



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

August 2023

The Schoolmarms and Docents of Medford NJ

Each year in the spring, a group of retired educators step out of their 'comfort zone' to welcome Medford's 3rd grade students to the Cross Keys One-Room Schoolhouse. Donning period dress, these women recreate for the 3rd graders what it was like to go to school more than 100 years ago. Leaving the comfort of retirement these educators choose to get back into the classroom albeit a 166-year-old classroom. They are the schoolmarms and docents of Medford, NJ.

This year, joining seasoned schoolmarms and docents Patricia Alvino, Marilyn Crawford, Michelle DeFiore, Carol Milich and Joyce Schreiner were three new schoolhouse volunteers. They were Donna Anderson, Leslie Jones, and Debbie Nickles.

Donna Anderson is a retired Home Economics teacher who taught students at Shawnee and Seneca High Schools. To quote Donna after her first day of teaching at Cross Keys Schoolhouse, "Today was a great day for me. I have learned so much by interacting with the other volunteers and students. I think it is so important for the young children to learn about their history."

Leslie Jones joined the schoolhouse staff from the Medford Lakes School District. As a paraprofessional, she worked with students on the elementary level. To quote Leslie, "I enjoy children and missed being around students and in the school environment. Volunteering in the community is a rewarding experience."

Finally, Debbie Nickles taught first grade and special education for the Abington Public School system. She was also both a Professor and Chairperson at West Chester University where she used her expertise to prepare future teachers. When asked why she wanted to volunteer as a schoolmarm, she simply replied, "I love to teach". Which I think says it all about these extraordinary women! *by Pat Alvino*



Medford Historical Society Officers 2023 - 2024 Fiscal Year

PRESIDENT

TOMLINSON/HAINES HOUSE

KIRBYS VILLAGE

SECRETARY/APPLE FESTIVAL

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Kelly Maguire, Libby Zimbleman, Dennis McDonald, Carol Douglas, Michael Gallagher, Peter Perno

President's Corner

After several months of communication between Medford Township Council and the Medford Historical Society, MHS will acquire the historic Haines/Tomlinson House that is directly in front of the Township Administration Building / Library on Union Street. The address is 51 Union Street and stands on 0.801 acres of subdivided property. The process of sale should be fully complete by early September after the Township Committee signed the agreement on August 15.

The house, built in 1760, is a brick colonial farmhouse that is believed to be the oldest house in what is known as Medford Village. The house was originally built by the prominent Haines family but was also used as the residence and law office of Medford Mayor Ephraim Tomlinson.

We hope with the help of Medford supporters, businesses, the Township, and volunteers that this property will become an attractive and stable anchor to Historic Medford Village.

The Medford Historical Society is primarily organized around Project Leaders for events and properties. Medford Village resident Mike Gallagher will lead the effort to restore and maintain the Haines/Tomlinson House. Mike is a Research Ecologist (Ph.D.) with the U.S. Forestry Service. Mike says his real love is history, but somehow finds himself as an ecologist. Activities at the House will include preparation of a museum for local history. Anyone with artifacts that they may want to donate may direct them to the Kirby or Tomlinson museums.

Other important recent activity includes the exterior painting of Kirby's Mill by Revive Painting of Medford and the repair of the sluice that directs water to power the Mill. Many thanks to John Hines and others who have opened the Mill during the summer on many days for access to the museum and to observe a truly Historic New Jersey Landmark in action.

On our calendar you will note the Flea Market on September 9, Open House Days at the old Cross Keys Schoolhouse on Mill Street and the REALLY BIG Apple Festival on October 14. This is our primary fund raiser for restoration and maintenance of our historic buildings. Donations to this cause are always welcome.

We hope to see you on Thursday, October 5 for a meeting of the Historical Society at 7:00 p.m. in the Friends Meeting at 14 Union St. Our speaker on that evening will be Maureen Leach with her presentation "Flag Over the Schoolhouse" and teaching patriotism in our schools.

Richard Bucko, President

8/14/23



What does a Lighthouse in New Jersey have to do with the Pledge of Allegiance?

“I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America”. These words spoken by thousands of students each day are familiar to all of us because that is how we started our day when we were in school years ago. Part of our collective history, the Pledge and the schoolhouse flag are iconic images of teaching patriotism in the school.

But was there always a flag in the classroom? Who wrote the Pledge of Allegiance and why? And finally, what is the significance of the Twin Lights Lighthouse in New Jersey to this story?

At the October 5th meeting of the Medford Historical Society, Maureen O’Conner Leach, historic interpreter and museum educator, will answer these questions and pose some of her own. Mrs. Leach will consider the genesis, growth, and nationwide acceptance of the idea of a flag over the schoolhouse as well as the evolution of and continuing controversy over the authorship of the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Medford Historical Society is proud to offer this free presentation and hopes that you will join us on Thursday, October 5th at the Friends Meeting on Union Street at 7:00 pm. *by Pat Alvino*

Third Grade Students Welcomed Back in 2023

to the Cross Keys One-Room Schoolhouse - *by Pat Alvino*

After a 3-year hiatus due to the Covid Epidemic, the Cross Keys One-room Schoolhouse once again opened its doors to the third-grade students of Medford. From March through June every Medford third- grade teacher in both the public and parochial schools brought their students on a class trip back to the 1800s. This was a time when mills were active in Medford, farms dotted the landscape and students learned how to read, write, and do arithmetic in a one-room schoolhouse.

This year a total of 361 students participated in the Schoolhouse Living History Program offered by the volunteer schoolmarms and docents of the Medford Historical Society and supported and encouraged by the Medford Township Public Schools. If you would like to know more about this program or volunteer to participate, contact Patricia Alvino at contactus@medfordhistory.org



Was Thaddeus Stevens the savior of public education?

What did students learn in yesterday's one-room schoolhouses?

Did Amish children attend public school without a fight?

These were the questions that were answered at this year's Country School Association of America Conference. For anyone interested in one-room schoolhouses, the CSAA is a gold mine of information. As a member for over 10 years and attending 7 conferences, I am always amazed at the caliber of the presentations and the depth of knowledge of the presenters. This year was no different. Attended by participants from 13 different states, the Conference was held at Millersville University located in Millersville, Pennsylvania. The theme of this year's conference was 'Country Schools: The Keystone of American Education'.

The first keynote speaker was Steven Nolt who spoke on the origins and rise of Amish schools. In addition to exploring this history, he offered an overview of Amish schooling today. We also got the opportunity to meet with an Amish farmer and discuss what life is like today for Amish children.

On day two the second keynote speaker was Robert Hoelscher who spoke on the role played by Thaddeus Stevens in saving the Pennsylvania Common School Act from repeal by the Pennsylvania House of Representatives in 1835.

Besides the keynote speakers, 20 workshops on a variety of topics were offered over the 2-day period. From 'The Place of Rosenwald Schools in the History of Education' to the 'Teaching of Amish Students in a Public One-Room Schoolhouse', the topics were as diverse as were the interests of the participants.

On the final day of the conference, the participants boarded a bus to visit several unique schoolhouses in the Lancaster area. One was the Cotton Mill Museum School in Lancaster. This city school taught the children who worked in the cotton mill. CSAA members got the chance to meet a historical interpreter who portrayed Jeremiah Miller, a school master who taught at the Cotton Mill School in 1853. *by Pat Alvino*



Cotton School
Museum (Left)



Walnut Run
School (right)

Former Cross Keys School Students

In May of 1982 I had an assignment from the Burlington County Times to shoot some alumni of the one-room Cross Keys School in Medford as it sat in a field on Mill Street. Imagine! Six senior citizens, who had attended a school that closed in the 1920's, came together for a group portrait.

Some background information is probably needed here. The one-room Fairview/Oak Grove/Cross Keys School was opened in the 1830's and was located at the corner of Stokes and Dixontown Roads where McDonald's now sits. Students paid tuition at the rural school till Medford separated from Evesham in 1847. After it closed it sat empty for almost 50 years till the Medford Historical Society purchased the building and moved it to Mill Street in 1976.

I wish I had spent more time talking to these Medford residents. They probably could have talked all day about their unique experiences. Many talked about attending school for only one month a year because farm chores kept them busy the during planting and harvesting season. Others talked of long walks to school or riding horses to school. They are from left to right: Geneva Shontz, Ethel Merefield, Edna Sutton, Ruth Lemley, Louis Shontz, and Evelyn Foulk.

The building has since been restored and members of the Medford Historical Society - Medford, NJ invite third graders from throughout the district to imagine what these senior citizens experienced growing up.

- Dennis McDonald



Alumni of Medford's one-room Cross Keys School are, left to right, Geneva Shontz, Ethel Merefield, Edna Sutton, Ruth Lemley, Louis Shontz and Evelyn Foulk. They gathered in May, 1982 to have their photograph taken. Their former school was moved to Mill Street in 1976 from the intersection of Stokes and Dixontown Roads. (Photograph by Dennis McDonald)

Medford's **44th** Annual



APPLE Festival

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14TH, 2023
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM AT THE KIRBY'S MILL
275 Church Road (at Fostertown Road) Medford, NJ

Free Admission • 120+ Handmade Crafters
Live Music • Food • Apple Goods
Free Parking on Fostertown Road

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, Beverages, Apple Baked Goods
Children's Activities and Crafts, Mill Tour & Demonstration.

For further information email us at contactus@medfordhistory.org

Sponsors wanted! Check Medfordhistory.org for more details.

For Volunteer Opportunitites: Check our website & Facebook page closer to the event.

We depend on YOU for this important event.



PARKING FOR APPLE FESTIVAL

DOWN FOSTERTOWN ROAD JUST BEYOND THE FESTIVAL AND
AT JERSEY ACRES - CORNER OF CHURCH RD & EAYRESTOWN ROAD

Park your car and catch the hay wagon to walk to the festival



