

The Cranbury Historical & Preservation Society

NEWSLETTER



Volume 36, Issue One

March 2011

Cranbury Historical Society Potluck Supper Friday, April 1 at 6:30 PM First Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall

Bring a dish or dessert to share, as well as your own plates and utensils. Beverages will be provided.

Featuring Roger Muessig, President of the New Jersey Civil War History Association

Roger will talk about Cranbury's part in the Civil War that began 150 years ago in April and the new Civil War monument that will be donated by the New Jersey Civil War History Association and dedicated in Memorial Park in Cranbury on Saturday, June 11, 2011. Roger began re-enacting as a living historian in 1993 as a private in the 3rd NJ and became Captain in the 14th NJ in 1997. He has attended approximately 200 reenactments and living histories. He is a member of the United States Volunteers, The Batsto Citizen Committee, Friends of St. Mary Historic Cemetery and the Pinelands Preservation Alliance.

Michelle Newman-Dickey
Vice President & Program Chairman



*See related story
about the dedication of
our Civil War
Monument on page 2.*

President's Message

Have you shared the Society with your friends and neighbors? We now have a beautiful brochure with photographs and descriptions of what CHPS has to offer for just that purpose. Please let me know if you would like to have one to give to someone who may be interested in membership. Displaying the membership sticker you have received and giving a gift membership are also ways you can let others know about the Society. I am proud of what we have accomplished through the years and I'm sure you are, too.

I am especially proud of our History Center at 6 South Main Street. It houses our collection of visual, oral, and written records of Cranbury's history. It also provides storage for artifacts and memorabilia not on exhibit at the Museum, as well as our textile collections. It is open on Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m.- 1:30 p.m. for research and use of the Society's records. Roi Taylor, History Center Director, has reported that volunteers are needed to work at the History Center in several areas. Please contact Roi at historycenter@comcast.net or stop by soon on a Tuesday to see how you can help.

If your 2011 membership renewal was not received by the middle of February, you received a reminder from our Membership Committee. If you have not already sent in your renewal, I hope you will mail it with the membership form that is included with this newsletter.

In this newsletter, you will read about past and future events. Our Society is actively involved in many areas. Please check our website at cranburyhistory.org for our latest news. I hope to see you at our Potluck Supper meeting on April 1.

Audrey Smith
aud123abc@aol.com

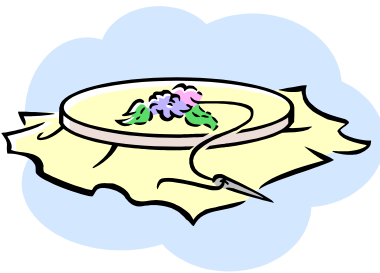
Society Acquisitions

The Acquisitions Committee gratefully acknowledges the following gifts to the Society: Christmas ornaments from Walter Wright; engraved brass labels from Paige L'Hommedieu for Civil War items he had previously donated; wooden box, with poker chips and cards, made by Les Perrine in 1941 for the men's "Walk to Poker" Club, from Arthur Danser; a never used "Baker Bros. & Brown" 10 lb. paper potato sack and local business receipts from John Katerba of Monroe Township Historical Society; a patchwork quilt from Curt and Claire Lindberg; and a "Davison Silvers & Co. Cranbury, NJ" small glass bottle from Charlie Paul of Iselin, NJ.



Civil War Monument Dedication Scheduled

On June 11, a Civil War Monument will be dedicated in Memorial Park. The monument is a gift from the New Jersey Civil War History Association and the dedication is being planned by that organization, Cranbury Township, and CHPS. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend this event that will honor the memory of those from the Cranbury area who served in the Civil War. In the weeks ahead, please check our website, cranburyhistory.org for more information.



Cranbury Museum Exhibits

An exhibit of beautiful needlework from the Society's collection opened at the Museum on Sunday, February 27 and will run through April 3. On April 17, an exhibit featuring life in Cranbury at the time of the Civil War will open and will run through mid July.

George Washington in Cranbury

The second edition of *George Washington in Cranbury* by John Whiteclay Chambers II was published in 2010 and includes new information and additional illustrations. This expanded edition is now available for \$10.00 at the History Center and at the Museum or by mailing a check, payable to CHPS, to Cranbury Historical & Preservation Society, PO Box 77, Cranbury, New Jersey 08512.

Cranbury Museum Hosts School Tours

Following a successful series of fall tours of the Museum for third and fourth graders in Cranbury, this coming Spring the Society plans to education programs for the Cranbury School in the form of class trips consisting of educational walking tours of Cranbury. Don Davidson will be working with various school personnel to schedule these tours in April and May. The 4th, 5th and 8th grades will be given the opportunity to learn more about local Cranbury history, Colonial history with emphasis on George Washington's historic visit to our Village, and missionary David Brainerd's involvement in Cranbury, all of which meshes with the grades' history curricula.

The CHPS is very excited about the relationship we have enjoyed this year with the Cranbury School. Our town and Museum are so rich in history and probably not fully appreciated by many of our young residents (and their parents). These tours provided us an opportunity to promote our Museum and hopefully to increase visitation while, at the same time, providing the school with free and worthwhile class trips for several grade levels.

Don Davidson

Parsonage Barn Dedication

The Parsonage Barn at the Cranbury Barn Park was dedicated on Sunday, November 7. An enthusiastic crowd gathered to enjoy the beautiful day and learn about the history of the barn and its reconstruction. Among those in attendance were The Rev. Dr. Louis Mitchell who gave the Invocation; the Cranbury Scout Band directed by Jerry Yochelson; Cranbury Township Committee members, Mayor David Stout, Win Cody, David Cook and Jay Taylor; Bill Bunting, President of Cranbury Landmarks, Inc. and Mark Berkowsky who along with Bill was a Barn Project Manager; Michael Kaiser of Kaiser Building Co.; Betty Wagner, Cranbury Township Historian and Audrey Smith, President of the Society.



Above: Visitors touring the Parsonage Barn in November.

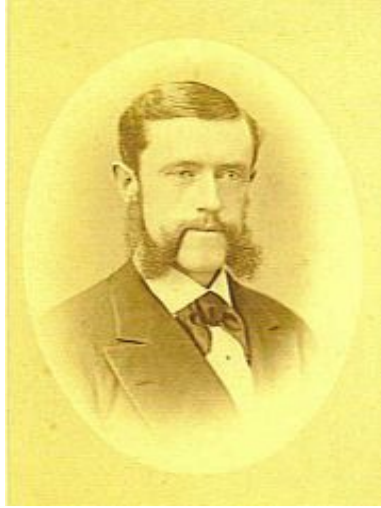
Cranbury Wassail

Cranbury Wassail on December 11 was an enjoyable evening for all who attended. The Society thanks Kathie and Peter Wise, Ruth and Andy Jost, Loida Wilson and Ben Mugrage, Pam and David Szabo, Mia and Keith Lindberg, and Bobbie and Frank Marlowe, who opened their homes, as well as Ginny and Don Swanagan and Jill Westerberg who provided/hosted dessert at the Museum that evening. The Society appreciates the talents of Peter Wise, Andy Jost, Lynn Lakner, and Tim Brennan who each portrayed a character from Cranbury's history and to all those who were group leaders, donated food and helped with serving.

Andy Jost (below left) as George Washington and Peter Wise (below) as Hezekiah Stites entertain guests at the Cranbury Wassail.



**REV. JOHN & MRS. SADIE RUE MURRAY
MISSIONARIES IN SHANTUNG PROVINCE, CHINA
1876 - 1926**



**Born – Oct 8, 1846
Died – Feb 18, 1929**



**Born – March 5, 1851
Died – Oct 12, 1902**

Married - Sept 6, 1876 - Cranbury 1st Presbyterian Church

A member of the 1st Presbyterian Church Foreign Missionary Society wrote this undated account. (The 1st Presbyterian Church of Cranbury and other churches sponsored Rev. and Mrs. Murray as missionaries.)

In the fall of 1876 a young missionary & his bride said "Goodbyes" to many loved ones and started on their long journey to the Orient. Of course this young couple wondered what China would be like & how they would be received by the people. When they arrived at Tsinan, they found the opposition to the foreigners very strong. Every obstacle was put in the way of their securing property of any kind. The only places obtainable were "haunted houses".

The hardships and disappointments which followed were enough to discourage the most stout hearted, but the young missionary & his bride kept bravely on with the work & in 1880 the Murray High School for girls was opened & a station firmly established on property of its own.

Mrs. Murray was staying awhile on a house boat on the Yellow River, the river is supposed to be consecrated & if the waters are disturbed the "Gods" would be angry. Mrs. Murray's oldest son was playing around the deck of the boat & fell into the water, the Chinese all around saw him fall, but made no effort what ever to get him out thinking they would disturb the Gods. Mrs. Murray nearly frantic (the boy had gone down twice) grabbed a long pole with a hook on the end & succeeded in getting him out.

For 18 years Mr. & Mrs. Murray lived right in the heart of densely crowded Tsinan. As has been said, the only houses available in this crowded city were those the natives would not rent "haunted houses". Mrs. Murray to a wonderful degree made these wretched quarters cheery & comfortable while the cramped courts ere long became a mass of bloom, for

Mrs. Murray was fond of flowers. But she couldn't change the sultry summer days, the close hot nights nor could she purify the foul air which hung as a pall over the city. While to take the children on the street would be the signal for all the hooting, yelling youngsters in the neighborhood to dog your steps. And yet Mrs. Murray brought up her three boys (Walter, William, James) under such conditions until they could go home to America to school.



Mr. Murray spoke, "Take a part of my work in 1904, four country churches under my charge which are about 50 miles apart & in a square with all the territory all around & in between. Baptized 68 adults, superintended several small country schools. Took my turn preaching in a city church & conversed with many visitors at home & in the country."

Among many bright memory fixtures here is one. A village in the North Country, sixty miles from the city there live several Christian families; poor as the world would rate them but rich in the kingdom of God. As I near their home, out run the little boys & girls to meet me, one leads my donkey another carries my whip another takes my books. As many as possible get hold of my hands leading me on to the place of meeting, all shouting in childish glee "Pastor Murray has come!" Then comes the welcome of older men & women. To them I have but one title "Mu Shi" Pastor, Shepherd, enough for me.

Some years earlier, Mr. & Mrs. Murray & children were forced to take refuge to escape from a threatened mob of violence. At the time the outlook was so serious, that it seemed the China station would have to be temporarily abandoned. Such were the trials of the pioneer missionaries.

A story is told how during the Boxer Rebellion, thieves were looting the mission station. In Mrs. Murray's home was a large doll which had been sent from America for her little girl. It was in the box it was sent in looking almost like a dead child. The Chinese thieves never having seen anything so lovely thought it must be an angel of some spirit, dropped the box, broke the doll & ran as fast as they could out of the village.

Mr. & Mrs. Murray had five children, three boys & two girls. In 1888 as Mr. & Mrs. Murray were returning (to China) from their first furlough they lost, while on the Atlantic, their little daughter (Julia) who died from suppressed measles. Mrs. Murray was back in China only a few months when during Mr. Murray's absence at mission meeting away at Tingchow, the other end of the Province, she was taken down with Asiatic cholera. There was no other lady at the station to nurse her, not even a European doctor to attend her.

In 1902 Mrs. Murray was called to her "reward" & Mr. Murray was left to carry on alone & to plan the education of their youngest daughter Helen. Mrs. Murray was ill only two weeks. After the fever fell she became very weak & she sank rapidly. It was a most peaceful end to a life of unusual activity & usefulness.



Murray High School - Tsinan Fu, China

More information from the Murray file at the History Center: During a memorial for Rev. John Murray at the 1st Presbyterian Church, Cranbury in 1929 a story was told of "Mr. Murray's life of hardship and even danger at times." One story took place when Mr. Murray was returning from a distant travel and hired a boy to help pull his wheelbarrow. The boy neglected to tell his family where he was going and some companions reported that a "foreign devil" had carried him off. Two relatives went after the boy and without asking for an explanation they attacked Mr. Murray. Villagers came to his rescue and took him to a home of a native Christian. A call went to find a missionary doctor who

was a day's journey away. The doctor was escorted by an armed guard from the Provincial Governor to the aid of Mr. Murray. Mr. Murray was taken back to Tsinan Fu. The injuries were thought to have been fatal but Mr. Murray made a good recovery and lived many more years to the service of his mission.

When finally leaving the field in 1926 for his last journey to the homeland, Mr. Murray said, "The hardest job I have ever done is pulling up the roots of a lifetime and leaving China."

In the booklet, American Presbyterian Mission Work in Shantung Province, China 2nd Edition 1861-1913, page 33 mentions that Mrs. Murray opened a Primary School for Girls in 1880; slow to acceptance from the Chinese then grew to six primary schools in the province. (This booklet is not in the History Center archives but may be found on the internet. Internet address – www.archive.org in 'search' enter the title of booklet)

Betty O. Dickson's note about her mother Helen Murray: Helen Marie Murray returned to Cranbury at the age of ten after her mother's death. She lived with her mother's sister Maude Rue on South Main Street. Helen attended Wilson College became a 2nd grade teacher in Clifton, NJ. Reverend Murray was somewhat bothered that she would not return to teach in the Murray High School. Helen Marie Murray Offt moved to Rossmoor in 1970 to be close to Cranbury and her old friends. She died in 1979.

Maude Rue donated the Baptismal Font in the 1st Presbyterian Church in memory of her sister Sadie Rue Murray.

**CRANBURY HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION SOCIETY
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Christmas Tea at the Museum

On Sunday afternoon, December 5, the Museum opened its doors and welcomed all who entered to enjoy spiced tea, punch, cookies, and music and to see the rooms of the museum decorated beautifully for the season. Visitors of all ages viewed the exhibit of dolls from American history and Hess toy trucks on loan from many of Cranbury's children. A tree donated by William L. Bunting, Jr. was the centerpiece of the Museum's Exhibit Room. The Society thanks all who decorated the Museum, donated cookies and tea ingredients and served refreshments.

Welcome New Members

A warm welcome to our newest members, James Gilligan, Angela Holman, Leslie and Mike Kasper & Raymond and Susan White. Thank you for joining us!

How to Become a Museum Docent

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. To learn more, please contact Docent Chairman, Bonnie Wagman at 609-662-0667 or lee@personalityresources.com.



In Memoriam

*The Society notes with sadness the passing of
John Bloom
October 14, 2011*

A Note from the Membership Committee:

As we kick off the new year we would like to thank you for your generous contributions!

We are in the process of updating our membership database so please advise us if there are any changes in your membership information. We are also working on a membership drive so please let us know if you have neighbors or friends who you would like to see as members of CHPS. We would love to share with them all the activities that the Society offers. Hope to see you at the potluck supper on April 1st !

Ruth Jost (609)235-9078; ruthjost@comcast.net; Karen Fiorentini (609)655-2180; kmfiorentini@gmail.com

2011 Membership Form — Mail with payment to CHPS, PO Box 77, Cranbury, NJ 08512

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

____ Individual- \$15.00

____ Patron- \$50.00

____ Family- \$25.00

____ Corporate- \$150.00 or more

____ Sponsor- \$35.00

____ Other- _____

CHPS is a non-profit, self-supporting organization. Your contribution is fully tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Matching gifts are a significant source of support for the Society. If you work for, or have retired from, one of the many companies that match employee donations, please ask your personnel office for a matching gift form.

Volunteer Opportunities:

Museum Docent _____ House Tour _____ Educational Programs _____ Fundraising _____ Publicity _____

2011 House Tour Date Set

This year's House Tour will take place on October 15. It's not too late to be in on the planning or to sign up to help in some way. If you would like to help, please contact Audrey Smith at aud123abc@aol.com.

You won't want to miss this wonderful Cranbury tradition that is enjoyed by so many. As in years past, the Friends of the Cranbury Library will be serving a delicious luncheon for the House Tour. Ticket information will be in the June CHPS newsletter and on our web-site, cranburyhistory.org.

The Parsonage Barn was dedicated on November 7. To learn more about the dedication, please read the article on page 3.



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Cranbury Museum

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Ph: 609/655-2611

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