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Life

Kingston's Old Dutch Church rich in history

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The following is a partial timeline developed from information in the Old Dutch Church Web site olddutchchurch.org and additional materials provided by the church.

- 1659. The congregation of the First Reformed Protestant Dutch Church is officially organized.
- 1777, October. British troops land at Kingston Point on the Hudson River and burn the entire village, including the Old Dutch Church, to the ground. The church is quickly repaired and used for another half-century.
- 1782. Gen. George Washington visits Kingston and Dominie George Jacob Leonard Doll and the governing body of Old Dutch Church. He writes a letter to thank the church for such a “high mark of public esteem.” Washington later becomes the first president of the United States. Additional presidents who have visited Old Dutch Church include Martin Van Buren, Ulysses S. Grant, Chester A. Arthur and Franklin D. Roosevelt.
- 1832. A growing congregation called for the erection of a new brick church.
- 1852. Renowned architect Minard LeFever designed and erected the current structure which was built of native bluestone and designed in the style of Christopher Wren.
- 1865. The Civil War begins, and to support the Union cause, the New York 120th Infantry, under the command of Gen. George H. Sharpe, enlisted many members of the congregation. Two flags presented to his regiment and carried into battle are displayed in the church. After the war, Sharpe presented a bronze statue as a memorial to the 120th infantry. The monument, “Patriotism,” in the church cemetery, is said to be the only one of its kind erected by a general to his men.
- 1908. George Clinton’s body and monument are removed from the Congressional Cemetery in Washington, D.C., and moved to the Old Dutch Church cemetery, where Clinton is re-interred. As the only vice-president to serve under two presidents, Clinton died while serving under James Madison. Earlier, he had been vice president under Thomas Jefferson. He also has the distinction of longest-serving governor (1777 to 1795) of any U.S. state.
- 1932. Franklin D. Roosevelt speaks at the annual George Washington dinner.
- 1952. Kingston celebrates its 300th anniversary during which Juliana, Queen of the Netherlands, and Bernhard, prince of the Netherlands, visit Old Dutch Church.

- 1959. The state celebrates the 350th anniversary of Henry Hudson's voyage, and Old Dutch Church celebrates its tercentennial. Beatrix, princess of the Netherlands, visits the church and signs the guest book.
 - 1976. Major restoration of the Old Dutch Church steeple, the tallest in Kingston, commences.
 - 1992. Barbara Lottridge initiates an organ recital series, a free 12:15 p.m. Thursday program open to the public. The series, which continues, takes place the last week of June through October.
 - 1999. Fine Arts series, also a free 12:15 p.m. Thursday program open to the public, begins. The series also continues and runs from April to June as well as October and November.
 - 2001. Sept. 11 Old Dutch Church hosted a prayer vigil for residents following the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers in New York City and the Pentagon. The church served as a bastion of support during other dark and tragic periods as well, including World Wars I and II, the sinking of the Titanic and the assassination of William McKinley.
 - 2008. The Old Dutch Church was declared a National Historic Landmark, and the secular non-profit group Friends of Old Dutch Church was founded to help guarantee its preservation.
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