



Gem of the Mountains

The Newsletter of the Boonton Historical Society and Museum

June, 2026

210 Main Street, Boonton, New Jersey 07005 ♦ (973) 402-8840 ♦ boontonhistory@boonton.org ♦ <http://www.boontonhistory.org>



Christmas in July!

July 17 & 18 & 19 – Noon to 5:00 PM

It's that time of year again. Save the dates for the return of our huge annual summer sales event, CHRISTMAS IN JULY. Pre-event bargains now available.



photo: James Cook

Scavenger Hunt 2026

Wednesday, July 1 through Friday, July 10

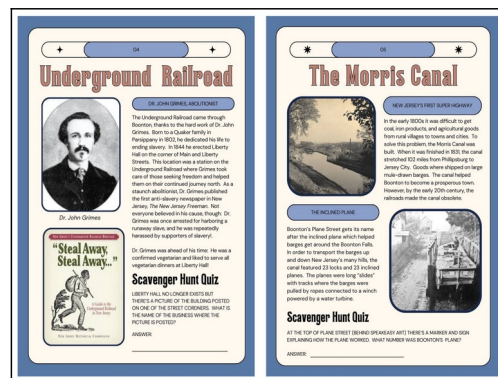
Boonton families are invited to join in a town-wide history scavenger hunt. Delve into Boonton's fascinating history, seek out its historic sites, and learn about the Boontonites who shaped the town and its streets.

Pick up your Scavenger Hunt Map & Booklet:

- Boonton Museum – 210 Main Street
- Boonton Holmes Library – 621 Main Street
- Boonton Town Hall – 100 Washington Street

Each page of the booklet leads you to a site where you will learn about its history and answer a question.

Official conclusion of hunt: 11:00 AM Saturday, July 11, at the Boonton Museum. Attendees will receive a ticket for a random drawing.



This adventure promises discovery around every corner as you uncover the hidden gems and stories that define Boonton's charm.

Colonial Boonton And The American Revolution

Sunday, July 26 – 2:00 PM at the Boonton Senior Center, 126 North Main Street



Loren Katsakos

In honor of the USA 250th Birthday of the Declaration of Independence, our museum educator, Loren Katsakos, has prepared a special presentation of her research on *Colonial Boonton and the American Revolution*. Save the date for this outstanding portrayal of our town in the revolutionary period of our country's history.

Please note that Loren's presentations about Boonton and its history are available for private tours and presentations. Call the museum at 973-402-8840 and leave a message or email Loren directly: lmkat-sakos@gmail.com. She will be pleased to discuss her availability to present at your location or at our museum.



Pathways Of History

The Boonton Historical Society participated again in the two days of this year's Spring Pathways of History event. Museums and historic venues throughout Morris County participated in this year's theme supporting county-wide celebrations of America's 250th anniversary.

The Boonton Museum featured our new exhibit ***Boonton Was An Industrial Town*** which traces, with photographs and many intriguing artifacts, the development of Boonton after the ironworks era.

At the Miller-Kingsland House, musician Jennifer Carter provided musical accompaniment as guests toured the 1740 residence. Returning for a second year, Marie DeVenezia demonstrated the art of drop spinning, including samples of her work to illustrate the various yarns and methods she uses.



*Guest musician Jennifer Carter with trustee Jennifer Coultas at the Miller Kingsland House.
MK photos: Joanne Fattrosso*



Marie DeVenezia.



Volunteer Linda Nichvoloda in our Gift Shop Annex for Pathways. BHS&M photos: Nancy Questa



Trustee Art Charlton (center) with Pathways guests Peter Becan and Matt Holway at our "Boonton Was An Industrial Town" exhibit.

Canal Day Celebration



Canal Day volunteers (l to r): Charlotte Moors, Pat Gamsby, Nancy Questa, MC Anthony Angiolini, Tammie Holloway, and Jennifer Coultas.

Our neighbor historians at the Montville Township Historical Society presented a celebration of the Morris Canal. The celebration was the first such event presented since 1988 and drew crowds in record numbers. All were invited to enjoy live period music, guided bus tours, food trucks, children's games, and the introduction of a new mobile museum. Members of the Boonton Historical Society joined Montville's team of enthusiastic volunteers led by Montville's president and MC for the event, Anthony Angiolini.

The Morris Canal & The Boonton Ironworks Walking Tour



Visitors crowded our museum for the start of Joe Macasek's ever-popular walking tour.

Photo: Veronica Jelic

The George Washington Bi-Centennial Tree

(Edited from the files of the late Arline Dempsey.)

1932 marked the bicentennial of the birth of George Washington with celebrations and commemorations held throughout the country. Coins were struck, twelve new stamps were issued, plates of varying sizes and designs were sold. The official George Washington Bicentennial Commission was established by President Coolidge in December 1924, organizing numerous projects, programs, and celebrations to commemorate the historic date, and encouraging communities and civic organizations throughout the United States to follow suit.



Photo: Nancy Questa

In Boonton, the Garden Group of the Women's Club sponsored the planting of a 22-foot white spruce tree in Grace Lord Park "so that Boonton would have a permanent community Christmas tree and also serve as an everlasting memorial to the father of our country in whose honor we are asked to plant trees."

Since this was a community project, all organizations and lodges in Boonton were asked to participate in the funding of this tree. The following organizations contributed:

The Elks, I.O.O.F. (Odd Fellows), American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Rotary Club-Boonton Chapter, Masons, Eastern Star, Sokol, Boonton PTA, Father's Council of the PTA, Civic Committee, Girl Reserves, Girls Hi-Y, Boonton Fire Wardens, Boonton Women's Club, Garden Group of the Boonton Women's Club.

A dedication ceremony was held in Grace Lord Park on July 20, 1931, when “every man, woman and child in Boonton” was invited to attend. The tree was registered on the national honor roll of the American Tree Association as a George Washington memorial tree.

Next time you visit Grace Lord park, take a minute to admire the beautiful spruce tree on the lawn area of the park. Nearby, mounted on a stone, is a bronze memorial plaque:



Photo: Jennifer Coultas

We have not been able to find any early photographs or articles about the Christmas tree, so it is unknown whether or not it was decorated or lit for the season or if any festivities took place around this community tree. Can anyone shed any light on this mystery? Please let us know at Boontonhistory@Boonton.org

Preserving Historic Boonton

Preservation of Boonton’s historic landscape does not just extend to historic buildings. One particular area of concern to preservationists in recent years has been the repair and maintenance of structures which include a unique and durable building material called Puddingstone.

Puddingstone can be seen around northern New Jersey, and particularly in Boonton and surrounding areas, where many examples of the purple-colored stone with white dots of quartz or jasper line our buildings and streets. British settlers named the rock Puddingstone because of its perceived resemblance to a plum pudding.

Puddingstone is known to geologists as conglomerate. Conglomerate is sedimentary rock made up of rounded gravel-sized pieces of rock surrounded by finer-grained sediments such as sand, silt, or clay. The larger fragments within conglomerate are called clasts, while the finer sediment surrounding the clasts is called the matrix. The clasts and matrix are

typically cemented by calcium carbonate, iron oxide, silica, or hardened clay.

Puddingstone walls, foundations, chimneys, and pathways have not always received the care and attention they deserve. In some cases, structures have suffered from lack of maintenance or have been repaired using the wrong medium; structures have been entirely eradicated because the significance and uniqueness of Puddingstone was unfortunately ignored or unknown.



Conglomerate walls require masons experienced with natural sedimentary stones. Because puddingstone features a brittle siltstone matrix with quartz clasts, improper mortar matching or over-grinding can ruin its integrity. Professional stonemasons can stabilize walls by removing deteriorated mortar, re-setting displaced stones, and re-pointing joints using heritage lime mortars



Photos: Nancy Questa

The road to successful care and repair of historic structures can be fraught with unforeseen problems at every turn. So how do you proceed if your pud-

dingstone wall or feature needs repair? The Boonton Historic Preservation Commission (BHPC) should be your first call. Among other important activities *"the BHPC serves in an advisory, regulatory, and educational capacity to the Planning Board, as well as guiding residents and developers on sympathetic rehabilitation."*

Our town is replete with examples of Puddingstone, including the basement and chimneys of the Boonton Museum. Our mission *to encourage preservation and restoration of historic landmarks in the town* can only be accomplished by the shared support of our citizens and local preservation and environmentalists. We hope you will join this effort to safeguard our town's unique history.

The First Slitting Mill In New Jersey

(Excerpt taken from Colonial and Revolutionary Morris County by Theodore Thayer; published by The Morris County Heritage Commission, 1975.)

"About 1765, Samuel Ogden, after graduating from King's College, moved to Boonton and took over the management of the iron works. ...When Samuel Ogden took over the management, the iron works consisted of a forge of no more than two fires and a trip hammer, which had been in operation for about 20 years. Believing that he saw possibilities in making steel, Samuel went ahead and ordered equipment from England. When the machinery arrived, he hired two men knowledgeable in the making of steel to install the equipment. They, however, could not get the slitting mill to work properly. ... One of the "experts"...was sent to England. ...He managed to get back to Boonton with the tidings that all the mill needed to make it work was lard on the wheels. When this was tried, the slitting mill worked smoothly and there was no more trouble in making steel at Boonton.

Since steel-making was banned by the British Iron Acts of 1750 and 1763, the story prevails that this part of the works was hidden under a gristmill. As has been often related, Governor William Franklin made a trip to Boonton in response to orders from London to see if the Iron Act was being obeyed in the colony. Whether or not Franklin was aware that the gristmill hid equipment for making steel is not known, but in any event he did not bother to investigate. Having been cordially received by Samuel Og-

den and having drunk many rounds of his best wines, Franklin went merrily back to Perth Amboy to report that there was nothing illegal in Boonton."

Meet Our Summer Intern



Photo: Nancy Questa

Tyler Cechony is not new to our museum. She joined our volunteer staff two years ago when she was assigned to the museum gift shops. She has been working in our archives for one year and is now completing an internship in our archives, working 20-25 supervised hours a week.

To prepare for a career as a museum curator or archivist, Tyler intends to pursue a degree in history at Ramapo College in New Jersey. Apart from her interest in WWI and WWII history, it was music that sparked her love of history. Tyler's favorite band *Sabaton* sings about the horrible realities of war and its forgotten heroes. Their work made her realize her passion for preserving all history, especially the stories that have been mostly lost to time.

Tyler will be leaving us this month. We wish her well, and thank her for all her work behind the scenes at our museum.



BOONTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM EVENTS CALENDAR 2026

MARCH

15th Sunday	Noon to 4 PM	New Changing Exhibit <i>Boonton Was An Industrial Town</i>
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APRIL

18th Saturday	Noon to 4 PM	Canal Day Celebration <i>Macculloch Drive, Montville Township</i>
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MAY

2nd & 3rd	11 AM to 4 PM	Pathways of History
17th Sunday	1:30 PM	Walking Tour <i>Canal & Ironworks Tour – Joe Macasek</i> Tour starts at the Museum

JULY

17th, 18th, 19th	Noon to 5 PM	Christmas in July Sale <i>Big Sales in our Gift Shops!</i>
26th Sunday	2 PM	Colonial Boonton And The American Revolution <i>by Loren Katsakos</i> <i>Boonton Senior Center, 126 North Main Street</i>

SEPTEMBER

27th Sunday	Noon to 4 PM	Boonton Day
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OCTOBER

18th Sunday	1:30 PM	Walking Tour <i>Historic Main Street Tour – Nancy Charlton Questa</i> Tour starts at Canalside Park Overlook
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DECEMBER

6th Sunday	Noon to 4 PM	Museum Annual Holiday Open House <i>Live Musical Entertainment & Special Sales!</i>
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***We are open to the public every first and third Sunday, 1 to 4 PM,
and other days by special appointment. Email us at boontonhistory@boonton.org to
schedule a visit, or leave a message at 973-402-8840. Dates and times subject to change.***

Boonton Historical Society & Museum

Board of Trustees

Tammie Holloway – *President*

Nancy Charlton Questa – *Vice President*

Geoffrey Millington – *Treasurer*

Jennifer Coultas – *Recording Secretary*

Anthony Angiolini – *Strategic Planning*

Arthur Charlton – *Special Projects*

James Cook – *Gift Shop*

Joanne Fattrosso – *Special Projects*

James M. Gannon – *Guidelines & Policies*

Candace Grant – *Social Media*

Steven Milkowski – *Nominations*

Sima Roy Chowdhury – *Guidelines & Policies*



Veronica Jelic – *Archivist*

Loren Katsakos – *Museum Educator*

Monica Scozzafava – *Archivist*

Eric Wallin – *Membership*

Mission Statement

The Boonton Historical Society and Museum is a non-profit organization incorporated in 1959, located in the town of Boonton, New Jersey. Its mission is to:

- Preserve and protect the town of Boonton's unique cultural, architectural, and industrial history;
- Preserve and share the area's rich history, folklore, arts, and humanities of the past and present;
- Encourage preservation and restoration of historic landmarks in the town;
- Protect and display the museum's collections;
- Provide educational programs, guided historical tours, and exhibitions to a diverse population.



Kevin M. Hale Publication Award Winner

2020 & 2021 First Place

2022 & 2024 Second Place

Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Boonton Historical Society.

– BHS&M MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL –

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

☐ I would like to volunteer! (We have a variety of volunteer opportunities.)

Please choose your level of support (annual memberships renew in January)

LIFETIME: ☐ \$350 Couple ☐ \$200 Individual ☐ \$150 Add Your Spouse

ANNUAL: ☐ \$25 Family ☐ \$30 Business / Professional

☐ \$20 Individual ☐ \$15 Senior ☐ \$15 Student

DONATION: ☐ I have included an additional donation of \$ _____

Please make checks payable to the **Boonton Historical Society** and mail to:
BHS&M Memberships c/o Eric Wallin, 465 Hill Street, Boonton, NJ 07005

– All monies directly fund the efforts of the Society and are tax deductible –



Christmas in July!

At The Boonton Museum!

FRIDAY 17TH * SATURDAY 18TH * SUNDAY 19TH

NOON TO 5:00 PM

Gift Shop Annex SALE!

Vinyl Records: 3 For \$1
CDs: 3 For \$1
FREE Clearance Tables!

Museum Level SALE!

FRIDAY ONLY: 50% Off All Publications!
All Jewelry 50% Off!

Sunday Is Annex BAG SALE Day!

Stuff A Bag For \$5! No Limit!

One Weekend Only Of Sales Madness!



Boonton Historical Society & Museum
210 Main Street
Boonton, NJ 07005