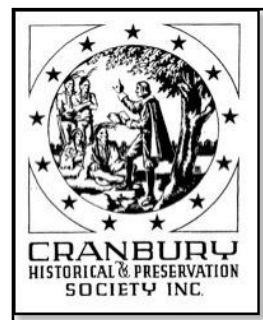


CRANBURY HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION SOCIETY



250th ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Volume 43, Issue One, May 2026

<https://www.cranburyhistory.org/blog>

President's Message

There is so much to look forward to as we celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution and the many events that are planned in Cranbury.

CRANBURY COLONIAL FAIR & Historic Dedication
Sunday, MAY 17 | 10:00 AM
 CELEBRATE THE 1713 EAST JERSEY COTTAGE

FREE & FAMILY FRIENDLY!
Cranbury - Millstone Park,
 86 Old Trenton Rd, Cranbury NJ

Historic Plaque Dedication
 Lecture by Dr. David Martin
 Colonial Music Performances
 Kids Crafts & Games
 Local Vendors & Demonstrations
 Community Organizations

FOOD AVAILABLE FROM:
 CRANBURY INN RESTAURANT & BAR
 GREEN OLIVE RESTAURANT

This Event is a project of:
 Cranbury Historical & Preservation Society
 The Cranbury Business Association

I hope you were able to attend the CHPS Annual Meeting on Wednesday, April 29th at the Cranbury Public Library. I was glad to see so many of our members there. Reports were given by members of our Board and Earl Groendyke presented the excellent program, “The Five Signers of the Declaration of Independence from New Jersey.” Thanks to those who provided the delicious cookies that added to a very enjoyable evening.

The exhibit, “The Christmas Campaign - Ten Crucial Days” continues through June at Cranbury Museum, open most Sundays, 1-4 pm. **The 1713 East Jersey Cottage Dedication and Colonial Fair, sponsored by the Cranbury Business Association and CHPS, will be held on Sunday, May 17, beginning at 10:00 am.** A special thank you to the Middlesex County Board of County Commissioners for awarding a grant to CHPS to commemorate the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution. Part of the grant will fund the signage at the 1713 East Jersey Cottage.

CHPS will have a float in the Memorial Day Parade on May 25 and a table at Cranbury Day on September 12. The exhibit “Cranbury in the American Revolution” will open at the Cranbury Museum on September 20. Other events include the opening of the History Center Gift Shop on December 5; the Christmas Tea on December 6 and Cranbury Wassail on December 12.

I am pleased to announce that our Society’s newsletter has won Third Place in the League of Historical Societies of New Jersey’s Kevin M. Hale Award program for 2025! Congratulations to the 2025 Newsletter Committee, Jean Golisano, Kathy Jani and Purba Lahiri! For the latest CHPS news, please check our website, cranburyhistory.org.

Thank you for being a member of the Cranbury Historical & Preservation Society. We appreciate your support and participation!

Audrey Smith



Pictured are Cranbury’s four historic buildings under CHPS care. From left to right: The Elizabeth M. Wagner History Center, the 1713 East Jersey Cottage, the Cranbury Museum and the Parsonage

Cranbury Museum Exhibit

The Christmas Campaign - Ten Crucial Days

By Karen Kelley

After punishing defeats in New York and a desperate retreat across New Jersey, General George Washington's troops camped on the west bank of the Delaware River, many without tents and exposed to the freezing rain. On December 24th, General Washington and his officers assembled for a Council-of-War meeting at the Thompson Neely House. A decision was made to attack the Hessian garrison in Trenton.

On the night of December 25, 1776, General Washington led 2400 troops of the Continental Army to a dangerous crossing of the icy Delaware River. Enduring ice and snow, the troops marched nine miles to Trenton, where they delivered a surprise attack on the Hessian garrison early the next morning, winning the battle. After ferrying their Hessian prisoners across the Delaware to Pennsylvania, Washington's troops returned to New Jersey to engage the British at Trenton again on January 2, 1777. The Second Battle of Trenton, also known as the Battle of the Assunpink, was considered another win for the Patriots!

That same night, General Washington led his troops along a back route to Princeton, where he attacked General Cornwallis' rear guard on the morning of January 3, 1777. General Mercer and his Continental brigade marched north towards Stony Brook Bridge while the British Colonel Mawhood and his regiment were headed from Princeton to Trenton. Mercer and Mawhood spotted each other and headed towards the orchard in front of Thomas Clarke's house. A battle ensued with Colonel Mercer fatally wounded. General Washington rode into the battle and rallied the troops. The British infantry broke apart and ran across the fields to escape to the Stony Brook Bridge or towards Penny Town. The Continental Army could declare another win!

On the same day as the Battle of Princeton at Thomas Clarke's farm, American troops were sent into town where the British troops were holding Nassau Hall. The American cannons and rifles were aimed at the college building and a battle ensued. One of the canons was fired by a young officer, Alexander Hamilton. The British eventually surrendered to General Washington.

Encouraged by their recent success on the battlefield, the Continental Army marched to Kingston and onto Morristown where it established its winter headquarters. The military wins at Trenton and Princeton were considered a turning point for the Americans in their War of Independence.

See the current exhibit, *The Christmas Campaign - Ten Crucial Days* at the Cranbury Museum on Sundays, 1-4pm (excluding holiday weekends.) Nine colored prints, depicting the ten crucial days of the American Revolution, are featured in the exhibit. The print collection, created in the early 1970s by Davis Grey (E.B. Walden,) is on loan from Karen Kelley, Cranbury Museum Curator.

History Center

By Linda Schilling



Photo by Linda Schilling

Happy Spring from the History Center! We love our beautiful lilac bush by the Outhouse. Stop by to see it while it is in bloom if you are walking down Main Street. The History Center continues to be busy on Thursdays with visitors and volunteers. We continue to support the 250th American Revolution Committee

and to work on our Cranbury African American project. We also answer genealogy and house history questions. We are bringing books and documents to the History Room at the Cranbury Public Library for safekeeping in this climate controlled room. Matt Holland is helping us organize our storage of documents in this room.

1713 East Jersey Cottage Update

By Steven Golisano

The rain garden committee will be working on the garden this spring. The garden, located behind the Cottage, is required to offset the impervious area of the Cottage on the site.

If you would like to volunteer to help, please contact Karen Kelley at chps.historycenter@gmail.com.

Parsonage Barn

By Audrey Smith

In March and April, the Parsonage Barn was busy as the Kindergarten classes practiced their dance routine for the Cranbury School Variety Show. The Society thanks member, Chris Scarpa, who checks the barn regularly.



2026 Museum Closing Dates

Mother's Day	May 10
Memorial Day	May 24
Father's Day	June 21
Summer Break	August 23 and 30
Labor Day	September 6
Thanksgiving Weekend	November 29
Christmas Weekend	December 27
New Year's Weekend	January 3, 2027

CRANBURY HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION SOCIETY

2026 EXECUTIVE BOARD AND TRUSTEES

OFFICERS

President	Audrey Smith
VP/Program Chairperson	Linda Morgan
Recording Secretary	Open Position
Corresponding Secretary	Eileen McGillan
Treasurer	Sharon Pulz
Museum Curator	Karen Kelley

TRUSTEES

2024-2026	2025-2027	2026-2028
Anupurba Lahiri	Steven Golisano	Kathy Jani
Eileen McGillan	Karen Kelley	Michaela Kehrt
Tim Brennan	Bobbie Marlowe	Linda Schilling
Jay Taylor	Cheryl Clarke	George Smith
Heather Keltz Scott	Joan Weidner	Bonnie Wagman

HONORARY TRUSTEES

Jan Wagner	John Chambers
Jerry Pevahouse	Ginny Swanagan

COMMITTEES & CHAIRPERSONS

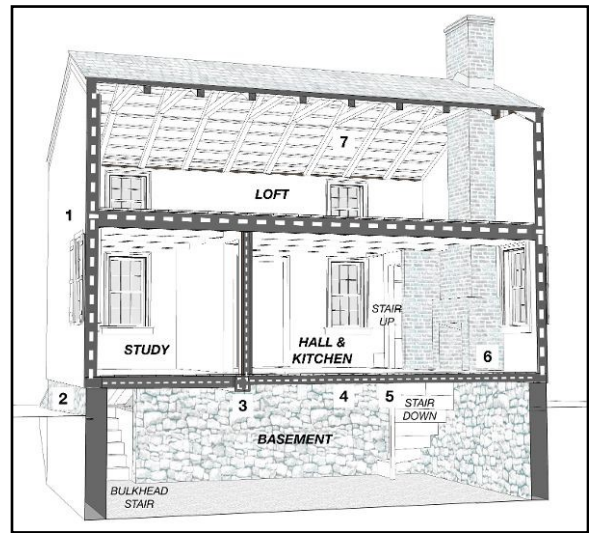
Acquisitions	Karen Kelley, Eileen McGillan, Michaela Kehrt, Linda Schilling
Buildings and Grounds	
Museum:	Ed Kelley
History Center:	Open Position
1713 East Jersey	Committee
Docents	Lynn Lakner
Education	Delpha Georges
Exhibits	Karen Kelley
Finance	Bob Dreyling, Sharon Pulz, Kathy Jani, Jay Taylor, George Smith, Steve Silverman, Audrey Smith, Linda Schilling, Karen Kelley
Fundraising	Committee
Gardens	Cheryl Clarke, Karen Kelley, Delpha Georges
History Center Director	Linda Schilling
Historic Preservation	Mark Berkowsky
Membership	Audrey Smith, Michaela Kehrt
Museum Inspectors	George Smith
Nominating Committee	Karen Kelley
Parsonage Barn	Audrey Smith
1713 East Jersey Cottage	John Chambers, Bob Dreyling, Steven Golisano, Karen Kelley, Bobbie Barlowe, Audrey Smith
Publicity/Media	Jennifer Suttmeier
Newsletter Editors	Anupurba Lahiri, Jean Golisano
Website/Social Media	Heather Keltz Scott

1713 EAST JERSEY COTTAGE: THE ORIGINS

On October 26th, 1693, the Proprietors of East Jersey sold a 550-acre tract in Cranbury to two Scottish brothers, Thomas and Robert Fullerton. The original deed records the transaction in the language of the time:

"Granted unto Thomas Fullerton, Esq. of the Island of Barbados in rights of himself and his brother, Robert Fullerton, deceased, all that tract of land situated and being in the County of Middlesex on the Millstone River and Rocky Brook, beginning where said Rocky Brook runs through the Millstone River and running down the Millstone River one half a mile; thence, north and by east one half a mile; thence, east and by south one half a mile; thence, in a straight line to the mouth of the Rocky Brook; thence, up along Rocky Brook about a mile and a half to the Mouth of Gape Brook; thence north a mile more or less to Millstone Brook River; thence at said Millstone Brook River where it began, containing about allowance of 550 acres."

Two decades later, a sturdy one and a half story, timber-framed cottage rose beside the Millstone River on this same land. Built well before the American Revolution, the structure dates to 1713, confirmed by the State of New Jersey's tax parcel database. Its original materials and post and beam construction techniques speak clearly to its early 18th century origins.



This 3D Building Section was created to highlight the buildings structural configuration.

Over the next 300 years, nearly 20 families would call the cottage home, among them the Fullertons, Phillipses, Bodines, Storys, and Bergens. Several of these owners left a notable mark on history — James Bodine, son of Vincent Bodine, Joseph Story, and John P. Bergen all served in the American Revolution, giving the cottage a direct and lasting connection to the birth of the nation.

Today, the cottage is being restored to its 18th-century origins. Once complete, it will open as a museum bringing to life the story of Cranbury's earliest settlers, the families who shaped the village, the neighboring Lenape people, the American Revolution, and the visit of the Marquis de Lafayette. The surrounding park setting will provide space for outdoor events and living history programs, ensuring that this remarkable story continues for generations to come.

OLD BEAMS, NEW GROUND



In July 2018, the Peter Camamis family purchased the cottage and its remaining one-acre lot. Planning to build a new house on the property, the cottage was scheduled for demolition in October 2018. CHPS proposed to take ownership and offered to remove the house from the site to preserve it, thus saving the family demolition costs.



On October 5, 2019, stones from the original basement were relocated by volunteers to the new site at Millstone Park.



Breaking Ground: Bobbie Marlowe, Karen Kelley, Audrey Smith and Steven Golisano



Cranbury Township provided the land in Millstone Park for the cottage's new location. In September 2019 new footings were poured in an excavated pit before relocation of the cottage.

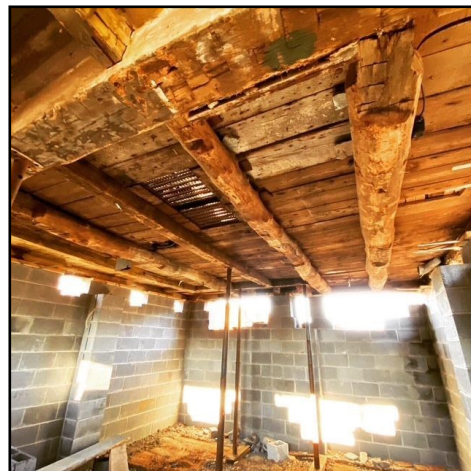


On October 25, 2019, new basement walls constructed below the cottage were back-filled.



CHPS funded the hiring of a professional moving company and coordinated with several utility and telecom companies to clear the move path of overhead lines.

On October 1, 2019, the cottage was successfully moved across the road to Millstone Park.



On November 4, 2019, the house was lowered on the new foundation. This basement view shows the original first floor rough-hewn and tree trunk beams. Additional structure was added for safety.



The cottage rolling down a ramp over its new footings in the Park.



Underneath the cottage, positioning and lifting it to prepare for the new basement below.



Topsoil leveled around cottage and seeded by CHPS volunteers in April 2020.

THE RELOCATION AND RESTORATION OF THE 1713 EAST JERSEY COTTAGE



In the fall of 2021, Earl Groendyke, mason, placed the original foundation stones on the exterior exposed wall of the new foundation.



In December 2021, a portion of the sill plate was repaired.



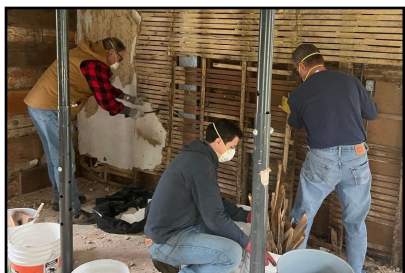
In March 2022, vinyl siding was removed by Karen Kelley and Steven Golisano.



In July 2022 the rear of house is shown with repaired cedar shake siding, and reversing the 20th Century modifications/additions.



In August 2022, house was primed and painted.



In October 2023, volunteers worked on interior.



in November 2023, Earl Groendyke built steps with original stones



Aerial of new cedar roof installation in November 2023



In November 2025, second floor divided wall was removed to make one continuous loft. Plaster work and brick nogging repair underway.

The cottage retains its intact hand-hewn post-and-beam structure, with pegged mortise-and-tenon joints and brick nogging, typical of 18th-century construction.



Cottage April 2026

The historic integrity of the house has endured remarkably well, with only minor alterations made in the 1830s, 1930s, and 1990's, most of which have since been removed without any cultural loss to the original building. Two exterior additions from the 1930s were dismantled, revealing the original 18th-century footprint. Next efforts will focus on period windows and doors.

PAST EVENTS

Christmas Tea

By Karen Kelley



Princeton HS A Capello group, Cloud Nine
Photo by Karen Kelley

The CHPS Annual Christmas Tea was held on Sunday, December 7th at the Cranbury Museum. The Scouts, Cloud Nine and Pastor Anthony Godlefski provided the music. Docent Lynn Lakner

led the singing of the carols while Pastor Anthony played the parlor pump organ. The Society thanks all the volunteers who helped with decorating, baking and hosting. All who attended seemed to enjoy the tea, cookies, and decorated museum.



Member Kathy Jani serving tea
Photos by Anupurba Lahiri



Pastor Anthony and
Lynn Lakner

Holiday Auction

The Holiday Auction, co-chaired by Jennifer Suttmeier and Linda Morgan, was a great success! A heartfelt thank you to all the generous donors and to everyone who participated in making this a wonderful fundraiser for the Society.

Middlesex County Roundtable Meeting

By Karen Kelley



CHPS 250th flag designed by
Louise Palagyi.

Photo by Karen Kelley

During the Middlesex County Roundtable Meeting at the Barons Arts Center in Woodbridge on March 29th, Karen Kelley and Linda Schilling shared the activities planned by the CHPS 250th Committee. Mark Nonesteid, Middlesex County Historian, displayed the new CHPS flag to the many Middlesex County historical organizations, who attended the meeting. The 250th activities planned by CHPS were well received by all.

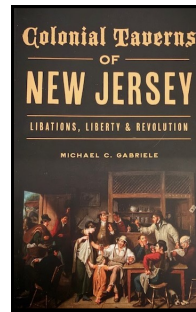


IN MEMORIAM

Peter Wise, an active member and long-time supporter of CHPS, passed away earlier this year on January 2nd. Peter and his wife, Kathie, coordinated the Society's Oral History project in the 1990's. Through the years, Peter participated in panel discussions, led lectures and shared his talent as a historic reenactor, including Aaron Burr, pictured. We are profoundly grateful for every contribution Peter made to preserving the history of our community. We shall all miss him.

Burgers, Beer and Backstories of Colonial Taverns

By Jean Golisano



Photos by
Jean Golisano

The Cranbury Historical & Preservation Society hosted author Michael Gabriele, who presented a lecture on his book, *Colonial Taverns of New Jersey*. The Cranbury Inn is included in the book as an Inn of importance during the American Revolution.



New Jersey Signers of the Declaration of Independence

By Karen Kelley

At the Society's General Membership Meeting on April 29th, Earl Groendyke, a member of the Sons of the America Revolution, spoke about the five New Jersey signers of the Declaration of Independence: Abraham Clark, John Hart, Francis Hopkinson, Richard Stockton and John Witherspoon.

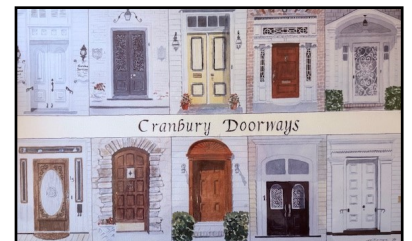


Photo by
Karen Kelley

Donations and Acquisitions



Byers' Choice George Washington Doll from Washington Crossing State Park donated by member Eileen Griggs McGillan.



Harvey Sachs donated three framed pictures along with the book *Cranbury Past and Present* by Ruth Walsh, and a small glazed jug imprinted with Cranbury, N.J.

Photos by Karen Kelley

Two Women, One Revolution: The Untold Stories of Cranbury's Past

By Karen Kelley and Anupurba Lahiri

The American Revolution was fought not only by soldiers on battlefields but by families on farms, by women managing households alone, by teenagers facing enemy soldiers at their front doors. During the war, armies faced considerable challenges feeding their soldiers. They raided local farms for food, livestock, and supplies, and farming families faced not only devastating losses but the constant threat of violence. The profiles that follow tell the story of two women from Cranbury who faced these challenges when the war arrived at their doorsteps.

Lydia Wyckoff (1764 -1842)

Lydia Wyckoff was born in 1764 in Monmouth County, New Jersey. In 1777, with the war raging across the state, she found herself home alone one afternoon. Her father was away serving in the militia, and her mother was in the fields tending to animals carefully hidden from Tory raiding parties. Without warning, a group of Tories — soldiers loyal to the British Crown — burst into the cottage and demanded to be fed.

Rather than panic, Lydia kept her composure. She knew that resistance could mean the destruction of their home or the discovery of their hidden animals. She built up the fire and prepared the soldiers a pot pie. When they had eaten, the Tories departed — leaving the home unburned, the animals undiscovered, and Lydia unharmed. Her mother returned to find everything intact and was overcome with pride in her thirteen year old daughter's bravery.

After the Revolution, in 1787, Lydia married Jacob Wyckoff, a veteran of the First Regiment of Monmouth County. Life on the farm was hard but rewarding, and together they built a comfortable home and raised their children, including son Cornelius, who became a successful farmer and landowner.

Lydia passed away on November 13, 1842, at age 78, nearly a decade after Jacob's death on March 29, 1833. Both were laid to rest at Brainerd Cemetery.

Hannah Perrine (1749 -1824)

Hannah was born Ann Mount on February 11th, 1749, in Hightstown and was christened at Cranbury Presbyterian Church. A fourth generation Mount, her grandfather Richard Mount received two hundred acres from his father and moved to Cranbury in the second half of the 17th century.

She married William Perrine on November 12, 1772. He called her Hannah, and that is the name used on her tombstone. Together they raised nine children: Margaret Cook, Rebecca, Michael, Ann Baldwin, Lydia Baldwin, Peter, Humphrey, John, William, and Mathias.

William fought very bravely in the American Revolution, in the Battles of Ash Swamp, Short Hills, and Monmouth. While he was away fighting for his country, Hannah managed the over 2,000-acre farm along with caring for the children, the animals, vegetable garden, and their home.

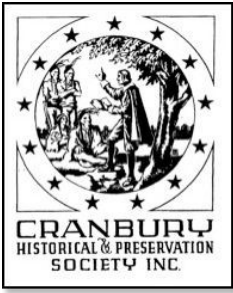
In June 1778, around the time William was involved with the Monmouth campaign, Hessian soldiers entered their house. They stole everything edible and took much of the provisions stored in their large granaries, doing great damage to the property. After the raid, members of the household had to go into the fields and shell grain by hand just to survive.

Hannah and William spent 48 years building their family and farm until his death in 1820. Hannah lived on for four years, dying on April 8, 1824.

The Revolution needed soldiers, but it also needed women like Lydia and Hannah. They carried no muskets and wore no uniforms, yet they fought just as fiercely for what they loved. Their courage deserves to be remembered.

CHPS Mission Statement:

Committed to the History and Future of Cranbury, we are a society of volunteers who support and encourage the preservation of Cranbury Township's land, historic buildings, sites and landmarks through education, stewardship, outreach, research and restoration.



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**Cranbury Historical & Preservation Society
6 South Main Street**

Cranbury Museum
4 Park Place East
Open Sundays 1 pm to 4 pm & by appt.
Tel: 609-655-2611

Cranbury History Center
6 South Main Street
Open Thursdays 10 am to 12:30 pm & by appt.
Tel: 609-860-1889

Email: CHPS.Historycenter@gmail.com
Website: www.cranburyhistory.org
X: @cranburyhistory
Facebook: Cranbury Historical and Preservation Society.
Instagram: Cranbury_1700s_house

250th Anniversary of the American Revolution Calendar - CHPS Upcoming Events

January-June	<i>The Christmas Campaign -Ten Crucial Days Exhibit</i> at the Cranbury Museum Sundays, 1- 4 pm, excluding holiday weekends
May 17	<i>1713 East Jersey Cottage Dedication/Lecture by Dr. David Martin</i> <i>Colonial Fair</i> by Cranbury Business Association Both events at the 1713 East Jersey Cottage
May 25	<i>Memorial Day Parade</i>
July 15	<i>American Revolution Lecture by William L. Kidder</i> sponsored by CHPS and the Cranbury Public Library, 7 pm.
September 20	<i>Cranbury in the American Revolution Exhibit</i> opens at the Cranbury Museum
September 12	<i>Cranbury Day</i> - Stop by the CHPS Table
October 27	<i>Battle at Red Bank Lecture by Dr. Stuart Alexander</i> at the Cranbury Library, 7 pm
December 5	History Center Gift Shop Open
December 6	<i>Christmas Tea</i> at the Cranbury Museum, 1 - 4 pm
December 12	<i>Cranbury Wassail</i> - details to follow

Additional events are being planned. Follow the CHPS newsletter, website, Facebook or Instagram.