

The Cranbury Historical & Preservation Society

NEWSLETTER



VOLUME 31, ISSUE TWO

JULY, 2006

CELEBRATE THE 4TH ON THE 5TH AT VILLAGE PARK!

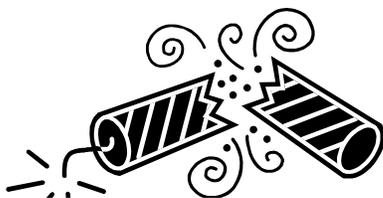
Pack your picnic, blanket and chairs! The town's annual Independence Day celebration will take place on Wednesday, July 5 at the Village Park.

Come as early as you like to pick your favorite viewing spot and enjoy the day. The music begins at 6:30 p.m., when the Mercer County Symphonic Band, a perennial favorite, sets up in the gazebo. Patriotic and popular tunes will be the order of the day. At dusk, the sky over Brainerd Lake will be awash with the glow of hundreds of fireworks.

In the event of rain, the fireworks will take place on Thursday, July 6th at dusk. There will not be a concert prior.

The Independence Day fireworks and music are cosponsored by the Society and the Township's Cultural and Heritage Committee.

Normadelle Swale,
Vice-President & Program Chair



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CARL HELSTROM

Dear Members,

As this newsletter shows, the Society has been very active this year.

Congratulations to the Website Committee (Rob Diamond, Roi Taylor, and Dave Szabo) for launching the Society's new website, www.cranburyhistory.org. The site currently utilizes information the Society already provided in print or through the Lions Club's website. Our plan is to develop it into an online exhibition, research, and communication tool, as well.

Congratulations also to the Float Committee for garnering "Best Float" honors at the Memorial Day Parade. Led by Peter Turner, the freshmen Trustees (especially Mary Beth Graydon, Fiona Romaine, and Mia Lindberg) created an eye-catching tribute to the old barns on Cranbury Neck Road. Rob Diamond was a great help, too, acquiring and driving the tractor that pulled the float.

The float provided an excellent opportunity to inform local residents about preserving the barns as a community park. As many of you know, the Society, the Lions Club, and the Township are working together to develop a preservation plan. The Society has agreed to administer private contributions for the project. Donations can be sent to: Barn Preservation Fund, Cranbury Historical and Preservation Society, PO Box 77, Cranbury, NJ 08512.

If and when it comes to fruition, the barn preservation project will require a lot of community involvement. With your help as donors and volunteers, the Society will play an integral role and Cranbury will end up another remarkable community resource.

NEW SALE ITEMS AVAILABLE CRANBURY DAY SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2006



Along with the Cranbury Day activities at the museum, there will be a sale table on Main Street where we will be selling some items that are currently available, as well as some new items that will be perfect for holiday gift giving. Please mark your calendar and plan to stop by our table on Cranbury Day to see these wonderful new additions to our sale items.

Also, just in time for summer reading and relaxing, the Society is offering a stylish, zippered tote. The bag can hold your favorite beach read and features the Cranbury Township seal. A bargain at \$25! Contact Betty Wagner at 655-3736 if you'd like to get yours in time for the Independence Day celebration at Village Park!

Landscaping Materials Sought

The Society is seeking donations of hardscape materials for use at the Museum. Stones, bricks, pavers, railroad ties all are needed to spruce up the paths and beds around the Museum. If you have any of the above leftover from a project, please contact Norma Swale, at 655-3028. Please note that materials will be accepted only if they can be used in the landscape design. Please do not bring materials to the Museum; Norma Swale will arrange pick up for you.

Fall Fashions for the Home Garden

The lazy days of summer will all too quickly give way to crisp, autumn days. Take the easy way of adding fall color to your home by ordering your fall plants from the Historical Society.

This year we will be offering colorful, local field-grown mums, cabbage, kale, corn stalks and the ever-popular winter-hardy pansies.

Orders can be placed at the Society table on Cranbury Day or by calling Karen (655-2180) or Norma (655-3028) before Sept. 15th. Prepaid orders can even be delivered to your home...keeping your car clean! Plants will be available Sept. 22nd and Sept. 23rd. Thanks for your support!



HISTORY CENTER NEWS ROI TAYLOR

A recent acquisition has come from Emma Forman Stults: 29 Forman and Stults family albums bursting at the bindings, dating from the late 1800s to the 1990s, two scrapbooks of newspaper articles, and various photos. The majority of these are of Emma and Bill Stults' three children and grandchildren. There are many old photos of Cranbury which will have to be sorted from the rest.

Over the years, Emma Stults has given much of her time to the historical society. She donated boxes crammed with files of genealogies of many old Cranbury families that she began working on before there was a historical society. Emma copied Presbyterian Church records of births, marriages and deaths for our files, she donated books for the history center and items for the museum. She's been a docent and volunteered for many events, projects and gave of herself whatever she was asked to do.

Several times since early 2005, the conference table in the history center has been loaded with boxes of files, photos and now albums all collected and compiled by Emma. It came to the point of the table groaning under the weight of these gifts that I have named the room the "**Emma Forman Stults Room.**" Digging through all her years of collecting we have found files containing what some call "treasures" of Cranbury history and genealogy. Emma was also the Presbyterian Church historian for a few decades.

Before Emma left NJ and she donated all these "treasures," she had me over to her house for training sessions to take over where she left off with her genealogy and church history work. We also traded Forman genealogy since we are cousins through the Forman and Wyckoff families.

Emma Stults is living in a nursing home close to her youngest daughter, Holly, and is being treated for bone cancer. If any of her old friends from home would like to write Emma, her address is: **Emma F. Stults, Casa Real Nursing Center, 1650 Galisteo St., Room 220, Santa Fe, NM 87505-4747.** Emma's birthday is

THE MYSTERY OF MARCUS AURELIUS STULTS

BY JERRY PEVAHOUSE

June 1, 1864, men of the 14th Regiment New Jersey Volunteers waited in formation on the left flank of the Union Army line at Cold Harbor Virginia. Across an open field, behind dirt fortifications the Rebel army also waited. After an all night 9 hour march beginning at 9:45 the previous evening the Union 6th Army Corps had arrived exhausted late that morning. The weather was very hot and dry. Along the march both men and horses had fallen from heat stroke. Assigned to the 6th Army Corps men of Company H, 14th NJ Volunteers waited and rested, talking and thinking of their friends and families back home in New Jersey.

Company H 1st Lieutenant Marcus Aurelius Stults was born on his family's farm at Prospect Plains just outside Cranbury, New Jersey. His cousin Captain Symmes Henry Stults had recruited Company H in Cranbury during August of 1862. They were close cousins, both born on adjoining farms in 1840. Marcus was well liked by the men of the company. He wrote many letters home to his parents Thomas and Mary Stults. His letters reveal a young man with sensitivity and intelligence. He stood six feet two inches tall with light brown hair and blue eyes. During winter camp of 1863-64 he had gained so much weight he had to have a new frock coat sewn at Frederick, Maryland.

The first battle for the company had been at Locust Grove, Virginia during late November 1863. Six men had been killed. Men had also died in camp of disease. To see men dying of wounds and disease began to trouble Marcus. While home on leave during February 1864 he confessed to Reverend Joseph G. Symmes of the First Presbyterian Church of Cranbury to being preoccupied with the belief he would not return home from the war. Troubled by the suffering around him he turned more to

home I have been remembered in your prayers, both in private and from the pulpit on the Sabbath. To my sorrow I must say I have never truly appreciated the true benefit of prayer, but I am convinced that the happiest life one can live is that of a Christian. But I must say a large part of our soldiers lead a different life. We have a good many Christian men in our regiment and their influence over the unruly is not small. We have a worthy chaplain in our Regiment. He lectures us very smartly every Sabbath. “

Late in the afternoon June 1, 1864 the Union battle line at Cold Harbor stretched out six miles long. At 4:30 PM the order was given to advance on the Rebel fortifications. In the blazing sun, their uniforms covered with dust from the long hot march from North Anna they began a slow advance across the open field toward the Rebel positions, Symmes and Marcus in front of the company leading the men. As their pace quickened the Rebel muskets fired a thunderous volley, men fell and the Rebel positions disappeared in a thick cloud of gray smoke. The Union line continued its steady advance leaving dead and wounded on the grass behind. Marcus led men from Company H directly into the Rebel positions, climbing over the dirt fortifications which had ironically been built by the Union Army two years earlier. Suddenly Marcus fell, a Rebel minnie ball piercing his chest. Rebel soldiers fired as they retreated, some were captured, and Marcus was carried back on the field and left among the dead and wounded as the company began to retreat under renewed Rebel fire. Later his friends said he was alive when they saw him last on the field. The muster role for June reported him as “Absent supposed to have been taken prisoner at Cold Harbor June 1, 1864”. Finally the July report concluded “Killed in action at Cold Harbor VA, June 1, 1864”. August 18th, 1864 Hightstown

Commissary of Prisoners on behalf of Marcus's parents “The father of Marcus A Stults Lt Co H 14th N Jersey Vols has not heard from his son since the Battle of Monocacy in July & thinks he is either a prisoner or dead. Any information which you can provide would greatly relieve his anxious parents.”

Most of the men from the company killed that day were buried in battlefield graves and after the war buried in the U. S. National Cemetery near the battlefield. Attempts after the battle to find Marcus failed leaving his friends to conclude he was taken prisoner.

At the dedication of the Civil War Soldiers Monument in Cranbury on August 1, 1866 Reverend Symmes to whom Marcus had confessed his fear of dying two years earlier spoke of him “And the friends of Lieut. Stults were long in suspense as to his fate.



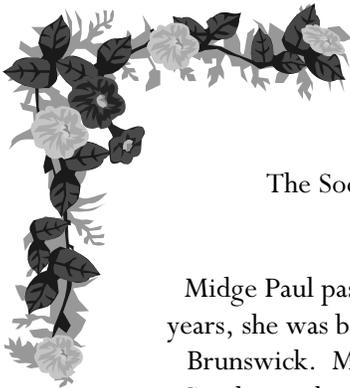
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There were many reports concerning him the most generally believed being that he fell into Rebel hands this being almost worse than death. But after the war was over and our poor prisoners had all returned, all that remained alive, then hope perished. And it was learned that the record of the War Department was that he had been killed on the field the 2nd of June. What kind of sepulture he obtained will probably never be known."

His travel trunk with his few possessions was shipped back to his parents at Prospect Plains. 140 years later a note was found hidden in the top of the trunk with the prophetic last words of Marcus A. Stults, "I feel I am going to die in battle."

His fate will never be known. Only a name remains on the Civil War Soldiers Monument in back of the Presbyterian Church to remind us of a young man who when the time came conquered the fear of death to die a hero for his community.



In Memoriam

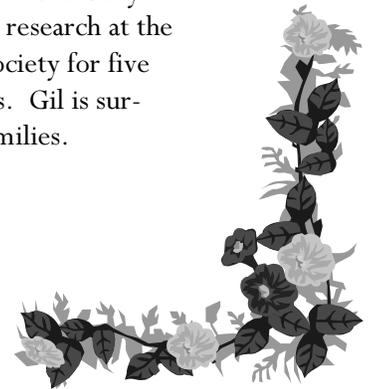
The Society notes with sadness the passing of two longstanding members.

Margaret B. "Midge" Paul

Midge Paul passed away on April 5 at her home. A resident of Cranbury for the past 42 years, she was born in Franklin Township and was retired from Johnson & Johnson of New Brunswick. Midge was a member of the Cranbury Lioness Club, the Woman's Club of Cranbury, the Golden Age Neighbors and the Society. She volunteered both at the Elms Nursing Home and with the Society for many years.

Gilman N. "Gil" Cyr, Ph.D.

Gil Cyr passed away on May 30 at home. Born in Van Buren, Maine, he was a Cranbury resident for many years. Gil retired in 1991 after 38 years in pharmaceutical research at the Squibb Institute for Medical Research. Gil was Treasurer of the Historical Society for five years and sat on the Society's Finance Committee for an additional two years. Gil is survived by his wife of 61 years, Theresa, four sons, two daughters and their families.



CHPS WEBSITE UPDATE

ROB DIAMOND

The CHPS Website is almost complete, and we should be announcing its availability very soon. It features sections on the Museum, the History Center, an online events calendar, photo tours, and much more. Also, you will be able to sign up for email alerts so that you can receive announcements and news related to CHPS. We will be enhancing the functionality of the website over the next year. Eventually, we hope the website can be a sort of "online museum and history center" where users can go to do research and see historical exhibits.

Editor's Note: William C. (Bill) Hoffman (1892-1983) shared his recollections with the Society in several oral history interviews. Below is an excerpt from "Thoughts on Cranbury," recorded just one year before Mr. Hoffman died. This narrative is continued from the March issue of the Society newsletter. Here Bill describes the diversions and entertainment to be found in and around Cranbury in the early 20th century. In the final installment which will appear in the fall issue, Bill will take us on a stroll along the Main Street of his youth.

Hightstown signed up for Chautauqua for several years, which featured high-class speakers or entertainment; numbers of Cranburians attended. New York City and Philadelphia could be reached by train or ferry, with patrons being delivered to the stations usually by stage. A trolley ran from Camden to Newark, the nearest station being Plainsboro, where there was a shed to park the horses and carriages.

Each small town seemed to have a baseball team, and there was intense rivalry among them. If we were lucky, winter afforded much enjoyment on the pond, interrupted sometimes by the gathering (ed. note – harvesting) of ice. When the winter snows made conditions favorable, there would be on Saturday afternoons, horse racing on Main Street.

In the summer, once a year, there would be a joint Sunday School anniversary service, (Jamesburg, Dayton, Plainsboro), usually in the (Cranbury) First Presbyterian Church. As soon as that service concluded, we could look for another horse race through Main Street.

Without radio and television, the question comes readily to mind: How did people amuse themselves, or what means of culture were there? A limited few probably went to New York to see shows or musicals; Trenton had a so-called Opera House where light opera and musical comedies were tried out, and where individual stars like John McCormack, Harry Lauder, top flight pianists and violinists might appear.

My father, due to his contact with Goodwin's Band, every year or so, would collect enough of the best musicians (mostly from Trenton) who would come without charge, to produce really top-rate concerts. There were given in the Chapel (now called the Parish house) of the First Presbyterian Church. Much preparation went into the production of Cantatas at Christmas time and Easter, and miscellaneous endeavors on Children's Day.

Many had pianos or foot-pumped organs in their homes, and each music teacher would have recitals to display their pupils' progress (and to continue, perhaps, their parents' patronage). I can't recall that any pupils who took vocal lessons made the "big time." There was a small orchestra, The Crescent Orchestra, that played for dances in Cranbury and vicinity. Quite an event to me personally was when Goodwin's Band, as a whole, joined the Musician's Union in Princeton. This made the hiring of musicians from Philadelphia, Trenton, Keyport, etc. much more easily done, and, at the same time, gave me a chance to play in bands in Trenton, Burlington, Asbury Park, etc.

Men's and women's attire, as may be imagined, has changed

tached. They were applied with various types of collar buttons, and could be three inches high with ready-tied cravats. Some thrifty fellows wore celluloid collars that could be cleaned at home. Jackets were buttoned high – and they usually covered a vest across which would be a heavy gold chain with a thick railroad watch (or a closed hunting-case one) on one end. . . . Winter coats were heavy "ulster" type. Rubber boots were common, and on the farms, some leather ones could be seen. Derby hats were common and straight brim straw hats in the summer.

Women's dresses swept the floor. They covered corsets and bustles; waists were strapped in, to present an hourglass effect; the upper sleeves were puffed out like balloons, with all of it topped off with voluminous hats trimmed, in many cases, with ostrich feathers, otherwise bows. The local milliners were hard pressed not to have two alike. Their shoes were high above the ankles, and needed button hooks to be fastened. At home, "wrappers" (I think from calico) were popular, covered with the inevitable apron. In the fall and winter, suits with short, waist-fitting jackets were popular; I don't recall in earlier days seeing fur coats.

BAND CONCERT NEXT MONDAY EVENING.

Concerts Will Be Held Every Saturday Evening During the Summer.

A GOOD THING FOR CRANBURY.

By the efforts of several leading citizens and contributions from many people of Cranbury, a band stand is being erected today over the dam of Brainerd Lake. Concerts will be given by Goodwin's Band every Saturday evening during the summer. The first concert will be given next Monday evening in celebration of the Fourth of July.

This movement is a fine thing for Cranbury as it will liven things up and will be a pleasure for the citizens as well as those who come from other towns.

The way in which the citizens of Cranbury responded to this movement shows the appreciation of such an organization (Goodwin's Band) as we have in our midst. It was organized over thirty years ago and has made a reputation of note far and wide. They have closed many engagements for the summer season.

The following is the program for Monday evening:

- March, "Glorification."
- Waltz, "I Wonder How the Old Folks Are at Home."
- Overture, "Snap Shot."
- Two Step, "There's a Little Bit of Love Still Burning."
- Waltz, "Daughter of Love."
- March, "Invercargill."
- Overture, "Home Circle."
- March, "Cuban Independence."
- National Air, "Star Spangled Banner."

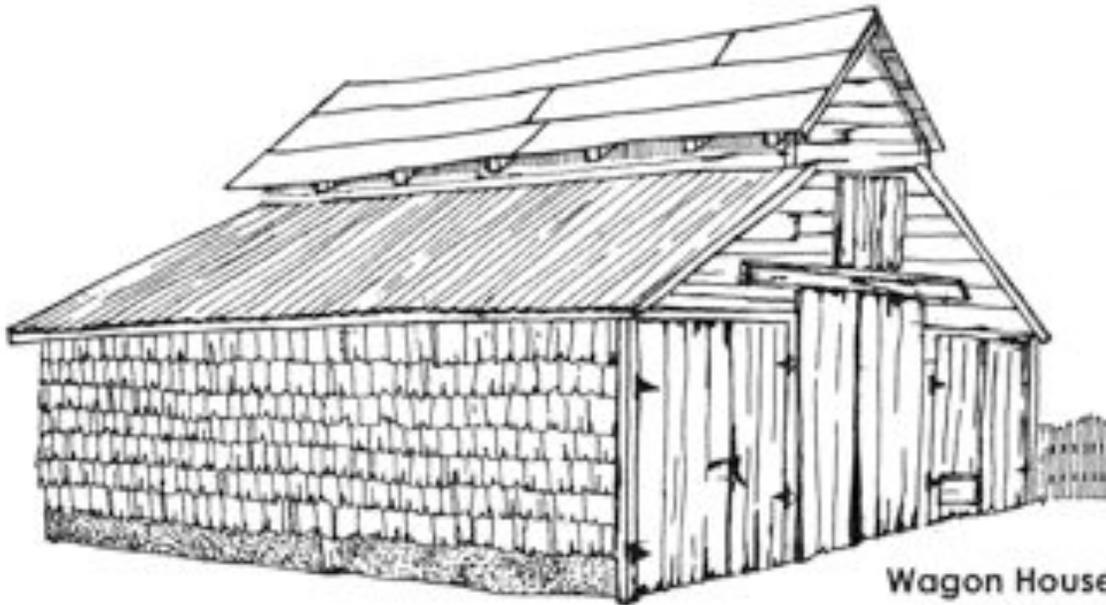


Potato Barn
1930



Corn Crib
1890-1900

SUPPORT the BARN PRESERVATION PROJECT



Wagon House
1795-1805

Send donations to:

Cranbury Historical & Preservation Society

P.O.Box 77

Cranbury, NJ 08512



We are happy to welcome members new to the Society since October 2005:

Maryann Colombo, Kevin and Cheryl Coyle, James and Kaoru Fahey, Walter and Elizabeth Gay, Patricia Ierley, Charles Ill and Linda Mazzo-Ill, Theresa Marzarella, Lars and Marlynnne Mawn, Patrick and Cheryl McCormick, Hank Perrine, William and Denise Reilley, Mort and Sally Shakun, Christopher and Renee Welch.

HELLO? HAVE YOU RENEWED? This is just one more friendly reminder that we need your 2006 dues and contributions to continue the Society's activities.

Early renewals for the year look promising, compared to the rate of renewals at this time last year. We are stepping up new membership recruitment efforts this year and will ask you more than once to keep your membership current, to consider a donation in addition to your dues amount, and to introduce your friends and neighbors to our work with gift memberships. Your financial assistance and help as volunteers is vital.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has designated May as National Preservation Month. To help recognize the importance of history and preservation, the Membership Committee will conduct a membership drive and sponsor special programs. Over the next few months, we'll keep you informed about their development and encourage you to participate as much as possible.

2006 MEMBERSHIP

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: _____

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: _____

Fund raising: _____

Publicity: _____

Other: _____

EXHIBIT HIGHLIGHTS NEW ACQUISITIONS

The Museum's current, long-term exhibition will include many never before seen items. Recent acquisitions, including the L'Hommedieu's gifts described at left, will be on display in the Perrine Wing of the Museum, along with other objects that have been received by the Society. Curators DonJo Swanagan and Jerry Pevahouse put together this display which will no doubt have "something for everyone." Thank you to the many individuals who each year generously entrust their heirlooms to the Society for display and research.



Cranbury Historical & Preservation Society
4 Park Place East
P.O. Box 77
Cranbury, NJ 08512

Cranbury Museum

4 Park Place East
Open Sundays 1 to 4 pm and by appt.
Ph: 609/655-2611

Cranbury History Center

6 South Main Street
Open Tuesdays 10:30 am to 1:30 pm & by appt.
Ph: 609/860-1889
Email: historycenter@comcast.net

A MEMORIAL DAY REMEMBRANCE & GIFT TO THE SOCIETY

On Memorial Day, 2006, during the service at the Civil War Soldier's Monument in Brainerd Cemetery, we had a special presentation at which Mr. and Mrs. Paige L'Hommedieu presented to the Society four Civil War items from Mr. L'Hommedieu's grandfather, Pvt. Roderick Bradley a drummer in Company H, 14th NJ Volunteers. The items include framed copies of a rare Company H roster, a framed document listing the battles of the company, Roderick' discharge paper and a Confederate Calvary officer's sword, a souvenir which Bradley had brought back from the war. After the ceremony, a few members of the Society had lunch with the L'Hommedieu's at the Cranbury Inn. Though his family has Cranbury connections, this was the first time Mr. and Mrs. L'Hommedieu had ever attended our Memorial Day parade.

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A red dot on your mailing label means that as of June 15 we have not received your dues for 2006. If you have not yet renewed, please use the form on page 7.