



# Turkey Tracks

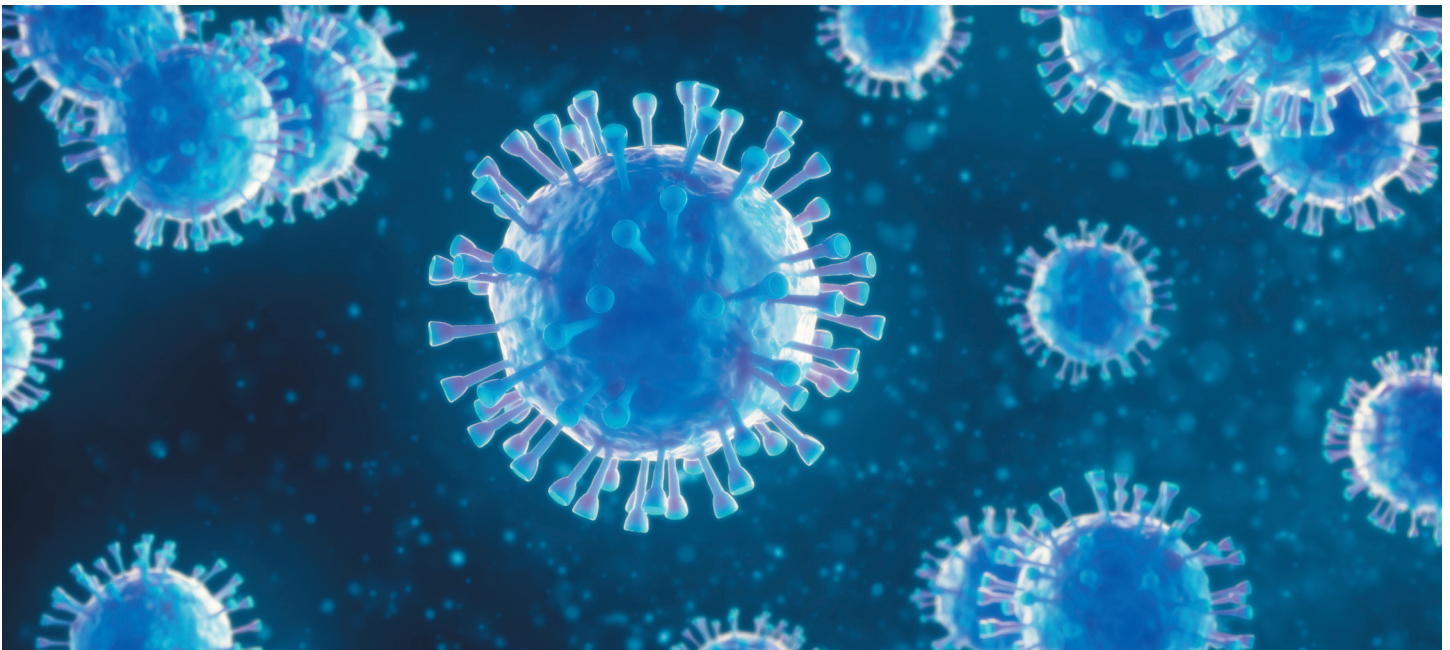
*Newsletter of the New Providence Historical Society*

Volume 53 No. 2

Issue #126

October 2020

## 2020, The Year Of...



There is an old curse: “May you live in interesting times.” And 2020 has certainly been far too interesting. For New Providence, 2020 is the town’s Tricentennial, but all of the scheduled celebration events have been cancelled along with Historical Society events.

The year began with an impeached president facing a Senate trial. This was followed by the Covid-19 pandemic. In the United States, over 225,000 people have died so far. Forty-three of those victims lived in New Providence. We learned a new phrase: “social distancing.” And masks have become part of our standard apparel. Many have struggled with balancing

the health safety anxieties with economic concerns.

On May 25th, George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis, when the arresting officer held Floyd’s neck under his knee for almost nine minutes. This triggered nationwide protests, many of which led to vandalism and looting. On June 4th, many citizens of New Providence, including Mayor Morgan and Chief Gazaway, participated in a peaceful protest march along Springfield Avenue.

And ahead, we still have a contentious and divisive presidential election on November 3rd. Rather than remembering history, we are living it close up.



# Board of Trustees Letter

In this letter, we usually discuss the wonderful fall events scheduled, such as the Fall Talk, Open Houses at the Salt Box Museum, the New Providence Book Festival, and our participation in other events, such as Union County's Four Centuries in a Weekend and the New Providence Street Fair. This year, we were also going to have numerous events celebrating New Providence's 300-year anniversary as a vibrant town and community. However, on March 9, 2020 the State of New Jersey issued a State of Emergency, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has forced us all to cancel these events.

However, the people of New Providence won't be kept down. Thanks to the dedication of our citizens, we are cooperating and surviving. Our monthly society meetings have continued via Zoom. All members are welcome to log in and join us, as we make plans for a big comeback next year. In 2021, we will thrive.

Linda Kale has stepped down from her position as president of the society. However, she continues on the board, working to coordinate with the school system and train docents for Salt Box Museum tours. In these difficult times, she has also helped our community by sewing and distributing numerous cloth masks for her fellow citizens. We thank Linda for her past service and appreciate her ongoing efforts.

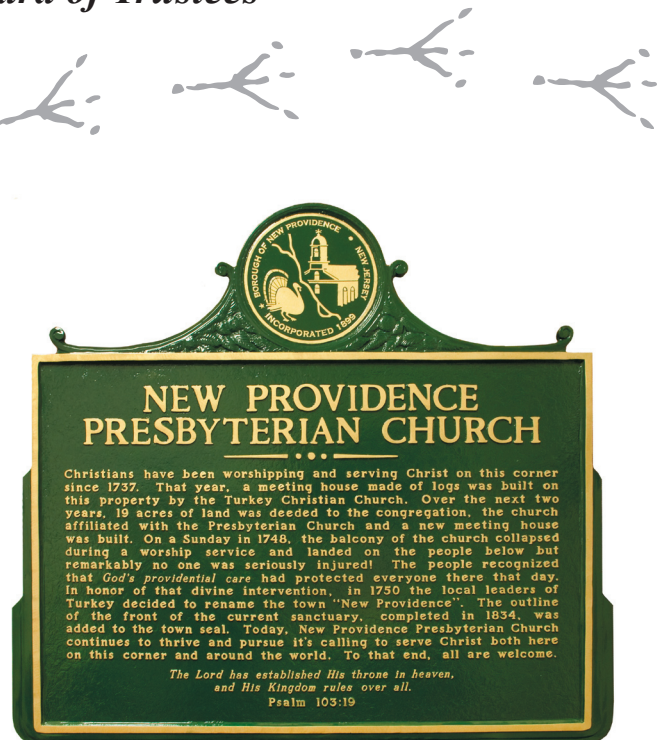
A recent addition to the Board of Trustees is Kerry Lee, who has also taken on the position of Treasurer. Kerry has also led the historical marker initiative. Thanks to him, we expect the first historical marker to go up soon at the New Providence Presbyterian Church.

Like many of us, it feels like the society is in hibernation. But when the spring comes, we will come roaring back! Stay safe. Be well.

## *The New Providence Historical Society Board of Trustees*

### Historical Markers

Under a new initiative, the New Providence Historical Society, in cooperation with the borough, will be erecting historical markers at key sites of historical interest. The first marker fabricated is for the New Providence Presbyterian Church, an important part of our town's history. The marker is on temporary display at the Mason Room. Two more markers are planned for the coming year.





# The Last Pandemic: Spanish Flu

As we face the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic of 2020, it's worth looking back to the last great global pandemic just over a century ago. Beginning in February 1918, the virus infected 500 million people, roughly a third of the world's population at the time. This pandemic killed an estimated 50 million people worldwide, including an estimated 675,000 people in the United States.

President Woodrow Wilson contracted the flu in 1919 while in Paris, where he was negotiating the peace treaty after World War I. Wilson became ill and coughed so severely his doctor initially thought he'd been poisoned in an assassination attempt.

As the pandemic reached epic proportions in the fall of 1918, many referred to the disease as the "Spanish Flu." Most mistakenly assumed the sickness had originated in Spain, but this is a misunderstanding. During World War I, Spain was one of the few major European countries to stay neutral. The nations engaged in the war suppressed news of the flu to avoid undermining morale. Meanwhile, the Spanish media was reported on it in great detail, starting in late-May 1918. Coverage was only amplified when Spain's King Alfonso XIII came down with a severe case a week later.



Mask wearing, 1918

Since nations undergoing a media blackout could only read in depth accounts from Spanish news sources, they naturally assumed that the country was the pandemic's ground zero. Meanwhile, Spaniards believed the virus originated from France, so they called it the "French Flu."

In the United States, the disease was first identified in military personnel in spring of 1918. It is generally believed the spread of the virus was facilitated by increased troop movements required by World War I.

At the time, the understanding of infectious pathogens was limited, and the tools to study them were still in their infancy. The primary tools for controlling the virus was mask wearing and social isolation. However in the late 20th century, a sample of the 1918 virus was found preserved in the Alaskan permafrost at an Inuit village called Brevig Mission, which was almost completely wiped out in November of 1918. Based on those samples recover, the subsequent research revealed it to be an H1N1 virus with genes of avian origin. Scientists were amazed at the lethality of the virus. Some animal test subjects died of pneumonia within three days of exposure.

Since 1918, the world has experienced three additional, but less catastrophic, pandemics, in 1957, 1968, and most recently in 2009. The development of vaccines and better detection methods have helped reduce the devastation a pandemic can bring.

As of the date of this publication in 2020, the United States has suffered over 225,000 deaths due to Covid-19. Hopefully, we will not approach the numbers achieved in 1920.

# The Video Phone Arrives

## *No, Really This Time!*

The pandemic of 2020 finally forced the equivalent of the video phone into common usage, whether it's Zoom, Skype, FaceTime, GoToMeeting, Microsoft Teams or another video application. Once a staple of science fiction and spy thrillers, the promise of the video phone has been around for decades. One of the earliest representations was Dick Tracy's two-way wrist watch. Film and television followed with offerings such as *The Jetsons* and *2001, A Space Odyssey*, as well as others. But what about the reality?

The idea of video phones was compelling and fit with a desire for "space age technology." Accordingly, AT&T embarked on a quest to invent such a technology. However, science and technology strained to deliver. While they did technically develop the equipment, it was quite expensive. Sheldon Hochheiser, an AT&T's corporate historian, called the videophone "the most famous failure in the history of the Bell system."

Even in the early days of the Internet, transmitting video was difficult and prone to significant lag. However, with advances in fiber optics and other improvements in bandwidth, two-way video conferencing is now a reality, and not a minute too soon. Video conferencing has allowed classes to be conducted remotely. Even newscasters have been able to broadcast from their own homes.



*Dick Tracy* by Chester Gould debuted October 1931



*The Jetsons* by Hanna Barbera debuted Sept. 23, 1962



*2001: A Space Odyssey*, 1968

# The Changing Face of New Providence

**Y K Salon** – Although Feathers, Hair Boutique, formerly at 1274 Springfield Ave., closed its doors in early 2020, YK Salon didn't officially have their grand opening until September 10.

Construction began on **Harmony Park**, part of Veterans Park on South Street on April 1. Harmony is between Veterans Park and First Street. Harmony Park is being filled with large, hands-on, interactive musical instruments. N.P. Borough Council approved an ordinance authorizing acquisition of property at 136 South St., corner of South St. & First St. July 2020; increasing the green acres space along South Street.

The house at 87 Passaic Street was demolished in early August.

A new building at 1286 Springfield Avenue has been built and will be **Your Kids Urgent Care** will provide treatment for non-life-threatening illnesses and injuries. Scheduled to open in fall of 2020.

The most striking changes are because of the pandemic. Many closed businesses have reopened, but in limited ways. Temperature taking and contact tracing have been added. Outdoor dining has proliferated. Many of the businesses in town need our support. And much support has been given, but more is needed.

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## Member & Citizen News

Please welcome new members: **Lucille Poli, Nancy Panella, Maria DeLuca, Marvin B. Chasek, and Ralph & Margaret Miano.**

**Kate Hearn** is the 22nd recipient of the New Providence Historical Society scholarship. Kate worked as an intern at the Society, for which we are thankful.



Kate Hearn

**Teresa Gazaway** was sworn in as New Providence's seventh Police Chief on Friday, May 1. She is also its first female chief. She joined the Police as a probationary patrolman in 1995.

**Clarice Milbrodt** (89) a long-time member of our society, passed away on 3/2/2020. A resident since 1960, and a Secretary for the New Providence Board of Education, primarily at the Salt Brook Elementary School. She was a long-time parishoner and volunteer at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church and Overlook Medical Center.

**Julius Stang Jr.** (89) passed away on 5/5/2020. He and wife Claire have been long-time society members. Julius served in the Army in the Korean War. He retired from Prudential as a systems analyst. A resident of New Providence since 1958, he was a Cub Scout leader, an Assistant Scout Master for Troop #61, and a Master Gardener for the Union County Extension Service.

**Dolores Jean Anelli** (87) passed away on 5/23/2020. Dolores was the Administrative Assistant to the Chief of Nursing in the VA Medical Center in Lyons, NJ where she was employed for 34 years. Dolores is survived by her husband Patrick Anelli.

**Molly Whitney** (96) passed away on 6/3/2020. For nearly 20 years, Molly was an assistant librarian in the New Providence school system. Upon her retirement, she volunteered at the Overlook Medical Center in Summit.

**Harry Kundrat Jr.** (91) passed away on 9/13/2020. Harry served in the US Air Force and eventually became president of Richard-Lee company. Harry was a member of the ARRL, Old Guard and senior citizens clubs.

**Marion Bale** (82) passed away on 10/10/2020. A resident since 1969, Marion served as recording secretary for the New Providence Historical Society for seven years. She was a DAR member with nine ancestors from the American Revolution. Marion co-authored two books on family genealogy.



## New Providence Historical Society Officers & Committees

Vice President	Rick Anderson
Corresponding Secretary	Carol Smith
Treasurer	Kerry Lee
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, J.R. Bale, Linda Kale, Kerry Lee,  
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](http://newprovidencehistorical.com)

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

Facebook Page: [facebook.com/NewProvidenceHistoricalSociety](https://facebook.com/NewProvidenceHistoricalSociety)



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