



Medford Historical Society
circa 1966
Newsletter

Mill Phone: 609-654-7767

www.MedfordHistory.org

Kirby's Mill, 275 Church Road, PO Box 362, Medford, New Jersey 08055

Cross keys One-Room Schoolhouse, 55 Mill Street, Medford, New Jersey 08055

September 2022

Medford Historical Society
General Meeting and Speaker Series
Thursday, October 6, 2022 at 7 p.m.

New Jersey Forest Fire Service
Medford's History of Wildfires and Forest Fire Research

Dr. Michael Gallagher

Research Ecologist and Lead Scientist, US, Forest Service, New Lisbon

Tom Gerber

Section Firewarden, NJ Forest Fire Service, Medford, NJ

Alexis Everland

Fire Observer, NJ Forest Fire Service, Medford, NJ

For thousands of years, wildland fire has been an important part of New Jersey's forests. Join us on Thursday, October 6 to learn about Medford's unique role in the history of fire, its management, and the genesis of forest fire research in the northeastern U.S. that began at the U.S. Forest Service Ockinickon Experimental Forest in 1927.

Medford Historical Society Officers 2021 - 2022 Fiscal Year

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NEWSLETTER

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TRUSTEES

EXPIRES 2024 Edmund Gager, Sam Still, John Hines, Douglas Donor, Jeanne Woodford

EXPIRES 2023: Kelly Maguire, Libby Zimbleman, Kyle Mason, Carol Douglas, Michael Gallagher

EXPIRES 2022: Rick Young, Pat Alvino, Carol Milich, Richard Bucko, William Pflug



43rd Annual Apple Festival

presented by

Shoprite of Medford

Saturday, October 8th, 2022

9 am - 4 pm

at Kirby's Mill, 275 Church Road (at Fostertown Road) Medford

NO ADMISSION CHARGE

CRAFTERS

LIVE MUSIC

FOOD

FREE PARKING ON FOSTERTOWN ROAD

AND SHUTTLE SERVICE AT FELLOWSHIP ALLIANCE CHURCH

Signature Apple Cider Donuts Made On-Site,
Apple Ice Cream,
Medford Historical Society Apple Butter Spread,
Sandwiches - Made on Premises, Hot Dogs, Funnel Cakes,
Apples, Cider, Drinks, Apple Baked Goods
120+ Hand-Made Crafters
Activities for Children
Live Music, Mill Tour & Demonstration.

For further information email us at applefest@medfordhistory.org

New volunteers needed. We depend on YOU for this important event.

Medford Celebrates Its New Fire Truck circa 1935

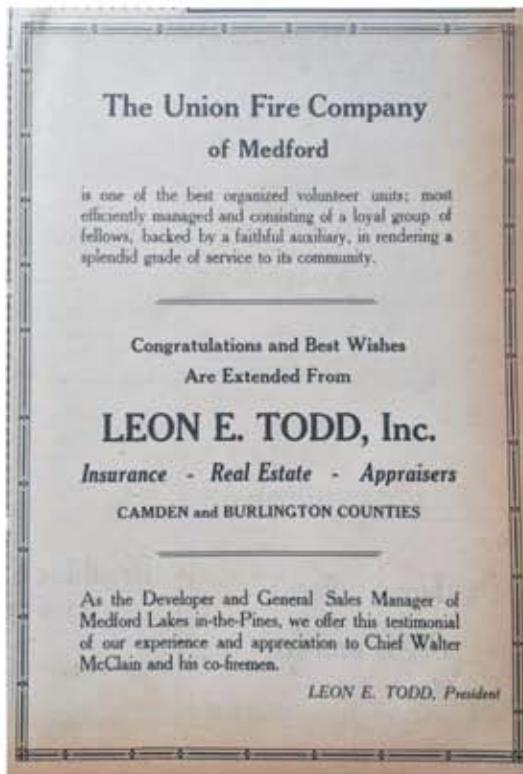
In the summer of 1935 Medford's Union Fire Company took delivery of a new fire truck. This was far from a routine acquisition and the fire company was (and continues to be) a huge part of the fabric of the community. Medford's Central Record newspaper published a "Fireman's Souvenir Edition" devoted to the Union Fire Company, its new apparatus, the town wide parade, and more. The celebrations included a huge parade with at least forty fire companies represented including over 1200 firefighters and 60 pieces of apparatus.



Scores of local businesses took out advertisements in that souvenir edition. Congratulating the Union Fire Co. was Jos. H. Haines & Sons. The "sons" Everett and Maurice Haines homes still stand on Main Street and the town's 6th grade center bears their names.



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An advertisement from Leon E. Todd also appeared in the paper. Mr. Todd founded the Medford Lakes Colony Club in 1927, developed Medford Lakes, and served as its first mayor.

One last advertisement is for Kirby Bros. Flour – Feed – Grain and Coal. Kirby’s brothers owned the iconic feed store that was a fixture on Main Street in Medford for so many years and is now home to the Shoppes at Medford Mill. And of course the Kirby’s also owned and operated Kirby’s Mill on Church road, present day home of the Medford Historical Society.



Four Public Wells in Early Medford

From the 1935 special edition of the Central Record comes a description of four wells dug in the area of Upper Evesham that would later become Medford Township. These wells were dug and maintained by the Medford Union Fire Company and used for bucket brigades to fight fires in various parts of the surrounding area. The first well was dug in 1822 and located at Main and Friend’s avenue in present day Medford. This was known as the southern well.

A northern well was dug in 1822. It was filled in around 1840 to allow Jonathan Oliphant to build a home on the property. In 1935 that same location was described as being occupied by a Dr. C Frazer Hadley, who practiced medicine for a short time in Medford. His home was located at 22 North Main Street, present day location of the J S Braddock Agency, and apparently the former location of the northern well.

In 1825 a third well was dug, it’s location in 1935 described as where the store of John Cowperthwait is located. And in 1829 a fourth well was dug on Union street. The writer is unsure how long the 3 remaining wells were used but presumably as technology improved and bucket brigades fell by the wayside these wells would have fallen out of use.

Beyond the Schoolhouse Door

by Pat Alvino, Schoolmarm

When the town of Medford acquired and moved the Cross Keys One-Room Schoolhouse in 1976, it had not been used as a schoolhouse for nearly 50 years. The building had been repurposed when it was no longer needed with the opening of the Allen School. The contents of the building were either sent to the new Allen School, discarded, or acquired by collectors. The building was no longer a schoolhouse, it was an empty shell used for a variety of purposes.

If you are to enter the Cross Keys School today it is no longer empty. You are able to go back in history to get a glimpse of a simpler time when students used copy books, sat in wooden desks, wrote on slates, and played with hoops. How did this transformation occur?

In the coming Newsletters we will meet some of the individuals who through their vision and generosity, helped to bring back the building to its original mission.

We shall start with those items which were original to the schoolhouse. Acquired by Josephine Gager, the school bell, pencil sharpener and black lacquer bench are the only items we have that were actually used in the schoolhouse. Josephine, who collected and sold antiques, recognized these items as belonging in the schoolhouse and purchased them from an individual who had them. She was able to recognize them because her husband's family not only attended the school but were responsible for building it.

Today, as our schoolmarm rings the school bell to welcome young scholars, we can thank Josephine Gager who not only had an eye for antiques but a sense of what's really valuable.



Swimming at Lake Cotoxen by Michael Gallagher

With summer winding down, you may find yourself on a cool evening reminiscing of a special afternoon at a favorite beach or swimming hole. If you grew up in the Philadelphia area during a certain bygone era, perhaps you have had thoughts of cooling off on a hot afternoon at Lake Cotoxen by Kirby's Mill. Driving by today, little suggests of the lake's interesting history through much of the 1900s as a popular swimming hole.

Lake Cotoxen takes its name from the Lenni – Lenape settlement of "Quoexin" which first appeared on a 1691 land survey in the present-day vicinity of Kirby's Mill. The lake has been dammed since at least 1778; however, the dam has been rebuilt twice in the past 100 years due to washouts from major storms in 1940 and 2004, and it is likely that similar events required rebuilds at other times as well. Old pilings that are visible when the lake is extremely low also seem suggestive of a dam with a different angle prior to 1907.

Development of lake recreation and houses at Lake Cotoxen followed a common theme of the early 20th century. A Courier Post article from 1907 advertised the lake opening for picnicking on July of that year; and by the mid-1920s, the South Jersey Building Corp. of Camden, NJ was advertising lakefront properties and recreation. Building lots started at \$350 and bungalows started at \$2500, which would afford buyers with "the coolness and pleasure of the seashore with the peace and quietness of open country". Recollections of John Hines and the presence of old pilings suggest that at the time a walking path and covered bridge across the Rancocas served these properties below the dam. The lake at the time must have been quite the happening place as it boasted a bathing beach, picnic tables, parking, boating, amusements and lockers; in addition to a tearoom and lakeview dining at the Cotoxen Inn operated by a Mrs. L.J. Crevies. By 1930, the blacksmith shop was repurposed and operated as a snack and recreation stand by a Mr. James Wiggins, who also resided in the building.

The lake primarily served visitors from Camden, Philadelphia, and other towns in south Jersey, and organized outings of community groups of the area; but was also visited occasionally by police raids, criminals, and the coroner. Illegal possession and consumption of alcohol seems to have been prevalent at Lake Cotoxen and on occasion Mr. Wiggins, the Cotoxen Inn proprietors, and visitors to the (including a former US Marshall) found themselves arrested and fined on related charges. Mr. Wiggins bad luck streak continued when 4 men in a car from Pennsylvania held him at gunpoint while they stole the slot machine from his concession stand. Around that time, one of the lake's bungalows provided a hideout for the Medford safecrackers who were involved in local robberies, and another resident of the lake was arrested on separate occasions for stealing canoes and personal items from Camp Darkwater and for stealing cranberries from Brick's Coldwater Run Bogs. Sadly, at least 15 visitors (and one resident) drowned in the lake and many additional guests were seriously when they dove in and struck the bottom of the lake or parts of the bridge and dam. The lake was also the location of an attempted murder of a Camden County business owner in 1960.

The Great Depression and World War 2 likely brought a close to the Cotoxen Inn; yet, the concession and boat rental stand continued to operate until sometime between 1976 and 1979. Water quality issues and the growing prevalence of home pools brought a gradual end to swimming at Lake Cotoxen by the late 1960s. Today the concession stand is owned by the Medford Historical Society and has been restored to its former purpose as a blacksmith shop and the lake remains frequented by fishermen, boaters, and admirers of nature.