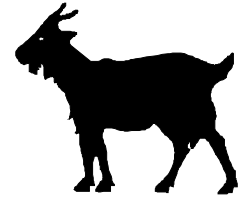


Nannygoats



Vol. 2 Issue 3

Newsletter of the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society

Summer 2004



This house pictured on a postcard is identified as "A. C. Case's Residence." It is believed to have stood on Woodbridge Ave.

"Roselawn" was located on the south side of Park Ave. approximately where Mulberry Lane is today. Built for Walter Williams in 1912-13, the mansion had 23 rooms and 7 bathrooms. The house was demolished in 1968. (From a postcard.)



J. R. Potter owned a large farm on the north side of Inman Ave., now the location of West Gate. The Potter Farm house is shown in this 1933 photo taken by Lloyd Grimstead. Potter's Crossing was named for a railroad stop along the Potter Farm property.



This photo of a unique, turreted home on Hillside Ave. was taken by Lloyd Grimstead in the early 1930s.



Author Mary Wilkins Freeman and Charles Freeman were married in this house on Lake Ave. in 1902, and resided there until 1906. The house was later remodeled and is a two-family residence today. (From a postcard.)



The home of Nathan Robins, built around 1875 on the east side of Main St. between Hillside Ave. and Middlesex Ave., was later remodeled and became the Hillside Inn, shown in this circa 1920 picture from a postcard. It was eventually demolished to make way for commercial buildings.

A Glance at the Past

Only a few of these stately and interesting structures have survived, but these photographs serve to remind us of a past with a touch of elegance. Schedule a visit to the archives of the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society to see more photographs from our past. Call Curator Marie Vajo at 732-985-3217.



The historic Forman Martin Home on Old Post Rd., was built in 1830 and expanded in 1850. Members of the Martin family lived in the house until the 1960s. It remains a private residence. (Photo compliments of The Center for Community Renewal.)



This residence, known as "White Goose Cottage," was located near what was Wood Brook Farm, now the site of Woodbrook Corners Development at Talmadge Rd. and Park Ave. When Lloyd Grimstead took this photo in March 1933, an A. D. Cook lived there.



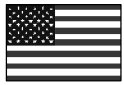
The home of I. C. Thornall stood on the corner of the Lincoln Highway (Route 27) and Frederick St. in Menlo Park. It was occupied by the Peins family when Lloyd Grimstead took this photo in April 1933. One of the first three buildings to be lighted with Edison electric lamps, it no longer exists.



The Charles C. Mook residence, shown here circa 1898, was built about 1886 on Amboy Ave.

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.

St. James Episcopal Church Hosts Revolutionary War Encampment & Reenactment September 11-12, 2004



As one of several events during 2004 in celebration of its 300th anniversary, St. James Episcopal Church is hosting a Revolutionary War Encampment and Reenactment on September 11 and 12.

Throughout 1776 and 1777, many Revolutionary War skirmishes took place in what is now Edison and Metuchen. In June 2002, the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society sponsored a reenactment of The Battle of The Short Hills, which took place in Edison's Oak Tree neighborhood. The encampment and reenactment at St. James Church offers another opportunity for residents and visitors to experience "history in action." St. James is working in cooperation with Edison Mayor George Spadoro, the Edison Township Council, and the Edison Historic Preservation Commission for this event.

An authentic Revolutionary War encampment and battle reenactment will take place on the former Piscatawaytown Commons (now Thomas Swales Park/Edison Commons) located behind St. James Church. Revolutionary War reenactors from several New Jersey units will recreate engagements that took place around the church, and perform infantry and artillery demonstrations and cavalry drills. Visitors can stroll through authentic campsites and a Colonial-era marketplace where "sutlers" sell authentic wares. Special presentations and tours of the church are scheduled, as listed in the Reenactment Schedule to the right. Tours of the Piscatawaytown Burial Ground around the church are also being planned.

St. James is located at 2136 Woodbridge Avenue between Plainfield Avenue and the Meadow Road/Old Post Road intersection in Edison's Piscatawaytown neighborhood. It was established in 1704 and chartered by Queen Anne of England in 1705. St. James was part of the Church of England until the Revolutionary War. Pastor Rev. Abraham Beech closed the church after a Colonial soldier could not guarantee his safety if Beech continued to pray for the English King, the practice in the Church of England at the time. From December 1776 to June 1777, the church was used as a British hospital and barracks.

Seven battles took place along a 2-mile stretch of the Post Road (now known as Woodbridge Avenue) from February to May 1777. Three of those occurred at or near St. James and involved several thousand troops. British dead are buried in front of St. James and in the Piscatawaytown Burial Ground. Also buried there are Continental soldiers, along with many early settlers of the area including slaves.

Piscatawaytown Commons, located behind St. James and the Piscatawaytown Burial Ground, dates back to the settlement of Piscatawaytown in 1664. The Commons is the *oldest open space in Middlesex County*. During Colonial times, local militia drilled there

and animals grazed there. The Town Meeting House and stocks were also located on the Commons.

For more information about the Revolutionary War Encampment and Reenactment, call 732-777-9249 or go to edisonnj.org and click on the "Reenactment" banner.

Reenactment Schedule

Parking is available on Meadow Road; follow the signs for "Spectator Parking." Free bus service will be provided from the parking area. All events take place at Thomas Swales Park/Edison Commons (formerly Piscatawaytown Commons) behind St. James Church unless otherwise indicated. Admission is free; a donation of non-perishable food items for the St. James Food Pantry would be appreciated.

Saturday, September 11

- 9:00 a.m. CAMP OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, Officer's Meeting
- 10:00 Infantry Drill & Demonstration
- [10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Tours of St. James Church]
- 11:00 Artillery Demonstrations
- Noon Concert by Folk Singer Linda Russell
- 1:15 p.m. "British Perspective on the American Revolution," presented by Dr. Ray Raymond, British Consul Office, in St. James Church
- 2:00 Dedication of memorial to American and British soldiers who died in the three battles in Piscatawaytown, and "Mourn Arms" ceremony, St. James Church
- 2:30 Formation of Troops
- 3:00-4:30 Battle Reenactment
- 6:00 p.m. CAMP CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC

Sunday, September 12

- 10:00 a.m. CAMP OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
- 10:00 Church service at St. James Church with Gen. George Washington in attendance (*Gen. Washington will be portrayed by noted actor William Sommerfeld*)
- 11:00 Gen. George Washington's presentation to the public, at St. James Church
- [11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Tours of St. James Church]
- 12:30 p.m. Formation of troops
- 1:00-2:30 Battle Reenactment
- 2:30 p.m. CAMP CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC



Interested in Local History? Take a Gander at These Two New Books...

The Center for Community Renewal has released an updated and expanded issue of its *Guide to Edison Township: Its History and Community Resources*. The Center has granted the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society the rights to the book as well as donating 300 copies for sale with all proceeds benefiting the Society. Copies can be purchased by calling 732-985-3217. See the newsletter insert for details.

Girl Scouts Angela and Catherine Langhoff and Teresa Marron of Senior Troop 488 researched and wrote *The Sights & Sounds of*

Edison, New Jersey, which earned them the prestigious Gold Award. A limited number of copies are available for a \$20 donation to Troop 488 to defray the cost of printing. For information, call Marilyn Langhoff at 732-417-3951.

Copies of both books have been donated to local libraries, schools, and municipal offices. Some of the content in the books is the same, but the books have different presentation approaches and offer complementary information and photographs.

John Henry “Pops” Lloyd & Negro League Baseball

In April, the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society was pleased to sponsor a talk by Dr. Lawrence Hogan on “The House that Ruth Built and Pop Opened.” Dr. Hogan is a professor of history at Union County Community College and a speaker for the NJ Council for the Humanities.

“Pop” was John Henry Lloyd, a man regarded as the one of the finest baseball players of all time. Originally from Macon, GA, Pop lived in Atlantic City and played for the New York Lincoln Giants, the Chicago American Giants, and the Atlantic City Bacharach Giants. In addition to outlining Pop’s many accomplishments and accolades, Dr. Hogan highlighted an historic event that Pop was instrumental in creating--the double-header between the Lincoln Giants and the Baltimore Black Sox, July 5, 1930, at Yankee Stadium, which marked the first appearance of Negro League professional baseball at the stadium. Furthering the extraordinary nature of this event was that the fact that it was organized to benefit the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

After his presentation, Dr. Hogan answered questions from the audience, including those from a young history buff, pictured here with Dr. Hogan, in one of the reproduction uniform shirts on display.



During the informal discussion after the presentation, a video made by one of the attendees about Hinchliffe Stadium in Paterson was shown. Hinchliffe was the home of the Black Yankees in the 1930s and 1940s. Closed in 1997 and now in disrepair, Hinchliffe is one of only two Negro League stadiums left standing (the other is in Birmingham, AL).

Available at the meeting were flyers regarding the efforts to have Pop Lloyd recognized at Yankee Stadium, and information about the 12th Annual Pop Lloyd Weekend Celebration in October. For more information, call 609-927-1597 or go to www.popsballyard.org.

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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, 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.*

The Legacy of John Brinckmann

On Tuesday, June 15, the Historical Society lost a long-time, valued member. John H. Brinckmann died peacefully at home at the age of 79.

Brinckmann was born in 1924 in Metuchen and grew up there. His obituary published in the *Home New Tribune* included some of his early memories, including “seeing a Middlesex line [trolley] car go by on Amboy Avenue about 1929” and “riding with his parents on a ‘Fast Line’ open car from Newark to Bonhamtown Junction.”*

He started collecting railroad and trolley timetables at age 14, the beginning of a life-long interest in rail travel. At age 18, he began a career with the Pennsylvania Railroad and successor companies Penn-Central and Conrail, concluding with his retirement in 1985 and interrupted only by a tour of duty in Alaska during World War II.

Brinckmann was the author of a booklet on the “Public Service Fast Line,” “The Tuckerton Railroad” (1974), and “The Pemberton and Hightstown Railroad” (1987). He was a member of the National Railway Historical Society for 50 years, and co-founded the United Railway Historical Society.

He was a member of the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society for 30 years, holding several offices in the 1970s. Brinckmann was instrumental in arranging for the negatives of the Lloyd Grimstead photo collection to be donated; these photographs comprise 80 percent of the Society’s photographic collection. He also made prints of many of the negatives for the Society’s archives, and added his own photographs.

Walter Stochel, past president of the Historical Society, remembers Brinckmann arranging for the front of an actual trolley to be delivered to Metuchen on the day of the Metuchen Country Fair around 1979. This was the front of the Society’s booth at the fair that year. Society Curator Marie Vajo remembers that Brinckmann was overseeing the Society’s archives in the early 1990s, and suggested she take over when he subsequently moved to Virginia.

John Brinckmann was one of only eight members of the Historical Society who have been awarded the distinction of *Honorary Member* in recognition of his contributions to the Society.

He will be missed.

*The “Fast Line” was a direct, high-speed rail line constructed in 1913, and ultimately running from Newark to Trenton. In the Metuchen-Edison area, the right-of-way became Route 1.

CORRECTIONS

In the Spring 2004 issue of *Nannygoats*, the caption next to the photograph of Gustav Linenthal on page 1 should have read: “The Lindenthal family lived on an estate in the Pumptown area of what is now Edison Township.” On page 2, the last paragraph in the article “Former Stagecoach Inn Demolished,” should have read: “In March 2004, the former stagecoach inn was demolished....”

HELP WANTED

The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society is looking for an energetic **volunteer to assist the curator in managing the Society's archives**, housed at the Metuchen Public Library, 480 Middlesex Avenue, Metuchen. If you are:

- Interested in local history
- Computer literate (Microsoft® Word and Photo Editor or similar software, email and internet savvy)
- Have excellent verbal and written communication skills in English
- Can volunteer an average of 25 hours per month.

call Curator Marie Vajo at 732-985-3217.

As the curator's assistant, you will:

- Catalog materials in an electronic database
- Organize historic materials
- Transcribe selected materials
- Answer research questions
- Fulfill requests for copies of material, handling correspondence, and other tasks as necessary.

“Bring Us Your History”

WE WANT YOU...to participate in the **4th annual Edison History Day** on **Sunday, October 17**, at the Edison Main Library. The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society will bring photos, documents, maps, and displays from its archives. Jack Stanley, curator of the Edison Memorial Tower Museum, will bring artifacts from the museum. And we're asking you to bring photos, documents, and artifacts from your "archives."

Look through those boxes in your attic and basement and your photo albums. Jot down your memories of life in Edison and Metuchen. We're also interested in photos of buildings, residences, businesses, and landscapes that exist today--in another 50 years, they will be part of our history!

Using a computer and scanner, we'll make copies of your photos and documents on the spot. With a digital camera, we'll photograph your artifacts.

At noon, Mark Nonesteid of the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission will conduct a **tour of the Stelton Baptist Church cemetery**, the final resting place of early European settlers, including members of the Stelle, Drake, Runyon, and Manning families. Don't be late!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Revolutionary War Reenactment & Encampment

Sat. & Sun., Sept. 11 & 12
Thomas Swales Park/Edison Commons, behind
St. James Episcopal Church, 2136 Woodbridge Ave.,
Edison

Metuchen Country Fair - Visit our booth!

Sat., Oct. 2, Main Street, Metuchen
(*Raindates: Oct. 9, 16, 23*)

4th Annual Edison History Day: “Bring Us Your History”

Sun., Oct. 17, 12-4 p.m.
Edison Main Library, 340 Plainfield Ave.,
Edison

Metuchen-Edison Historical Society
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