



Timepiece

Volume 46, Issue 4
October-November-December 2012

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President's Message—Alycia E. Rihacek

SPECIAL UPDATE:

To all of our Members, friends and the historic preservation community:

Obviously we've been visited by historic weather event of mind-boggling proportions. Super-Storm Sandy and the following nor'easter, left a devastating impact on the tri-state area as well as our community. The board of the Madison Township Historical Society would like to extend our sincere prayers and understanding to all of those affected by the wrath of Sandy.

Our bayshore communities of Laurence Harbor and Cliffwood Beach fared the worst after Sandy's storm surge. During the storm, wind gusts of over 85 miles an hour were reported, wreaking havoc throughout the Township. At 10 PM the night of the storm the entire Township was without power, and through the diligent work of JCP&L and their subcontractors from all over the country, restoration of full power came back to the entire Township after 10 days.

The board of the Madison Township Historical Society hopes that all of our friends have weathered the storm in the comfort and safety of the family and community.

This was a time when we witnessed everyone in the Township come together, and offer their support, time and energy in volunteering to those most in need. The outpouring of volunteerism from many of our own members shows how truly blessed we are to live in such a great community. We would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to all Police, Fire and EMS workers and the Township Administration, who showed strength and courage in the face of chaos. And thank you also to the Township Center of Emergency Management, the emergency shelter, for opening the doors of the Carl Sandberg School, providing comfort to all, including some of our members, affected by this emergency.

For those who live out of state, and wish to offer support for the many people from our community that suffered during Sandy, the Alumni Path Association has also set up a donation page to give recovery assistance directly for those in our community. (<https://www.leaguelineup.com/formpreview.asp?url=alumnipath&sid=480328296&FormID=56810>).

The Sayrewoods Bible Church has activated a recovery/ relief center and can be contacted at 732-679-7736 (www.sayrewoods.org). The Old Bridge Township Food Bank is accepting donations and can be contacted at (732) 721-5600 ext. 2022. And of course one can donate to the national disaster relief organizations.

MEETING CALENDAR

- *Regular Meetings: 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm unless otherwise noted. Upcoming meetings: November 20th, December 8th (Holiday Luncheon)*
- *Board of Directors Meetings: 2nd Monday of the month at 7:30pm unless otherwise noted. Upcoming meetings: November 12th, December 10th*

**MADISON TOWNSHIP
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

OFFICERS

President, Alycia E. Rihacek
1st Vice-President, Patricia A. Schuck
2nd Vice-President, Jack Becker
Recording Secretary, Carol Dennison
Corresponding Secretary, David Johns
Treasurer, Richard J. Kujawinski

Director A, Pauline Drake
Director B, Carmela Barthine
Director C, Leona Murphy

Museum Curator,
Kathleen M. Philbrick

Newsletter Editor,
Deborah Stanley

Masthead image:
Gingerbread Mantle Clock
Connecticut origin, Steam-Pressed Oak
Circa early 1900s
Accession number 6
Donated by: Mr. J. Maley

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President's Message (continued) — Alycia E. Rihacek

The Thomas Warne Museum fared very well during Sandy's visit. We can report no damage to our facility, only the loss of some trees to the back of our property. Thanks to our curator, Kate Philbrick, the facility was prepared and watched over under her careful guidance.

In the wake of Sandy and under the advisement of the Township administration and the Board of the Society decided, for the safety of all of our volunteers and friends, to cancel our 47th Apple Festival. Not to worry, we will be back next year.

Also, we are sad to report the location for our December luncheon, the Ye Cottage Inn of Keyport, was destroyed during the storm. The Board has decided to accept the generous offer of Deb Stanley to hold our holiday get-together at her house on December 8th, Noon till 3 PM. This will be a catered affair, and we invite you to come and join us in thanksgiving and community. Contact the Museum for more information.

Lastly, the Keyport Historical Society suffered the loss of their beautiful museum. Even with their disaster preparedness plans and the removal of two thirds of their archive prior to the storm, the facility and the final third of their archive was damaged and destroyed. Our heartfelt condolences go out to the members of the Keyport Historical Society and our prayers for a speedy recovery.

It is in times like these, that we see the community compassion in action. This is what makes living in Old Bridge, with its history and neighborly spirit, a truly great place to call home. To borrow a phrase, We Are Old Bridge Strong! We may have been knocked around, but we all help each other rise back up together.

A little bit o' Sunshine—Get well soon!

Howard Drake
Chet Philbrick
Trudi Terpilli

In Memoriam:

Helen Scott Quackenbush

March 12, 1919- October 30, 2012

It is with a heavy heart, to mark the passing of Mrs. Quackenbush. We had the pleasure to interview Mrs. Quackenbush over the previous year. She was an amazing woman born and raised in South Old Bridge. Her work with 4H and the County Fair some may know ... she was "Gram" to so many in the township. She will be missed, not only for the endless knowledge of township history and family genealogies, but for her kindness and generosity to the Society. Our prayers and condolences to her family at this time.



*3rd Annual Tea
With Mrs. Lincoln*

April 6, 2013

At the Thomas Warne Museum

Tickets (\$20) for this fundraiser are limited.

To reserve, call Pat Schuck

(732) 566-5029

Curator's Corner—Kate Philbrick

As we all recover from a change of seasons that brought us hurricane Sandy and several inches of wet snow, it's gratifying to know the museum is up and running again, welcoming visitors old and new. It is always a pleasure to have guests stop in for their first time, or for repeat visits. It's a special treat when our members drop in for an hour or an afternoon, to chat and catch up.

Though we lost power, heat and the phone on Monday, October 29 when Sandy hit, we had everything restored within hours of the snowy nor'easter that visited Nov. 7-8. Sadly, the Historical Society was forced to cancel the annual Apple Festival because of the storm, but we've picked up the pieces and are back in business. Sandy took down several big trees in the woods, but fortunately the museum, sheds and outhouses were not damaged.

The tentatively scheduled display of 'A Cabinet of Curiosities' was postponed, and has since been cancelled for the year, as preparations are underway for our annual Christmas Holiday exhibit. Please watch this space for a posting of Curator Sunday Talks, with dates and subjects to be presented after the first of the year. These are informal talks and discussions covering a wide range of subjects including local history, or perhaps highlighting pieces in our collection. There will also be some interesting topics concerning the history, people and events that made their mark on New Jersey. These are presented once monthly at 2 pm on a Sunday afternoon-- but again, watch this space for details.

Holiday Cheer

We hope you can stop by the museum during December and visit during our Christmas Holiday Display. The exhibits will include a sampling of old-time store window showcases, from toy shops to booksellers, photographic studios and more. Once a year we get the opportunity to trot out some of our artifacts and collections that are not usually featured in our gallery, as we depict a nostalgic street scene from a century gone by. We will also have winter fashions and traditional decorations on display. Come in for some holiday cheer and relax before heading back to the mall. The exhibit runs through December and the first week of January. Hope to see you there!



Christmas 1982—Kate Philbrick

Did you know that 30 years ago, Old Bridge NJ was making national news? That was the year when the Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree was harvested from our township, to be brought from obscurity to world fame.

The official tradition of erecting a Christmas Tree in the plaza at Rockefeller center was begun in 1933, and according to records the Norway Spruce has been 'the tree of choice' since 1982. Guess it is safe to say our native son started that.

The first tree was actually erected Christmas eve of 1931, before the Center was finished. Several workman set up a tree and decorated it with whatever was handy, including strings of cranberries and even some tin cans. Starting with pines 50 feet tall, and growing in importance as a symbol of the season over the years, the tallest on record was said to be 100 feet, erected in 1999. Today candidates must stand at least 65 feet tall, and be about 35 feet wide. To be transported it needs to be wrapped to a width of 20-30 feet, which is done before cutting.

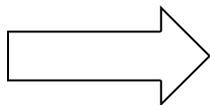


I first heard about the Old Bridge tree when it was announced on the radio, the morning it was being collected. Actual cutting down is a process which now takes less than 5 minutes. The home where the spruce had grown, and where all the activity took place, sits on the northbound side of Englishtown Road, not far from Dill's garage, and I am told members of the original family still live there. You are able to see where the tree once stood in front of a picture window, as no replacement tree was planted in its place.

The Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree has become one of the most prominent of holiday traditions, and its lighting each year is an event televised around the world. Visitors to NYC, locals, and thousands of shoppers make point to visit each year, and it's exciting to know that for a few weeks during the holidays in 1982, a tree from Old Bridge brought delight to the world.

Many thanks to Mary Koutis for her help with this article!

THE MYSTERY SOLVED



OFFICE OF THE TOWNSHIP CLERK OF THE TOWNSHIP OF	} _____ N. J., _____ 189
This is to Certify, That _____ has given notice to the Township	
Clerk of the Township of _____ that he has made application to the Court of	
Common Pleas of the County of Middlesex to be admitted to become a citizen of the United States, and that the	
provisions of Section 4 of the Act entitled "An Act concerning naturalization and regulating the procedure in cases of	
naturalization in Courts of this State, and establishing uniform fees of clerks and judges in naturalization	
cases," passed March 26th, A. D. 1895, have been complied with in such case.	
_____ Township Clerk.	

You may recall, in a previous newsletter, there was a small certificate printed with no explanation given. It was printed at about 2/3 to 3/4 actual size, and was one example of many found in an old ledger recently unearthed in our collection. The form was in fact an application and receipt for U.S. citizenship, for Madison Township, county of Middlesex. While most of the forms in the book were never used, they were dated for the 19th century. Those that were filled out were done in the 1890s, and in fact reflect a few family names from Old Bridge's past, all signed by the town clerk. Want to know more? You can see it for yourself on your next visit to the museum-- just ask!

History in the Making?—Kate Philbrick

I am particularly late in submitting articles for this issue of the newsletter, thanks to a visit from Sandy. Dubbed “Frankenstorm” by the media, and blowing through our fair state mere days before Halloween, Mother Nature was clearly offering tricks instead of treats.

Prior to Sandy’s arrival, the meteorological community was excited because of the storm’s origin. It was a never-before-seen event, involving a combination of weather patterns and circumstances coming together perfectly in something they say could only happen ‘once in a life-time’. It has been called a weather event that could only occur once in 100 years, and no one who experienced it would debate that point. An odd subject for an Historical Society newsletter, but all in all appropriate regarding history and historical happenings. Weather conditions being something we cannot control, notable and severe climatic events will always be news, and yes, these events make history.

New Brunswick, New Jersey, almost 160 years ago, was struck by a tornado, leaving one fatality. Even today, references are made by weathermen and forecasters to the blizzard of 1888. We remember Katrina vividly though she did not ravage New Jersey, and there are many hurricanes and their remnants that some of us can personally recall. So it will be with Sandy, the monster storm of 2012-- an historical weather event which we ourselves have survived.

Newspaper clippings and personal recollections will tell part of the story. Photographs taken of the destruction left in Sandy’s wake will tell even more. A night in a county shelter, listening to the tales of distraught families and individuals not as fortunate as me is something I will not forget. People related tales of cars, homes, belongings and personal treasures lost in the blink of an eye when water swept in from the bay in South Amboy and other near by towns. Most of us experienced some days without power or heat, or had to wait on lines for gasoline. Our lives were disrupted by tragedy and inconvenience, but remember, it is history nonetheless!

FOUNDERS DAY OCTOBER 16, 2012 The Exceptional and Outstanding Founding Members of The Madison Township Historical Society 1971-1976

To continue our tradition of honoring those before us, we now recall the names of our members’ outstanding dedication to our Society. If it were not for the following group of men and women, our stories and our history may very well have been lost to time. We are indebted to them for the promotion of our cultural history for future generations. We honor their generous donation of energy and time.

Chester Philbrick	William Adams
Kathleen Philbrick	Cecil Letts
Marge Weaver	Mary Lou Koegler
Mrs. Robert Koenig	Olga Hutchinson
Jean Roberts	Herbert Kuehne
Tracy Hamilton	Michael Connally
Irene Bedle	Molly & Jack Honig
Mary Neilson	Joanne & Michael
Kathleen Buckley	Connolly
Ellie McDermott	James Geddis
Lenore Pinoos	Arlene Belaskiewicz
Edna Green	Shirley Glickman

Also:

Robert Sommers—Boy Scouts, history projects relating to Indian Trail
Clarence & Hazel Hauser (and family)—Prior to our incorporation
Herbert Cottrell, Jr.—Apple Fest start & family/local history
Henrietta Chittick—Early Member, extensive collection of family papers/books/items in our archives

This program is made possible by

Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders
Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission

with funding in part from

New Jersey Historical Commission
a Division in the Dept of State



THE 2012 APPLE FESTIVAL UPDATE

The Apple Festival of 2012 was cancelled due to the effects of Hurricane Sandy. However, the annual Apple Festival Poster Contest was a huge success, thanks to the efforts of Jack Becker and Carmela Barthine. There were 218 posters submitted from six different elementary schools. The Old Bridge Art Teachers are to be complimented for the participation of their students.

Winning posters were submitted by:

1st Place: Patrick Chomanic, 3rd Grade, Grissom School

2nd Place: Samantha Gough, 2nd Grade, Grissom School

3rd Place: Rafaella Bagacay, 1st Grade, Shepard School

Honorable Mention: Gracie Petschauer, Kindergarten, Cooper School.

A certificate of appreciation will be provided to all the students who submitted apple posters.

Apple Festival Honoree:

Our Apple Festival Honoree is Mr. Herbert Cottrell Jr. His long time apple growing in this town has been important to our history.

We appreciate all the willing volunteers who were ready to work in this fundraising effort.

Patricia Schuck and Deb Stanley,
Co-Chairs



Won't you consider
volunteering
on a Friday
afternoon?

The hours are 12-4, the pay is great—you get to be in the Museum with another member to greet visitors and get free training in giving tours. Ann Miller, Jack Becker, Leona Murphy and Joan Gibson have been faithful volunteers on a monthly basis for years. Would you commit to one afternoon of your time on a regular basis?

I'll be waiting to hear from you (732) 566-5029.
—Pat Schuck

Speedway Weekend

The Old Bridge Speedway Weekend has proven to be another success. We wish to thank The Garden State Vintage Stock Car Club, for their generous donation to the Madison Township Historical Society.

To all of our guest curators, volunteers and visitors, we are grateful for all of the hard work you do to record and preserve the history of New Jersey's vanished race tracks.

Thank you to Mayor Owen Henry for stopping by and sharing your stories about the Old Bridge Stadium Speedway.

Madison Township Historical Society Meeting Schedule **2013**

Regular Meetings: at 7:00pm (Held the 3rd Tuesday of the Month unless otherwise noted)

- January 15
- February 19
- March 19
- April 16
- May 21
- June 18—picnic
- July/August—no meetings
- September 17
- October 15—
Founder’s Day
- November 19
- December Luncheon

Board of Directors: at 7:30pm (Held the 2nd Monday of the Month unless otherwise noted)

- January 14
- February 11
- March 11
- April 8
- May 13
- June 10
- July 8
- August 12
- September 9
- October 14
- November 11
- December 9

Madison Township Historical Society **2013 Membership Form**

Regular annual membership dues for the year 2013 in the Madison Township Historical Society (MTHS) are \$15 per person.

Dues are due by April 1st, 2013.

To renew or apply for a new membership, please complete this form and make payment in person at the Thomas Warne Museum or mail this complete form along with check or money order (Please Do Not Mail Cash) made payable to:

Madison Township Historical Society—(memo note: *“Membership”*)

Mail to:

Membership Committee
Madison Township Historical Society
4216 Route 516
Matawan, NJ 07747



Please Print

Check One

- 2013 Renewal
 New Member

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Would you like to receive your Newsletter via Email? Yes No

Would you like to be a MTHS Committee Volunteer? Yes No

Would you like to be a Museum Volunteer? Yes No

For Office Use:

Cash

Check/MO#

AMOUNT PAID

RECEIPT



Thomas Warne Museum & Library



“The Little Red School House”
across from the Old Bridge
Township High School Complex.

We welcome all questions and
information pertaining to local
family genealogy, township
history, historic buildings and
archeological findings.

Community groups and school
tours available by appointment.

Home of the
Madison Township Historical Society,
serving Old Bridge Township.

Open to the Public
Fridays—Noon-4PM
Saturday & Sunday Noon-6PM

PHONE: 732-566-2108

FAX: 732-566-6943

Visit Our Web Site

www.thomas-warne-museum.com

and Join Us on Facebook

Madison Township Historical Society

4216 Route 516

Matawan, NJ 07747

