



# Turkey Tracks

Newsletter of the *New Providence Historical Society*

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June 2021

## 2021, a Year to Mark



Above: Rick Anderson, Vice-President, and Kerry Lee, Treasurer, with New Providence's first historical marker.

With the pandemic raging for over a year, activities for many, including the New Providence Historical Society have been limited. However, the society has not been in complete hibernation. The prime example of this has been the historical marker program, led by trustee Kerry Lee. The plan is for three markers to be created and deployed, commemorating the borough's most historic sites. The first, commemorating the Presbyterian

Church, was created by Sewah Studios in Ohio and installed by the Department of Public Works.

Additional markers are in the planning stages, including one to commemorate the Academy, which later served as Borough hall, and is now occupied by Peapack Private Wealth Management. A third marker will honor the Salt Box Museum, formerly a 1700s farmhouse.





# Board of Trustees Letter

We are finally emerging from the Pandemic of 2020/2021. Amen! While not back to completely normalcy, it's on the horizon. While many of our public events have been cancelled this past year and a half, work still continued behind the scenes. The most obvious example is the historical marker project, the first of which has already been erected at the Presbyterian Church. Monthly meetings continued via Zoom.

Our social media presence has been elevated, thanks to the energetic efforts of Maria DeLuca. Many people have registered particular enjoyment of the Throwback Thursday historical trivia on our Facebook page, as well as the monthly "Turkey Trivia", where readers are invited to respond.

We are finally confident enough to start planning in-person events again. The Salt Box Craft Fair, normally held in April, will be held on August 21st. This will be followed by the New Providence Book Festival on September 18th. We invite you all to join us for these events.

Volunteers are always needed and encouraged. As the restrictions open up, there will be lots more to do. If you'd like to volunteer, or just have questions, please give us a call at 908-665-1034.

## *New Providence Historical Society Board of Trustees*



Members of the New Providence Historical Society, the Presbyterian Church and the Borough Council gather to celebrate the first of three historical markers. Front Row – Carol Smith, Margaret Maurer, Barbara Pape, Janice Chapin, Kimberly Rampaul-Pino, Colleen Fletcher, Councilwoman Lisa McKnight, Pastor Mike Flavin. Middle row – Councilwoman Michele Matsukodis, Councilwoman Nadine Geoffroy, Kerry Lee, Mindy Warde, Lydia Wong, Mayor Al Morgan, Councilman Rob Munoz, Rev. Jeffery Ebert. Back row – Sara Jane Vignali, Rick Anderson, Glenn Guerin, Robert Keller.

# The Salt Box Craft Fair Returns!



Our previously postponed Salt Box Craft Fair has been set for Saturday, **August 21, 2021**, from 9AM to 3PM on the grounds of the Salt Box Museum. (Rain date is August 28th.)

This year we are expecting a new crop of vendors with an exciting range of craft offerings. If you would like to be a vendor, please reach out to J.R. Bale. Proceeds from this event supports the society's scholarship fund and maintenance of the Salt Box Museum.

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## The Changing Face of New Providence

**Your Kids Urgent Care** at 1286 Springfield Avenue has opened.

**Boro Cleaners** at 37 South Street closed.

**Anew Things of Beauty Supply & Salon** at 1312 Springfield Avenue closed.

An old favorite, **Noah's Bagels**, located at 1253 Springfield Avenue also closed.

**Towne Vision Center**, formerly 35 South Street for many years, moved to 1273 Springfield Avenue.

**Terrana Orthodontics** opened at 65 South Street.

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## Member & Citizen News

Please welcome new members: **Jim & Lynn O'Neill**, **Tom Young** and **Carol Bramley**.

**Robert Greenwood Gorton** (90) passed away on March 21, 2021. Bob helped New Providence open its new High School in 1960, establishing the Science Department and contributing to the design of the science wing. Though he loved teaching and was in turn beloved by his students, he received promotions that ultimately took him out of the classroom and into school administration. When Bob retired in 1987, he was the Assistant Superintendent of Schools for New Providence. Bob also was an active member of the New Providence Historical Society and an editor of the *Turkey Tracks* from 1992 to 2001.



Robert Gorton

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## 2021 Calendar for Upcoming Historical Society Events

August 21, 2021	Saturday	Salt Box Craft Fair, 9AM - 3PM
September 18, 2021	Saturday	New Providence Book Festival, 9AM - 3PM
October 16-17, 2021	Saturday & Sunday	Four Centuries in a Weekend (Salt Box open both days.)

Other events may be added, so check our calendar at [www.newprovidencehistorical.com](http://www.newprovidencehistorical.com).



# The Academy Building

For over 150 years, the Academy building at the corner of Springfield and Academy has served the Borough of New Providence in many significant ways. From 1870 to 1917, it served as the primary school for the Borough (Grades K-12). As the town's population increased, students moved into more extensive facilities and the building was repurposed to become Borough Hall.



The Academy, circa 1894



New Providence Borough Hall, 1969

Over time the Administration also outgrew the space and in 1980 moved into the former Lincoln School across Academy St. The Borough still owns the building and has leased it to various tenants for forty years. It is currently serving as the local branch of Peapack Private Wealth Management.

Surprisingly, the original Academy school bell, forged in 1873, was discovered in March 2021 still hanging in the cupola. It has been silent since 1980. The Historical Society is in the early stages of planning to have it ring out over the residents of New Providence once again.



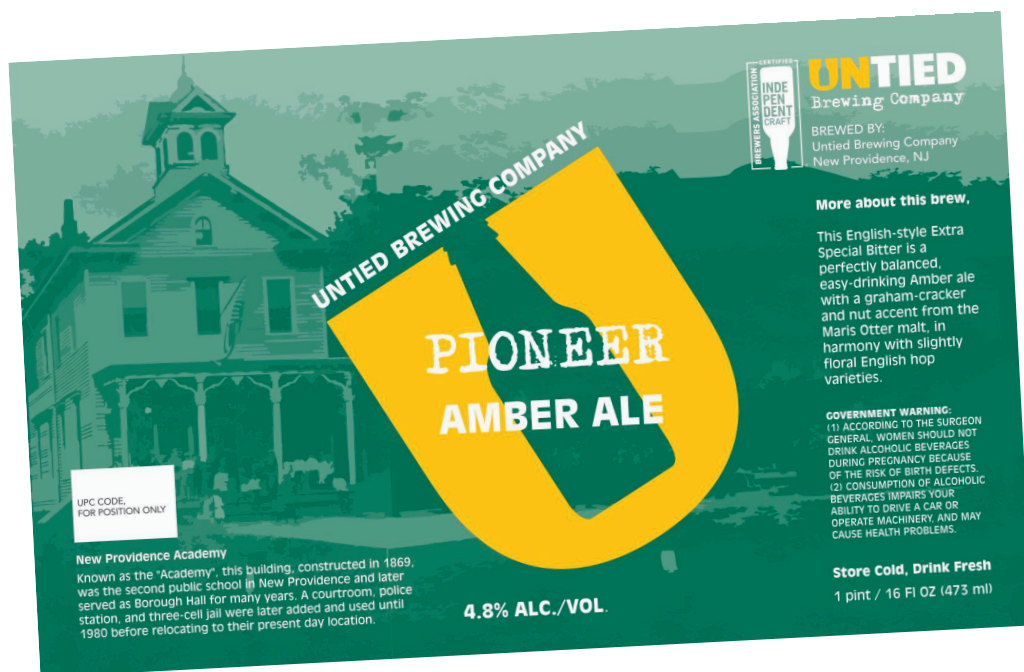


In 2021, Untied Brewing Company commemorated the historical significance of the Academy by featuring its image and description on the label of their Pioneer Amber Ale.

This summer, the Historical Society plans to erect a second New Providence historical marker on the property to serve as a constant reminder of the Academy's role in the history of our town



Peapack Private Wealth Management, 2021



## Christopher Siebelts, 2021 Recipient of the Historical Society Scholarship



Christopher Siebelts is the 23rd recipient of the New Providence Historical Society's High School Scholarship.

During his sophomore and junior years, Christopher volunteered as a docent at the Salt Box Museum, as well as helping out at the Salt Box Craft Fair. During his senior year, Christopher led the creation of a virtual media tour of the interior rooms of the Salt Box Museum, a valuable asset during the pandemic while the museum was closed.

Christopher will attend Seton Hall's College of Nursing in the fall of 2021. After earning his bachelor's degree, he plans to work toward a doctorate in nursing and become a nurse anesthetist.

## 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
<i>Turkey Tracks</i> & Website	J.R. Bale
Social Media	Maria DeLuca
Recording Secretary	Audrey Keebler

### 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