

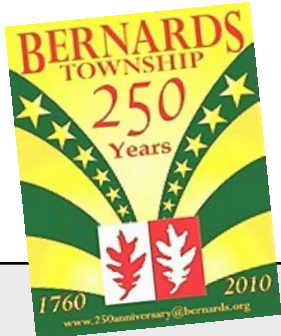
Inside

THE BRICK ACADEMY



The Historical Society of the Somerset Hills

September 2010



Contents

New Scholarship
Mildred Van Dyke
Bernards Township's
250th Anniversary
Upcoming Events
Sunday 'Open House'
Farmstead Arts Center
Oak Tree in NJ Book
Civil War Items
Bernards Library Exhibits
'June in June' Program

Weekend Journey through the Past

Saturday, October 9 & Sunday, October 10

The Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Commission, in conjunction with local historical organizations, has designated the weekend of October 9 & 10, '*Weekend Journey through the Past*'. Twenty-seven historic properties will be open on Saturday from 10 AM to 5 PM and on Sunday from Noon to 5 PM. Printed guides will be available at each site to describe special exhibits, programs and tours. Admission and parking are *free!*

The Historical Society is pleased to sponsor the Brick Academy located at 15 West Oak Street in Basking Ridge. The main floor will feature:

- Brick Academy 200th Anniversary Timeline
- New exhibits: 'Head to Toe' and 'Kitchen Help'
- The Whitaker Indenture, 1752
- Bernards 250th Anniversary Quilt
- Lord Stirling's 18th C. Manor House

As a special event, author June Kennedy will be present to sign her photographic history book, '*Around and About Basking Ridge, Liberty Corner and Lyons*' both Saturday and Sunday from 1 to 4 PM. The new edition is a Bernards Township 250th Anniversary project of the Historical Society with net proceeds benefiting THSSH thanks to Mrs. Kennedy's generosity.

The top floor of the Brick Academy, restored to an 1895 schoolroom, features an authentic pot belly stove, period furnishings, and early education displays. History Weekend activities are planned for young visitors!

*For further information, visit the event website at
www.schistoryweekend.com*



New Scholarship Announced

The Historic Preservation Committee of the Historical Society is very pleased to announce a new scholarship program that will be offered to members of the Historical Society beginning in January 2011.

The new program is being made possible by generous donations to the Historical Society in memory of long-time member Lorraine Passmore. To honor her passion for historic preservation, the scholarships are intended to help underwrite the cost for courses offered through Drew University's Historic Preservation Certificate Program.

Watch for scholarship details on the website, www.brickacademy.org.

WITH THANKS AND APPRECIATION...

For more than a decade, Mildred Dunham Van Dyke (below left) has been actively involved in the affairs of the Historical Society as a Trustee. She has contributed her time, resources and services to further the Society's interests and promote historic preservation throughout the Somerset Hills. Always available in matters of the Brick Academy and the Society, Mrs. Van Dyke's textbook memory has aided all seeking information about local history, genealogy, vintage photographs, etc. She continues to provide valuable assistance in updating the archives of the Society.

Photograph: On behalf of the Board of Trustees and in appreciation, THSSH Chair Marcella Miccolis presents retiring Trustee Mildred Van Dyke with a Bernards Township commemorative woven coverlet.



BERNARDS 250TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Community events for the remainder of 2010 include...

- Sept. 25* 100th Anniversary of the Liberty Corner Fire Department. Parade, picnic and fun fair.
Family History Day at the English Farm on Valley Road, Liberty Corner.
- Oct. 3* Lord Stirling 1770s Festival at Environmental Education Center, Lord Stirling Road, Basking Ridge.
- Oct. 9-10* 'Weekend Journey Through the Past' sponsored by Somerset County Cultural and Heritage Commission. In Bernards, the Brick Academy; Kennedy-Martin-Stelle Farmstead; and the Boudinot-Southard Farmstead will welcome visitors.
- Oct. 15-16* 'Memories of Bernards', a multi-media production including skits, readings, oral histories, and reenactments of local historical events. Ridge High School Performing Arts Center
- Nov. 13* Placement of the Time Capsule containing memorabilia and other items donated by residents and those interested, front lawn of the Municipal Building at 11 A.M.
- Nov. 21* Thanksgiving Interfaith Service, sponsored by the Somerset Hills Fellowship of Churches.
- Dec. 5* 'Holiday House Tour', sponsored by The Historical Society of the Somerset Hills, featuring properties of historic significance and architectural distinction. Event from 12 Noon to 5 P.M.
- Dec. 12* Trilogy Repertory Theater will produce a Revolutionary War Reenactment of the arrest of General Charles Lee at Widow White's Tavern. The event, scheduled for 2 P.M., will be held at Astor Field, behind the Bernards Township Municipal Building.
- Dec. 24* Traditional Christmas Eve Carol Sing on the Basking Ridge Village Green at 7 P.M. will conclude Bernards 250th Anniversary celebrations!

Lord Stirling

1770s Festival

October 3

Colonial history lives at the 1770s Festival to be held on Sunday, October 3 from 10 AM to 4 PM at Lord Stirling Park in Basking Ridge.

The Historical Society of the Somerset Hills will staff a fair booth, displaying educational materials, local artifacts and area books.

Nearly 50 colonial folks attired in period dress demonstrate their trades and crafts, and a Revolutionary War military detachment conducts maneuvers on the site of the former manor house.

The Somerset County Park Commission's event promotes historical and environmental education by highlighting William 'Lord Stirling' Alexander; demonstrating the colonial heritage of New Jersey; and recreating a typical

Speaker Series

September 16

'The War Man'

An intimate portrait of an American Revolution Soldier
Author Robert A. Mayers

October 21

Songs for Halloween
Ghosts, haunted houses
and holiday customs

Matthew Dodd

November 18

'A Printer on the
Eve of Revolution'

Second Edition!

Author Gordon Bond

Programs start at 7:30 PM

Brick Academy

15 W. Oak St., Basking Ridge
Free Admission • Refreshments

Holiday House Tour

The Historical Society's sixteenth biennial Holiday House Tour will be held on Sunday, December 5 from 12 Noon to 5 PM. The fundraiser will include six Somerset Hills properties of historic significance and architectural distinction including Victorian, Craftsman and English Tudor.

The Brick Academy will serve as the hospitality center. Handmade topiaries by the Basking Ridge Garden Club, and autographed copies of '*Around and About Basking Ridge, Liberty Corner and Lyons*', by author June Kennedy, will be available for purchase.

Tickets cost \$25 each and are available after October 15. Please send a self-addressed, legal sized stamped envelope with your check to: THSSH, P.O. Box 136, Basking Ridge, NJ 07920. Proceeds benefit the continued restoration of the Brick Academy, headquarters of the Historical Society.

Sunday 'Open House' Resumes at the Academy

'Open House' at the Brick Academy (2 to 4 PM) resumes on Sunday, September 12. The museum, the only one of its kind in the Somerset Hills, specializing in local artifacts. Visitors are welcome to enjoy the Historical Society's permanent collections as well as several new exhibits featured on the main floor:

"*Head To Toe*," showcases the Historical Society's collection of early hats and footwear, with a few other interesting small accessories thrown in for good measure. A second new exhibit, "*Kitchen Help*," pairs a number of turn-of-the-20th century kitchen items with their Sears Roebuck catalog descriptions – and the low, low prices from the "Cheapest Supply House on Earth." Generous donations by local families over the years make these exhibits possible.

An ancient parchment deed that was recently donated to the Historical Society by Richard Stevenson of Hertford, North Carolina, now hangs on the main floor of the Brick Academy. The 1752 indenture, which is one of the earliest documents owned by the Historical Society, conveyed a large tract along Mine Brook Road in what is now Bernardsville. The property was once owned by William Penn, one of the East Jersey Proprietors. After Penn's death his two sons sold the property in 1752 to Jonathan Whitaker, stepfather of Mary Jervis, who many years later would be remembered as "Widow White."

The top floor of the Brick Academy, recently restored to an 1895 schoolroom, features an authentic pot belly stove, period furnishings, and early education displays.



Farmstead Arts Center Grand Opening Celebration

October 9 & 10



The Farmstead Arts Center at the Kennedy Martin Stelle Farmstead in Basking Ridge will celebrate its official Grand Opening and Formal Dedication on Saturday and Sunday, October 9 and 10. The weekend festivities, which are held in conjunction with Somerset County's *Weekend Journey Through the Past*, will include a formal dedication and ribbon cutting event at 3 PM on Saturday with members of the Stelle Family, public officials, board members, and the public. The Farmstead Arts Center, which is located at 450 King George Road in Basking Ridge, will be open from 10 AM to 5 PM Saturday and noon to 5 PM Sunday, with activities scheduled throughout the weekend.

The opening weekend will be highlighted by an antiques appraisal event, "Antiques Alley", to be held on Sunday from 1 PM – 4 PM. Martine White of Bernards Appraisal Associates will appraise items brought in by the public at the Farmhouse. Persons interested in having their items appraised can pre-register by sending their name and a brief description of the item to the Farmstead at farmsteadartscenter@gmail.com, or by fax at 908-766-9330. Items may also be registered at the show. All items will be appraised on a first come first served basis. The appraisal fee is \$10.00 for the first item and \$5 per each additional item.

Martine White, who has been appraising personal property in the area since 1988 and has been a featured appraiser on WMTR's "Meet the Expert" Radio Program, is a Senior Certified Appraiser of Antiques & Decorative Arts with the American Society of Appraisers and the Appraisers Association of America. Items which may be appraised include antique furniture, silver, paintings, decorative art, Oriental rugs and other family treasures. Proceeds from the event, the Farmstead's first major fundraiser, will go to the general operations and upkeep of Farmstead Arts Center.

Opening weekend activities will also include tours of the historic Farmhouse and English Barn, musical entertainment by Elefante School of Music, plein air painting, an art exhibit, and children's crafts. An original 18th C. style mural by Caren Frost Olmstead and her team of Master Student Muralists, which will be on permanent display in the Farmhouse, will be unveiled to the public.

The Farmstead Arts Center is a non-profit center for the fine, performing and practical arts located on four acres overlooking the Passaic River and adjacent to the 40 acre Farmstead Park in Bernards Township. The Farmstead will begin offering art and music lessons, art shows, concerts, community events, and studio space in November and will present individual art shows of New Jersey Artists between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

The Center is housed in an historic 18th century farmhouse and English Barn listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places. The Grand Opening represents the culmination of 11 years of renovation efforts by The Friends of the Kennedy Martin Stelle Farmstead, through grant funding by the State of New Jersey, County of Somerset, Bernards Township, Somerset Hills Historical Society, and countless volunteer hours by members of the community. In May, The Historical Society of Somerset Hills honored the Farmstead Arts Center with the 2010 Historic Preservation Award in special recognition of the 250th Anniversary of Bernards Township.

For more information on the Grand Opening weekend, classes, teaching, and events at the Farmstead, or to join the Friends of the KMS Farmstead, visit www.farmsteadartscenter.org, or write to FarmsteadArtsCenter@gmail.com.

NEW JERSEY CHILDREN’S BOOK FEATURES OLD OAK TREE

“G is for Garden State”, a New Jersey alphabet book for children, lists all the State’s features from A to Z. The letter “Q” has the following verse: “Q is for Quercus Alba, the grand old oak tree, that watched over the village through the centuries.” The accompanying paragraph with its brilliant illustration lists: Quercus Alba, a 600-year-old white oak tree, stands in the historic cemetery of the Presbyterian Church in Basking Ridge. Everyone from early day Native Indians to modern children on school buses have passed by its stretching branches. It is one of the largest and oldest trees in the state. Other ancient white and red oaks grow in various parts of New Jersey. Quercus Alba is the Latin name for White Oak.

Quercus Rubra is the Latin name for Red Oak, the State tree of New Jersey which produces many acorns and turns a strong red in the fall.

“Q” also stands for Quakers, who came to America for religious freedom and settled in western New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

The book, written by Eileen Cameron and illustrated by Doris Ettlinger, was published in 2004 by Sleeping Bear Press, Chelsea, MN.

Historical Society Seeking Civil War Items

For a new exhibit planned for 2011, the 150th anniversary of the commencement of the Civil War, the Historical Society would be interested in locating local artifacts, memorabilia, and documents that relate to the Civil War period. Please contact Kevin Fox (647-6270) for further information.

Our sincere thanks go to Archives volunteer Kevin Fox who has been cataloging the collections to create a database to research specific topics. So far, draft databases are available at the Brick Academy in hard copy format for books, ledgers, and several special collections.



Bernards Township Library Exhibits

As part of the Historical Society’s celebration of Bernards Township 250th Anniversary this year, two new exhibits have been installed at the library:

- Documents from the Stelle Family archives. Although the Stelle name can no longer be found among Bernards Township residents, during the 19th century the family was one of the most prominent in the Township. The name regained importance again with the Township’s acquisition of the Kennedy-Martin-Stelle Farmstead on King George Road. One of the most interesting documents is Oliver Stelle’s 1829 will, which documents four black slaves he owned that he bequeathed to his children.
- A retrospective photography exhibit of past Bernards Township historic preservation award winners.

2011 Membership Dues

THSSH is kicking off its 2011 Membership Renewal Drive! Annual dues provide revenue for our speaker programs, museum exhibits, special publications, and the Brick Academy.

Renewal envelopes have been mailed to THSSH members. Please remit your membership dues by **October 31, 2010**.

Life Members kindly consider making a tax-deductible contribution.

**A DOZEN ARTIFACTS FEATURED
AT ‘JUNE IN JUNE’ PROGRAM**

by June O. Kennedy

Twelve precious artifacts from the archives of the Brick Academy made their public debut on Sunday, June 13 at the Bernards Township Library’s program celebrating the Township’s 250th Anniversary. Featured presenter Trustee June Kennedy was assisted by Archivist Ann Parsekian and Kevin Fox, Archives Volunteer. The relics included:

- An assortment of Lenni Lenape artifacts, found on the Madisonville Road area near Osborne’s pond. Comprise arrowheads, spearheads, hammer stones, axes, and grinders.
- The Whitaker Indenture, 1752, an original parchment encased in its frame, conveying land from Richard and Thomas Penn to Jonathan Whitaker in the Bernardsville/ Far Hills area.
- Debris (horseshoe, china, bottle, and buttons) from the William Annin Homestead site in Liberty Corner. The stone structure was built in 1766, fell into decay and razed.
- Brick from the Widow White’s Tavern, scene of the arrest of General Charles Lee, December 13, 1776. The building was razed prior to World War II.
- Bernards Township Library memorabilia; framed 1811 document for one share of stock purchased by Joel Dayton, subscriber. Old book catalogs and trustee minutes.
- Pierced lantern, late 18th or early 19th century. Used in a barn adjacent to the Passaic River.
- Civil War memorabilia: an 1863 honorable discharge for John Blazier, his pocket compass; Color Guard hat; April 11, 1865 rag material newspaper declaring *Victory is Near*.
- Advertising memorabilia of early 20th C. merchants in Bernards Township: 1907 grocer’s calendar; 1909 ceramic calendar plate; posters, 1907 thermometer, calendars, etc. from Cerino Brothers Grocers.
- Brass stencil from Cedar Hill Farm packing crates, pre-1930s.
- Vintage leather flying suit, circa 1920, lined with Chinese Nuchwang dog fur, used by pilots in open cockpit, single engine planes.
- Cow license plates, mounted over stalls with feeding instructions, used at Fair Haven Farm (currently Lord Stirling Stables), pre-1948.
- 1947 Austin Spencer Flying Trophy, presented annually at air races at Somerset Hills Airport.

The Brick Academy is caretaker of the Somerset Hills past!

THSSH Celebrates 82 Years

September 23, 2010 will mark the 82nd anniversary of the founding of the Basking Ridge Historical Society. In 1928, a group of residents met in the Maple Avenue School (site of the present Bernards Township Library) and decided to organize and foster local history. Programs were in the school, members’ homes, the former library at 2 North Finley Avenue, and later in Town Hall (currently the Brick Academy).

Today, the Society leases the Brick Academy from Bernards Township and preserves its history, provides factual information and offers programs on history. In 1988, in an effort to broaden its horizon, the organization’s name was changed to The Historical Society of the Somerset Hills. In 1990, a new 50-year lease was signed with local government for the continuous use of the Brick Academy. The Society “shall have exclusive use of the premises and shall endeavor to restore, renovate, and preserve the building, in view of its historical significance”.

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IN HONOR OF VETERAN’S DAY

Eighty-two years ago this November, President Calvin Coolidge approved “Knollcroft”, the estate of Walter E. Reynolds, as the site for a U.S. veterans hospital. The initial tract, selected from 161 nominated, was sold for \$130,000. The hospital was to provide 400 beds for neuro-psychiatric patients. The building cornerstone was laid in June, 1929 with dedication services July, 1930.

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**Thanksgiving Day
Credited to Local Resident**

Elias Boudinot, a resident of Basking Ridge during the American Revolution, is credited with introducing a resolution calling upon President George Washington to proclaim a national day of Thanksgiving. Boudinot, a distinguished Revolutionary, was President of the First Continental Congress and a signer of the Treaty of Peace with Great Britain. He believed the new United States should go forth with a dedicated day of Thanksgiving. In accord, Washington named Thursday, November 26, 1789 as Thanksgiving Day.

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at the Historical Society

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Inside The Brick Academy

The Historical Society newsletter is published in February, May and September.
Back issues are available at the Brick Academy or online: www.thssh.org
Members are welcome to submit stories, photographs and tidbits of local history!

Editor: David Connolly
Writers: Brooks Betz, June Kennedy, Ann Parsekian & Ruth Hill Thomson
Advertising: Florence Hallgring
Design: Marcella Miccolis
Production: Daniel Lincoln



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For information, articles, and news visit us online at www.thssh.org