

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2004
Historical Society of the Somerset Hills

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Joseph Callahan	Marcella Miccolis
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George Helmke	Ken Salvo, Building Manager Pro Tem
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Donald Lorenz	Lawrence Terricone, Recording Sec.
Richard Macksoud, Treasurer	Millie Van Dyke, Genealogy

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

1) The Historical Society of The Somerset Hills (THSSH) participated in two community events this year. Charter Day, May 22nd, was attended by huge crowds, and we were inundated by questions of all types related to our work. We sold many gift items and passed out much free information. The Lord Stirling Festival, October 3rd, was a wonderful event devoted purely to history in one form or another and we were equally successful there. Participating in these community events gives us a good opportunity to reach new residents in the area who would not otherwise know of our work. The proceeds of all of the sales go to the Brick Academy Building Fund.

2) Once again the Basking Ridge Garden Club and Linda Macksoud planted wonderful flowers outside the Academy. We maintained these beds throughout the season.

3) Items from our archives are used throughout the year in display cases, particularly in libraries and the Bernards Township municipal building.

4) In June some of our members rode in the parade celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Basking Ridge Fire Dept.

5) Assisted the English Family on October 9th with their Family Farm Day. It was a great success.

6) We nominated one of our members, Ann Parsekian, to be honored at the YMCA Volunteer Recognition Night – a very impressive event.

7) We participated in the Memorial Day celebration and placed a wreath on the Town green.

8) We continue to advise individuals on grant application procedures, and a number of home owners concerning procedures for restoration and how to get their homes on the National Register.

Restoration

We are now embarking on the last phase of restoration of the Brick Academy. We are delighted to announce that in the end of 2004 we were awarded \$70,000 in grants by the Cultural and Heritage Commission of Somerset County for the restoration of our third floor. We must now hire an architect to draw up the plans and then proceed with hiring contractors. We are looking forward to finally completing the restoration of the entire building, which has been the main objective of the Historical society since its founding in 1928.

In the area of exterior maintenance in 2004 we did roof repair, replacement of boards on the porch and window sills, and painting of all exterior wood.

Preservation

The Historic Preservation Committee came up with a wonderful idea this year to promote awareness of the importance of historic buildings. They created an historic preservation award to be given to a group of owners who exhibited extraordinary consideration for the proper approach to the preservation of their buildings. The owners were given plaques and banners to display and photos of the buildings were put on display in the Bernards Township Library. The awards were given on May 20th at our general meeting and the event was well publicized. The recipients were: The Grain House Restaurant, The carriage house at Coffee House Corner, the Wealth Strategies building at 11 South Finley Ave., the English Farm, and the summer camp buildings at Fellowship Deaconry.

In November the committee introduced new Historic Preservation Guidelines. These voluntary guidelines were developed as an aid to property owners who are interested in restoring or renovating an historic building.

During the year the committee consulted with several property owners on their historic home projects, and provided input to the Bernards Township Engineering Department on a number of Planning Board and Board of Adjustments applications.

The Historical Society continues to follow with great interest the progress of the restoration of the Kennedy-Martin-Stelle Farmstead. The receipt of \$550,000 in grants is indeed wonderful news.

Education

1) THSSH published three newsletters this year. They were sent to our 300 members and also given out at our open houses and public events. They are helpful in informing the public of our activities.

2) Our museum is open every Sunday afternoon from 2:00 to 4:00 pm. We have changing exhibits, a modest gift shop, and well informed docents to help those who stop by. Special appointments should be made for help with research.

3) We gave a number of lectures to Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, Indian Princesses, and elementary school children, 310 children in all.

4) On November 30th we entertained a bus load of residents from Ridge Oak who came to learn something of the activities of the Historical Society and browse through our museum.

5) On June 16th we were visited by "Leadership Somerset", a group sponsored by the county of over 30 people interested in all aspects of county affairs. They visited the Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church and then came to the Academy for a brief meeting. They then proceeded to the Kennedy Farmstead.

6) We published a new, updated walking tour of historic Basking Ridge and, on October 9th, in partnership with Base Camp and The Lemon Lounge, we conducted a guided walking tour of the town. This was followed by a reception at the Brick Academy.

7) We have begun the work of photographing a large collection of 19th Century Dunham family diaries and recording them in digital form on compact disks.

8) We provided artifacts, reference material, and photographs to the Liberty Corner School to help with its 100th anniversary celebration.

9) We continue to be open 9:30am to 12:00 noon the first and third Wednesdays of every month. A gratifying number of people come in for help, both for genealogical information and guidance in historical preservation.

Utilization of the Academy

January 7th - meeting of the Berkeley Circle Association

January 25th - Victorian luncheon and speaker sponsored by The American Association of University Women.

February, March - Meetings of Friends of the Farmstead

April, July and December - Meetings of the Herding Association of New Jersey.

September 23rd - Ridge Oak Board of Trustees meeting.

December 16th - Historical Society Christmas party.

See "Community Outreach," "Education" and "Fund Raisers" sections of this report for details on other occasions in which the Brick Academy was used for working with the public.

Fund Raisers

- 1) Ongoing sale of gift shop items, both at the Academy and at Charter Day and the Lord Stirling Festival. This year we had two new items with photos of local scenes for sale: Place mats (now sold out) and gift cards.
- 2) We have begun a new policy of putting ads in our news letter and find that it has boosted our income considerably.

Programs

These are advertised and the general public is welcome.

March 18th - "Ten Moral Moments in the Life of Abraham Lincoln"
by Glenn Leboeuf

April 15th - "Country Houses of the Somerset Hills" by W. Barry Thomson.

May 20th - Historic preservation awards (see Preservation section) followed by "Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church Cemetery" by George Fricke

June 17th - "Ben Franklin and John Adams: the Odd Couple" by Edward M. Cifelli.

September 16th - "Early European Book Production, The First 200 Years" by Per Ralamb.

October 21st - "First Ladies: A conjecture of Personalities" by Feather Foster Schwartz.

November 18th - "The Very Creature of Excitement: The Woman Abraham Lincoln Fell In Love With and Never Fell Out Of" by Laurie MacDonnell-Gaulke.

Consultation and Clerical Work

In 2004 we spent over 300 hours providing telephone and face-to-face consultation to the public on genealogy and guidance in historic preservation, reviewing and cataloguing acquisitions, photographing privately held old documents for inclusion in our files, cataloguing our library, composing pamphlets and publications, cataloguing our files to improve their accessibility, cleaning the building, and much more.

Acquisitions

<u>Item</u>	<u>Source</u>
1870 wash stand for the lavatory	Purchase
Miscellaneous property deeds for Bernards Township	Don Cross
Early 1900s Bernards Township voting box	Town Hall attic
1773 print of General Charles Lee	Purchase

Stelle family diaries, Bible, books, deeds, wills,
and surveys

Miss Beatrice Stelle

Color print of Van Dorn Mill

Summit-Short Hills
Historical Society

Large collection of pictures, photos, and other
material pertaining to the restoration of the
Van Dorn Mill, including a history of Franklin
Corners

Summit-Short Hills
Historical Society

1936 dress uniform of Capt. James Sylvester Flynn,
Basking Ridge Company #1, Volunteer Fire Dept.

Betty Ann Ciucevich

Books:

Our First 100 Years - 1904 to 2004 (VNA of
Somerset Hills)

George Helmke

The Boys From New Jersey (WW II service men)

Barbara Kramer

100th Anniversary, Basking Ridge Fire Co. #1

Fire Company

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 2005

1) Now that we have received our grant, proceed to restore the third floor of the Brick Academy. This will include drawing up plans and the beginning of actual work as time permits.

2) Continue outreach in areas of education on local history and genealogy, and provide information and guidance to people interested in restoring old buildings.

3) We hope to repeat the Historic Preservation Awards Program in 2005, expanding eligibility to the entire Somerset Hills.

4) Plans are already under way to develop a walking tour booklet for Liberty Corner and an audio-tape driving tour of the Somerset Hills.

5) Explore new ideas for fund raising activities.

6) Participate in community events in order to raise community consciousness of the historical heritage of the Somerset Hills.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "June S. Campbell".

June S. Campbell
Chairman - Board of Trustees