



The King House Museum

Stony Brook CURRENTS

Vol. VI, No. 2

A Newsletter of the Suffield Historical Society

April 2011

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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THE HANCHETTS, ORIGINAL PROPRIETORS

by Edward Chase

Thomas Hanchett, Sr. was born in a small town near Hertford, Essex, England about 1620 with ancestry among the landed gentry. Little is known of why or even when he came to the New World as a young boy, perhaps with a brother John. He was ambitious, although not wealthy, when his efforts begin to appear in colonial records.

In 1642, he is listed as a landholder in Wethersfield among the founders of that community. He had married Deliverance Langton, and their children, Thomas, Jr., John, Deliverance and Hannah were born in the following decade.

Thomas is recorded in New London in 1651 and Northampton in 1660. There in Northampton he became one of the eight founders of the first church. In 1661, he became a freeman and achieved the title of Deacon. The town registers him also a Juryman and a Selectman during his tenure there.

While maintaining his land in Northampton¹, he moved his family to Westfield in 1668. Thomas acquired large land holdings in Westfield and again was elected a Selectman.

In the mid-1670s, King Philip², leader of the Wampanoag tribe, gained the allegiance of several warring tribes. In an effort to drive the English out of New England, these united warriors attacked Westfield, Northampton, Hadley, Springfield, Deerfield, Suffield³ and many other valley settlements. Suffield was abandoned and burned.

In 1679, during the resettlement of Suffield, events persuaded the Hanchetts to find their fortunes in Suffield.

John Pynchon's Committee for Suffield granted Deacon Thomas 60 acres, and his sons, Thomas, Jr., and John, were each granted 40 acres. John's lot was on High Street (now North Main Street) where SHS members Frankie and Bill Connelly now live. Deacon Thomas's was just south of his son's grant while Thomas Jr. was located across the street.

Deacon Thomas and son Deacon John prospered in Suffield.

...continued on page 2

HANCHETT *continued from page 1*

Thomas served on the committee to build a parsonage for Suffield's minister, the Reverend John Younglove. He was elected Selectman ... the third colonial town that would choose him for this responsibility! By 1683, however, his health was failing. He petitioned to be free from military exercises because of "craziness." Although still of sound mind, he had developed "the shakes". Thomas died in Suffield in 1686. His wife Deliverance died in Suffield in 1718.

Son Deacon John married Esther Prichard before the family left Westfield. He followed in his father's footsteps becoming a Selectman for Suffield between 1692 and 1710.

He and Esther had nine children. Deacon John lived to the age of 95, had married four times and outlived his first three wives when he died in Suffield in 1744.

Son Thomas Jr. returned to the family holdings in Westfield before 1685.

Although the name Hanchett, sometimes spelled Hanchet, has disappeared in Suffield, many contemporary townspeople are descended from these two Suffield proprietors.

1. *Northampton 1672/73 tax records note his payment of 2 bushels of wheat and 4 lbs. of flax for the support of Harvard College.*

2. *King Philip is the name given by the English to Metacom, son of Massasoit.*

3. *At this time, all able-bodied males were members of the militia or train band, as it was known.*

Thomas was no exception. His involvement in King Philip's War is not exactly known, although a Thomas Hanchet (most likely his son) appears on the role of conscripted soldiers manning a garrison at Mendon, Massachusetts, according to Soldiers in King Philip's War by G.M. Bodge.

References:

The Hanchett Family by Junius Hanchett;
The Descendants of Thomas Hanchett by Merlin Hanchett, 1986;
The Hanchett Family by Merlin Hanchett, 1983; and
The History of Suffield by Hezekiah Sheldon, 1979.

All are available at the Kent Memorial Library.

SUFFIELD COUNTERFEITERS

by Anne Borg

Recently I came across information regarding several counterfeiters in Suffield (*Counterfeiting in Colonial Connecticut*, by Kenneth Scott). From the *Connecticut Courant*, January 28, 1772:

"Broke out of the County Goal (sic) in this town, the last evening, JOHN SMITH, who came into this colony a few years since, supposed from the province of New-York, and has resided chiefly at Suffield, where he married a wife, and where, as it is supposed, his principal business has been (with sundry others) counterfeiting money, chiefly the New-Jersey and New-York new Bills..."

Also mentioned were William Hurlbutt and Phineas Granger, who were jailed more than once, like Smith, through the efforts of Oliver Hanchet* and who also escaped. Smith and Granger had their right ears cut off and their foreheads branded with the letter C. Smith was eventually hanged in Albany early in 1773.

Hurlbutt was also convicted in Albany but eventually pardoned. After his escape, Phineas Granger was suspected of burning Gideon Granger's house in Suffield to the ground (Gideon was a member of the General Assembly).

A more well-known counterfeiter was Richard Brunton, an engraver by trade, who was jailed in Newgate from 1799-1801 and who had at one point boarded with Gad

Rose in West Suffield. His engraving of Newgate Prison is well known, and he did a bookplate for Mr. Rose. Family tradition has it that he left a number of his engraved metal plates behind at the Rose home.

The insert above shows Brunton's Rose bookplate from *An Early Connecticut Engraver and His Work* by Albert C. Bates. The "Gad" may have been added by counterfeiter Harvey Griswold of Suffield.

* *Oliver Hanchet (1741-1816) was a Hartford County Deputy Sheriff and a direct descendant of the Hanchett proprietors chronicled on page one.*



Bookplate designed by Richard Brunton for Gad Rose. The "Gad" may have been added by a later engraver.

NEW EXHIBIT

Curator Lester Smith will be mounting a new exhibit in the shed room for the 2011 season at the King House entitled "Selections from the Attic."

He has chosen some interesting items from the storage shelves which are seldom seen. Included are some old swords, a celluloid shirt collar, political and advertising memorabilia, and a 2-foot wooden organ pipe from the Second Baptist Church. New items are being added to the exhibit in the barn as well.

Do come see what Lester has unearthed. If you have visitors this summer, bring them along. Remember, admission to the house is now free, though we hope guests will make a small donation in appreciation of their tour.

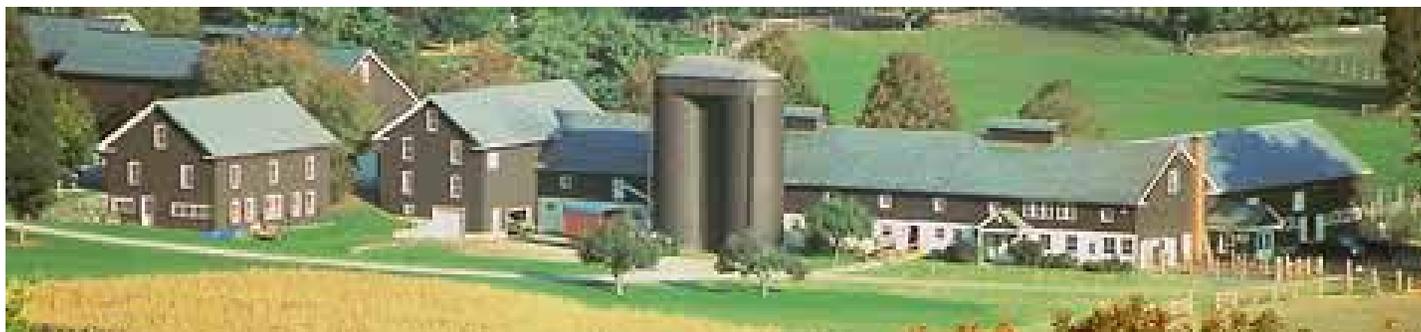
MEMBERS UPDATE

We welcome new members Robert and Rona Dudas, Frank Viniconis and Bernice Sobinski.

Joyful supporter of our events, Joanie Baker, passed away in February. Along with her late husband and former Trustee Jim, Joanie joined our annual bus trips and ice cream socials. She came in costume to disperse candy on the King House front porch for Halloween Night. We all miss her and her enthusiasm.

WORK WEEKEND

King House Museum and grounds cleanup planned for Saturday, April 16. See details on page 4.



Suffield Historical Society
ANNUAL FIELD TRIP

Saturday, May 21, 2011

Windsor and Woodstock, Vermont

Itinerary: Simon Pearce Glassworks, Harpoon Brewery and Pub, and Billings Farm Museum

Leaving the King House at 7:30 am

Returning to Suffield at 7:00 pm

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Please fill out this coupon and return with a check made out to the *Suffield Historical Society*

Mail to EDWARD CHASE, 33 ABRAHAM TERRACE, SUFFIELD, CT 06078

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

TOWN, STATE & ZIP _____

PHONE _____

Cost: \$48.00 per person

You may bring your own lunch or eat at the Harpoon Pub. Sandwiches range from \$7-\$14.

For more information, call 860-668-2928 or 860-668-2962.

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

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King House Museum
232 South Main Street

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

Newsletter Editor
Maggie Philippon

UPCOMING EVENTS

WORK WEEKEND

Saturday, April 16 9:00 a.m. to noon
King House and Grounds

Join us to spruce up the house and grounds before the opening of the museum season in May.

OFF-BEAT CONNECTICUT MUSEUMS

DATE CHANGE Thursday, April 21 7:30 p.m.
with Steve Wood

With its rich colonial and industrial history, Connecticut has become home to over 500 museums! Wood will talk about some of the unusual places, the history buffs who staff them, and using the internet as a method to gain visibility for smaller museums.

OVERBOARD!

Monday, May 16 7:30 p.m.
with Arthur Sikes

Kent Memorial Library
Michael Tougias describes the desperate struggles of the captain, first mate and the crew of the sailboat Almeisan which embarked on a voyage from

Connecticut to Bermuda in 2005. A massive storm swept the captain and first mate off the vessel and onto the high seas.

ANNUAL FIELD TRIP

Saturday, May 21
See details inside.

PICTURES FROM SUFFIELD'S POLISH HERITAGE

Wednesday, June 15 7:30 p.m.
Kent Memorial Library
Della Winans will show a selection of photographs of Suffield collected by the Polish Heritage Committee.

ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Tuesday, July 19 7:00 p.m.
King House Museum Grounds
Brings friends and family to an old-fashioned social of the lawn. Pack a picnic, bring lawn chairs and enjoy an evening of neighborly visiting. The Society will provide ice cream and musical entertainment.