



Turkey Tracks

Newsletter of the New Providence Historical Society

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September 2021

Hidden in New Jersey?

New Jersey is often an overlooked state. Some even use it as a punchline to a joke. Even we New Jerseyans sometimes overlook the treasures and secrets within our state.

On Thursday, October 14, Linda Barth will reveal the famous and not-so-famous people, places, and events of our great little state harbors. Many commonly known and valued inventions were born in New Jersey.

Our speaker, Linda Barth, has written two books on the D&R Canal and three children's picture books, *Bridgetenders Boy*, *Hidden New Jersey*, and *Alice Paul: Champion of Women's Rights*.



New Providence
Book Festival

New Providence Book Festival

On **Saturday, September 18, 2021**, 9 AM to 3 PM, the Salt Box Museum will host on its grounds, the fourth annual New Providence Book Festival. Over a dozen 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 purchased. 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. More information is available at www.NewProvidenceBookFestival.com. The rain date is September 25th.

Board of Trustees Letter

One thing history teaches us is that events rarely begin and end cleanly or easily. However at this point in time, New Jersey has a 60% full-vaccination rate, while over 70% have had at least one shot. While the pandemic isn't quite over, we can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Our first foray toward normality was the Salt Box Craft Fair, held on August 21st. Despite the threat of thunderstorms and a bit of last-minute vandalism to the grounds, the fair was regarded as a success by all involved. We even reopened the Salt Box Museum for tours and even coaxed former society president John Bale out of retirement to serve as a docent for museum tours.

As we return to normality, one need we have is for museum docents, people who can show guests around the Salt Box house and explain the exhibits. Training is easy with our docent guide. We have a wonderful museum and would like to open it up more often. Anyone who has even a mild interest should reach out to us. We are making plans open the Mason Room Archives on Saturdays, once a month. We are seeking volunteers for that as well.

Our next event on the grounds of the Salt Box Museum will be the New Providence Book Festival on September 18th. 9am to 3pm. Over a dozen authors will be joining us. Some will do readings and talks. For more up-to-date information on the festival, visit www.NewProvidenceBookFestival.com. Again, we will have a bake sale and tours of the museum.

On October 14th, we will have our delayed Annual Dinner Meeting at Chimney Rock Inn in Gillette. Our speaker will be Linda Barth.

Our historic marker program continues with the delivery of the second marker to be placed in front of the former academy and borough hall, located on the corner of Academy Street and Springfield Avenue. Special thanks to Kerry Lee and Rober Keller for their hard work on this project.

Volunteers are always needed and encouraged, especially DOCENTS. 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



2021 / 2022 Calendar for Upcoming 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.)
October 24, 2021	Sunday	New Providence Street Fair, 10AM - 4 PM
May 7, 2022	Saturday	Salt Box Craft Fair, 9AM - 3PM
June 4, 2022	Saturday	New Providence Flea Market, 9AM - 3PM

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

The Academy Bell

By Robert Keller

In the last edition of *Turkey Tracks*, we shared details on the progress of the 2nd historical marker (for the Academy/Old Borough Hall) and the surprise March 2021 discovery of the original 1873 Academy school bell.

The history and existence of the bell was well documented, but its whereabouts, post-1980, were completely unknown. As luck would have it, the bell has been hanging in the existing Academy cupola on Springfield Avenue, hidden from plain view by a wooden hatch.

No one in New Providence we have interviewed recalls when it was last rung, but likely it has been 40 years. It was electrified in 1976, shortly after the bicentennial, but probably went silent when the Borough administration moved out of the Academy building in 1980.

The Historical Society in cooperation with the current Academy lessee, Peapack-Gladstone Wealth Management, and the New Providence Department of Public Works has been troubleshooting the electrical apparatus that once rang the bell. Regretfully the wiring has been destroyed by vermin over the years and needs to be rewired, at a minimum. We suspect the 40+ year old electronics need replacement as well, which can be accomplished with the help of the Verdin Company in Ohio, who electrified the bell in the 1970s and still exists.

It is our sincere hope that the resources can be secured and deployed to help our Academy school bell ring out once again.

Since it was first hung in 1873, it served our community dutifully by ringing the first students to class, heralding the end of World Wars I and II, the expansion of New Providence High School in the 1964 and the 1976 American Bicentennial.

Can we gather the momentum and community support needed to fix the bell and hear its beautiful tone ring out over New Providence yet again?

Please take a moment to read the 1976 article about our beloved New Providence Academy school bell and discover why it is important on our website. Local historian Frank Orleans wrote an “Autobiography of the New Providence Academy Bell,” which along with a timeline, can be found on the society website at www.newprovidencehistorical.com/turkey-tracks/academy-bell.

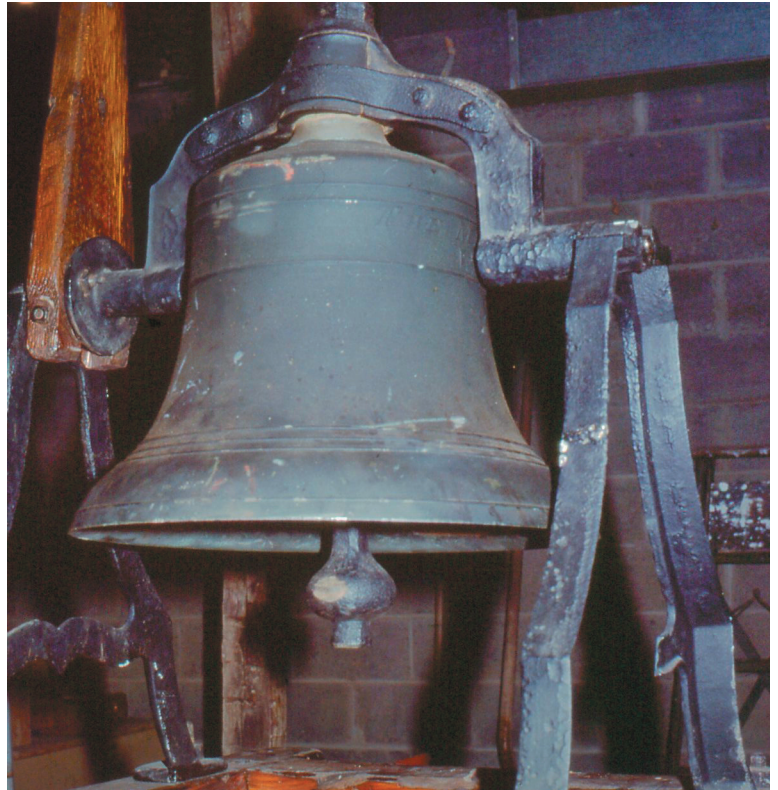


Photo by Frank Orleans



Photo by Frank Orleans

Salt Box Craft Fair Triumphs



The society's first public event since the beginning of the pandemic has been deemed a success. A dozen craft vendors did a brisk business as the Salt Box Museum offered its first tours since the fall of 2019.



Member & Citizen News

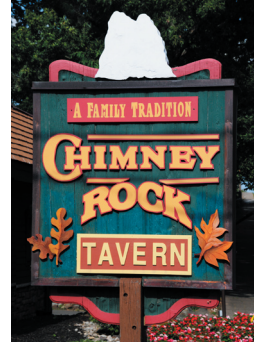
Please welcome new members: **Peter Bolton, Mary Tanaskovic Bitting, Daniel & Jenna Badgley and Davies & Associates (Bob Davies).**

Ida Pecca (97) passed away on July 7, 2021. She met and married her late husband of 69 years, Joseph A. Pecca, in 1945, and raised their family in New Providence. Ida was a longtime member of the Paca Club and was recently honored for 69 years of service. She was also an original member of Our Lady of Peace Parish.



Reservations for 2021 Annual Dinner

October 14, 2021, Hors d'oeuvre at 6 PM, Dinner at 7 PM, Cash Bar.
Chimney Rock, 342 Valley Road, Gillette, NJ 07933



Number of reservations: _____ @ \$38.00 for NP Historical Society Annual Dinner

Amount of Check \$_____.

Please make check payable to NP Historical Society.
Reservations must be received by **October 1, 2021**.

Name _____ Date _____ Email _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Send checks to:

New Providence Historical Society
c/o New Providence Memorial Library
377 Elkwood Avenue
New Providence, NJ 07974



Proposed Trustees - Class of 2020: Kerry Lee, Margaret Maurer and Barbara Pape

Proposed Trustees - Class of 2021: Rick Anderson, Sara Jane Vignali and Maria DeLuca



The Changing Face of New Providence

The building which previously was a deli on the corner of Springfield Avenue and Central Avenue has been demolished.

The shop on the corner of South Street and Westview Avenue, which held Beyond Delicious Catering, will be opening as **Kawa Ramen**.

The dry cleaners at 1271 Springfield Avenue has already closed.

A new home has been constructed on the corner of Springfield Avenue and Salt Brook Road.

Lantern Hill has taken over the old **BOC** property and is expanding its operation.

Tables For Two Panini Café at 598 Central Avenue closed after 16 years. The last day was at the end of May.

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
Website & <i>Turkey Tracks</i> editor	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, 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



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