

Friendship School - Circa 1830

# S.H.O.U.T.

SAFEKEEPING THE HERITAGE  
OF UPPER TOWNSHIP

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE  
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY  
OF UPPER TOWNSHIP



*Rooted in the Past - Enjoyed in the Present - Preserved for the Future*

**Volume 15 No. 2**

**Spring 2008**

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### Update from Our Leaders

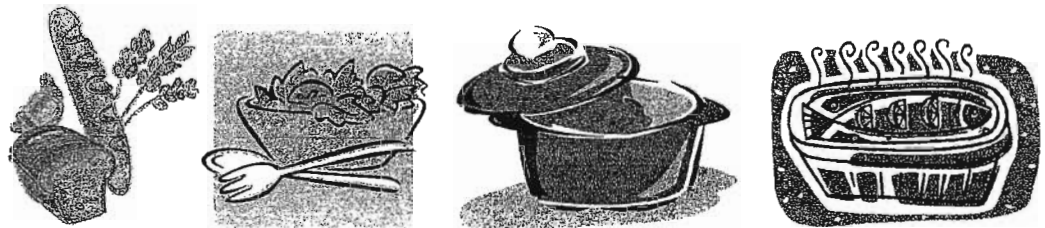
On January 22 our new president, Carol Williams, held a leadership retreat at her home. Under discussion were our goals and direction for the future. Now that we have the Train Station, Friendship School, and Gandy Farmstead, what should be our priorities?

Lew Albrecht gave an architectural committee report which is reproduced on page 2 of this issue. We continue to improve our facilities.

Mike Houdart gave a treasurers report which he will repeat at the next general meeting. Briefly, that with monies from grants and the Township Committee we have sufficient funds to accomplish all that we have set out to do.

Our greatest challenge for the future seems to be to make our facilities known to and utilized by the community. Several ideas are under consideration: 1. to place bookmarks at the library. 2. to update our brochures, and 3. to develop a program for fourth grade students at the Gandy Farmstead which is similar to Kindergarten Day at the Friendship school.

Reported by Marj Bixby, editor



**Don't forget our annual covered dish supper!**

**Bring a covered dish and something to show and tell!!!**

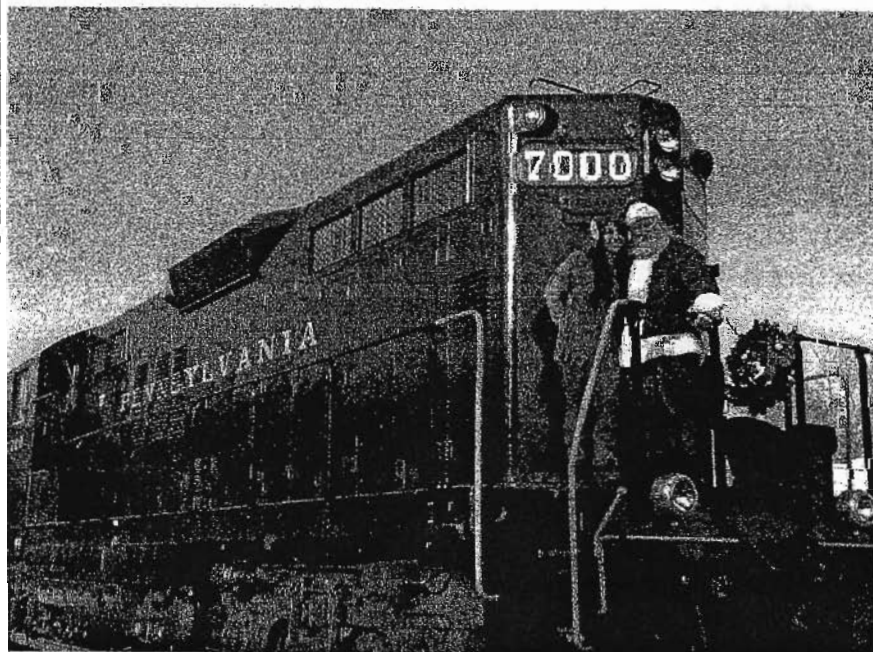
**After taking the winter off, it's time to get together, renew friendships,  
and plan our year's activities.**

**See you on March 11  
at the Resurrection Church in Marmora at 6 pm.**

## Calendar of Events

- February 22 - Kindergarten Day will be held at the Friendship School. This annual event is an extremely enjoyable and educational field trip for our kindergarten students. Members of the society dress in period clothing and explain what it would have been like to attend this school when it was first built.
- March 11 - The general meeting will take place at the Resurrection Church in Marmora at 6 pm. As is our tradition this meeting will be a covered dish supper with "show and tell" to follow! Members please bring casseroles, breads or veggies. The Board members will bring the meat, beverages and deserts.
- April 5 - Sonia Forry is reviving our Spring Rambles! We will be attending an Open tour of Paulsdale, the Mt. laurel birthplace of Quaker suffragist Alice Paul. For more information call Sonia at: 628-3041.
- April 8 - Our regular meeting will be held at the Upper Cape Library. Refreshments at 7:00 pm. Meeting starts at 7:30. The speaker will be Bill George, a former conductor on the Reading Seashore Line from Ocean City to Lindenwold. He has many, many stories to tell.
- May 15 - Our regular meeting will be held at the Upper Cape Library. Refreshments at 7:00 pm. Meeting starts at 7:30. The speaker is Bill Kelly, author of the "History of Bars of Somers Point". He is also an expert on the History of Richard Somers and moving and returning his remains to Somers Point from Tripoli.
- June 14 - Looking forward to the Strawberry Festival. What can you do to help?

## RECENT EVENTS



**December 11** we held our annual Christmas Party. This year it was on the heated porch of the newly repaired Anchorage in Somers Point. The food was good, the company congenial and a good time was had by all.

During November and December the **Santa Claus Train** entertained children of all ages. And incidentally introduced hundreds of people to the hard work the Society has done and is still doing to preserve the railroading heritage of the township.



# *TUCKAHOE NATIONAL BANK ROBBERY*



March 13, 1925 (Friday) was one of the few dark days in the history of Tuckahoe. On that date, the Tuckahoe National Bank robbery took place.

According to newspaper accounts of the day, the bank had opened for the day when three young bank robbers entered.

They blackjacked bank president, Edwin L. Tomlin, Edward L. Rice the cashier and his wife who happened to be in the bank at the time. The savage beatings left depressions in the vault tile which are still visible today. Tomlin recognized one of the men and called him by name, who then shot Tomlin in the side of his head with the bullet ricocheting off the face of the wall clock (this clock with the bullet hole now hangs in the office of Bill Brown the realtor in Marmora). Also, there are bullet holes in the exposed original Birdseye floor just in front of the vault. The infamous three then ran out the front door after taking \$3,000 in coin and left the cash behind.

Lilburn Hess, who had been a cashier at the bank and was a crippled man, lived near the bank. He watched the robbers jumping in their automobile and picked up his shotgun and aimed at the robbers. His two small sons yelled to their dad to shoot them but he didn't fire until the robbers fired at him. He riddled the fleeing automobile with shots and it was found out later, that he had wounded two of the thieves.

A posse of townspeople formed and chased the robbers down Reading Avenue until they found the car overturned in April's cranberry bog. The thieves were caught less than an hour later when the state police joined in the search with police dogs. The young robbers were exhausted after the chase. A state trooper recovered most of the money from the robbery.

Tuckahoe Posse

**WANTED  
DEAD OR ALIVE**



The injured robbers were James Pettit and Gustave Anderson. Their accomplice was Walter Laird.

Edwin Tomlin, bank president, died the next day from his injuries inflicted by the pistol shot during the robbery.

Edward Rice recovered from his injuries and returned to work a few weeks later. It was said that Mrs. Rice never fully recovered from her combined injuries and shock and was an invalid the rest of her life.

Two months later the trial took place on May 14, 1925 with a Justice Campbell on the bench and resulted in a verdict of first degree murder with a recommendation for a life sentence instead of the electric chair.

The reason for the verdict was that it could not be proven which one inflicted the injuries that actually killed Edward Tomlin.

Of the robbers, James Pettit was killed in prison, Gustave Anderson died of a heart attack in prison and Walter Laird served his full sentence and was released in 1948.

The National Bank of Tuckahoe NJ opened in 1907 in the home of L. M. Hess, which was located next door to the existing building. Meetings were held and business conducted at that site, 2233 Rt. 50 until 1910 when the bank building was completed. At the time, Rt. 50 was a gravel highway and the town of Tuckahoe, was lighted by kerosene lamps. Railroad was king in Tuckahoe as it was the junction of the Seashore Line and Reading Railroad. Many railroad train gang wars took place for many years between the competing railroads until the right of way was finally established.

The bank depended on large depositors like Bethlehem Steel and Du Pont Chemical Company as they had large ammunition factories located just over the Tuckahoe River in Atlantic County, supplying first Italy, then Great Britain and finally all Allied countries during World War I. The remains of these factories can still be seen today along Rt. 50.

At the time of the great depression the Tuckahoe National Bank was forced to close its door for a declared "bank holiday" for three days, but it was one of only one thousand banks to re-open after the great crash of Wall Street.

The bank was robbed again in 1958 (also on a Friday the 13th) by two more not so brilliant men. After entering the bank lobby, the robbers tried to get behind the teller cages to get to the vault. However, the Cashier, Charlie Foster, locked the doors and all the tellers ducked beneath the counter. As the robbers tried to open the door, Mr. Foster was on the phone to the State Police who were on their way. The robbers heard the phone call and they panicked and ran out of the bank. They were captured by the State Police shortly thereafter on the just being built Garden State Parkway.



This is a picture of the bank as it appeared in 1908. The house on the right was owned by a bank director, Lilburn Hess and was used as the bank headquarters in 1907 when the bank was founded until the new building was completed in 1908. The building on the left was the office of a local telephone company owned by two directors of the bank, E. B. Goodwin and L. M. Hess.

## ARCHITECTURAL COMMITTEE REPORT

County Open Space Amendment: In most counties one reason for preserving an area of open space is the historical significance of old buildings on the site. We want to add this element to Cape May County's criteria. Barbara Ernst, director of CMC Open Space and Terry Karchner, of the Office of Historical Preservation have sent me material that will help in our efforts to present the issue as a future ballot question. Carol Williams and I will be working on this project.

Railroad station: Search for a 'speeder' house site continues. The township has nixed the site next to the water tower. Doug is working with Tony Macrie to define a site on the North side of Mill road next to the tracks. Doug continues to press Don Westergom to complete the metal work on the speeder cab.

Gandy Farmstead: The chimney bricks have been treated with 3 coats of sealer by the mason. The Victrola mechanism has been repaired and will be delivered soon. Anyone with 78 RPM records that they would be willing to donate would be appreciated. An iron teakettle and a c. 1850 lunch pail have been purchased for the Gandy kitchen.

Street Lamps for Tuckahoe: Sonia and I attended a recent meeting with NJ DOT about the proposed reconstruction of Route 50 and replacement of the Tuckahoe River Bridge. I have attended several meetings since 2003, gathered material, and lobbied DOT for post lamp street lighting. In the past, DOT and others resisted any thought of installing electric replicas of the old gas lamps that existed there in the 1800's. However at a recent meeting, we were encouraged that through our efforts with NJ Office of Preservation, there is the prospect that we will get approximately 20 lamps on Route 50. I have discussed design choices with Janet Fitapaldi, a member of DOT.

As part of the big picture regarding street lighting, we would like to get a few post lamps on Reading Ave., from Route 50 to the Railroad station. There are four custom made lamp posts with Deitz lanterns at the Station. If all this comes to pass, we envision a glowing downtown Tuckahoe. The placement of lamps and sidewalks on Reading Ave. would require dealing with the Freeholders. Dan Clark has agreed to work with me on this effort.

Submitted by Lew Albrecht, Architectural committee Chairman

## RECENT DONATIONS

From: Mr. Stanley Mroz of Franklinville, NJ:  
An Extensive collection of Pennsylvania and New York Central Railroad memorabilia consisting of pins, certificates, photographs, timetables, regulation manuals, etc., all belonging to his late father, railroad employee.

From: Ocean City (NJ) Historical Museum  
A floor model display system consisting of large exhibit panels for easy viewing of the society's ever growing railroad collection.

From: Mr. Al P. Flanagan, Ocean City, NJ  
A maple round table with one leaf and four chairs, now in use at the society's office. The set is greatly increasing and improving the work area.

Thanks to: Mr. Jeremiah Reardon, Somers Point, NJ, who provided transportation of and set up of the previous items.

## **Corrections to Donations 2007**

(Winter 2007 issue)

**Mr. and Mrs. Osman Corson** were the donators of memorabilia and photographs from the B. L. England dedication program.

**Elaine Cona** of Pennsauken, NJ was the donor of several photographs of Pennsylvania Railroad employees at work in the Camden New Jersey Yards, and family railroad memorabilia.

Submitted by Sonia Forry, Historian

## Key Ingredients: America by Food

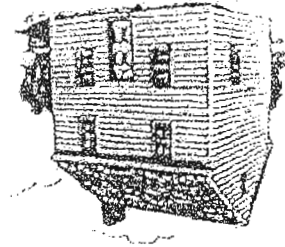
A traveling exhibit jointly sponsored by the Federation of State Humanities councils and the Smithsonian Institute's Museum on Main Street will visit six sites around NJ. Because each venue is charged with presenting the many connections between local food, history, and culture visitors will be treated to a lot more than Jersey tomatoes and cranberries.

From July 19 to August 31 the Sam Azeez Museum and the Borough of Woodbine will host this event.

Originally settled in 1891 by Jewish immigrants fleeing czarist pogroms, our neighboring town became a model agricultural center. Today, it is a multiethnic community.

from: NJ Council for the Humanities: 'Ideas'

The Gandy House - c. 1815



Historical Preservation Society  
of Upper Township, NJ, Inc.  
P.O. Box 658  
Marmora, NJ, 08223

From the office:

## Help! Your assistance is sorely needed.

Won't you please consider volunteering a bit of your time to our society's office, located in the Tuckahoe Railroad Station, where much organization of our collections is needed. For example:

The vertical files await material that now sits about the office floor in several boxes;

Also, back issues of our newsletter need chronological filing;

Much photocopying of early handwritten society meeting minutes and stacks of newspaper clippings need to be copied;

Interesting scrapbooks of our Society's earliest times must visit the copier;

And, early Tuckahoe Bank record books must be wrapped in archival paper.

We need to catalog our ever-growing collections and enter inventorial objects into the computer Past Perfect program.

As you can see the jobs ahead of us are endless. Should any or all of these tasks have appeal to you, please contact Sonia Forry at 628-3041 to arrange a visit to tour the office environs.

**Editor's correction: According to our by-laws we have 9 officers. The Trustee-at-large is elected annually. The other 8 officers each serve 2 year terms. 4 are elected one year and the other 4 the following year. This way the continuity of our leadership is maintained.**