A Message from Friends President

Dear Friends,

It takes a group to build a great organization. As I review the events of the past year it is abundantly clear that the accomplishments described here are the result of extraordinary teamwork. I am truly thankful for each and every board member and their unique talents that they offer our organization. I am also thankful of the Senate House staff who have been unwavering in their support of our events and our mission. There are so many points of pride that we have this year from the growing success of our annual events such as the Sugaring Off and Snowflake Festival participation to excitement about our newest endeavors such as a Night under the Stars with Jay Ungar and Molly Mason and the Champagne Reception with music provided by Blue Gardenia. I am looking forward to what the future brings as we embark on a new calendar year. Being able to share this wonderful historic site with our community has been a gift for which I am extremely grateful.

President of The Friends of The Senate House,

Ephie Trataros
Sugaring Off: 18th Century Style

On April 11, Senate House kicked off the 2015 season with their 3rd annual maple sugar event entitled, “Sugaring Off: 18th Century Style.” Under sunny skies, a large crowd enjoyed the many activities associated with 18th century maple sugar production. Activities demonstrated included boiling maple sap over an open fire; making jack wax candy; baking maple cornbread in a dutch oven; making waffles with an 18th century style waffle iron; hewing a log into a sap trough; making wooden sap buckets; and whittling spiles used to tap the trees. The 1st Ulster County Militia was also on hand demonstrating 18th century camp life, and musical entertainment was provided by Mark Rust performing on a variety of instruments including the banjo, fiddle, dulcimer, guitar and spoons. Also, visitors enjoyed the re-opening of the exhibit, “With Malice Toward None: Ulster County and the Civil War” in the Senate House Museum.

Preparing for a New Year: An 18th Century Spring & Garden Fair

To the colonial farmer, the new year began on March 25, at the beginning of spring when nature is awaken from its long winter hibernation. In celebration of spring and the start of a new year, the Senate House hosted their annual event, “Preparing for a New Year: An 18th Century Spring and Garden Fair” on May 16. Activities during the event included planting the site’s vegetable and herb gardens, sheep shearing, beekeeping, kite making, and spinning and weaving demonstrations. Guests also sampled switchel, a thirst quenching drink brought into the fields while planting crops. Herzog’s Garden Supply and the Ulster Garden Club were on hand discussing various plants and offering gardening tips. Guests also enjoyed the 18th century magic of Levron the Great: The Colonial Conjurer and enjoyed free hot dogs and beverages throughout the afternoon.
In celebration of America’s independence 239 years ago, the site hosted its annual event on June 27 with a large crowd in attendance. A highlight of the event was the Patriotic Ceremony that featured a variety of dramatic readings and stirring songs. Readings included Patrick Henry’s “Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death;” Abraham Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address;” excerpts from the Declaration of Independence; Emma Lazarus’ “The New Colossus;” and George Washington’s “Prayer for the United States of America.” George Washington and his horse were also in attendance chatting with the public, and a concert by the Phoenicia Festival of the Voice delighted the crowd. The 3rd Ulster County Militia was also on hand demonstrating hearthside cooking, washing laundry and colonial era medicine. Visitors also tried their hand at colonial games and toys and learned about the different types of colonial currency in America. Free hot dogs and beverages were also available courtesy of the Friends of Senate House.

Let Freedom Ring: Celebrating America’s Independence

An Evening with Jay Ungar & Molly Mason

On a crisp early fall evening, an audience of more than 100 joined internationally acclaimed folk singing duo Jay Ungar & Molly Mason for an intimate performance under the stars on the beautiful grounds of the Senate House. Under a moonlit sky, the pair entertained the enthusiastic crowd with their Grammy winning music and the often amusing stories behind some of their most recognized and beloved songs.

Along with the music attendees enjoyed hors d’oeuvres, wine and beer and a drawing for a variety of gift giveaways. The Friends of the Senate House would like to thank all that attended as well as Jay Ungar & Molly Mason, Herzog’s Home Center, Boitson’s Restaurant, Sante Fe Restaurant, Guido’s Little Italy Restaurant, Ecce Terre Restaurant, the Kingston Conservatory of Music, the Stone Soup Food Company, Lucas Pet Supply, Deborah Crump, JK Wine & Liquor and the Stockade Tavern for making the event such as success.
The Name of Kingston and Its Predecessors

When Europeans first came to this region a tribe of native aborigines was found residing here of Algonquin stock who called themselves Waronawonkongs, but who soon came to be known as the Esopus Indians. Their council house seems to have been near the junction of the Vernooy Kill and the Rondout in the present town of Wawarsing but the chief settlement was at the converging of the Esopus, Rondout and Wallkill valleys upon the Atharhacton or “Great Meadows” as they designated the treeless lowlands along the Esopus which spread in a savannah for miles to the north and south. This name was soon modified into Atkarkarton. But until 1661 the locality did not bear a distinctive name. It was invariably called “The Esopus.” From what the name is derived has been a mooted question. The most of authorities agree that its root is in a radical found in many of the Indian tongues from which many streams derive their names. This radical is seepus. It is the root of the word Mississippi as well as Esopus and its application here is “place of small rivers.”

The word is first found upon a map which was discovered in the Netherlands, at the Hague, upon the 28th of June, 1841. There was no mark or memorandum upon it by which its date could be definitely determined. But the government experts decided that it was the map referred to in “the octroy of the States-general dated 11th October, 1614.” On this day their High Mightiness’ granted to Gerrit Jacob Witsen, former burgomaster of the city of Amsterdam, and his twelve associates the right to visit and trade with the lands between the Delaware and the Connecticut rivers for three years from January 1st, 1615. They constituted themselves “The United New Netherland Company.” Upon this map there are but two settlements designated, namely: Manhattes (New York) and Nassou (Albany). The location of the Indian tribes along the Hudson river is shown. The Waronawanka are placed on the west side of the river where Ulster County now is, and the Woranecks on the eastern shore opposite. Under this name, Woranecks, on the eastern shore, is the word “Efopus,” as if it were another name for the same tribe.

The different hoecks (capes) and racks (reaches) of the river are designated and thus Kinderhoeck (children’s cape) and Claverack (clover-reach) appear among others. Upon the granting of the charter to the settlement by Director General Petrus Stuyvesant in 1661, which is described elsewhere in this issue, he names the village Wildwyck or Wiltwyck, the “village of the wild.”

With the surrender of the province to the English September 6th, 1664, a military force was placed here. But the place was still called “the Esopus” although officially known as Wiltwyck. Indeed the old name of Esopus or more frequently “Groote Esopus” remained until the disappearance of the Dutch language within the memory of the present generation. As stated in the article on “The Founding of the Nieuw Dorp, or Hurley,” the local court at its sitting of September 25th, 1669, directed that the “Town formerly called Sopez be named Kingston.” No reason is given for the change but it is said to be named after Kingston-upon-Thames, in England, because of landed estates there of the family of the then Governor General Lord Lovelace under His Highness, the Duke of York. The Court also renamed the Nieuw Dorp Horley, after a village in the same vicinity. Kingston-upon-Thames derives its name from the coronation stone upon which no less than seven of the Saxon kings of England were crowned. A great council was held there in 838, under Egbert of Wessex and Ethelwolf of Kent and the coronation of the kings continued to be there until the Norman conquest. This stone was called “The King’s Stone” and is still standing along one of its streets enclosed by a railing.

On the 2nd of November, 1673, the Esopus passed once more under Dutch control. Anthony Colve was made governor and one of his first acts was to re-name the place Swaenenbergh. The Dutch domination lasted but one short year and on the 20th of November, 1674, a letter arrived from the Royal Governor, Edmund Andros, releasing the people from their allegiance to the States General and re-instating the English officers whom Colve had deposed one year before. Officially the name of Kingston was resumed and has continued to this day while, actually, the name of Swaenenbergh was unknown except in a few documents and Kingston had remained the official name while everyone used the name of Esopus in conversation.
During a crisp autumn day, the Senate House held their annual 18th Century Autumn Festival in conjunction with the city-wide Burning of Kingston event on October 17 from 11am – 3pm. Afternoon activities included smoking meat in a wooden barrel, blacksmithing, and hearthside cooking. Hands-on activities included candle dipping, apple pressing, and making corn husk dolls and dried apple wreaths for the public to take home. Guests also mingled with re-enactors as they went through their daily tasks and watched them flee in panic from the approaching British forces. Throughout the day, entertainment was provided by Stephan Grotto whose comical acts included stilt walking, balancing, juggling and lots of audience participation.
Senate House Festival of Light 2015
On Friday, December 4th, the Senate House Staff and Friends of the Senate House welcomed over 5,400 guests to the beautifully adorned grounds of the Senate House Historic Site during uptown Kingston’s annual “Snowflake Festival.” Revelers enjoyed roasted chestnuts and hot apple cider as they toured the Stockade District by horse-drawn carriage. Santa Claus was on-hand for the children and carolers entertained visitors in the Loughran House, magnificently decked out for the holiday season under the expert direction of Haynes Llewellyn. All enjoyed the good cheer of the season with family, neighbors and the Friends of the Senate House.
Senate House Scarecrow in Frog Alley

Each year the Friends of Historic Kingston and the Junior League of Kingston host an event entitled “Scarecrows of Frog Alley.” Local businesses and other not-for-profit organizations submit their version of a scarecrow after which each is judged and a winner chosen. In addition, local children displayed paintings they created during the school day. This was our first time participating and we had a blast! Looking forward to doing it again.

Music-filled Holiday Champagne Reception at the Senate House

This holiday season the Friends of the Senate House hosted the first of what we hope to be many music-filled Holiday Champagne Receptions at the Senate House Historic Site. Attendees delighted in the enchanting sounds of Blue Gardenia as they enjoyed finger foods and light fare at the beautifully decorated Loughran House on the grounds of the Senate House. The evening was a wonderful way to celebrate the season and the Friends of the Senate House would like to thank Haynes Llewellyn for coordinating the fabulous local talents of Linda Hopfenspirger of the Gilded Thistle Floral Design, Charles Farruggio and Michael Van Nort of FRED in High Falls, NY, Jen Dragon of the Cross Contemporary Art Gallery, Rebekah Milne of Milne’s At Home Antiques, John Krenek and Jamie Niblock of Spruce Decor + Design, Exit Nineteen and all those who attended this special holiday event.