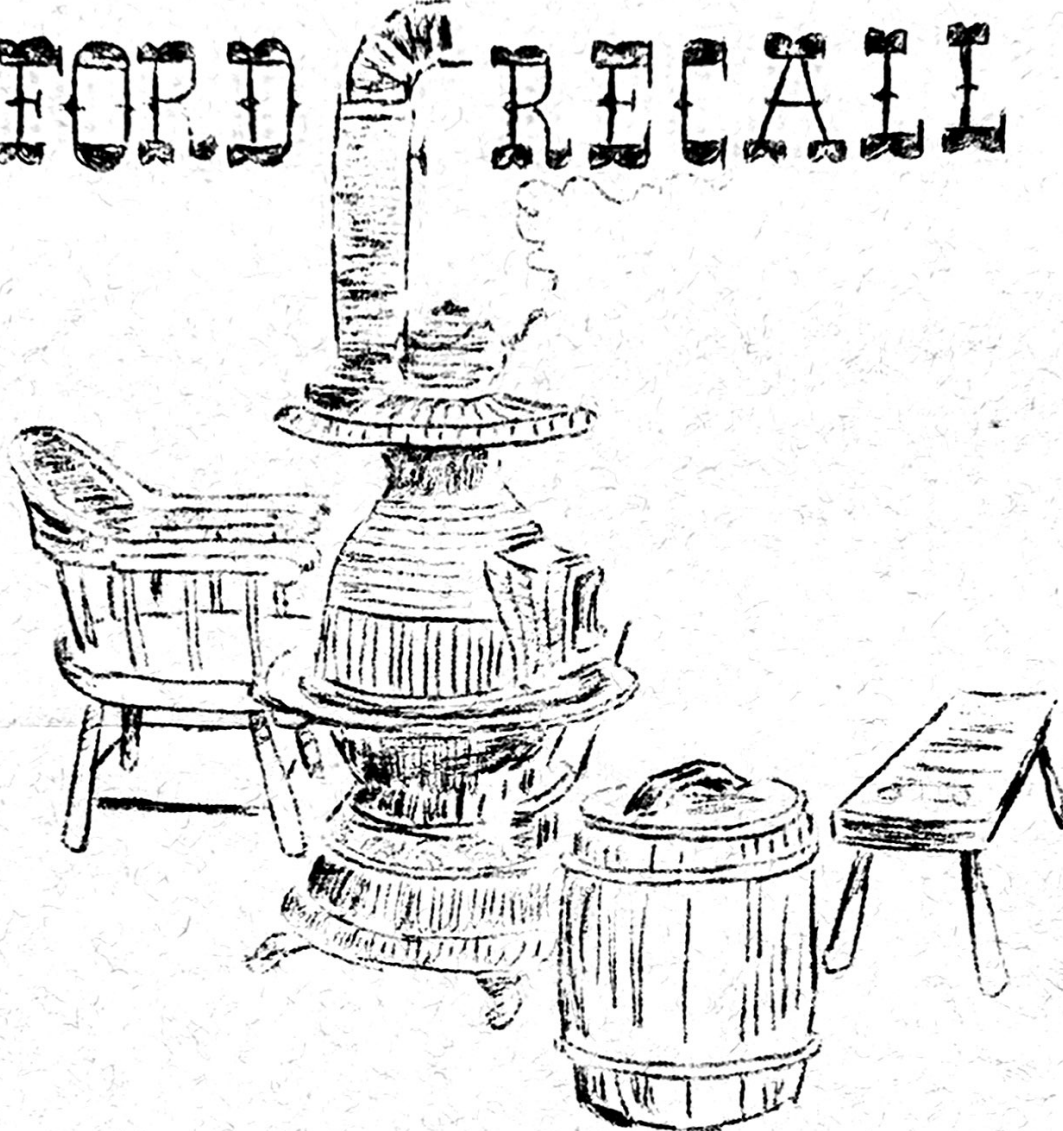


the MEDFORD RECALL



The annual meeting of the Medford Historical Society was held May 7, 1968. The election of officers for the 1968-69 season were held at this time. Mr. Robert Harrison declined the nomination for President. Mr. Clyde LeVan was elected President with Dr. Jennings as first Vice President, Mr. Robert Bonner, second Vice President, Mrs. Kathy Mathis, Recording Secretary, Mrs. Marie Bonner, Corresponding Secretary and Mr. Frank Atkinson as Treasurer. Trustees for the next three years are, Mr. W. McClain, Mr. Everett Mickle, Mrs. Doris Oakes, Mr. Louis McConnell, and Mrs. Marge Penberthy.

The Society wishes to express its sincere thanks to Mr. Harrison for his fine job while serving as President of our Society.

The Medford Historical Society

Louis J. McConnell

THE CASE OF THE "JERSEY DEVIL"

To anyone interested in folklore the case of the so-called "JERSEY DEVIL" presents both fact and legend but so intertwined as to almost defy separation. Disregarding the later efforts of Norman Jeffries who was no better than a publicity agent for a Philadelphia "Dime" museum out for the money, let us take a look at the few facts "Known" from of old.

It is now almost 300 years since the first rumors of some sort of local monster began to circulate in the Jersey confines. At that time the fauna of this still largely unexplored area was known only to a few hunters after meat for the table, a notably reticent group. Most of the stories agree that the "DEVIL" was the unwanted child of an alleged witch. J.E. Boucer in his book, "Absegami Yester-year" credits the story of "Mother Leeds" suspected of dabbling in witchcraft and black magic who cursed her thirteenth child, saying that "it shall be a monster, a devil." Apparently the child was born looking the part, misshapen and ugly and Mother Leeds kept it hidden for years. When she fell sick and was unable to attend it, the creature escaped from the confinement of its quarters and fled to the pine forests. Such an unfortunate would be almost totally unlearned unless adopted by some kindly stranger and taught survival as a necessity of the frontier (which Jersey still was).

This area was also the hangout of more than a few dangerous outlaws, criminal elements whose activities were to remain troublesome during the war of revolt against England. A child born thusly of ugly visage and certainly unkept appearance; what better target for the stories spread about to cover the planned depredations of local outlaws? Poses formed to hunt down the "DEVIL" could have been easily duped or misled by artful, skilled woodsmen (outlaws) planted in their midst. An occasional kill by a local puma or mountain lion would have only added fresh evidence of the presence of a "DEVIL".

During the 1700-1800's, a time of superstition and tall stories anyhow, the legend was popular and people often reported seeing the "DEVIL" flying through the air. Stephen Decatur is said to have shot a cannon ball through it while testing cannon at the Batsto Iron Works. Descriptions of the creature varied, some claimed it had the head of a horse, others said the face was man-like and some were sure it had the features of a collie, but all agreed on its huge wings and that it breathed fire. The color was either brown or green with references to forked tail, cloven hooves and claws; surely made to fit most people's idea of how a devil should look! Very unattractive in any event.

It's a good guess that after the war ended the returning soldiers formed poses much more able to rid the district of outlaws or drive them out of the area. But even after the depredations stopped there were some who kept the "JERSEY DEVIL" legend alive- a handy peg upon which to hang all unexplained trouble. And what better place for such a legend to persist than in those rough sons of the backwoods, the "Pineys", who indeed to this very day continue to exist on the fringe of our more sophisticated society? Who among us has enough facts to light the trail of the "JERSEY DEVIL" of that far distant era? I am another of the many who would welcome more truth as to the real person (or creature??) behind the legend of the "JERSEY DEVIL".

Louis J. McConnell

GRANDMA'S COOKBOOK

* BAKED EELS*

INGREDIENTS----Eels
Flour
Butter
Mustard
Catsup

Cut the eels in pieces about six inches long; sprinkle them with flour and small bits of butter; put in a pan and bake half an hour; take them out, and in the same pan, make a gravy of flour, water, butter, a little mustard and walnut catsup; let it boil up once and turn it over the eels.

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* TEA CAKE *

INGREDIENTS----One cup of butter
One and a half cups
of sugar
Two and one half
cups of flour
Four eggs, well
beaten

Beat the whites and yoks of the eggs separately. Bake twenty minutes or according to the heat of the oven. Currants may be added and then a little more flour is better.

RAILROADS TO OUR TOWN

Up to within five score years ago the only transportation available in our township was by horseback, buggy or stagecoach over the few so-called turnpikes, then surfaced with shells or gravel; one such being the Old Marlton Pike. When once proposed, however, it took only three years between chartering, funding and final completion of the 6.2 mile Mt. Holly, Lumberton and Medford Railroad from its connection with the Pennsylvania Railroad. The final cost was \$170,650.00 for plant and leased rollingstock with a bonded debt of \$75,000.00. A top of 4¢ per mile was charged passengers while freight was carried for less than 10¢ per ton. After six years, as a leased line by several local railroad companies the line became part of the Pennsylvania Railroad's Amboy Division in 1875.

It seemed to be a good investment at the start as Lumberton had a shoe and basket factory as well as various small mills and large quantities of marl were shipped from there by the railroad. Medford, the terminus of the line had a glass factory and shipped cranberries and marl as well. Four years later however, as the line was operating at a loss there were plans to extend the road and connect with a network of lines serving both New York and Atlantic City. The connection would have gone south following what is now Jackson Road to Ancora, there to connect with the Camden and Atlantic Railroad for Atlantic City. A change of plans sent the New York trains to Burlington and Haddonfield, then on to Atlantic City. By 1883 most of the freight hauled, consisting of marl going to distant farmers, was carried in mixed passenger and freight trains. These were scheduled four times daily but the trains of those days were slow and tiresome with top speeds of 12 MPH and long waits while freight cars were switched. There were two stations in towns, one for passengers the other freight, both located on what is now a small field on Branch Street slightly east of Haines' Equipment. Eventually both buildings were removed, the passenger station after being partly destroyed by fire and the freight building to the northern end of Broad Street--still for railroad use. It was next bought by Kay Haines for a

cranberry packing house and moved to Charles Street. It is now owned by Doug Entwistle. Summer Excursions to Long Beach Island via the Pennsylvania Railroad were advertised in 1892. Medford to Harvey Cedars, Barnegat City and Beach Haven Cost \$3.24 one way, a slow but sure way to visit the shore for surfing and sun and seafood dinners or on vacation.

Medford's second railroad came to town in 1881 with the completion of the 18 mile line of the Camden and Atlantic Railroad connecting with Philadelphia via Haddonfield and Marlton. At times as many as fourteen trains a day carried eager fans to the baseball games in the ballpark across the street from the station on North Main Street. There were regularly four trains a day to handle milk and freight to the city of Philadelphia and passengers to Camden. At this point connections were available to Atlantic City. A through fare from Atlantic City to Mt. Holly via Medford was \$2.63. In 1896 the line was taken over by the West Jersey and Seashore Line Railroad. Demand for service gradually declined over the years with a final passenger run in 1927. Now very little remains of this very busy line. The Medford station has been remodeled by the Township into a municiple building housing Township offices and the Police Department. The first station out of town on the "Haddonfield Line" was Melrose, the building itself now on the property of 68 Branch Street. Another was Cropwell where the station building now serves as a fruit stand along Route 70. With the building of Route 70 in the early 1930's the rails were taken up, all that now remains being a short stretch or rail and roadbed opposite the Post Office, by Kirby's Feed store.

There is no doubt about the popularity and good use to which the railroads were put around the turn of the century before the day of hard roads and the advent of the automobile. Crowds followed the baseball teams to town and excursions were popular ways to the seashore. Funerals and political meetings added to the usual daily travel to and from Medford when the railroad was the only means of transportation for most. Two other lines were planned but never carried to completion. The sole remaining line, the Medford Running Track, still part of the Pennsylvania Railroad averages only six trips a month but pays its way with freight to the various mills and factories along the route. Its local clients include Kirby's Feed Store Haines Equipment, Peter Lumber Company and Border Electronics. Today the line looks much as it did in its hayday with still a 15 mph speed limit, but the many small stations are gone from the road crossings. One station building removed from the Wilkin Station crossing with Church Road, may still be seen on the property of Dave Forsythe, Medford. All quite different from what was, say 50 years ago: the railroad just hopes for a brighter future.

Beverly Mickle
Student Member

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It is about seventy years since gas lamps were first introduced into the streets of London. In 1736 or thousand dim oil lamps supplied all the artificial light in the public thoroughfares.

NEWS FROM THE PAST

AN OLD LANDMARK GONE

"An old landmark has been destroyed by the recent burning of the Market Street Bridge across the Schuylkill River, which connected West Philadelphia with the eastern section of the city. It was said to be the oldest and best wooden bridge in the country. It was erected by a bridge company incorporated in 1798, although, in consequence of many difficulties, the masonry was not commenced until the later part of 1802. The bridge was four years in building, and cost about \$300,000. The western pier was sunk in a depth of water remarkable in hydraulic architecture, the top of the rock upon which it stood being forty-one feet nine inches below common high tide. The dam for the Western pier was a peculiar construction, and the design was furnished by WILLIAM WESTON, a celebrated English engineer. The bridge remained a toll-bridge in the hands of the company until about 1839, when it was purchased by the city. Important alterations, costing about \$100,000, were made in 1850, since which the Pennsylvania Railroad Company has had the exclusive use of one of the two roadways, the other still continuing to be used by vehicles.

At the time of the fire a large gas main was being laid across the bridge for the purpose of making connections with the Centennial buildings. An escape of gas was noticed, and in the attempt to find the leak with a lighted match an explosion occurred. The flames rapidly extended to the dry wood-work, which caught like tinder, and all efforts to extinguish them were fruitless. In a short time the smouldering ruins of the old bridge fell into the river."

HARPERS WEEKLY
December 11, 1875

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WORLD OF FASHIONS

Bathing costume in pale blue flannel, consisting of drawers, with trimming of embroidery of several different shades of wall-flowers. Blouse with pleated plastron in front, fastened by a band and buckle; long sleeves, both the upper and lower part of which, as well as the edges of the blouse, being embroidered in the same manner as the drawers.

Godey's Lady's Book &
Magazine 1879

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HAVE A PLEASANT SUMMER!!!

SEE YOU IN THE FALL!!!

The Publication Committee