

Friends of Kingston Station Collection

Overview of the Collection

Repository: South County History Center, 2636 Kingstown Road, Kingston, Rhode Island 02881
Tel: 401.783.1328; Web: southcountyhistorycenter.org

Title: Friends of Kingston Station Collection

Dates: 1875-2021, bulk dates 1972-2012

Media: Blueprints, Correspondence, Maps, Newspaper Clippings, Paper, Photographs

Quantity: 2 Boxes, 2 Oversized Drawers

Identifier: 2021.007

Language: English

Historical Note

The Friends of Kingston Station was nonprofit corporation established by South Kingstown, Rhode Island, residents Barbara Dirlam, John Hall, and Frank Heppner in 1973. Its primary goal was to preserve and protect the Kingston Train Station, a wood-framed structure built in 1875 by the New York, Providence and Boston Railroad. The station, currently part of Amtrak's Northeast Corridor, is the oldest wood frame passenger train station remaining in continuous service in the United States. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.

The Friends led several efforts to restore and revitalize the Kingston station, the first of which took place in the mid-1970s. After a fire damaged the station in 1988 the Friends spearheaded a \$3.5 million restoration and modernization project that was completed in 1998. In recognition of the Friends's efforts to preserve the station the RI Department of Transportation allowed the organization to use half of the station for a museum of railroad history and technology that operated from 2002-2020. The organization has also offered a variety of education, safety, and rail travel promotion services. In 2021, the remaining members voted to dissolve the group.

Scope and Content

The records of the Friends of Kingston Station include meeting minutes, correspondence, photographs, telegrams, railroad ephemera, architectural drawings, maps, and news clippings. Records fall into two series: materials created in the course of the Friends's activities and materials collected by the Friends related to the history of the station and local railroads. The series are organized as follows:

Series I: Records of the Friends of Kingston Station 1972-2021

Series II: History of Kingston Station & Local Railroads

Administrative Information

Access: Any qualified person doing personal or scholarly research is permitted to utilize materials in the South County History Center collections.

Preferred Citation: Friends of Kingston Station Collection, South County History Center

Provenance: This collection was compiled by various members of the Friends of Kingston Station and donated to the Center in 2021 following the organization's dissolution.

Processed by: Caleb Goodhouse; Erica Luke

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Subject Terms

Friends of the Kingston Station (Kingston, R.I.); Narragansett Pier Railroad; Railroads--Rhode Island--History; Railroads--Rhode Island--Maps; Railroads--Rhode Island--Planning; South Kingstown (R.I. : Town)--History; South Kingstown (R.I. : Town)--Buildings, structures, etc.

Related Materials

Researchers interested in this collection may also wish to consult the following sources in the South County History Center holdings:

Archival Collections – G. Edward Prentice Collection (1979.007; 2013.006); Jack McCabe Illustrations of Kingston Station (2019.008.0001); South County Railroads Collection (2023.508)

Object Collection – Railroad-related Objects (1986.008)

Photograph Collection – South Kingstown Photograph Collection (2022.504)

Reference Library –*The Kingston Train Station: A History* by Martha McCabe (TF24 R4 M33); *Railroads of Rhode Island* by Frank Heppner (TF24 R4 H47); “Reminiscences of the Sites and Sights of Historic South County” by Bertha C. Taft (F87 N2 T34); *A Short Haul to the Bay: A History of the Narragansett Pier Railroad* by James N.J. Henwood (HE2791 N21)

Contents Listing

Series I: Records of the Friends of Kingston Station 1972-2021

This series contains records related to the Friends's creation, governance, initiatives, and projects from 1972 to 2021. Of note are records related to the restoration undertaken by the Friends and the rededication ceremony in 1998. These records also document the establishment of the

railroad museum and the relocation of the signal tower. Additionally, the Friends worked closely with the Friends of the South County Bike Path during the creation of the William C. O’Neill South County Bike Path, a rail trail built on the former right of way of the Narragansett Pier Railroad with Kingston Station as its northern terminus.

Box	Description	Date
1	Formation-Related Correspondence, etc.	1972-1974
1	Meeting Minutes	1973-2001
1	Committee Assignments	1973-1974
1	Newsletters and Member Correspondence	1990-ca. 2010
1	Membership Lists	1991-1999
1	Publicity and Press	1972-2021
1	Restoration Planning & Correspondence	1987-1996
1	Rededication	1998
1	Railroad Museum	1998-2007
1	Post Restoration Correspondence	1999-2021
1	Development of Bike Path	1999-2001
1	Website	2017
1	Misc. Events, Projects, Programs	various
1	Rhode Island Association of Railroad Passengers	1973-1998
1	X200 Demonstration	1993
1	Kingston Station Intermodal Transportation Facility Draft	Dec. 1994
1	Photographs and Negatives	1972-2021
2	Jack McCabe Illustrations of Kingston Station	ca. 1998
2	Station Blueprints, Interlocking Tower Plans	2007
UC2 Drawer 14	Bike Path – Planning Map	n.d.
UC2 Drawer 14	Friends of Kingston Station Poster	1991
UC2 Drawer 14	Station Blueprints	1995
UC2 Drawer 15	Plan of Proposed Intermodal Transportation Facility	1996
UC2 Drawer 15	Interior Renovation Blueprints	2015

Series II: History of Kingston Station & Local Railroads

This series contains materials collected by the Friends to document the history of the station and local railroads. It includes telegraphs sent from the station in 1885, two of which are from South Kingstown summer resident Edward Everett Hale. Assorted photographs depict the station from 1875 until the founding of the Friends. Some photographs were donated to the Friends by Charles R. Sisson, a retired tower operator.

Box	Description	Date
1	Photographs of Station, Railroads, etc.	pre-1972
2	Misc. Histories and Narratives about Station and Railroad	various
2	Telegraphs	1885
2	Railroad, Station Ephemera from Friends Museum	n.d.