

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1997
The Historical Society of the Somerset Hills

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June Kennedy, Publicity, & Education	Martine White, Program
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Dan Lincoln, President	
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The Board meets twelve times a year in addition to meetings for special events. As always, the past year has been very interesting and challenging for all of us. Some of its highlights are outlined below:

Community Outreach and Fund Raisers

1) In conjunction with Charter Day III on May 17th, The Historical Society of the Somerset Hills (THSSH) conducted a "Bargain Bazaar" to sell items that had been donated for sale. We also rented table space on the main street at which we sold mugs, T-shirts, note paper, etc, featuring historical scenes. We realized from these two efforts \$850 in profit, which will be put toward the Brick Academy Building Fund.

2) The Basking Ridge Garden Club planted a magnificent array of flowers outside the Academy, they were a real asset to the community. With the exception of a little assistance in ongoing maintenance, the garden club did all the work. We are very grateful.

3) Once again, one of the highlights of our year was the summer history camp. June Kennedy conducted two one-week sessions, and raised \$1600, which is earmarked for Brick Academy restoration. The history camp has become a widely known event that elicited phone inquiries from Summit, Maplewood, etc.

4) August 1, John Campbell presented to the Presbyterian Church of Liberty Corner a write-up containing detailed suggestions concerning the future of the Ehrenberg house. This structure, which was built some time between the end of the Revolutionary War and 1800. is on a lot adjacent to the church. The church recently bought the property and is considering what to do with the house. Due to its

location and relatively unchanged facade the house is significant to the character of the Liberty Corner Historic District. The write up incorporated the thoughts and input of many THSSH members and other interested people from the Somerset Hills.

5) October 18 - THSSH conducted two walking tours of downtown Basking Ridge in conjunction with the Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Commission. The Brick Academy was open for the event. The tours were very well attended and and the participants were very enthusiastic.

6) We took a booth at the Lord Stirling Festival in October because it provided a good opportunity to introduce The Historical Society to new residents. We displayed many local historical photos as well as handouts, and our usual items for sale. There was an excellent turn out.

7) September 14 - The Historical Society participated in the Bernardsville Community Day, an event very similar to the Lord Stirling Festival.

8) The highlight of our 1997 activities was our Christmas House Tour on December 7. Under Diane O'Connor's leadership the effort resulted in one of the best house tours we have ever had. Six houses in the Somerset Hills, each with unique features and charm, were open to the public. The tour was staffed by 80 volunteers. Profits were about \$12,000. We received glowing reports from many of the attendees.

9) Larry Terricone donated a quilt that featured motifs which represent Basking Ridge sites. We took advantage of this windfall by conducting a raffle. The drawing was December 10 and profits were over \$2,600. Dan Lincoln spear headed this effort.

Education

1) The Academy is open Sundays in the spring and fall from two to four p.m. We have museum exhibits and offer a handout describing a self guided tour of Basking Ridge, as well as a number of handouts on local history. This year we attracted more visitors and a number of college and graduate students.

2) Ridge High School honor students have obtained from us original source material for use in school reports.

3) Throughout the year lectures are given at the Academy to school groups and scout troops.

4) June Kennedy, the township historian and also our education chairman, has worked with first and second graders at Oak Street School, on a project called

"School Yard Archeology." This introduces young children to the concepts of archeology. June is now also acting as consultant to Ridge High News Channel 12. There have been several programs featuring the Brick Academy.

5) People from all over the country contact us for genealogical information. The demand for this service is growing and brings in a modest income in donations.

6) Rusty Myers of Ridge High School, under the guidance of June Kennedy, produced three video tapes. (1) The William Annin Story, (2) The Astor Family in Basking Ridge Before and After the Titanic, (3) Bernards Township In the Wars, 1776 - Present. These are now in the library of THSSH.

7) THSSH published six newsletters. They went out to the membership and were given to other interested parties through the year, particularly during Academy open houses, and at the Lord Stirling and Bernardsville fairs.

Utilization of the Academy by Local Groups

January - meeting of the Berkeley Circle Association

February - meeting of the Liberty Corner Presbyterian Church Building Committee.

April - meeting of Northern N. J. Chapter of the American Society of Appraisers.

Each of these groups made a small voluntary donation to the Brick Academy Building Fund.

Membership Celebration

A July 4th picnic was held in Southard Park. It was very well attended by people from three to eighty-five - fun, games, and lots of good food.

Meetings and Programs

These are advertised and the general public is welcome.

January - Slide program "Bernards Township - As We Were" by June Kennedy & Martine White.

March - "Antique Dolls by Elizabeth" by Ann Pierce.

April - "The World of Miniatures" by Marinetta Stohlman.

May - "Currier and Ives" by June Kennedy.

September - "Antiques Open House, Sharing and Appraisals" by Martine White and June Campbell. The program was followed by an old fashioned ice cream social.

October - "200 Year History of Purses" with a slide presentation by Phyllis Sanftner.

November - "Lord Stirling, New Jersey's First Astronomer by George Helmke.

Restoration Work

1) A land owner in Peapack - Gladstone is planning to donate to THSSH property including two 18th century lime kilns. The kilns are in a marvelous state of repair and of great historical significance to the Somerset Hills. Ninety-five percent of the brush clearing has been completed and 75% of the grading and seeding is finished. THSSH is ready to take title to the property when two fences for safety of the public have been installed by the developer. We hope to open the site to the public in the spring of 1998.

2) Academy - With the help of Bernards Township, THSSH arranged to have exterior trim and the front steps of the Academy painted, crown moldings repaired and some shingles and two rotted window sills replaced. At the end of December, we began work on replacing our two dilapidated, 1924-vintage bathrooms with a new unisex, invalid-accessable facility. At present it is 70% completed.

Acquisitions

<u>Source</u>	<u>Item</u>
Purchased	Self guided tour of Somerset County published by Heritage Trails.
Community Service Organization of Bernards Township	Early 20th century, two-tiered, glass-doored book case.
Purchased	Framed yellow-corn-meal bag "Van Dorn's Mill 1768-1842." Made in 1933.
Purchased	Print of Theodore Frelinghuysen, c. 1845.

Purchased	Sign "Phillip Koechlein, Liberty Corner, N. J."
Purchased	Map "Hailton Farm & Environs - Somerset, Morris, & Hunterdon Counties." 1935.
Nancy Brangcoccio, Lyons Pl.	Aerial view Bernards township between Annin Rd. and Lyons RR station, c. 1912.

Association Memberships

- 1) National Trust For Historic Preservation
- 2) Preservation, New Jersey
- 3) League of Historical Societies of New Jersey
- 4) Somerset County Historical Society

Outlook for 1998

- 1) Complete restoration of the lime kiln property in Peapack, and acquire the title of ownership.
- 2) Continue outreach in many areas of education.
- 3) Conduct a 1998 Christmas house tour.
- 3) Continue restoration of the Brick Academy: complete work on the bathroom, install heating and air conditioning systems, and lay a new concrete cellar floor.

Respectfully submitted,

June S. Campbell
Chairman - Board of Trustees

January 9, 1998

Ms. Barbara Pence, Administrator
Township of Bernards
1 Collyer Lane
Basking Ridge, N. J. 07920

Re: Annual Report For The Year 1997
The Historical Society of the Somerset Hills

Dear Barbara:

The enclosed annual report describes our activities and restoration efforts, contributions we received, and the outlook for 1998.

Also enclosed is a check in the amount of \$1.00 payable to the Township of Bernards as a fee consideration of our lease agreement.

Please contact me if you have questions or need any additional information.

Very truly yours,

June Campbell
Chairman - Board of Trustees

Encs.