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THE BRICK ACADEMY

The Historical Society of the Somerset Hills

May 2011



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The Basking Ridge Garden Club
and
The Historical Society of the Somerset Hills
invite you to visit the

Gardens of the Historic Somerset Hills

Friday, June 17 - 10 AM to 3 PM
Rain or Shine

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Garden Gift Boutique
Master Gardener Information Table
Floral Art Show at the Brick Academy

Ticket: \$30

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Pick up ticket/booklet at the Brick Academy
15 West Oak Street, Basking Ridge
June 17 - 9 AM to 2 PM

Information: 908-647-2844 or brginfo@gmail.com

*A portion of the proceeds to benefit the Memorial Garden
at the Center for Families of the Fallen, Dover, Delaware*

Museum Committee Sees Changes

After 18 years of dedication as the Museum Curator and Committee Chairman, June Campbell retires, but remains a vital member of the Museum Committee. Named as her successor for both positions is Sue Zibelli, a recent retiree and Bernardsville resident who has lived in the Somerset Hills for the past 18 years.

The Museum Committee will continue to focus on acquiring, displaying and interpreting local historical artifacts in order to inform, educate, entertain, and engage the community and general public.

Donations

The increasing diversity of our community highlights the importance of collections that reflect our history as it changes over time. The Society is always interested in adding to the Museum's collections. Donations of local historical relevance enable the Society to retell the story of everyday life as it was in the Somerset Hills.

If you, or someone you know is interested in donating historical artifacts that originate from the Somerset Hills community, please contact Sue Zibelli at 908-953-0725 or susanzibelli@yahoo.com

Committee Member

The Historical Society of the Somerset Hills serves to conserve and cultivate interest in our local history. Scores of volunteers who enjoy history share their time to promote, support and engage the communities of the Somerset Hills.

We would like to invite you to join us by contributing your spirit and talents. A great way to become involved in your community is to serve as a committee member.

The Society currently needs a volunteer for its Brick Academy Museum Committee. The group meets for two hours once a month to discuss and plan activities and operations of the museum. As a member, you will work along with the full committee to present engaging exhibits.

Come meet new friends and participate in the exciting history of your local community! Contact Sue Zibelli at 908-953-0725 or susanzibelli@yahoo.com

Brick Academy 'Open House'

Charter Day - May 21

Bernards Township's *Charter Day* will be held on Saturday, May 21. The annual event will commemorate the 251st anniversary of the May 24, 1760 granting of a Charter by King George II of England, establishing Bernardston Township.

In celebration, the Brick Academy will be open from 11 AM to 5 PM. The main floor features permanent exhibits of local historical artifacts as well as several new displays: 'Head To Toe', showcases early hats and footwear; an extensive collection of pre-1920's vintage postcards; 'Kitchen Help,' pairs a number of turn-of-the-20th century kitchen items with their Sears Roebuck catalog descriptions; and 1752 Whitaker Deed, one of the earliest documents owned by the Historical Society.

As a special event, local author June O. Kennedy will be present from 1 to 3 PM to personally autograph a special edition of '*Around and About in Basking Ridge, Liberty Corner and Lyons*', a documented photographic history of Benards Township.

The top floor, recently restored to an 1890 period schoolroom, includes early education exhibits, period furniture, a pot belly stove and activities for young visitors.

Reminder!

The new THSSH scholarship program in memory of Lorraine Passmore is now available to support participation of THSSH members who take academic courses or workshops in the field of historic preservation.

Applications are available at the Brick Academy or online at www.brickacademy.org.

“What Happened Here During The Civil War?”

A new exhibit now on view outside the Local History Room at the Bernards Township Library is the first of three installments planned by the THSSH that will tell the story of the Civil War as it affected Somerset Hills residents. “While there is a huge amount of local history of the Revolutionary War period that has been passed down, relatively little research has been done on the Civil War’s impact on the Somerset Hills,” said Ann Parsekian who serves as THSSH Archivist.

Although far from the front, the area felt the war’s impact in a variety of ways, which the exhibits will explain. Curated by Ann and Kevin Fox, another Archives volunteer, the first installment – entitled “Off To War” – uses local documents and artifacts to provide glimpses of the war from a volunteer soldier’s perspective. The pair tracked down information about period artifacts in THSSH collections as well as new facts behind some familiar local lore. Ann added, “In addition, we were lucky and grateful to find several area residents who were willing to loan family treasures from the Civil War for the exhibit.”

Research is now underway for the two upcoming installments of the exhibit. Several fascinating documents have surfaced, including the newsletters of a literary and debating society organized by local high school students in 1861, which will be on display in the next installment planned for this fall.

THSSH Archives Project

Christopher Winter, a senior at Ridge High School who is an Eagle Scout candidate from Troop 351 in Basking Ridge, recently completed a major project for THSSH that represents one of the requirements for the prestigious award. Over several months this past winter, Christopher developed a plan and managed a team to digitize and catalog a group of nearly 500 images in the Archives.

This marks the first large-scale effort of this kind for THSSH, and supports the society’s efforts to share archival materials with the public. Christopher also implemented a new cataloging system for THSSH collections, developed with the assistance of his mother, Lisa Winter. The Winter family has generously donated an external hard drive to store the data as well as the software that supports the catalog, which THSSH volunteers will be able to continue to expand.



Pictured from left: Peter Winter and Eagle Scout candidate Christopher Winter

IN MEMORIAM

The Board of Trustees is saddened to report the recent passing of two dear friends and senior members of the Historical Society:

Henry Allison Cox of Hightstown, formerly of Westfield, spent nearly 20 years reconstructing the Main Street, Basking Ridge map, by researching old deeds. Both the Township Engineering Department and THSSH archives have copies of the map. One of Henry’s ancestors donated the land in 1731 to build the original Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church. He is survived by his son Henry A. Cox, Jr., and daughter Susan and son-in-law Peter Schundler of Basking Ridge, and four grandchildren.

Carolyn Barton English, wife of the late Woodruff J. English of Liberty Corner, was a life member of the Historical Society. Mrs. English was very interested in local history and generous in allowing visitors to tour her farm. She is survived by her five adult children, 11 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren. There have been eight generations of the English family residing on the historic farmstead. Reverend James English was the first and founding pastor of the Liberty Corner Presbyterian Church in 1837.

Memorial Day

Dates Back to 1868

By June O. Kennedy

Memorial Day was first observed in 1868 after publication of General John Logan's Order No. 11. General Logan (*photo right*), who fought through the Civil War and rose from the rank of private to major-general, issued the order when he was commander-in-chief of the Grand Army of the Republic.

It begins: "The 30th day of May, 1868 is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their county during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land. In this observance, no form of ceremony is prescribed but posts and comrades will, in their own way, arrange each fitting services and testimonials of respect as circumstances may permit."

Since then, patriotic citizens have bowed their heads in prayer, decorated graves and paid tribute to those whose gift has been that of freedom.

Somerset Hills residents beginning with the settlers who sought religious freedom in the early 1700s have served their community, state and nation, offering their lives to defend and protect and continually work toward this goal in their daily lives.

During the American Revolution, Lord Stirling, a Basking Ridge resident, trained a regiment of local soldiers for battle. Squads of continental soldiers passed the village daily. George Washington established a military hospital off North Maple Avenue. When the main army camped at Jockey Hollow, soldiers constantly entered into the area, causing a road to be cut through timber over the hills, earning the name 'Old Army Road'.

Grain from the original Van Dorn Mill supplied troops in the nearby encampments. Under the revered oak tree in the Presbyterian graveyard, colonial soldiers enjoyed the shade it provided; 35 veterans of the Revolution are buried there.

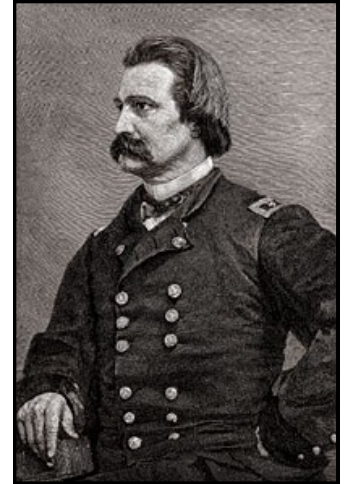
A company of Bernards Township men fought in the Civil War. Recruits drilled on the upper floor of Bunn's Mill, today's Bernardsville Town Hall. Heavy wagon wheels for the Union Army were made in a spoke and hub factory on Madisonville Road. On Brownlee Place, uniforms were sewn for the Northern troops. After the war, Horatio G. Whitnall, a Union Army surgeon, built his home on South Finley Avenue.

One Spanish-American War veteran lived at the U.S. Veterans Hospital at Lyons, until his death in 1939. This hospital, created by an act of the 68th Congress in 1925, opened its doors July 1, 1930 and has given rehabilitation, therapy, medical care, and long term nursing for more than 80 years.

World War I veterans are listed throughout the Somerset Hills communities. In Bernards Township, the American Legion Post 114 was named to honor two casualties of the War: Arthur Card and William Neill. World War II's song, '*Praise The Lord and Pass the Ammunition*' was written by the Reverend Howell M. Furgy, later pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Pluckemin. During World War II, the USS Southard, a destroyer, served with distinction in the Pacific area. The vessel was named in honor of NJ Governor Samuel L. Southard and his father, Representative Henry Southard, both of Basking Ridge. Many local residents lost their lives in this war.

Other brave men and women defended this nation in the Korean War and Vietnam. Fortunately, no lives have been lost in the recent Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts.

'*My Country 'Tis of Thee, Sweet Land of Liberty*' is a familiar song to Americans young and old. On Memorial Day, let us remember the many generations of warriors who have unselfishly given us "a land of the free and home of the brave from sea to shining sea."



ACADEMY'S FLAG AND NATION'S EARLY HISTORY

By June O. Kennedy

Have you noticed the American flag located on the far left side of the meeting room at the Brick Academy? It was custom-made and has 15 stars and 15 stripes! In observance of Flag Day, June 14, what better time to mention that the 15/15 combination was used as the Nation's flag beginning in 1795.

The 13-Star Flag was used from 1777 until 1795. Then, on the admission of Vermont and Kentucky into the Union, the U.S. Congress passed and President Washington signed an act that after May 1, 1795, the flag should have 15 stripes, alternating red and white, and 15 stars on a blue field.

When new states were admitted, it became evident that the flag would become burdened with stripes. Congress then ordered that after July 4, 1818 the flag should have 13 stripes, symbolizing the original States, and that whenever a new state was admitted, a new star would be added on the July 4th following admission.

No law designates the permanent arrangement of the stars. Since 1912, when a new state has been admitted, the

new design has been announced by executive order. No star is specifically identified with any state.



Today, the American Flag flown outside the Brick Academy on 'Open House' Sundays and community events is the country's current 50-Star Flag.

KMS Farmstead To Receive NJ Historic Preservation Grant

The Friends of the Kennedy Martin Stelle Farmstead is honored to announce that the Christie Administration has selected it to receive a 2010 Historic Preservation Grant in the amount of \$176,000. The Farmstead is one of 58 historic preservation projects in the State that were recommended for funding under this highly competitive grant.

The Friends of the Kennedy Martin Stelle Farmstead are delighted with the news. John Campbell, Vice President of the Friends, says the grant moneys will be used for work on the interior of the English Barn, including a cement slab topped by a wood floor, a new permanent closure with swinging emergency egress doors in the opening of one of the large sliding doors, an ADA compliant access ramp and electric service. This work would enable the Friends of the KMS Farmstead to begin three season use of the 18th century structure English Barn. Anticipated uses include plays, musical performances, art exhibits, and education about historic architectural techniques and the agrarian history of our region.

"The Historic Trust continues to make great strides in preserving New Jersey's important cultural and historic sites," said Governor Chris Christie. "These grant awards are indicative of our comprehensive efforts to grow the Garden State economy by spurring investment, generating jobs and attracting tourism opportunities to these areas." The New Jersey Historic Trust administers the grants from the Garden State Historic Preservation Trust Fund. The Trust Fund was created to promote historic preservation and encourage joint preservation efforts by the public and private sectors. It funds both capital projects and planning projects for historic preservation across the state.

The Friends of the Kennedy-Martin-Stelle Farmstead have reached several important milestones over the past year. The Farmhouse was officially opened for public use in October 2010, following over 10 years of restoration efforts. Since its grand opening, over 850 people have visited the Farmstead as a venue for art exhibits and lessons, musical performances, and lectures, and local artists are now leasing two of the Farm House studios on the second floor. Says John Campbell "We are delighted by the intense interest of local artists and musicians, and by the enthusiastic involvement of local residents. We are eager to continue improving the historic buildings so we can expand our arts center activities and intensify our historic education efforts."

New Jersey Signers of the Declaration of Independence

By June O. Kennedy

This Fourth of July let us remember...It took courage for the 56 members of the Second Continental Congress to sign the Declaration of Independence in 1776. They pledged their lives, fortunes and sacred honor. Most of the signers were men of education, substantial property and influence in their states. Here is how the New Jersey signers fared:

Richard Stockton *Age 45.* A lawyer and Associate Justice of the NJ Supreme Court. Upon his return from Philadelphia, Stockton was pulled from bed, beaten by British soldiers, jailed and nearly starved. His estate, *Morven*, was looted and his library, one of the best in America, was destroyed. Stockton died before the Revolution ended, his family forced to live off charity. *Morven* later served as the state's first Governor's Mansion until 1981.

Dr. John Witherspoon *Age 53.* President of the College of New Jersey (today's Princeton University). A Presbyterian minister and leader among the Presbyterians in America. While British troops occupied Nassau Hall at the institute, they burned his fine library, most of which had come from Scotland.

Francis Hopkinson *Age 38.* A lawyer who was elected Associate Justice of the NJ Supreme Court, but declined the honor. He was an early American secular song writer who lived and practiced law in Bordentown. The British sent a party to his home and looted it.

John Hart *Age 68.* A prominent State Legislator, Hunterdon County Court Judge and member of the First Continental Congress. He returned home shortly after the signing to care for his dying wife and their 13 children. When the area was overrun by the British in December 1776, his home and property suffered severe damage. Hart took refuge in the woods, hiding in caves until the American victories at Trenton and Princeton.

Abraham Clark *Age 50.* He studied law, was an active NJ State Legislator and three times a member of the Continental Congress. Clark had two sons in the Continental Army who were captured, treated with extreme brutality, and sent to the British prison ship '*Jersey*' where 11,000 American captives died. The British offered to spare their lives if he would recant and declare himself for the King. Patriot Clark's suffering can only be imagined as he refused.

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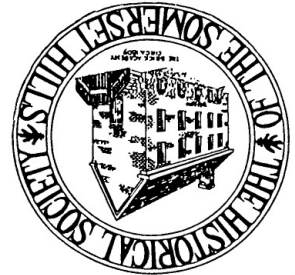
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