



Historical Society of Stillwater Township Newsletter

www.HistoricStillwater.org

July/August, 2010

From the President's Desk

Bob Grabowsky, President

From the first time I set foot in Stillwater, I knew there was something very special about the town and its history. Any visitor to Stillwater instantly knows there is something rare about it. Just talk to them and ask. They will tell you, as they have told me countless times.

I've lived in Stillwater for nineteen years. By many accounts I'm an outsider. Other than my comparatively short residency here, I have absolutely no roots or family history in Stillwater. When I joined the Historical Society, I did so because I felt and appreciated the deep sense of history Stillwater offers to us every day. That's not something you can say about many towns these days.

Unfortunately, each and every day, Stillwater's history gets watered down. Mementos are auctioned off on eBay, new families move in, old families move out. Treasures disappear, stories are lost and our history is slowly dissolving. Preserving these treasures, these bits and pieces of history, must be done today because tomorrow they could be completely gone, sent to the highest bidder in some other state or country.

Thank you for caring about Stillwater and its legacy. Thank you for the time, money and energy you have expended to safeguard our historic buildings and artifacts for future generations. Tina Keppler's speech, in this issue, tells of the State Historic Preservation Office's impression of the wonderful preservation job Stillwater's residents have done thus far.

In this Issue:

Love Letter to Stillwater

Upcoming Events

Shortcakes and Short Takes - Photos
from HSST's Activities

History Mystery

And much more...

As you all realize, preserving Stillwater's history and historic treasures is an ongoing process. If you are not already doing so, I ask that you consider volunteering for one of our committees. From museum collections, genealogy and oral histories, to the library, Grist Mill and fund-raising, each activity is extremely important in carrying out the Society's mission of preserving Stillwater's history.

What could be more rewarding than ensuring that our children and grandchildren enjoy the Stillwater that we enjoy?

2010 Calendar

Aug 12	Membership Meeting, Thurs at 7:30pm, at the Museum
Aug 15	Peach Festival - 1pm to 4pm at Museum (3rd Sun)
Aug 29	Museum Final Summer Opening Sun 2pm to 4pm
Sep 9	Membership Meeting, Thurs at 7:30pm, at the Museum - Dr. Richard Veit, "History in the Landscape"
Sep 25	Fall Festival, Sat 11am to 4pm at Stillwater Elementary School
Oct 14	Membership Meeting, Thurs at 7:30pm, at the Museum - Special Program TBA
Nov 11	Membership Meeting, Thurs at 7:30pm, at the Museum - Deborah Drumm, "Historical Uses of Herbs for Medicinal Purposes"
Dec 5	Christmas Open House - from 1pm to 4pm (1st Sun)
Dec 9	Membership Meeting, Thurs at 7:30pm, at the Museum

Member News

With Sympathy - Mrs. Shirley Robbins, a lifetime member of HSST, passed away on July 12, 2010. HSST extends our sincere sympathies to Shirley's husband, Donald, and her entire family.

Shirley contributed greatly to HSST over the years. She volunteered for events and baked brownies for the bake sales. She even wore period costumes if the occasion called for it. HSST is grateful for Shirley's enthusiasm and dedication over the years. She will be missed.

Welcome - Please welcome new members Holly and Dick Gross of Unionville, PA. Barbara and Gerald Hall of Chester, NJ, formerly annual members, have become lifetime members.

Historical Society of Stillwater Township

**PO Box 238
900 Main Street
Stillwater, New Jersey 07875**

Board of Directors

President:

Bob Grabowsky, 973-903-3244

Vice President:

Dennis Pegg, 973-383-1057

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Recording Secretary:

Betty English, 973-383-5714

Corresponding Secretary/Sunshine:

Lynn Rosenkrans Meyer,
973-702-8369

Communications:

Betty English

Publicity:

Tina Keppler, Lynn Rosenkrans Meyer

Museum Inventory / Cataloging: Louise Saal, Nan Horsfield, Dennis Pegg

Genealogy:

Louise Saal, Nan Horsfield, Sadie Gass

Library:

Betty English, Dennis Pegg

Museum House & Grounds:

Bob Grabowsky, Michele Adamski

Oral History:

Rob Jacoby, Maureen Block

Special Events:

Carolyn Celli, Edie Lambert

Fall Festival:

Deborah Drumm, Chris Petrullo

Docent Coordinator:

Carolyn Celli, Dennis Pegg

Neighborhood House Committee:

Bob Grabowsky, Dennis Pegg, Skip
Henschot, Roy Knutsen

Grist Mill Committee:

Lou Sylvester, Bob Grabowsky, Roy
Knutsen, Dennis Pegg

*Meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of
every month at 7:30 p.m.*

*The museum is open June through August
every Sunday from 2 to 4 p.m.*

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Museum Matters

Donation Brings HSST into the 21st Century

An anonymous donor gifted HSST with a generous selection of high-tech equipment, including a 17" laptop computer (with service contract), software and a digital camera.

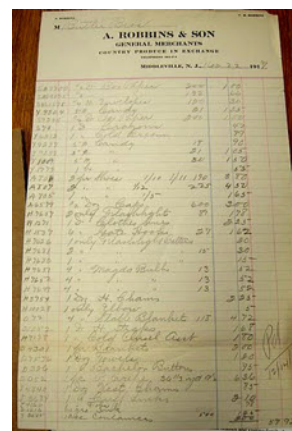
This equipment will enable the Historical Society to document our collection more effectively, making the collection more accessible to the public. In May, we used the laptop for HSST's exhibit at the Sussex County History Day (photo on page 8). We extend our sincere thanks to this donor for recognizing the Society's need and for fulfilling it so splendidly.

Collection Donation

Mrs. Marlene (Huff) Estabrooke donated an invoice to HSST from A. Robbins & Son of Middletown. The invoice, dated 1917, gives us a glimpse into the everyday life of a Stillwater resident almost a century ago.

Some examples of the items purchased are: a jar of cold cream at 89¢; flashlights at 89¢ each, several pairs of shoes at \$1.65 to \$2.25 per pair and stable blankets at \$1.18 each.

Thank you to Mrs. Estabrooke for this interesting addition to our collection.



Thank You to Meadowbrook Landscaping

Many thanks to Alan Westra of Meadowbrook Landscaping. Alan continues to donate the time and energy of Meadowbrook to taking care of the Museum grounds. The grounds look terrific and we are very grateful to Alan and the Meadowbrook team.

Recent Resolutions

HSST's President, Bob Grabowsky, recently sent an e-mail to members proposing two time-sensitive resolutions. The first resolution was to treat the Grist Mill for powder post beetles at a cost of \$1400 from the Grist Mill Trust Account. The second resolution was to incorporate HSST in anticipation of the merger with Neighborhood House and the possible formation of a friends group for the Grist Mill (filing fees of \$150). Both resolutions passed unanimously. The officers of HSST thank the members for responding so quickly to these urgent issues.

It is due to the donations and fund-raising efforts of HSST's members and friends that we are able to undertake these projects. Thank you.

Collection Care

We have been addressing some air quality issues within the Museum. To further these efforts, we could use up to 3 fans to help the circulation in the exhibit rooms. If you can help out with this need, please e-mail to newsletter@HistoricStillwater.org or call Bob Grabowsky at 973-903-3244.

Don't Miss Out!

August 15 - Peach Festival

Every August, HSST celebrates peaches, and this year is no different. All are invited on Sunday, August 15, 2010, to savor fresh peach cobbler at the Museum from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Perhaps you will also be tempted to take home some homemade dessert from our Bake Sale.

September 9 - Dr. Richard Veit - History in the Landscape

Fascinated by old cemeteries? Find gravestones intriguing? Learn about historic gravestones from Dr. Richard Veit, award-winning author and Associate Professor of Anthropology at Monmouth University.

An entertaining and popular speaker throughout New Jersey, Professor Veit's areas of expertise include anthropology, archaeology, historical archaeology, New Jersey history, Native Americans and historic preservation. Members and non-members are invited to attend the program at the Museum on Tuesday, September 9, 2010 at 7:30 p.m.

September 25 - Fall Festival



The Fall Festival Committee is hard at work on the Society's 5th Annual Fall Festival. The Festival will be from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Stillwater Elementary School on Saturday, September 25, 2010.

Activities include hay rides, a hay maze, games, pumpkin picking and much more. We'll have live music and plenty of food. All of this will take place with Stillwater's spectacular fall beauty as a back drop.

The 2nd Annual Apple Pie Baking Contest is sure to be one of the highlights of the day. Contestants are invited to download an application on the Society's web site at www.HistoricStillwater.org. Simply click on the Fall Festival 2010 link in the right hand column to access the application link.

Sponsorships are available at the Platinum, Gold and Silver levels. To become a Sponsor or Donor for the Festival, please use the form on the last page of this newsletter.

Fall Festival Vendor Opportunities

The HSST Festival is a wonderful venue to sell crafts and antiques or to promote an organization. The 20' x 20' spaces are outside and accommodate a canopy. A single space is \$25 and a double is \$40.

Those wishing to be a vendor at the Festival, should visit the Historical Society's web site at www.HistoricStillwater.org. In the right hand column, there is a link to the Fall Festival 2010 with additional information and a link for the vendor application packet.

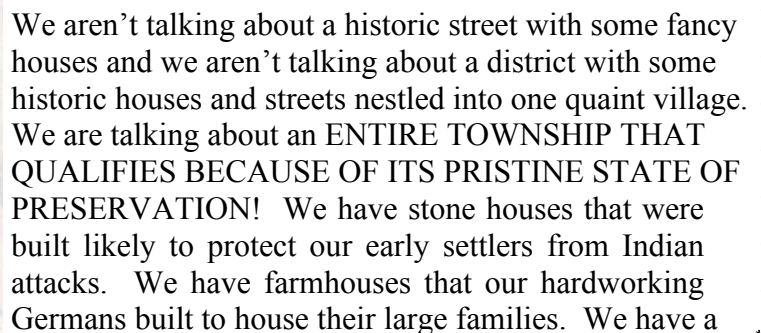
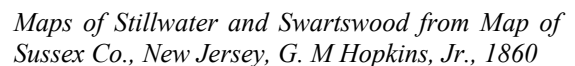
Any further questions should be addressed to Deborah Drumm via email (preferable) at debdrumm@yahoo.com or phone (908-698-4143).

On April 28, 2010, Tina Keppler, lifetime member and former President of HSSST gave an impassioned speech to the DEP at their hearing regarding the PSE&G power lines. Below is an edited version of the text of that speech.. All emphasis is Tina's.

These Germans built cabins on the frontier. Amazing, isn't it that Stillwater was the frontier? Later they built stone houses, and since those stone houses were built around the same year as the Swartwout massacre, we guess that they wanted more permanent shelters to keep themselves safe from the Indians. Imagine that your neighbor Anthony Swartwout, his wife and his children were killed by the Indians; what would you do? ... You'd get a stone house built lickity split! So much for flammable log cabin living. This is just one of the early stories of Stillwater.

Maps of Stillwater and Swartswood from Map of Sussex Co., New Jersey, G. M Hopkins, Jr., 1860

In 1860, a plat map was drawn for Stillwater. Looking at it today, our township still looks nearly the same as it did then. Our history hasn't been absorbed into the development around it. Our history hasn't been torn down and replaced by more modern buildings and industry. It's extremely well preserved.

[illegible]

beautiful gristmill and Inn on Main Street. We have old dirt roads and stone rows that are unscathed by the passage of time. Stillwater might be one of the most beautiful places in New Jersey because when you come to our town, you step back in time. It's not like a recreated historic village, such as Jamestown and it's not like Williamsburg, Virginia where the city has been preserved by The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. This place we call home has been preserved by US, by each and every resident in our township who has cared enough to treasure it and protect it.

Andrea Tingey said that Stillwater has an **“incredible selection of historic buildings”** and that **Stillwater is a “very remarkable and special” place.** She said, **“Many people here (in Stillwater) are still following the life patterns of the past hundred years. There are also very little alterations (such as screen doors or vinyl siding) to the buildings — remarkably little. The people of Stillwater have been excellent stewards of their property.”**

This is coming from a branch of your office. This is YOU...this is the DEP saying that Stillwater is important, significantly important. Now I am here before you reiterating what you already SHOULD know. There is a 2 VOLUME historical report on Stillwater that the state has seen ... regarding the historical significance of Stillwater. If you haven't seen it, or haven't acquainted yourself with it for a while, maybe now it's time to do that!

I am going to charge you with this. YOU are the New Jersey Office of Historic Preservation and YOU are the Department of Environmental Protection. PROTECTION is your game. You protect me and my environment and that's the purpose of your office. PLEASE protect Stillwater from these POWER LINES! We've been preserving ourselves for 270 years, now we need your help to protect us for the future!



Thank you!

Did you know that the Museum has ...

- the original minutes of the Stillwater Township Committee meetings for 1885?
- dozens of genealogical files, organized by surname, containing clippings, documents and notes on Stillwater families?
- collections of Stillwater's residents diaries? Among the collections are: a Coursen diary from the 1840s and its transcription, several of Agnes Maines' diaries from the 1920s and more than 25 years of Agnes Huff's diaries, starting in the 1950s.
- a 1987 inventory of Stillwater's historic sites? The huge 3-inch binder contains photos and background information on scores of sites and buildings.

Shortcakes

Strawberry Festival June 13, 2010



This is what it's all about!



Dedicated volunteers made the day!



Relaxing with friends and neighbors



Clip-clopping through town



The weather didn't matter.



Dessert before dinner - what fun!

Photographs by Bill Lambert

Short Takes

Sussex County History Day May 1, 2010

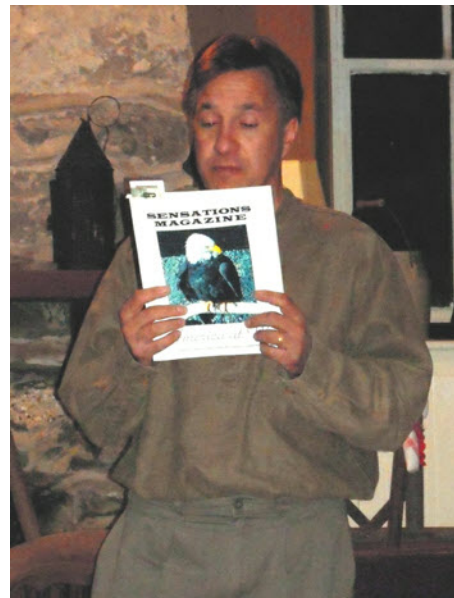


From our collection



A welcoming face

World Wars I and II in Poetry May 15, 2010



A moving evening of poems and songs exploring the many facets of World War I and World War II

History Mystery

HSST received a request for information from Mr. Scott Lynch and perhaps our members can help him. Mr. Lynch's father painted a large picture of the Stillwater Inn in 1963. Mr. Lynch heard the picture was hung in the lobby of the inn. Family lore says that Mr. Lynch's father sold the painting to the Stillwater Inn to provide Thanksgiving dinner for his family.

Does anyone remember the picture and/or have information about it? Does anyone know what became of it? If any of our members has information that would help Mr. Lynch, please e-mail the information to newsletter@HistoricStillwater.org or call Betty English at 973-383-5714.



Do you have a History Mystery that needs to be solved? How about an unidentified photo? Send your question or photo to newsletter@HistoricStillwater.org. We'll publish it in the newsletter and perhaps our members have the answer.

News about the News

Beginning with this issue, HSST will mail the newsletter to all members, including to those who also receive it via e-mail. Receiving the newsletter in hard copy makes it easier for members to read it at their leisure and to share it with other members of their family. We will continue to send out news and notices via e-mail in between newsletters.



If you would understand anything, observe its beginning and its development. ~Aristotle



Dues Remittance / Donation Form

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ E-Mail Address: _____

Annual Dues: Student: \$10 Individual: \$20 Family: \$30

Lifetime Membership: \$300 Individual/Family

Fall Festival: Sponsorship: Platinum \$500 + _____ Gold \$250+ _____ Silver \$100+ _____
Other Donation \$ _____

Mail completed form with check to Historical Society of Stillwater Township, PO Box 238, 900 Main Street, Stillwater, NJ 07875.

The Historical Society of Stillwater Township is an IRS recognized 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Donations to HSST are tax deductible. Ask your accountant or tax preparer for details. Annual memberships beginning in August or later will be active through the following year.

Historical Society of Stillwater Township

PO Box 238

Stillwater, New Jersey 07875

Member thru: {MM:Member Thru}

{MM:FIRST} {MM:LAST}

{MM:STREET}

{MM:TOWN, STATE, ZIP}