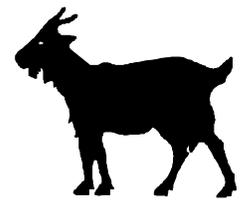


Nannygoats



Vol. 2 Issue 2

Newsletter of the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society

Spring 2004



Charles End, shown as a child, circa 1900, and in WWI. End, a lifelong area resident, created a written record of life memories.



Author Mary Wilkins Freeman wrote her first novel in 1882. She moved to Metuchen in the early 1900s and lived there until her death in 1930.



George Silzer was governor of New Jersey from 1923-1926. His family lived at 79 Graham Avenue.

The Grimstead family, taken by J. Lloyd Grimstead, circa 1907, outside their home at 576 Middlesex Avenue. Lloyd Grimstead took thousands of photos of the Metuchen-Edison area, and compiled a collection of anecdotes, reminiscences, and letters.



A Glance at the Past

The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society is looking for photographs of residents of our area --past and present! If you have any family photos, please consider allowing the Society to make copies for the archives. Call Curator Marie Vajo at 732-285-3217.



Dr. Ezra Hunt wrote a comprehensive history of Metuchen and a history of Metuchen churches in 1870.

Among the many accomplishments of civil engineer Gustav Lindenthal, was the design of the Manhattan and Queensboro Bridges in 1909. The Lindenthal family lived on an estate in Metuchen.



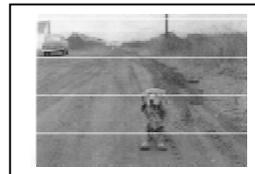
Thomas Alva Edison moved to Menlo Park in 1876, and set up the first research and development facility in the world. While at Menlo Park, he perfected the incandescent lamp and invented recorded sound.



Martha and Albin Turschmann feeding their chickens and gathering eggs, Vineyard Road, 1945.



The Bloomfield family in front of their mansion in the Clara Barton section of Raritan Township, undated. The family wealth came from local businesses such as the Bloomfield Clay Co. that incorporated in 1911 and operated for many years.



Unidentified resident on Loring Avenue, circa 1950.



Fred and Gertrude Boyd picking grapes for market on Vineyard Road, circa 1940.



Sine and Rasmus Clausen, shown here in an undated photo, owned a large farmhouse at Clausen Road and Woodbridge Avenue, and built houses for other family members in the area.



George Ainscow Sr. and Jr. in front of the Lincoln Garage, circa 1920. Later, the Ainscow family built Linwood Grove Amusement Park & Tourist Camp at Route 27 and Stony Road. After WWII, Linwood Grove became a nightclub and ballroom.

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.

Former Stagecoach Inn Demolished

A rest stop for stagecoach passengers traveling between New York and Philadelphia once stood on the northeast corner of what is now Main Street and Middlesex Avenue, Metuchen. The structure was moved near the site of the Metuchen Public Library to make way for the Metuchen Borough Hall, and still later to 231 E. Chestnut Street.



The former stagecoach inn, as it looked in 1901.

The oldest part of the structure was erected around 1745, with a newer section added in the early 1800s. After its use as a stagecoach rest stop, the structure was owned and occupied by prominent Metuchen

families. Ruth Mook, a member of one of the families, recorded an oral history for the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society. The tape is currently being transcribed as part of a project funded by a grant from the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission.

In March 2003, the former stagecoach inn was demolished to make way for the construction of new homes.

5 Inches of History

In the 17th century, present-day Edison and Metuchen were part of Woodbridge and Piscataway Townships. Settlements dotted the area. Bonhamtown, Metuchen, New Durham, Oak Tree, Piscatawaytown, and Stelton were important Colonial settlements. Revolutionary War engagements took place throughout the area, including The Battle of The Short Hills in what is now Edison's Oak Tree neighborhood. During the 19th century, the settlements evolved into villages, and other areas developed such as Highland Park, Menlo Park, New Dover, and Pumptown.

In 1870, the area became incorporated as Raritan Township, taking the name from the Raritan River and honoring the Raritan Tribe of Native Americans who originally settled the area. In the late 19th and early 20th century, the emergence of railroads and electric trolley lines opened up Raritan Township as a desirable locale for summer homes and recreation.

The area that is now Metuchen was the commercial and social center of Raritan Township, attracting artistic and literary figures as residents. The rest of Raritan Township remained rural into the early 20th century. In 1900, Metuchen incorporated as a separate municipality, and, in 1905, Highland Park did the same.

In 1954, on the 75th anniversary of the perfection of the incandescent lamp, the name of Raritan Township was changed to Edison Township in honor of Thomas Alva Edison.

•Crumbs of Comfort•

Residing in the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society archives are copies of a delightful cookbook compiled and published by the Ladies Aid Society of the Presbyterian Church of Metuchen in 1888. **•Crumbs of Comfort•** was republished by the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society in 1992. According to the Preface to this later publication, the approximately 160 recipes are accompanied by more than 27 pages of ads for local business establishments, and another 27 pages dedicated to the history of Metuchen and its churches written by Rev. J. G. Mason, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Metuchen for 48 years.

Along with recipes for soups, meats, pickles, breads, cakes, puddings, and pies are directions for making such household items as **•Tooth Wash•**, **•Whitewash That Will Stick•**, **•Cholera Mixture•**, **•Liniment•**, and **•Soft Soap•**. A particularly interesting inclusion is a recipe for cooking husbands, a portion of which is printed below.

from A RECIPE FOR COOKING HUSBANDS

• In selecting your husband you should not be guided by the silvery appearance, as in buying a mackerel; nor in the golden tint, as if you wanted a salmon. Be sure to select him yourself, as tastes differ. Do not go to market for him, as the best are always brought to your door. It is far better to have none, unless you will patiently learn how to cook him. A preserving kettle of finest porcelaine is best, but if you have nothing but an earthen ware pipkin, it will do, with care. See that the linen in which you wrap him is nicely washed and mended, with the required number of buttons and strings tightly sewed on. Tie him in the kettle by a strong silk-cord, called comfort, as the one called Duty is apt to break. Make a clear, steady fire out of love, neatness and cheerfulness. Set him as near this as seems to agree with him. If he spatters and fizzes do not be anxious; some husbands do this till they are quite done. Add a little sugar in the form of what confectioners call kisses, but no vinegar or peppers on any account. A little spice improves him, but it must be used with judgment. Do not stick any sharp instrument into him to see if he is becoming tender. Stir him gently, watching the while, lest he lie too flat and close to the kettle, and so become useless. You cannot fail to know when he is done.

If thus treated, you will find him very relishable, agreeing nicely with you and the children, and he will keep as long as you want, unless you set him in too cold a place. •

Copies of the 1992 edition of **•Crumbs of Comfort•** can be purchased. Call Marie Vajo at 732-985-3217.

Bon Appétit!



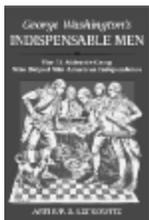
Program Focuses on the American Revolution in New Jersey

Arthur Lefkowitz, author, historian, and New Jersey Council for the Humanities speaker, addressed a full house on Sunday, March 14, 2004, at the Metuchen Public Library. During this program, sponsored by the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society, Mr. Lefkowitz used slides of historic maps, paintings, and sketches to illustrate his topic-- *The Long Retreat, the Calamitous American Defense of New Jersey 1776*.



His 1999 book, upon which the program was based, has been critically acclaimed as the first book devoted to this period of the American Revolution, when the Americans transitioned from a static defense strategy to that of a mobile field army. The book was selected by the New Jersey Council for the Humanities Book Award Committee as an Honor Book and as "Best Book of the Year" by American Revolution Round Table.

Mr. Lefkowitz related the events surrounding the retreat of George Washington and the Continental Army across central New Jersey and across the Delaware River to Pennsylvania in the fall of 1776. This was an extremely critical period in the war due to the Continental Army's generally weakened and demoralized condition in contrast to the British Army's relative strength. Mr. Lefkowitz speculated that if the British had aggressively pursued the Americans, they could have defeated them and possibly ended the Revolution.



After his presentation, Mr. Lefkowitz responded to questions from the audience and signed copies of *The Long Retreat* as well as his 2003 book, *George Washington's Indispensable Men: The 32 Aides-De-Camp Who Helped Win American Independence*.

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

Board of Trustees

Nancy Zerbe, President
N Ann Walker, First Vice President
Steve Reuter, Second Vice President
David Gaskill, Treasurer
Tyreen Reuter, Recording Secretary
Barbara Barbano, Corresponding Secretary
Marie Vajo, Curator

April Cormaci Ellen Miller Sylvia Taylor
Anna Eosso Robert Takash Marge Viquerat

*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, reminiscences, articles, 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.*

Curator's Notes

The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society is pleased to acknowledge these recent additions to the archives:

- ♦ Edgar Clay Co. account book. *Donated by John Sweatman.*
- ♦ Material related to the Litterst Sisters •Ramble Inn, *Metuchen Guide*, and newspaper clippings. *Donated by John Barton.*
- ♦ •The Home Front •video collection. *Donated by Donald Davis.*
- ♦ Programs from the Metuchen Fire Department's Annual Balls, 1947 and 1954. *Donated by Harold Breen.*
- ♦ •Know Your Town • Metuchen, New Jersey, • 1956; •Indexed Map of Metuchen and Surrounding Area, •1947; •Edison •Inspiration for Youth •booklet; and color photo of cement Edison Memorial Tower. *Donated by Gerry Rice.*
- ♦ Photos, Commencement Exercise Program, and 31st reunion program for Metuchen High School class of 1933. *Donated by Joanne Wright.*
- ♦ Exterior photo of June Chevrolet, Inc., located at 950 Middlesex Ave., Metuchen, and destroyed by fire in the 1990s. *Donated by Tyreen Reuter.*
- ♦ Copies of: *Welcome to Edison: An Enlightened Community*, 1990; *Recipes, Remedies and Recollections*, 1983; 300th anniversary calendar for Piscataway Township, 1966; and *Environmental Resources Inventory*, Metuchen, 1976. *Donated by Marion Stone.*
- ♦ Publicity Book of Sand Hills/ Bonhamtown Schools PTA, 1960-1961. *Donated by Becky and Graham Gudgin.*

In addition, the Society has purchased an Edison Police patch, and a deck of playing cards with a •Westinghouse Hi-Quality Television & Radio •plant line drawing on the back, circa 1950.

The Society gratefully accepts photographs, documents, personal histories, and artifacts. If you prefer to retain the original, the Society will make a copy, recording your name as donor. Your contributions can help the Society's archives fully and faithfully represent the vibrant and unique history of the area.

Call 732-985-3217 if you would like to donate materials or visit the archives.

ADDITIONAL ORAL HISTORY!

In the inventory of oral histories published in the Winter 2004 issue of *Nannygoats*, the 1999 interview with Jadwin Sartore, a long-time Metuchen resident, was inadvertently omitted.

Who were they?



Looks like a fun group, doesn't it? Unfortunately, we have no information about the Clara Barton Woman's Club or the Old Girls Orchestra, and we don't know the identities of the women in this photograph from our archives. Can you help?

**Please call Curator Marie Vajo
at 732-985-3217.**

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