



Nannygoats



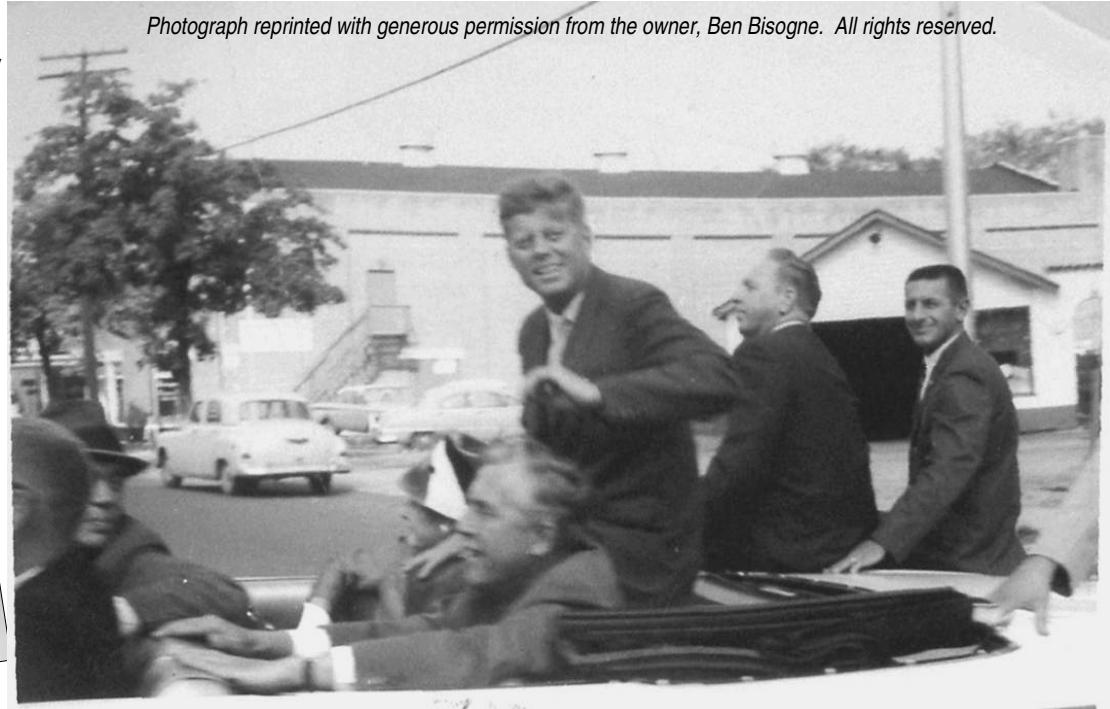
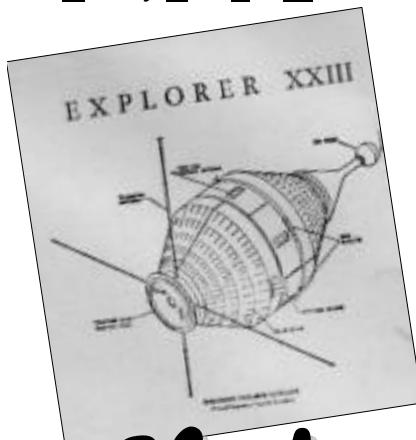
Special Country Fair 2011 Edition

Vol. 9, Issue 3

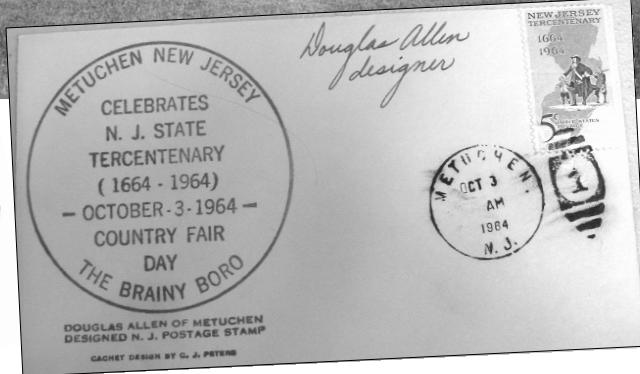
Newsletter of the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society

Fall 2011

The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society creatively celebrates this year's Country Fair theme of "Hats" by celebrating the 1960s with History And The Sixties.



History and the Sixties



Top: Photograph of John F. Kennedy riding in an open car along Amboy Avenue in Metuchen, taken by Ben Bisogno's father, with the Forum Theater visible in the background. It was probably taken on September 15, 1960, when Mr. Kennedy gave a presidential campaign speech in New Brunswick in which he said "For six years I represented Middlesex County, Massachusetts, in the House of Representatives. I would like to represent Middlesex County, New Jersey, in the White House." *Top Left:* Explorer XXIII, launched on November 6, 1964, with the first prismatic Ni-Cd cells, produced by Gulton Industries of Metuchen for NASA. *Above Left:* JFK Medical Center as it looked when it opened in 1967. *Far Left:* The seal of Middlesex County College, which –along with Raritan Center – was founded on the site of the former Raritan Arsenal. *Left:* A commemorative envelope from the first Metuchen Country Fair in 1964, begun to honor New Jersey's tercentennial.

Continued on Page 4

The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society was founded in 1974 with the primary purpose of promoting an interest in and appreciation of the history of the Borough of Metuchen and of Edison Township.

TREASURES UNEARTHED ON PLEASANT PLACE

by Jennifer Kelly



Edison Mazda light bulbs How these three delicate light bulbs remained intact is amazing! They appear to be circa 1912.

Konjola medicine bottle This was manufactured by the Mosby Medicine Company. The founder got very rich off his questionable elixers, and was later gunned down on the steps of the Cincinnati Police Station in what was possibly a mob related incident. This medicine was popular for a while in the thirties. It was supposed to cure just about anything and had 32 ingredients.

Paul Westphal Auxiliator for the Hair bottle This tonic was in use from 1883 through the 1920s. It can be considered to be the Rogaine of its time.

A.S. Hinds Honey and Almond

Cream bottle This cream was in production from 1883 through 1939. It was used to treat sunburn.

S.B. Goff's Oil Linement bottle This bottle appears to date from the late 1870s to early 1900s. It was indicated for humans and horses, and purported to cure everything from sores to dysentery.

Peter Doelger Brewery bottle This brewery was in existence in New York City from 1859 to the 1920s and then moved to Harrison, NJ. Our bottle appears to date back to 1916 (pre prohibition!).

In addition, we discovered bottles for pills, ink, soda, Listerine and Heinz ketchup. Also unearthed were several milk bottles from local dairies such as Cooper Farm in Iselin and Puritan Dairy in Perth Amboy.

Although we are still in the midst of construction, we've already established a place in our new space for these old treasures. We'll be sure to keep the Historical Society abreast of any additional finds. (Hopefully it will be gems, gold coins, or the like!)

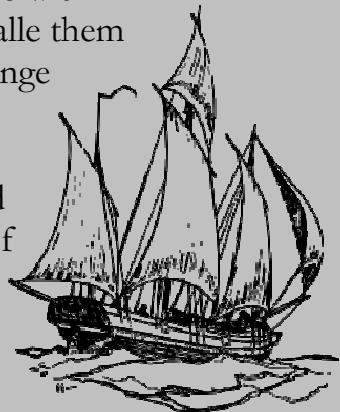
In June, we began building an addition and renovating our circa 1920 home at 64 Pleasant Place in Metuchen, which incidentally, was originally owned by Frank Grimstead (the famous Lloyd Grimstead's brother). The plans called for a full basement to be added. On the first day of summer vacation, my kids happily planted themselves at the dining room window to watch the giant backhoe tear up the earth behind our house. Halfway through, the digger hit what is believed to be the original brick septic tank. It was torn open to reveal a most unusual find: bottles and light bulbs dating from the 1870s to 1930s!! How or why they were put there remains a mystery, but thanks to the internet, we were able to obtain information about the items themselves. The following is a sample of what we pieced together:

The excerpt below is from a letter written by John Ayers to his mother in London, dated "Ye tenth of Octobre, 1720." He first describes his voyage and fellow travelers, then the land in which he settled. The letter is transcribed in Jay W. Thornall's 1982 "Isreal Thornell, Planter, Woodbridge New Jersey"

MeTochen is a faire and healthy spotte about two leagues from ye bay of Perth Amboy where we landed from our ship. Heare be many little hilles which go uppe and down like ye wartes on a toades backe.

Heare also be many fine trees of oake and a kind of nutte which is in a podde or huske with many sharp spines. Ye Indians calle them "dampsh arps" which in their toungue means "needle-nutt."

MeTochen is called from ye name of ye chief of this place and meant "slowe-dog" for that chief is lame and goeth slowly. Ye land heare is redde like a foxe and yt is wet yt sticketh lustily.



Did You Know...

That the inventor of the Rolodex
lived in Metuchen?

In 1954, Hildaur L. Neilsen, an employee of the Zephyr American Corporation, invented a rotary card filing system which was brought to market in 1958 as the "Rolodex" (from a combination of the words "rolling" and "index"). A self-taught Danish engineer, Neilsen engineered several improvements that made the Rolodex a better circular file card holder than an earlier version known as the "Wheeldex," and on January 24, 1956 was issued US Patent #2,731,966 for the invention. Even though Rolodex products continued to sell well in the age of personal computers, sales may decline as wireless personal digital assistants become more widespread. Perhaps someday the once ubiquitous Rolodex, often a successful business person's most highly prized and valuable resource, will be all together forgotten.

The Zephyr American Corporation, owned by Arnold Neustadter, was based at 95 Morton Street in New York City. While Neustadter often receives credit for the invention, it was clearly patented to Neilsen. In 1961, the Zephyr American Corporation was acquired by Insilco Corporation.

While little there is much more to be learned about Neilsen's history, we do know he lived in Metuchen at the time the patent was issued, and a 1955 Directory of Metuchen lists a Hildaur Neilsen and wife Lillian living at 2 West Maple Street (now Juniper Street) in Metuchen. Also, according to Social Security Index records, a "Hildaur L. Neilsen" was born on September 11, 1909, and died on April 16, 2000, with Metuchen being his last known address. In addition, there is an immigration record of an "H. Neilsen," born in Denmark in 1909, arriving in New York on the "Gypsum King" on October 19, 1939. Former Metuchen bookstore owner and Society Director Byron Sondergard remembers Mr. Neilsen buying books as gifts for his wife. Considering the inventor did not pass away until 2000, there must be other local residents who would remember him and/or his wife, and the Society welcomes any recollections they may have.

Below is a ca. 1930 Grimstead photograph of the Neilsen house. Although expanded and altered, it still sits on its site on Juniper Street.



1928 Directory of Metuchen, Column 6

Below is the sixth column of entries from a 1928 Directory of Metuchen that includes both addresses and telephone numbers of local residents. The small "r" after the name indicates the entry is for a "residence." The Society began reprinting the entirety of this directory in the Winter/Spring 2010 issue of *Nannygoats*.

Halford W H	bakery	418 Main	Metuchen-682
Hall F L	r	Kempson pl	Metuchen-574
Hall W C	r	Spear	Metuchen-128-M
Halla A S	contr	Iselin	Metuchen-91-J-3
Halsey L E	r	94 Home	Metuchen-116-M
Hamby A B	r	20 Clinton pl	Metuchen-454
Hancock W S	r	Iselin	Metuchen-352-R-1
Hanemann G	r	395 Main	Metuchen-215
Hansen A	r	39 Woodbridge av	Metuchen-211
Hansen A P	r	56 Home	Metuchen-471
Hansen Bros	confc	255 Lake av	Metuchen-395
Hansen Wm	r	Central av	Metuchen-354-R
Hanson E K	Dr	r Fords	Metuchen-62
Harriott J H	r	180 Maple av	Metuchen-113-R
Harris C E	r	36 Graham av	Metuchen-533
Hart L G	Mrs	r 25 Bissell pl	Metuchen-224-M
Hartman C	r	414 Main	Metuchen-101
Hassett A D	Rev	r 548 Main	Metuchen-110
Hassey Alice L	Mrs	r Iselin	Metuchen-419-W-2
Hatfield O R	r	241 Amboy av	Metuchen-266-J
Hatos A	r	19 Highland av	Metuchen-251-W
Hauer E	Miss	r Cedar	Metuchen-627-W
Hawke C	E	r 58 Elm av	Metuchen-114-R
Hawley G B	r	15 Homer pl	Metuchen-448
Hay S Francis	r	28 Oak av	Metuchen-18
Healey Jas	R	r 175 Essex av	Metuchen-440-J
Healey Raymond	G	r 272 Main	Metuchen-638
Heartman C F	r	612 Middlesex av	Metuchen-338
Hecht Saml	r	Plainfield av	Metuchen-118-R
Heilmann H C	r	48 Thomas	Metuchen-196-R
Herold Geo	r	124 Lake av	Metuchen-506
Herr Jos	hotel	Middlesex av	Metuchen-710
Herrick E R	r	Maple av	Metuchen-113-J
Hess K M	Mrs	r New Dover rd	Metuchen-59-W
Hibbard W H	r	85 Lake av	Metuchen-592
Hicks Douglas	M	r Clarendon ct	Metuchen-119-R
High Bridge Garage		923 Middlesex av	Metuchen-641
High Bridge Garage		Lincoln hwy	Metuchen-752
Highland Ay	Garage	Highland av	Metuchen-665
Hilliard F E	Mrs	r Menlo Park	Metuchen-351-W
Hillpot A K	undertaker	11 William	Metuchen-149
Residence	11	William	Metuchen-149
Hills S R	r 40	Woodbridge av	Metuchen-177-W
Hinds P W	r 581	Middlesex av	Metuchen-13-W
Hoagland J L	r	59 Pearl	Metuchen-229-J
Hoepfner M	r	148 Main	Metuchen-312-W
Hofer C A	Dr	r 463 Main	Metuchen-66
Hofer C A	MD	r 52 Oak av	Metuchen-57
Hoffman J J	market	r 397 Main	Metuchen-238
Hofmann Martin	A	r Iselin	Metuchen-53
Hogan T J	r 30	Plainfield av	Metuchen-608-J
Hokanson F	r	183 Main	Metuchen-285-W
Hokanson's Fruit & Grocery Mkt		420 Main	Metuchen-518
Holcombe E S	r 19	William	Metuchen-410
Hollenbeck M J	r	52 Spring	Metuchen-393
Hollender L	r	Woodbridge av	Metuchen-477-M
Holstein H	424	Middlesex av	Metuchen-96
Hommell J L	r	Amboy rd	Metuchen-331-W
Hood Chas S	r	Bonhamtown	Metuchen-328-J
Hope F M	Mrs	r 26 Bounty	Metuchen-548-M
Horn C E	r 61	Middlesex av	Metuchen-176
Horner M	Miss	r 16 Walnut	Metuchen-695-W
Hornsby A	r	7th av	Metuchen-278-W
Hortz J	Mrs	beauty parlor 407 Main	Metuchen-521
Howatt S W	r 66	Charles	Metuchen-187-J
Howland Robt	B	r 26 George	Metuchen-99-J
Hubert F J	r 64	Charles	Metuchen-610-W
Hulbert H C	r 48	Graham av	Metuchen-336-W
Hull C P	r 203	Woodbridge av	Metuchen-128-J
Hume Robt	J	r 27 Thomas	Metuchen-235
Hummer H	Mrs	r 648 Middlx av	Metuchen-334-J
Hummer N	r 15	Sylvan av	Metuchen-673
Humphries Geo A	Rev	r 260 Woodbridge av	Metuchen-182
Hunt A C	Dr	r 625 Middlesex av	Metuchen-213
Huntress Leonard	Jr	r 60 Pearl pl	Metuchen-150
Hussey Catherine	r	32 Brunswick av	Metuchen-186-W
Hussey Jos J	r 35	Clive	Metuchen-198-W
Hyde A D	rl est	400 Main	Metuchen-262
Residence	Iselin		Metuchen-59-J
Interdonato P	r	Iselin	Metuchen-258-M
Irving Wm J	r	Iselin	Metuchen-419-R-1

The



Top: John P. Stevens High School in Edison under construction, as shown in the 1965 yearbook.

Middle: Edgar School 1st Grade Class, 1968.

Bottom left: David, Roberta, and Kevin Calhoun with their neighbor - and distant cousin - Suzanne Yost in their yard at 9 Nottingham Way in Edison, 1963 (courtesy of Roberta Calhoun Eagan).

Bottom right: an aerial photograph of early 1960s Metuchen.

The 1960s may seem like ‘recent events’ to some, but believe it or not, it’s been 50 years since the decade began. Locally it is remembered as a decade of growth, with schools, libraries, hospitals, and residential neighborhoods being built. Edison, which had been largely undeveloped open space and farmland through the 1950s, saw dense residential development in the 1960s.

Many recall the decade beginning as a hopeful time, with World War II veterans establishing themselves as leaders, and business, technology, and the entertainment world growing like never before. The World’s Fair was held in New York, New Jersey celebrated its tercentennial, the Mets baseball team was formed, the United States put a man on the moon, the eight-track tape and touch-tone telephone were introduced. Who can forget Elvis returning home from the Army, the ‘invasion’ of the Beatles, Bob Dylan, *Doctor Zhivago*, *Rosemary’s Baby*, *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*, or Woodstock?

But there was turmoil and change as well, with the Vietnam War, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Stonewall Riots, the Cultural Revolution in China, the construction of the Berlin Wall, the Decolonization of Africa, increasingly tense race relations and struggles against segregation, the birth of the Feminist Movement, and the assassination of the Kennedys and Martin Luther King, Jr.

The list of global events, tragedies, and accomplishments is nearly endless. Included here are just some local memories and images from that time, and the Society is always looking to document more, in order to “preserve our past for our future.”



1960s

- Robert F. Kennedy's funeral train passed through Metuchen in 1968.
- The John Adams, Herbert Hoover, Menlo Park, James Monroe, and John Marshall, JP Stevens schools were built.
- Route 287 was constructed.
- The Metuchen Municipal Pool was built at the foot of Lake Avenue.
- The first McDonalds in Edison was opened on Route 27.



Above: The Edison Lanes – with 112 lanes (and 1500 parking spaces!) – was the largest in the United States when constructed. Although technically finished in 1959, many local residents have fond memories of their time there throughout the 1960s. It was replaced by Wick Plaza in 1988.

Left: The Edison High School "Audio Visual Aids," 1965 (left to right): J. Kapscsandi, C. Sheehan, Mr. H. Bopp (advisor), L. Mirbach, A. Rupp, T. Povlich, T. Lapлага.

Below: an early 1960s parade along Main Street in Metuchen.



- African-Americans were placed in official positions in Metuchen and Edison.
- Camp Kilmer was largely deactivated and became a reserve center.
- "Penn Central" was formed by a merger of long-time rivals Pennsylvania (PRR) and New York Central in 1968.
- The Metuchen-Edison Racial Relations Council (MERRC) was formed in 1962, and for the remainder of the decade worked to improve community relations.
- St. Francis Roman Catholic Cathedral was built in 1963 (the Diocese of Metuchen was created by Pope John Paul II in 1981).



Metuchen High School's Class of 1931 History of Metuchen

The following is continued from the Class of 1931's *History of Metuchen*, which is being reprinted in *Nannygoats* serially (beginning with Volume 5, Issue 2, Summer 2007). While the history contains some known factual & grammatical errors, the document is reproduced exactly as originally written.

More from 'The Wars'

In 1917, when the United States went into the greatest war of all, Metuchen gallantly gave of her sons and money. One hundred and fifty-three Metuchen men enlisted and did their bit to "make the world safe for democracy." Three of those men died in service. They were Edward O. Fugle, Harry Hansen, and Frank Hummer. Conklin Smith died shortly after the close of the war from illness contracted while in the service. The other veterans who served are: [see list below]

Two years after the guns ceased firing, Metuchen dedicated a piece of land located at Edgar Park. On this ground stand four trees, three in memory of the three men who never came back, and the fourth for Conklin Smith who was paralyzed.

In 1926, a Memorial Park was built on the Lincoln Highway as a gift to the town. It was a circular platform enclosed with a low parapet wall, and is a fitting memorial to those who served.

Anderson, Ashby
Artman, Alfred E.
Ayers, Clifford S.
Baldwin, George A.
Barr, T. Turner
Barr, W. Manning
Benner, Welsey
Birdsall, Albert J.
Birdsall, Clifton S.
Blakely, Edgar D.
Bonham, William
Bouverot, Amand
Bradstreet, Clarence F.
Brass, Emil
Breen, Edward L.
Breen, James B., Jr.
Breen, William A.
Brown, Robert F.
Bullock, Ellery L.
Burke, James A.
Burroughs, Edward A.
Campbell, Theodore C.
Carman, Charles B.
Chenowith, Richard F.
Clarkson, S. Crosby
Cohen, Morris
Corbalis, John H.
Corbalis, Joseph
Corbalis, Clement
Cowell, Reginald B.
Crowell, Stewart, Jr.
Crowley, Francis B.
Cunning, William J.
Dana, Edward C.
Davis, Howard T.
Davis, Leslie G.
De Lima, David A.
De Matt, John I.

Deitche, John L.
Drake, Arthur D.
Drake, Edward M..
Drake, James H..
Drake, Manning
Edgar, Albert C.
Ellis, Alfred L.
Feller, William
Feller, John
Fenton, Paul F.
Fisher, Harold J.
Flaherty, Winifred S.
Forsythe, JOhn
Fortner, William H.
Fouratts, Enos, Jr.
Fox, Vernon C.
Frohm, Charles A.
Fullerton, Thomas
Getty, Charles H.
Glover, James L.
Greenwald, A. Harold
Hahm, George H., Jr.
Hahm, Foster
Hahm, Henry B.
Hart, John G.
Hillier, Andrew
Hokenson, C. Arvid
Hughes, James A.
Hubert, Harry C.
Hummer, Archie
Hunt, Theodore B.
Kennan, Albert M.
Kornblatt, Jacob
Kramer, Harry
Kuntz, Louis B.
Lake, Edwin A.
Laul, Jacob S.
Lenz, William

At the south end, a bronze tablet giving the named of those who represented Metuchen in the war is set on an ornamental stone pedestal. The surrounding pieced of ground, with several shady trees, presents an air of quiet inspite [sic] of noisy traffic speeding past.

One other important thing grew out of the war, the American Legion. The local organization, the Fugle-Hummer Post, has done great work in the service of the community. Among their most important projects are: the leasing and fixing up of the athletic field on Durham Avenue, the forming of a drum and bugle corps which leads most of the parades in Metuchen, and most recently, the acquisition of the old high school annex, which has been transformed into a fine home for the Legion. Through the past ten years, they have proved themselves the most active of local organizations.

Madison, Howard
Markano, Andrew
Markano, August
Martin, Abbott W.
Martin, Gilbert E.
Massopust, Joseph
Mayo, Benjamin J.
Mayo, Sterling E.
McAdams, Harold
McAdams, Wm. T., Jr.
McGuiness, James A.
McGuiness, John B., Jr.
McKenzie, Robert
McKenzie, William V.
Metuchie, John
Miller, Lenual
Miller, Rawson P.
Moglia, Louis P.
Molineux, Leslie E.
Molineux, Paul R.
Molineux, Walter L.
Morris, Frank S.
Morris, Wilson S.
Moss, Hibbert W.
Mundy, George W.
Mundy, James A.
Mundy, Theodore V.
Nicholas, John E.
Molan, Edward
Ostergaard, Soren C.
Parker, Charles A.
Peck, Frederick C.
Perronne, James
Pierson, Alden
Polacco, Vincent
Potter, Edward L.
Powell, Ester M.
Powell, J. Kingsley
Prickitt, Charles N.
Reid, David A.
Richards, Frederick
Robinson, Frank A.
Rolle, Isaiah
Rolle, Russell F.
Rowland, Edward C. Jr.
Sanford, Richard B.
Scarpello, Nicholas
Scarpello, Salvatore
Schmidt, Charles
Schuh, Harry
Silzer, Parker W.
Skoquist, Conrad
Smith, William A., Jr.
Sortore, Emerson J.
Spear, Edgar E.
Spear, Holden
Spear, Kenneth
Swackhammer, Milton D.
Tagliaboschi, Louis
Tagliaboschi, Eugene
Tausig, Bertha
Tausig, Walter
Thighe, George F.
Thompson, Merrill H.
Tremblay, Silas
Vanderpoel, Edwin T.
Vennett, Emmett
Vennett, Russell
Van Zanten, John W.
Waldron, John J.
Wardell, W. Larmon
Watson, Shomberg C.
Wilbert, Henry J.
Wiley, Sam
Wilson, Ray P.
Wittnebert, Herman C.

New in the Collections

Many thanks to **Karen Repka** for donating a comprehensive collection of materials and files that will aid us in sharing our local history with our younger members. Look for forthcoming events designed for elementary school-age children.

Hearty appreciation is also due to Michigan resident **Jeri Engelby** for contacting us and donating photographs of Mr. & Mrs. William M. Thornall – he was Metuchen's first Mayor, and she was the first president of the Borough Improvement League. As Jeri wrote to us, “I have found two old photographs that I think will be great additions to your local historical society. I was browsing through old photographs in an antique store in Holly, Michigan and found two with names on the back. It saddens me to see great family photos lost to descendants. So, I usually will buy these old photographs with names, and try to find the homes for them. I donate these old photographs to proven family members or the local historical society for their archive.” *Thank you, Jeri!*



“William M. Thornall, Taken probably in the 1920s” and “Jennie Force Williams Thornall, 1901, For Leslie - July 14th, 1901.”

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The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

The name of the newsletter, “Nannygoats,” is taken from the title of a collection of anecdotes, articles, reminiscences, and letters compiled by photographer J. Lloyd Grimstead. He took more than 2,800 photographs of the Metuchen-Edison area, mostly during the 1930s, which make up 80 percent of the Historical Society's photographic collection. The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society dedicates this publication to Lloyd Grimstead, as a way of honoring him for collecting and recording so much of our local history.

Would you like to become one of our advertising supporters? Our readers are local residents interested in supporting our community, and our sponsors' generous supports helps the Society make *Nannygoats* available to the public.

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Borough Improvement League

Founded in 1901, the “BIL” is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization, affiliated with the GFWC and NJSFWC Womens' Clubs, devoted to community service & preserving the ca. 1807 Old Franklin School on Middlesex Avenue in Metuchen.



Old Franklin School Rentals

Our charming & historic 200-year-old schoolhouse with full kitchen is available for fine events of up to 65 seated guests. For more information or reservations, please call 848-250-1258.

www.boroughimprovementleague.org

Interested in reading previous issues of *Nannygoats*? All back issues are available for download from our website:
www.metuchen-edisonhistsoc.org.

Upcoming Programs and Events

More Secrets of the Grimstead Room

October 18, 2011

The Friends of the Metuchen Library will host "More Secrets of the Grimstead Room" on **Tuesday, October 18, 2011 at 7:00pm** in the Metuchen Public Library at 480 Middlesex Avenue in Metuchen.

Metuchen-Edison Historical Society Board Member Walter R. Stochel, Jr. will discuss the wealth of information contained in our archives located in the basement of the Metuchen Library.

Items from our collections will also be displayed. For more information contact the library at friends.of.Metuchen.library@gmail.com.

WOMEN SOLDIERS & SPIES OF THE CIVIL WAR NOVEMBER 11, 2011

The Borough Improvement League is hosting a program by Trish Chambers about women who chose to become soldiers and spies during the Civil War, on **Friday, November 11, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.** This free program will take place at the Old Franklin School (491 Middlesex Avenue in Metuchen). Learn how these women's ingenuity allowed them to perform successfully in both these endeavors, and why they selected the path they did. Parking is available across the street at Borough Hall and along Main Street. Please call Steve at 732-452-1381 with any questions.

Save the Date!

Annual Meeting – January 2012

The Society's annual meeting is being planned for January, 2012. A program about the origins of Metuchen as the "Brainy Borough" is planned.

Local History Day – February 2012

Come view our displays, maps, and thousands of photographs! The next issue of Nannygoats, a Black History Month Issue, will be released.



**Metuchen-Edison Historical Society
P.O. Box 61
Metuchen, NJ 08840**

Local History Mystery? Visit the Archives!

The Society's Grimstead Room archives, containing thousands of local history images and documents, are located in the basement of the Metuchen Public Library. For more information, contact us at 732-906-0529 or wstochel@earthlink.net. We may just have the key to your local history mystery!