

The Cranbury Historical & Preservation Society

NEWSLETTER



Volume 35, Issue One

March 2010

THERE'S MORE TO NJ THAN THE SOPRANOS!

AUTHOR MARC MAPPEN

FRIDAY, MARCH 19, 2010

POTLUCK SUPPER



The Society is pleased to report that all are invited to attend the spring Potluck Supper on Friday, March 19 at 6:30 PM at the 1st Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall. Please remember to bring a covered dish to share along with your own place setting and utensils. Beverages will be provided by the Society. As always, family and friends of society members are welcome to join us.

Our speaker, Dr. Marc Mappen, Executive Director of the New Jersey Historical Commission, will discuss and sign copies of his book, *There's More to New Jersey than the Sopranos* (Rutgers University Press, 2009). He will explore some amusing and less-known anecdotes from New Jersey's past. Formerly an associate dean at Rutgers University, his work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times* and *New Jersey Heritage*, among other publications. Dr. Mappen is co-editor of the award-winning *Encyclopedia of New Jersey*.

In addition, a silent auction of 1950s Stangl pottery in the Thistle pattern will be held. This promises to be an evening you won't want to miss!

Michelle Newman-Dickey and
Mia Lindberg, *Vice Presidents &*
Program Chairmen

President's Message

This year is the 35th anniversary of the Arthur E. Perrine Memorial Wing of the museum. Dedicated on May 26, 1975, this area of the museum has held so many interesting exhibits through the years and is used for meetings, social gatherings and workshops. Its beams came from five Cranbury Township barns. In the basement of the wing are items from Cranbury businesses and organizations, photos, Civil War items, Native American artifacts, as well as building tools, agricultural implements, signs and so much more. If you have not been in this part of the museum recently, please plan to visit sometime soon. The Society is thankful that Mary Elizabeth Perrine had this part of the museum built in memory of her father. What a generous gift that was!

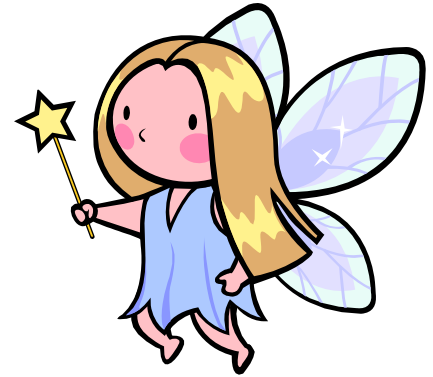
To learn more about Mary Elizabeth Perrine, Arthur Perrine and ten other people who have been important to the Society, please visit the current exhibit, "*Cranbury Treasures*." The exhibit will run through April 11 and also features gift items that the Society has made available through the years.

I hope to see you at our Potluck Supper on Friday, March 19.

My best wishes,
Audrey Smith

A Special Library Party Held at the Museum

The museum was visited on Saturday, February 20 by a group of twelve guests from grades 1 to 3, for an elegantly decorated Fairy Tea Party sponsored by the Cranbury Public Library. Adorned with gossamer wings and gracious party manners, the guests enjoyed tea with decorated cookies, fairy tales told by Erika Kruse, and a teacup arrangement to take home, courtesy of Kathy Burke. Many parents were at the party and remarked that the museum was a new and delightful discovery for them.



The Society welcomes events such as this for young people — of all ages! If you have suggestions for future programs, please contact President Audrey Smith at aud123abc@aol.com or Museum Curator Lisa Beach at jlmtbeach@aol.com

Barn Project Update

The New Jersey Barn Company is repairing the historic timbers of the Parsonage Barn, c. 1770, that will be re-erected at the Barn Park on Cranbury Neck Road later this year. This project of the Society is under the capable leadership of Mark Berkowsky and Bill Bunting, in cooperation with the Township of Cranbury.

Spring Cleaning?



Please don't forget the Society when you do your spring cleaning! Are you a former officer or committee chair with files at home or do you have any other Cranbury memorabilia? The Society will be happy to go through your items to enhance our files. Please contact Betty Wagner at 609-655-3736.



Quilt Raffle

Our quilt raffle was very successful! The raffle drawing took place at the Museum on November 15 And the winner was....

Michelle Newman-Dickey!

Congratulations to Michelle and thanks to all who supported the raffle by selling or purchasing tickets!



**ANOTHER
BEAUTIFUL
HOLIDAY
DISPLAY
AT THE
MUSEUM**

**THANKS TO A HOST OF
TALENTED
VOLUNTEERS!**

‘Thank you’s’ are due! Once again the Museum was beautifully decorated for the holiday season. Individuals and teams provided seasonal displays in all the rooms.

Magic was worked in the:

Parlor by Lyn Lakner, with carolers and warm home settings

Dining Room by Ginny Swanagan with a surprise visit by Santa and company

Children’s Bedroom by Fiona Romaine and Jill Cunsolo with beautiful candy topiaries and enticing decorations for the young ones

Master Bedroom by Doris Naylor came to life with wrapped gifts and colorful linens

Kitchen by Aida Zanghi, who decorations made this “heart of the home” truly warm and cheerful

Hallways & outside by Norma Swale, who kept the spirit flowing with several seasonal decorations.

Thank you Team 2009 for all the creative energy you put into this task. Want to do it again in 2010? Choose your room soon ~ first come, first to serve! We at the museum are always looking for others to help decorate for the Christmas holidays. If you would like to be part of this fun tradition, call Norma Swale at 609-655-3028.

George Washington in Cranbury

A second printing of *George Washington in Cranbury* by John Whiteclay Chambers II will be published this year. Some new information and additional illustrations have been included. The Cranbury Historical & Preservation Society first published the book in 2003, and in 2004 Dr. Chambers received an award for this publication from the League of Historical Societies of New Jersey. John Chambers is featured in the exhibit, “Cranbury Treasures,” at the museum through April 11, 2010.

Committee Opportunities

The Education Committee and the Fundraising Committee are new this year. The Education Committee will develop programs for school classes, families and other community members. The Fundraising Committee will plan fundraisers for 2010. If you would like to be a member of any of the committees listed in this newsletter, please contact Audrey Smith at 609-655-5361 or aud123abc@aol.com.

BAPTIST MEETING HOUSE - IN CRANBURY 1748 - 1785

New Jersey's first Baptist Church was founded 1688 in Middletown, Monmouth County. This was the Mother Church of all Baptist Meeting Houses in the Province of East Jersey.

Organization of meeting houses followed in Piscataway - 1689 with six members, Cohansey, Salem County - 1690 with nine members and 1737 saw the formation of Yellow Meeting House - Upper Freehold near Imlaystown. Yellow Meeting House is the oldest standing Baptist meetinghouse in New Jersey. No longer in use as a meetinghouse it sits in a quiet clearing and is the burial place of Abraham Lincoln's great-grandparents.



Yellow Meeting House

Before a meetinghouse was established in Cranbury, Baptists in the vicinity of Cranbury, Missionary Pastors, and beginning in about 1706, ministers who traveled between Holmdel and Upper Freehold, visited Hightstown and Windsor. Services were held in homes. Many services were held in the home of John Hight for whom Hightstown is named. By 1745 there were 17 people in the area who were members of the Middletown Church, which they attended when a missionary minister was not available. Traveling to Middletown was long and especially difficult during undesirable weather. The Baptist Association felt a church was needed in the area. Cranbury was chosen as the location for the meetinghouse, primarily because of the town's closeness to Middletown and the headquarters of Gospel Ministries and of the Ordinances (about 30 miles by horse). Minutes of the Philadelphia Association (Minute 1745, pg 49. A.B.P. Soc. Ed. 1851) state: "Agreed and concluded pursuant to requests made by the Brethren about Cranbury, that our Brethren, Nathaniel Jenkins and Jenkin Jones, in order to settle the members there, in church order."

Pastors Jenkin Jones of Penepack (Pennypack), PA and Nathaniel Jenkins of Cohansey were in attendance Nov 1, 1745 for the first meeting and blessing of the Cranbury Baptist Meeting House.

Cranbury Meeting House was built 1748. Conveyance of the meetinghouse property is dated April 15, 1746. It was reported to have been a plain wooden structure, inside and out, almost like a small barn - small windows, poorly lit, no stove to heat in the winter. Services were held 11am to 1pm with occasional night services depending upon weather. The first sexton was listed as "Brother Thomas Morris". He maintained the building, grounds and dug graves.

Organization of the meetinghouse was attributed to the work of James Carman; a Middletown licensed Missionary Pastor who traveled 40 or more miles three to four times a week to preach in the area. November 3, 1745, James Carman was ordained at age 67 as pastor of the new meetinghouse. Records do not show if he received a salary. It is thought that he most likely did not. Rev. Carman died during his pastorate in 1756, age 78. He was buried in the small burial ground near the meetinghouse. In 1899 his remains were disinterred and buried in Hightstown.

Six years of interim pastors passed until Peter Wilson was called May 13, 1782. Peter Wilson was born in

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Windsor Township May 14, 1753 and baptized by James Carman on May 1, 1776. A tailor by trade, Peter Wilson was licensed to preach in 1780 and ordained May 13, 1782. He had a large parish extending from the Raritan and Atlantic to the Delaware and into Pennsylvania. He baptized 203 people within nine years traveling about New Jersey on horseback. He was described as "a missionary committee in himself; a state convention in himself" and was a clerk of the Philadelphia Association. He lived with his wife Mary Fisher Wilson on Stockton Street, Hightstown. Peter Wilson died May 19, 1824 and was buried near Hightstown's first Baptist Meeting House on North Main Street.

The removal of the Cranbury Baptist congregation to Hightstown was during Peter Wilson's pastorate. What led to the move is not known. There was no place of worship at this time in Hightstown; Cranbury had the Presbyterian Church. It was stated that there was an oral agreement with the Presbyterians that if the Baptists moved to Hightstown, the Presbyterians would not found a church there. No verification of this agreement was ever made. The move though avoided local rivalries. It is possible that Hightstown and Windsor had a larger population of Baptists than Cranbury, and that may have been the reason for the move.

The first Hightstown Baptist meeting was held Friday, Nov 11, 1785. Records don't state whether the meeting-house was yet built. One half acre of land, purchased from William Smith April 3, 1784, held the new church - 40 X 30 feet; well finished with a stove to heat which the Cranbury meeting house lacked; galleries and a sounding board over the pulpit. It was much more modern and comfortable than the small rustic meetinghouse in Cranbury.

The Cranbury meeting house and property adjoining the burial ground were sold to Dr. Stites. The meeting-house was removed and the front portion of the property later sold. The Baptist burial ground in Cranbury was located where a parking lot sits behind businesses on North Main Street and along Park Place West.

In March 1900, a church committee found that the Cranbury burial ground was in poor condition. Many stones were worn, broken or missing. The names of those unmarked graves were not known. Four headstones remained standing and a few lying on the ground with inscriptions unreadable. The four standing stones and possibly a few fallen stones were moved to Hightstown. The graveyard lot was sold in April 1900 to J. S. Silvers & Bro for \$300. The Silvers company helped with the removal of the graves. *Have all the remains been removed or are some souls sleeping under parked cars waiting for a ride?*

Inscriptions of the four standing headstones

"Here lies the body of John, son of Joseph and Margaret Taylor, who departed this life January 20th 1761"

"In memory of John Chamberlain who departed this life March 15th 1783, aged 71"

"In memory of Hannah Chamberlain who departed this life June 30th 1807"

"In memory of James Perrine who departed this life March 26th 1811 aged 79 years and 10 months.

Hightstown's First Baptist Meeting House

Ref: History of Union and Middlesex Counties, NJ, W. Woodford Clayton; 1882

"The Genealogical Magazine of NJ", vol. 63, No. 3, Sept. 1988

A Pastor's 25th and A Church's 150th Anniversary, The Hightstown Baptist Church,
Nov 1895; Rev. Owen P. Eaches, D. D.; G. W. Burroughs pub.; Cranbury, NJ

A History of Baptists in New Jersey, Thomas S. Griffiths; Barr Press Pub. Co., Hightstown, NJ; 1904

Submitted by Roi Taylor, History Center

2010 OFFICERS

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Vice Presidents/Program Chairmen	Mia Lindberg, Michelle Newman-Dickey
Recording Secretary	Michaele Kehrt
Corresponding Secretary	Jan Wagner
Treasurer	Bob Dreyling
Immediate Past President	Patti Long
Museum Curator	Lisa Beach
Museum Co-Curator	Lynn Lakner
History Center Director	Roi Taylor
Legal Counsel/Parliamentarian	Bill Bunting

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Associations/ Public Relations- Betty Wagner, Ginny Swanagan,

Buildings and Grounds- David Szabo, Lisa Beach, Lynn Lakner, Bill Bunting, George Smith, Norma Swale

Docents- Bonnie Wagman- Lisa Beach, Don Davidson, Arlene Duran, Corrine Hertz, Helene Hughes, Melanie Johnson, Lynn Lakner, Susan Saravalli, Ginny Swanagan, Betty Wagner, Renee Welch, Walt Wright, Betty Lou Ziegler **Substitutes:** Carol Lindenfeld, Patti Long, Norma Swale, Paul Venanzi, Ginny Swanagan, Kathy Wise, David Szabo, Abby Gordon, Jan Wagner

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Museum Inspectors- George Smith Anna Drago, Kay & John Gartner, Beverley & Craig Gilbert, Jane Huff & Lil Conley, Bill Keller, Dot & Al Kocher, Mark Madden, George & Audrey Smith, Stan & Gretchen Stults, Bonnie & Mahlon Thompson

Newsletter- Lorraine Sedor

Publicity- Audrey Smith

Website- Rob Diamond

Docents Wanted

Would you like to learn more about our museum and meet new people? Becoming a docent or a substitute docent may be a perfect opportunity for you. You will receive training and be scheduled at the museum one Sunday afternoon each month, a commitment of just three hours! To learn more, please contact Docent Chairman, Bonnie Wagman, at 609-662-0667 or lee@personalityresources.com.

Membership Update

Welcome to our new members Corrine Hertz, Catherine McCarroll, Betty Carman and Vincent Pierdinock, Joanna Rose, Suzanne Silvers, and the Matcham family. Thanks to our business members, Allen & Stults, Chip Trucking, Herr's Heating & Plumbing, Long Motor Company and to all our members who have renewed their membership in 2010. If you have not renewed your membership for 2010, please use the renewal form below. Please share this newsletter and membership information with friends and neighbors who may be interested in our activities and in becoming members. The Society appreciates your support!



In Memoriam

We are saddened by the death of longtime Cranbury resident and Society member, Ruth Davison, on January 10, 2010



2010 Membership Form

Mail checks to: **Cranbury Historical & Preservation Society**, P.O. Box 77, Cranbury, NJ 08512

Membership Status (check one): ___New ___Renewal

Membership Category (check one): ___Individual, \$15.00 ___Family, \$25.00 ___Sponsor, \$35.00

___Patron, \$50.00 or more ___Corporate, \$150.00 or more

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

I prefer to receive my CHPS newsletter by: Email Mail

Matching gifts are a significant source of support for the Society. If you work (or have retired from) one of the hundreds of companies that generously match employee donations, please don't let this opportunity pass you by. Just ask your Personnel Office for a Matching Gift form, fill it in and send it to us. We'll do the rest. Together we can continue to preserve our unique heritage.

Please consider one or more of the following volunteer opportunities: Museum docent:___ Social functions:___

House tour:___ Educational programs:___ Fundraising:___ Publicity:___

Other: _____



Recent Acquisitions

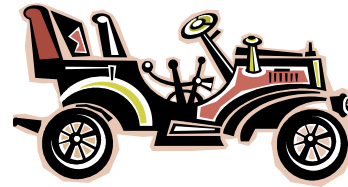
The Acquisitions Committee gratefully acknowledges the following gifts to the Society: three nested ceramic pudding molds from Eileen Griggs McGillan; doll carriage from Libby Field Ewing; milk bottle, book, atlas, WWII duffel bag, bank guard badge & cloth police badge from Ken Eiker; bowler hat from Lillian Conley; wooden crate from Mary & Gene Speer; blown glass Christmas tree topper from Rose Eller; metal ball from top of Cranbury water tower from American Water Co.; three pieces of stained glass (see above) and account books from First National Bank of Cranbury from PNC bank; 1915 Victor Victrola from Richard Betz. Our thanks to these generous donors!

Please Renew Your Membership Today!

A 2010 membership form is located on page five of this newsletter. Why not renew right now? Each contribution by our members and supporters is truly appreciated and used responsibly to maintain our historic building, preserve documents and artifacts and educate our citizens and visitors.

A Friendly Reminder

We are asking that all volunteers and guests of the museum refrain from parking in the Bookworm parking lot when visiting the museum. Thank you for being a good neighbor!



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Cranbury Museum

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Cranbury History Center

6 South Main Street
Open Tuesdays 10:30 to 1:30 & by appt.
Ph: 609/860-1889
Email: historycenter@comcast.net
Web: www.cranburyhistory.org
Webmaster: webmaster@cranburyhistory.org