

Resolution #060072
Acceptance of the Historical Society of Somerset Hills
2005 Annual Report

WHEREAS, pursuant to Ordinance #994, on January 12, 1990 the Township of Bernards and the Historical Society of Somerset Hills entered into a 50 year lease agreement for lease of the township-owned Brick Academy located at 15 West Oak Street, Block 73, Lot 10, Basking Ridge; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to said agreement and N.J.S.A. 40A:12-14c, the Historical Society of Somerset Hills must submit an annual report to the Township setting out the use to which the building was put during the preceding year, the activities of the Society undertaken in furtherance of the public purpose for which the leasehold was granted, the approximate value or cost, if any, of such activities in furtherance of such purpose, and an affirmation of the continued tax exempt status of the Society pursuant to both State and Federal law; and; and

WHEREAS, the 2005 annual report has been submitted as required.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Township Committee of the Township of Bernards that 2005 Annual Report of the Historical Society of Somerset Hills be accepted as submitted.

Agenda and Date Voted: 1/10/05

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2005
Historical Society of the Somerset Hills

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

June Campbell, Chairman, Curator
John Campbell, House Tour
David Connolly, News Letter
Sylvia Gambony
Pat Gray
Florence Hallgring, Fund Raiser
George Helmke
June Kennedy, Publicity, Education
Dan Lincoln, President, Grants
Don Lorenz
Richard Macksoud, Treasurer
Robin Marion
Marcella Miccolis
Diane O'Connor,
Community Relations, Corresponding Sec.
Ann Parsekian, Grants, Historic Preservation
Ken Salvo, Building Manager Pro Tem
Larry Schwenk
Connie Smythe, Hospitality

Larry Terricone, Recording Sec.
Millie Van Dyke, Genealogy

The Board meets twelve times a year in addition to meetings for special events. As always, the past year has been very interesting and challenging for all of us. Some of its highlights are outlined below:

Community Outreach

- 1) The Historical Society of The Somerset Hills (THSSH) participated in two community events this year. Charter Day, May 21st, was attended by huge crowds, and we were inundated by questions of all types related to our work. We sold many gift items and passed out much free information. The Lord Stirling Festival, October 2nd, was a wonderful event devoted purely to history in one form or another and we were equally successful there. Participating in these community events gives us a good opportunity to reach new residents in the area who would not otherwise know of our work. The proceeds of all of the sales go to the Brick Academy Building Fund and various out reach projects.
- 2) Once again the Basking Ridge Garden Club and Linda Macksoud planted wonderful flowers outside the Academy. We maintained these beds throughout the season.
- 3) Items from our archives are used throughout the year in display cases, particularly in libraries and the Bernards Township municipal building.
- 4) On June 4th some of the Girl Scout troops in town got together and sponsored a tour of eight historic spots in Bernards Township. The girls were the docents. The Historical Society provided them with much of their information and the Brick Academy was one of the locations visited.
- 5) We sponsored the English Family Farm Day on October 1. We also provided fliers on local history to be distributed there.
- 6) We participated in the Memorial Day celebration and placed a wreath on the Town green.
- 7) In October we entertained residents of Ridge Oak who came to learn something of the activities of the Historical Society and to browse through our museum.
- 8) The Historical Society donated chairs from the old Maple Avenue School to the following schools: Liberty Corner – 2, Mount Prospect – 1, and Cedar Hill – 1. Two chairs were donated to the Bernards Township Library.
- 9) We donated craft materials left over from our history camp to Bernards Township Girl Scouts.
- 10) We continue to advise individuals on grant application procedures, and a number of home owners concerning procedures for restoration and how to get their homes on the National Register.

Restoration

We are in the preparatory stages for work on the restoration of the third floor using the \$40,000 grant from Somerset County. The plans have been drawn up and we are beginning the preparatory work, such as paint analysis.

Preservation

In 2005 the Historic Preservation committee conducted the second annual preservation awards program culminating in the presentation of awards in May. The program was expanded this year to include all Somerset Hills Communities. The recipients were as follows:

Bernards Township – The Coffee House, North Maple Ave.
- The Old Homestead, 189 West Oak St.
Bedminster – Barn, Fairview Farm, Larger Cross Rd.
- Jacobus-Vanderveer House, Route 206

Bernardsville – Sacred Heart Chapel, Bernards Ave.

A project was implemented to research the history of the Madisonville section of Bernards Township (the area around the traffic light at North Maple Ave. and Madisonville Rd.), which was the only hamlet that had not been researched. The Madisonville section contains the largest concentration of surviving 18th and early 19th Century buildings in the township.

The committee continued to offer advice and input to applicants and board members on zoning and planning applications that involve historic resources. We also continue to make available a set of guidelines for historic preservation.

The Historical Society continues to follow with great interest the progress of the restoration of the Kennedy-Martin-Stelle Farmstead.

Strategic Planning Committee

A Strategic Planning Committee was created in 2005 to review the bylaws, mission, operations and goals of the Historical society, and prepare recommendations for presentation to the board of trustees in early 2006.

Education

- 1) THSSH published three newsletters this year. They were sent to our 300 members and also given out at our open houses and public events. They are helpful in informing the public of our activities.
- 2) Our museum is open every Sunday afternoon from 2:00 to 4:00 pm. We have changing exhibits, a modest gift shop, and well informed docents to help those who stop by. Special appointments should be made for help with research.
- 3) We gave a number of lectures and tours to Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, and elementary school children. There were 450 children in all. This represents a fifty percent increase over previous years.
- 4) Due to popular demand we reprinted our Historic Basking Ridge Walking Tour booklets. The tour was also added to the Bernards Township Library web site as a PDF file available for free download. We continue to distribute it and a number of our other historical information hand outs throughout the area.
- 5) We replaced two historic signs that had been vandalized, one at the Lord Stirling Manor, and one in Liberty Corner marking Rochambeau's Revolutionary War encampment. We also installed a new marker indicating Historic Madisonville near the corner of North Maple and Madisonville Roads.
- 6) We continue to be open 9:30am to 12:00 noon the first and third Wednesdays of every month. A gratifying number of people come in for help, both for genealogical information and guidance in historical preservation.

Utilization of the Academy

January 25th - meeting of the Berkeley Circle Association
March, October and December - Meetings of the Herding Association of New Jersey.
April 15th – Visit from the Newcomers Club. They showed great interest in our material on local history.
June 20th – Friends of the Kennedy-Martin-Stelle Farmstead Annual Meeting
October, November and December – meetings of the Board of Trustees of the Friends of the KMS Farmstead.
December – The Academy served as the rest stop during our Holiday House Tour. Over the course of five hours 600 hostesses, parkers and tour guests came for refreshments and to view our exhibits. Some also purchased items from our gift shop and joined the Historical Society.

See “Board of Directors,” “Community Outreach,” “Education,” “Programs” and “Fund Raisers” sections of this report for details on other occasions in which the Brick Academy was used for working with the public.

Fund Raisers

- 1) THSSH held its 14th Holiday House Tour on December 4th. Attended by 500 people, it featured six diverse and architecturally significant homes in Basking Ridge, Far Hills, and in the Brookside section of Mendham Township. Spanning 262 years, the oldest homes included two 18th Century Basking Ridge farm houses, one built in 1740 and the other around 1750. These are two of about 35 remaining 18th Century buildings in Bernards Township. The other homes comprised an 1830 farm house, an 1865 ornate Victorian home, a 15 year old brick English manor residence, and a 2002 French country house (mansion). This wonderful community relations project involved the efforts of a host of THSSH members, as well as 75 docents, 22 parkers, and of course, the home owners. All had a great time and we made a profit of approximately \$12,500, which will be used in our many out reach programs.
- 2) Ongoing sale of gift shop items, both at the Academy and at Charter Day and the Lord Stirling Festival. This year we introduced one new item – a “suncatcher” view of the Oak Tree, hand painted by a member’s daughter.
- 3) We continue to solicit publication of ads in our news letter and find that it has boosted our income considerably.

Programs

These are advertised and the general public is welcome.

March 17th – Five Presidents and the Civil War Battles that Made Them, by Glenn Leboeuf.

April 21st – The Battle of Trenton, by Ralph Siegel.

May 19th – Historic preservation awards, and a lecture Local Vernacular Architecture, by Janet Foster.

September 15th – Historical Curiosities and Stupidities, by William Newman.

October 20st – Public Archaeology, by Dr. Alan Cooper.

November 17th – The curious Military Career of General George Washington, by Glenn Leboeuf.

Consultation and Clerical Work

In 2005 we spent over 325 hours providing telephone and face-to-face consultation to the public on genealogy and guidance in historic preservation, reviewing and cataloguing acquisitions, photographing privately held old documents for inclusion in our files, cataloguing our library, composing pamphlets and publications, cataloguing our files to improve their accessibility, cleaning the building, and much more.

Acquisitions

<u>Item</u>	<u>Donor</u>
Brass stencil saying “Sold by Ellis tiger Co., Gladstone, NJ”	Joseph Krupsky
Early ice pick with “Frederick Andrews, Bound Brook Ice Co., Phone 359R” On handle	John Campbell

Set of name plates with cows names on them from the Fairhaven and Bakehaven Farm, which later became Lord Stirling Stables

June Kennedy

Books:

Basking Ridge and Beyond, by Norman Nelsen

Dan Lincoln

The Shooting of Rabbit Wells, by William Loizeaux

(Purchased)

Lesser Crossroads, edited by H. G. Schmidt

(Purchased)

New Jersey and the American Revolution, edited by

(Purchased)

B. J. Mitnick

Kearny's Own, A History of the First New Jersey Brigade (Purchased)

in the Civil War, by Bradley M. Gottfried

Association Memberships

- 1) National Trust For Historic Preservation
- 2) Preservation New Jersey
- 3) League of Historical Societies of New Jersey
- 4) Somerset County Historical Society

Outlook for 2006

- 1) Proceed to restore the third floor of the Brick Academy using \$40,000 Somerset County grant funds.
- 2) Continue outreach in areas of education on local history and genealogy, and provide information and guidance to people interested in restoring old buildings.
- 3) We plan to repeat the Historic Preservation Awards Program in 2006, for which the entire Somerset Hills will again be eligible.
- 4) Explore new ideas for fund raising activities.
- 5) Participate in community events in order to raise community consciousness of the historical heritage of the Somerset Hills.

Respectfully submitted,

June S. Campbell
Chairman - Board of Trustees