mather. His family has a named pew in Boston's historic Old North Church.

If you have news you would like included in the next *Turkey Tracks*, please send it to:

New Providence Historical Society
c/o New Providence Memorial Library
377 Elkwood Avenue
New Providence, NJ 07974
Attn: J.R. Bale

New Providence Historical Society Officers & Committees

President	Linda Kale
Vice President	Rick Anderson
Corresponding Secretary	Carol Smith
Recording Secretaries	Kerry Lee
	Sara Jane Vignali
Treasurer	Gail Souren
Publicity	Linda Kale
Displays	Barbara Pape
Grounds & Property	Rick Anderson
Membership	Margaret Maurer
Computer Archives	Colin duSaire
<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, Sara Jane Vignali



Salt Box Museum Hours

1350 Springfield Avenue
March to November
First Sundays, 1-3 PM
Or by appointment
Telephone: 908-665-1034

Mason Room Hours

at the New Providence Library
Tuesday Mornings
10 AM to Noon
Telephone: 908-665-1034
Appointments available

Website:

newprovidencehistorical.com

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

Facebook Page: facebook.com/NewProvidenceHistoricalSociety



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Memorial Library
377 Elkwood Avenue
New Providence, New Jersey 07974