



The King House Museum

# *Stony Brook* **CURRENTS**

Vol. II, No. 1

*A Newsletter of the Suffield Historical Society*

January 2007

**The mission of the Suffield Historical Society is to collect, preserve and stimulate interest in the history of Suffield and the region and to actively share it. The Society hopes to inspire a sense of community, as well as to provide an understanding and appreciation of Suffield's past.**

### **Suffield Historical Society**

*President*

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Blair Childs

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Gary Mandirola

*Secretary*

Nancy Noble

*Historian & Curator*

Lester Smith

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Marjorie Hinckley,

*Membership*

Rosalie Lappen, *Property*

Barry Sisk, *Long-Range Planning*

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Terry Mandirola James Reeves

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Barry Sisk Ruth Sisk

### **King Property Trustees**

Edward Chase, III

William Connelly

Hazel Phillips

## **Original Suffield Proprietors: Anthony Austin**

*by Ed Chase*

Before coming to Suffield, Anthony Austin lived first in England and then Rowley, Massachusetts. In Rowley, he married Esther Huggins in 1664 and started a family which would grow to include four sons and three daughters. But in 1674, he secured a Suffield grant for fifty acres. The young family settled on that lot, along what was then called Feather Street and is now known as East Street.

As an educated man, he was almost immediately singled out as a leader. Anthony was Suffield's *first* First Selectman, a post he held for 27 years! He rose to the rank of Captain in the militia during the years when Suffield was a remote frontier and King Phillip's War was raging.

At a time when most of his contemporaries had died of "old age," a 62-year-old Anthony Austin reluctantly accepted the role of Suffield's first schoolmaster. This office he held until shortly before his own death in 1708.

Anthony was the progenitor of several distinguished men in wider U.S. history, among them Moses Austin, his great-grandson, and Stephen Fuller Austin, his great-great-grandson, the leading founders of Texas. Many Austin descendants are still among your neighbors and friends in Suffield.

Part of the property built by Anthony still stands as a private home about a third of a mile south of Bridge Street. It is easily spotted by the "1690 Anthony Austin" on its front.

Five years after the Austin family came to Suffield, Anthony's two oldest sons, Richard and Anthony Jr., were granted land south of their father's off Feather Street. These two "men" were teenagers at the time they started clearing their own land! The property was adjacent to what became the Windsor Locks town line and is now part of the Connecticut State Prison.

*Material taken from the Austin Genealogy by Arthur M. Sikes, Jr., The Papers of John Pynchon, and H. S. Sheldon's Documentary History of Suffield.*

Anthony Austin, b. ca. 1636 in Bishopstock, Hampshire, England, son of Richard and Elizabeth Austin. Married Esther Huggins, daughter of John and Bridget Green Huggins, 1664. The couple had 7 children. The first three children were born in Rowley; the remainder in Suffield. Esther died in Suffield in 1698. Anthony died in Suffield in 1708. Both are buried in the cemetery behind the Congregational Church.

## HIGHLIGHTS 2006

by Barry Sisk

The Strategic Plan for the Society was accepted by the Trustees in January. Numerous tasks were implemented including the publication of a quarterly newsletter. Procedures for handling membership applications and records were significantly improved.

Our 2006 program series included Newgate Prison, Architecture in the Connecticut River Valley, Irish laborers and the Great Western Railroad, and a popular "Show and Tell." A field trip was held in April to visit Hammond Castle in Gloucester and the Essex Shipbuilding Museum. Our first Ice Cream Social, 1910 style, was held at the King House in July. And this year we co-sponsored a photo contest on architecture in Suffield and offered Halloween treats.

The old Pohalla Stable office and the reference room were cleaned out by Anne Borg and Ruth Sisk. It was a huge task, and an inventory process is continuing.

A gift offer of the old barn on Hezekiah Sheldon's former property was investigated and ultimately rejected by the Trustees. The barn was in poor condition, and estimated restoration costs were too high.

The details of the October home tour, Holidayfest and the fall cleanup are all covered in this issue.

## FALL WORK DAY

On Saturday, October 21, volunteers arrived at the King House with lots of energy. They trimmed trees and loaded brush, laid slate and stone to prevent dirt from splashing on the house, fertilized rhododendrons (probably for the first time ever), installed hardware cloth on holes in the stable and cleaned gutters.

A big thanks to the following: Jim Reeves, Bob and Rob Howe, Nancy and Norman Noble, Peg Shaughnessy, Taylor Stevens, Ed Chase, Anne Borg and Lester Smith.

An especially big thank you goes to Bob Borg, who before Holidayfest took it upon himself to wash the ugly green algae off the entire north side of the house and to brush all the cobwebs off the front. The house looked lovely for the holidays.

## DEDICATED VOLUNTEER



*Halloween at the King House. Shown above are Joan Baker, Anne Borg & Nancy Noble. Below: Susan Luukko, Anne Borg, Joan Baker, & Ed Luukko.*

Rosalie Lappen has volunteered at the King House on Wednesday afternoons for a decade. She has loved every minute of her duties and finds the visitors interesting, especially those who grew up in Suffield and have stories to tell. She has learned the history of the house well, but claims sometimes she learns much from visitors.

Her favorite event is the annual visit by 4th graders. She and our curator, Lester Smith, teach a little history in a place that makes yesteryear seem real.

"It's a wonderful feeling to keep learning and teaching others about history and making it a living history," she says.

Rosalie's time and effort have been key to keeping the house open on Wednesdays. She encourages you to give it a try. If you are interested in becoming a docent one or two days a month, call Nancy Noble at 668-2538.

## NEW FUND APPEAL

The Trustees voted to initiate an annual fund appeal in 2007. While we have

a substantial endowment, it is becoming a real challenge to meet our expenses and fund our plans for the future with only our current income.

The house has required some major repair work recently and needs to be painted again. We also anticipate a need to hire a part-time staff member to take some of the burden off our curator. Additionally, we have goals to expand our exhibit, work and storage spaces as well as restore a peddler's wagon.

Your support will be crucial to the ongoing mission and functioning of the Suffield Historical Society.



## CURATOR'S REPORT

by Lester Smith

On October 14 the King House was one of the stops on the "Spectacular Home Tour," organized as a fundraiser for Community Health Resources in Windsor. That day 248 visitors came through Dr. King's old home! This record-breaking attendance concluded a successful regular season.

The Holidayfest week-end was comfortably crowded with 146 visitors, whose comments on the special exhibit, *Needlework, Old and New*, were very favorable. The quantity, quality and variety of needlework made for a great show. And everyone enjoyed the refreshments and socializing by the kitchen fireplace. The generosity of the 32 needlework lenders is very much appreciated, as is the vital help provided by Anne Borg, Nancy Noble, and Terry Mandirola in preparing the house and the exhibit.

Also vital to the King House each year is the important service of the docents who welcome visitors throughout the season as well as during the special events. Thank you all!

Occasional new acquisitions continue to arrive. Notable during the last year were a pair of small dinosaur prints left in Stony Brook a few hundred million years ago and a fat bundle of letters sent by young Suffield farmer Ray Goodale to his intended bride about a hundred years ago when he was trying to build enough assets to support marriage. His writing reveals interesting bits of daily life as well as personal feelings and hopes. The footprints were donated by Marion Holloway Richardson, who found them. The letters were donated by the writer's daughter-in-law, Ruth Goodale of Cromwell.

We sometimes make purchases and usually welcome donations that would help us preserve and interpret Suffield's interesting past.



*The King House was filled with needlework for the Holidayfest in December.*

## NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to the following new members who have joined the Society since September:

Nancy Smith  
 June Christiana  
 Elizabeth Bay  
 Mitch and Sandra Charkiewicz  
 Derek Donnelly  
 Carol Burritt  
 Caroline and Etienne d'Otreppe  
 Thomas and Christine Chapman  
 Harry Krebbs  
 James Henderson  
 David Mack  
 Todd and Lynn Mervosh  
 Steve McKeen  
 Bill and Lin Remington  
 Edward Stanard  
 Taylor Stevens

If you would like to join the Suffield Historical Society, please call Ed Chase at 668-2962 or print out our membership application form from our website, [www.suffieldhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.suffieldhistoricalsociety.org).

## THANK YOU

Thanks very much to the many volunteers who gave time and talents in 2006. You all help make our programs successful!

*King House tours:* Rosalie Lappen, Natalie Mahoney, Nancy Noble, and Peg Shaughnessy.

*Family Fun Day:* Mary Baldyga, Anne Borg, Helen Kope, Cathy Noble, and Nancy Noble.

*Suffield on the Green:* Joan Baker, Anne Borg, Eleanor and Ed Chase, Blair Childs, Bill and Frankie Connelly, George Greenleaf, Gary and Terry Mandirola, Nancy Noble, Hazel Phillips, Jim Reeves, Peg Shaughnessy, Art and Bev Sikes, Ruth and Barry Sisk, Bob Stewart, and Mary Anne Zak.

*October Home Tour:* Anne Borg, Eleanor and Ed Chase, Ann Cronan, Alice Dahms, Natalie Mahoney, Hazel Phillips, Ruth and Barry Sisk, and Priscilla Sutula.

*Holidayfest:* Joan and Jim Baker, Anne Borg, Barbara Chain, Eleanor and Ed Chase, Shirley Crawford, Ann Cronan, Dian Friedman, Nancy Hess, Marjorie Hinckley, Helen Kope, Natalie Mahoney, Terry Mandirola, Cathy and Norman Noble, Florence Noble, Carolyn Samplatsky, Peg Shaughnessy, Ruth and Barry Sisk, Barbara Sutula, and Jackie Wadsworth.

## <sup>4</sup>Upcoming Events

### GENEALOGY WORKSHOP

Wednesday, February 21                      7:30 PM  
Kent Memorial Library  
*Art Sikes presents a workshop  
in tracing your own genealogy.*

### SHOW & TELL NIGHT

Wednesday, March 14                      7:30 PM  
Kent Memorial Library  
*Sign up to give a 10-minute presentation  
on anything historical.*  
*Artifacts, photos, collections, arcane knowledge,  
reminiscences, etc. are all welcome.*  
*Call Bob Stewart at 668-2928.*

### TEN HOURS UNTIL DAWN

Wednesday, March 21                      7:30 PM  
Kent Memorial Library  
*Another great presentation by Michael Tougias,  
this one on the blizzard of 1978.*

**Suffield Historical Society**  
**P.O. Box 893**  
**Suffield, Connecticut 06078**  
  
(860) 668-5256

[www.suffieldhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.suffieldhistoricalsociety.org)

King House Museum  
232 South Main Street

Open to the Public  
Wednesdays and Saturdays  
1:00 - 4:00 p.m.  
May through September

Newsletter Editor  
Maggie Philippon

### GROWING UP AT HILLTOP FARM

Wednesday, April 18                      7:30 PM  
Kent Memorial Library  
*George Hendee built a mansion as well as the  
historic barn that now stands on Hilltop Farm.*

*June Cook, niece of George Hendee,  
will show photos of his mansion and talk  
about summers spent on the farm.*



### FIELD TRIP TO SARATOGA SPRINGS

Saturday, May 5  
*Make plans to be on the bus!*  
*Call Ed Chase*  
*at 668-2962 to reserve your seat.*