



The King House Museum

Stony Brook CURRENTS

Vol. IV, No. 4

A Newsletter of the Suffield Historical Society

September 2009

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.

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James Rising, Original Suffield Proprietor

by Ed Chase

In 1635, 18-year-old James Rising left London and set sail for the Bermudas. Jockeying between Bermuda and Massachusetts during the next three decades, records place him at Harvard College, a marriage in Salem and the birth of four children.

In 1668, James was voted an inhabitant of Windsor, Connecticut, where he operated a ferry. Eleven years later, John Pynchon's Committee for Suffield awarded him a 40-acre grant on High Street near Stony Brook and, in 1682, his name appears on the Suffield voter list for our first Town Meeting.

The Rising lot is today at the southern tip of South Main Street and is marked by a house plaque noting that a John Rising lived on the property prior to 1850. James' son, John, inherited the property at the death of James in 1690.

This John Rising had 18 children; nine from his first wife and nine from his second. John's 7th child, Josiah, had a fascinating and, at times, tumultuous life. Because of the burden of raising such a large family, John sent Josiah to live in Deerfield, Massachusetts, with a cousin, Mehuman Hinsdale. Josiah was just nine when a large force of French soldiers and Native Americans from Canada attacked Deerfield. Josiah was taken captive in the early morning of February 29, 1704 along with four-year-old Abigail Nims, who would later become his wife.

Neither ever returned, but their life stories in Canada have been chronicled by André Raizenne Quesnel, a descendant of Josiah and Abigail. He produced a DVD entitled *Josiah Rising, the Captive Boy Who Never Returned to Suffield*. Quesnel will be the guest lecturer at our Society's September 16th meeting at the Kent Memorial Library. Join us for the rest of the story!

References:

Captors and Captives, The French and Indian Raid on Deerfield (Queen Anne's War), Haefeli and Sweeney, 2003.

Documentary History of Suffield, 1670-1749, H. S. Sheldon, 1879.

The Unredeemed Captive, John Demos, 1995.

New England Outpost, Richard Melvoin, 1989.

Rising Genealogy, Kent Memorial Library: James Rising, b Ketelsthorp, England, 1617, d. Suffield, July 24, 1690. m. 1st Elizabeth Hinsdale, July 7, 1654 (d. 1669) and 2nd Martha (d. 1669). Children with Elizabeth:

(1) James², b. 1658, Salem, d. unmarried July 24, 1690.

(2) John, b. April 4 1660, Salem, m. 1st Sarah Hale and 2nd Mary McLaughlin, d. Dec 11, 1719.

(3 & 4) Hanna, b. Salem, and Moses, b. Salem, both apparently died young.

JOHN WELLS LOOMIS AND HIS TOBACCO EMPIRE

by Jan Peake

Because the Society's newly restored cigar peddler's wagon is believed to have belonged to John Wells Loomis, Jan Peake was asked to learn what she could about him. The following is her interesting report. Below is also a photo of the restored wagon arriving at the museum in June.

Between 1853 and 1875 the property at 88 South Main (then High Street) was the site of a prosperous tobacco business led by John Wells Loomis (1805-1879). Behind the elegant street-side house, there were a large warehouse and several barns.

Loomis did extensive ordering of tobacco and tobacco products from merchants in New York and Boston who procured tobacco from all tobacco growing areas. He also manufactured cigars in his warehouse.

On Monday mornings, wagons would be loaded with cigars and other tobacco products. The drivers of the wagons, who had to switch to sleighs during snowy winters, would take tobacco products to customers throughout Connecticut, western Massachusetts, up to southern Vermont as well as eastern New York State and western Rhode Island. Their trips would be completed within a week's time.

Loomis had many other customers throughout the United States, including Boston and Burlington, most notably in Ohio, Indiana, Michigan and Illinois and occasionally as far west as California. These were serviced by an intricate system of land, rail and water transportation.

Loomis trained his son George in all the complicated details of the tobacco business, and George managed the enterprise until 1879 when he left Suffield for New Haven and other manufacturing interests.

George Loomis lived in the Italianate mansion that his father gave him as a wedding gift. This house is now St. Joseph's rectory at 166 South Main Street.

The family, back through seven generations, is memorialized on a large granite stone in Woodlawn Cemetery on Bridge Street.

The many details of Loomis's tobacco business can be found in his account books, the receipt books written by his drivers and correspondence between Loomis, his drivers, his suppliers and his customers.

A number of the account books are on microfilm at Kent Memorial Library (the originals are in the Historical Room at the library), and oth-



ers are in the Suffield Historical Society's new archives room at the King House Museum.

It is not just his business that comes to life in the account books. One also comes away with a very good idea of the running of a household in the mid-1800s. Entries are as diverse as \$7 for a dress for Mrs. Loomis, payments for the girls who rolled cigars, church contributions, a \$25 wedding gift for one of the drivers and furniture ordered from G. Sterrit. His drivers received a spending allowance for each of their trips. Loomis spent \$142.25 on a train ticket and expenses for a trip to Chicago. There was not a penny which was not accounted for in Loomis's books.



Wagon restorer Jim Chevalier takes a phone call in his Belchertown workshop. In the foreground is the front undercarriage assembly for the Society's cigar peddler's wagon, prime-painted in December.



LEFT: Gary Mandirola blows cobwebs off the Kent Family hunting wagon. Volunteers hauled six vehicles and many small items from the old stable to the new barn in July. RIGHT: Hezekiah Spencer's country cutter sleigh is tipped to remove accumulated debris before being carried into the barn.



BARN CELEBRATION

Next month will see the culmination of Curator Lester Smith's dream and lots of planning and work on the part of the Society's trustees.

The new barn will open officially on Sunday, October 4, with festivities planned from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Everyone is invited to come see the new barn and the displays mounted therein, listen to the *Bristol Olde Tyme Fiddlers* who will play for the occasion, and share in some light refreshments.

The barn will be dedicated to Evelyn Phelps, whose generous bequest made this all possible. Also open will be the new archives room and refurbished bathroom in the ell of the King House.

MEMBERSHIP

Enclosed is your membership renewal form. Please continue your membership by returning the form promptly. If you are not yet a member, join our activities and preservation efforts with the form below. However, check your mailing label. If it already says "10"... you do not need to renew now. You're up to date, and thank you!

The Society welcomes David Remington, Jessie Majewski Swink, Carole Riccio-Majewski Walden and Jim Kent as new members.



Anne Borg is interrupted while painting the walls of the museum's new archives room, which was completed in July.

Membership Application for *New Members Only*

I/we subscribe to the mission of the Suffield Historical Society as published in its newsletter and wish to be included in its membership.

Miss/Ms/Mr./Mrs. _____

Address _____

Telephone (optional) _____

E-mail (optional) _____

Dues: Individuals \$10 Family \$15
 Youth (under 18) \$2 Patron \$25
 Donation _____

Please check any committee or committees that are of interest to you.

- Collections Development
- Docents Exhibitions
- Property Membership
- Program Special Events
- Publicity and Marketing

The Internal Revenue Service has granted tax exempt status to the Suffield Historical Society.

Please complete this form and mail it with your check to
Suffield Historical Society, c/o Gary Mandriola, 1600 North Street, Suffield, CT 06078.

UPCOMING EVENTS

AUTO SHOW

Sunday, September 13 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

King House Museum Yard

The Society joins the celebration of Suffield-on-the-Green.

*The skills of Bill Gozzo and Bob Sullivan,
make it bigger and better every year!*

JOSIAH RISING, CAPTIVE BOY

Wednesday, September 16 7:30 p.m.

Kent Memorial Library

See related story on page one.

TOBACCO VALLEY ARTISTS'

ANNUAL SHOW & SALE

Saturday, September 26 9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

King House Museum Yard

Raindate: Saturday, October 3

BARN CELEBRATION

Sunday, October 4 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.

King House Museum Yard

See story inside.

Suffield Historical Society

P.O. Box 893

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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

EDWARDIAN LADY & THE TITANIC

Wednesday, October 7 7:30 p.m.

Kent Memorial Library

See enclosed flier for details.

FALL WORKDAY

Saturday, October 17 9 a.m. - noon

King House Museum and Yard

Bring your gloves and tools.

*We'll be cleaning the house and yard
before putting things to bed for the winter.*

Raindate: Saturday, October 24

AMERICAN INDIAN PATHWAYS & CONNECTICUT ROADS

Wednesday, November 18 7:30 p.m.

Kent Memorial Library

See enclosed flier for details.

CORRECTION:

The school bell donated in June to the Society by Verne Spear was used by his grandmother, Emma Delina Mills, at the Rattlesnake Swamp School on Spruce Street, not by his mother, as reported earlier.