

Kingston Historic District Chronicles – the Church on the Plains II

The Church on the Plains, opened in 1879, stands adjacent to the town's green as a majestic centerpiece of our heritage. One interesting point is the beauty of its steeple. Above the double peaked louvered openings on all four faces, one will see four clock faces. The clock history begins with a young entrepreneur - Edward Howard. After apprenticing with Aaron Williard, Jr in Waltham, Mass., Edward started a business with David P. Davis making high grade wall clocks and watches under the name of Howard and Davis in 1842. Later, with a third partner, Luther Stephenson, they began to manufacture tower clocks, including the ones you see today. In 1857, he established the E. Howard Clock Company with offices in Boston, New York and Chicago, and the business still thrives today. Although today's clocks are in need of repair, since 1879 they have been important icons for Kingstonians.

Beyond those beautifully carved louvered "windows", a giant bell is situated. Throughout its life, the bell's clanging have signaled people to its sanctuary for worship or important events. The Kingston bell (donated By Major E. S. Sanborn of Kingston) was fitted out by one of the most renown bell foundries of the time - the William Blake and Co. of Boston. William Blake worked in the Paul Revere Foundry in Boston with Paul Revere the 3rd before joining with Henry Hooper in the 1830's. Their expertise led to a prominent role in the manufacture of cannons used in the Civil War.

Our Church on the Plains was placed in the National Register of Historical Places, an honor bestowed in 1979. The last service was held in 1957, but today, the church and its gorgeous interior has been maintained through restoration efforts by the Kingston Historical Improvement Society (KHIS).

Currently, the KHIS is in the midst of an "appeal campaign" hoping to raise \$9,000 to build a handicapped ramp for accessibility and make repairs to the stairs of the Church. If successful, a matching grant will be received. They will gladly accept donations AND volunteers for this huge undertaking.