



Historical Society of Stillwater Township Newsletter

www.HistoricStillwater.org

November / December, 2009

From the President's Desk

Dennis Pegg, Acting President

With your help, 2009 has been a big year for the Historical Society of Stillwater Township. As we look forward, 2010 promises to be even better.

We had the Strawberry Festival in June, the Peach Festival in August and the October Fall Festival. The Grist Mill was recognized with its listing on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places. We began renovating and expanding the Museum's research area, and we had a new alarm system installed. Plus, we were open for visitors on Sunday afternoons all summer.

Sincere thanks to all who gave their time and support towards these activities and to all the other activities that go into the successful achievement of the Historical Society's goals. It truly shows that wonderful things can be accomplished when we pull together as a team and as a community.

Now, it's time to work on goals for next year. In 2010, we want to improve our outreach to the community by offering programs and lectures of historical interest. We should be ready for the grand opening of the renovated research area when we open for the season. We will be following up on the Grist Mill's National Register listing in 2010.

On December 6th, we will have our annual Christmas Open House at 1:00 p.m. at the Museum. There will be refreshments, a Bake Sale and, of course, Santa! Bring the family and have a great time. At our December 10th meeting, we will be discussing the goals for 2010 and we will be electing new Board members. I hope you can join the meeting.

Special Features in this Issue:

Oral History Corner:
Interview with Lawrence Earl

Museum Update

Our Collection Grows

Peach Festival & Fall Festival
Reports

If you are not already a member of HSST, please consider joining so you can take part in the exciting plans for 2010. If you are an annual member, now is the time to renew for next year.

December is also a great time to make donations to HSST. You will catch the tax deduction for 2009 and help support our preservation efforts at the same time.

Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year to all!

New Members

HSST welcomes the following new members:

Skip Hemschot	Stillwater, NJ
Charles H. Stouch, Jr.	Stillwater, NJ

Committees for 2010

To meet our 2010 goals, we would like to have two chairpersons for each committee. Committees needing additional chairpersons are: Library, Museum House & Grounds and Docents.

Besides committee chairpersons, volunteer work would be appreciated for any of our committees. In particular, we would be interested in someone who has some gardening experience and could help identify the plants on the Museum grounds.

For those interested in working on the collection, the collection / genealogy group meets on Tuesday mornings at 9 a.m. at the Museum. Any help would be welcome.

E-Mail Address Reminder

Sorry to remind you again but, if you have not done so already, please send your e-mail address to Maureen Block at waymaur@embarqmail.com. We can save serious money by delivering the newsletter and other notices via e-mail. We can save on both postage and printing. In addition, we send occasional items of interest to our members via e-mail. If we have your e-mail address, you will be included.

For those still receiving the newsletter in black-and-white via snail mail, please note that we have a color version of the newsletter available for download on our website at www.HistoricStillwater.org.

Historical Society of Stillwater Township

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

Board of Directors

Acting President/Vice President:
Dennis Pegg, 973-383-1057

Treasurer:
Bob Grabowsky, 973-903-3244

Recording Secretary:
Maureen Block, 973-948-5789

Corresponding Secretary/Sunshine:
Lynn Rosenkrans Meyer,
973-702-8369

Communications / Library:
Betty English, 973-383-5714

Publicity:
Tina Keppler, 973-579-2098

Museum Inventory / Cataloging:
Louise Saal, 973-383-8487
Nan Horsfield, 908-362-9462

Genealogy:
Sadie Gass, 973-786-5906
Louise Saal, 973-383-8487
Nan Horsfield, 908-362-9462

Oral History:
Rob Jacoby, 973-579-7245

Special Events:
Carolyn Celli, 973-383-3094
Edie Lambert, 973-383-7553

Docent Coordinator:
Carolyn Celli, 973-383-3094

Grist Mill Committee:
Lou Sylvester, 973-579-6402
Bob Grabowsky, 973-903-3244
Dennis Pegg, 973-383-1057

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

Museum House & Grounds:
Bob Grabowsky, 973-903-3244

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

Oral History Corner

Featuring Lawrence Earl

Based on an interview conducted by Rob Jacoby with the assistance of Jan Wiley, September 13, 2008

Lawrence Earl was born at home on Maple Avenue in Stillwater on August 8, 1922. He was delivered by Dr. Landis, who lived next door. His father, William, was a contractor and builder, the same as his father, before him, and the same career which Lawrence would later successfully pursue.



Photograph by Rob Jacoby

William was born in Stillwater but Lawrence's mother, Elsie, was born in Germany and came to the U.S. when she was six years old. Her family settled in Paterson. Though she was a homemaker, Elsie worked at a textile factory in Paterson before she was married.

Lawrence's grandparents also lived on Maple Avenue, in the same house in which his sister, Ruth, now lives. Lawrence's grandfather, John, had farmed early on in a different part of Stillwater, but he soon took up carpentering because it was more lucrative.

John Earl built a large number of barns in the area. He traveled in a horse and wagon with "John W. Earl, Contractor and Builder" painted on the side. He died before Lawrence was born but Lawrence researched his career from 1880 until the time of his death in 1920. Lawrence donated a copy of his research to the Historical Society.

Growing up during the Depression, Lawrence learned to earn and save up for what he wanted. He and the other boys in Stillwater would trap skunks and muskrats and sell them to Mr. Westbrook. For skunks, the price depended on how much white there was in the fur (the less, the better). For a while, young Lawrence also made some money catching nightwalkers. He even had some steady customers from Easton who had places at Silver Lake.

Lawrence began working on his father's crew at 15, though he was a go-fer for the crew during the summers long before that. He has an amusing story about spilling a bucket of paint on the job. He hid it by digging a hole and covering it with dirt, only to have the owner step right in it!

As a child, Lawrence attended the local one-room schoolhouse and was taught by Dr. James R. Dalling. One of his favorite chores at school was to carry the water bucket because two students needed to do the job and they could dawdle. The good students got that job.

There were as many as 60 students at a time in the schoolhouse, covering grades 1 through 8. It was so crowded that, one year, Lawrence and Glendon Rosenkrans shared a desk. In addition to Dr. Dalling, the school had a county helping teacher, Miss Farber. She came about once per month to, Lawrence believes, check the students' progress.

Lawrence graduated from 8th grade when he was 11 years old and he began to attend Newton High School. After high school, Lawrence spent one year at Rutgers Prep thanks to a scholarship that Mr. Garabrandt helped him win. After that, he attended the Newark College of Engineering from which he graduated in 1943.

Two weeks after graduating from college, Lawrence joined the army reserves. He attended Officer Candidate School at the current Seymour Johnson AFB in North Carolina and at Yale. He graduated from OCS and was commissioned through the Air Corps as a communications officer. He later attended MIT to learn how to make Loran Navigation charts.

Meanwhile, back in New Jersey, Lawrence's mother was contributing to the war effort by working in the civil defense as an aircraft spotter. She and Mrs. VanHorn had an observation post at the current Boat House restaurant.

Lawrence served for 3 years during World War II, returning to Stillwater in 1946. However, he decided to re-enlist and spent 30 years serving in the reserves. Over the years, he spent time at many different air bases, particularly at Andrews Air Base and Stewart Air Base.

Lawrence's wife, the former Helen Gaisler, was an RN who had been trained in Newark. She grew up on a farm in Blairstown and had also attended a one-room schoolhouse. Like Lawrence, she had gotten to carry the water pail in school.

In 1949, Lawrence built the house on Millbrook Road in which he and Helen currently live. He added on to it after the children arrived. Some of the lumber for the house came via railroad from Canada. The beams of the house were cut by Roy Bischoff, Sr. and hewn with a broad axe by Lawrence's father. Helen landscaped all the rock gardens on the property.

The entire Lawrence Earl interview is available for review at the Museum. If you know someone whom we should be interviewing as part of our Oral History project, please contact Rob Jacoby at 973-579-7245.

Booklets featuring the complete interview with Lawrence Earl are available for \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members. Please submit requests, along with \$2 for postage/handling, to: Historical Society of Stillwater Township, Attn: Lawrence Earl Oral History, PO Box 238, Stillwater, NJ 07875

Additions and corrections to Gus Roof's interview: Floyd Rosenkrans (not Roy) helped Gus' father rebuild the barn. Gus' father attended both elementary school and high school in the current Museum building. The school teacher's name was Dr. Dalling (not Dallan). Elsie Roof came from Norway. Gus and Elsie's sons Leon and George and their children take care of the cows and the chickens.

Did you know.....

- that those concerned about the preservation of New Jersey history should visit <http://njhistorywatch.blogspot.com> ?
- that there is a lot of information available about New Jersey history at www.HistoricStillwater.org ?
- that www.sussexcountyhistory.org/pascal/index3.htm is a good source for Sussex County genealogical information?
- that you can sign up for a great NJ history mailing list at <http://coursesa.matrix.msu.edu/~njersey/> ?

Museum Update

Many thanks to Louise Saal and Nan Horsfield for their leadership and on-going efforts in overhauling the Museum collection. They have been spending several hours each week reviewing and cataloging artifacts and organizing the genealogy records. They set up a research area in the old schoolroom to make the genealogy collection more accessible to the public. There is still a lot of work to be done but, hopefully, we will be able to have a grand opening of the renovated area in a few months. Please consider helping the project along by donating some time.

Louise and Nan reported that we are still in need of architect cabinets to properly store and preserve some of our larger documents and maps. If anyone knows of a good source or is able to donate cabinets, please contact Louise (973-383-8487) or Nan (908-362-9462)

Our Collection Grows

We have recently received several interesting donations to our collection. Thank you to those who donated the following artifacts:

Sadie Gass donated a bicycle which belonged to her grandfather, William Albert Sipley, of Wintermute Foundry (photo below). The bike was manufactured by the Western Wheel Works of Chicago, circa 1898.

A wooden wagon jack from the Jacob Emmons farm along the Paulinskill River in Middleville was donated by James L.D. Monroe, Captain, SC, USN (ret.) (photo below). Capt. Monroe was a former resident of Middleville and worked in the Robbins General Store as a teenager.

Nan and Tom Horsfield donated a sewing machine which had been used by Dr. Landis' wife and butter dishes used by Jenny Snook at the Maple Grove Farm in Fredon.



Peach Festival 2009

We had already lucked-out with great weather for the Strawberry Festival in June, but we were fortunate a second time on August 16th for our Peach Festival. It was well-attended and, besides the Bake Sale and the peaches, many visitors enjoyed tours of the Museum.

It was the proverbial win-win event - a great fund-raiser for HSST and a wonderful time for those who attended. Thank you to those who worked so hard to make this a success.



Peaches can be a LOT of work!



No complaints here...



A relaxing way to spend a Sunday afternoon.

Fall Festival 2009

The Fall Festival on October 3rd was a big success thanks to chairpersons Deborah Drumm and Chris Petrullo and to all those who volunteered to help out with the Festival. This event is a huge undertaking and everyone's efforts are appreciated. The community and many local businesses came out and showed their support of HSST's mission through very generous sponsorships and donations of time and money.

The Festival featured a wide variety of activities for all ages including scarecrow-making, face-painting, a horseshoe contest and pumpkin-picking. There was live music, vendors, popcorn and plenty of food. The weather was not as cooperative as we had hoped, but everyone enjoyed themselves nonetheless.

This year, we had our first Apple Pie contest. Contestants submitted two identical pies - one for judging and the other for the Bake Sale. Winners of the Apple Pie contest were: 1st place, Rita Petry; 2nd place, Laurie Gordon; and 3rd place, Nancy Scalley.



Welcome to the Festival!



Vendors were happy with the crowd.

*Fall Festival photographs by
Chris Petrullo & Betty English*



Ready to make scarecrows!



The Girl Scouts lent a hand.



The music was the icing on the cake.



Judging the Apple Pie Contest



Enjoying the Refreshments

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

Donation: ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other \$_____

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

4th Annual Fall Festival Thank You To Our Sponsors

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(www.historichousehunter.com)

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