



MEDFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Editor: Ed Penberthy

August 15, 1988

3rd Quarter Newsletter

From the President

Ed Penberthy

Thank you very much for your confidence in electing me President of the Society. As many of you know, I am a charter member and was active in the Tercentenary Group that preceded the Medford Historical Society. This is my first elected office in the organization although I have served as Program Director, Field Tour Director, served on various committees and was House Tour Director of the last Candlelight House Tour and have committed to chair the next one in December 1989. My goals for the Society are your goals and with your excellent support as previously demonstrated, I'm sure we will succeed.

Action of the Board of Trustees, June 15, 1988

A letter from Society Member, Larry Corn was read by our Corresponding Secretary, Helen Wells regarding the Society's thoughts about a Scholarship Fund. Since the letter was negative and many topics were on the agenda to discuss, the matter was tabled.

A request for a loan to help the Community Center at rates below existing banking rates was turned down on the grounds these funds will shortly be needed by the Society for its own reconstruction work. The amount requested was \$45,000.

Various committee appointments made by the President were confirmed by the Board in accordance with the By-Laws. Among them were - Ed Penberthy, Chairman of the 1989 House Tour; Irene Domanski and Jaclyn Levy, Cochairmen of the 1989 Quilt Show; Betty Wendt, Chairmañ of the 1988, 1989 Apple Festivals.

The Board approved for presentation to the membership a plan known as the 30% rule. This means the Chairperson of any fund raiser will be permitted to divert 30% of the profit from the fund raiser to any approved function of the Society. For example -- An 18th Century Herb Garden is in the works - if approved, 30% of the profit may be allocated to this function - Another item already underway is the creation of the 19th Century Couturiere & Millinery Room in the Mill complete with costumes of the day on display in a suitable setting. When completed this room will be formally opened with a 20 page bocklet with pictures also on hand for distribution.

The Board also approved an Auditing Committee of Paul Hellberg and Bill Dyer to audit the Society's books and have a report on hand for the September meeting.

September 6, 1988 MeetingPaul Hellberg

The meeting, the first under the direction of new President, Ed Penberthy, will be called to order at 8:15 PM. The meeting will open for business but, the first order of business will be the program of dedication to the memory of Clyde W. LeVan, former President and tireless worker for the Society. The service will be conducted by Reverend Say, from Medford Lakes, with Mrs. LeVan attaching the first rosette to the bronze plaque. A regular meeting will then be conducted (in short form) after which we will adjourn for refreshments and fellowship. The October 4 meeting will see us back at the Community Center on the first Tuesday at 8:15 PM. We will have a program and fix our date for the field trip.

Please mark your calendars applicable to meetings - **remember we meet each 1st Tuesday in the month at 8:15 PM at the Community Center** unless otherwise advised. We do not phone or send monthly reminders. The cost of postage today has restricted our mailings.

1988 Quilt ShowIrene Domanski

First weekend in June we had another fabulous Quilt Show. Viewers came from far and near - Germany, England, New York, Delaware, Virginia, Pennsylvania and of course many towns in NJ. Our records show almost 1200 attended.

The quilts were magnificent - old and new; contemporary and traditional; hand and machine spliced plus the Challenge Groups and a workshop from Quilters Escape in April. We added our Boutique of handmade items together with other Mill items and it showed a nice little profit. (\$1,152.99 - Editor's comment)

All this glory could only happen because of our many "crews" - Put Up, Take Down, Kitchen, Typing and Identification, White Glove Hostesses and Boutiquers. Thanks to each and everyone.

Plans/Ideas for Next Year -

How about a Christmas Corner?
 Keep Boutique and add Christmas handmade items
 Set up 3 or 4 spaces for handicap parking
 Training nite for Host and Hostesses to greet visitors, explain
 and safeguard the quilts

Have you any other suggestions to improve the show? Please let us hear from you. We do feel that more of the membership should be involved next year to make it even a bigger and better Quilt Show.

Apple Festival - 1988Betty Wendt

It's hard to believe but it's time to wish our Apple Festival a Happy Birthday this year. We'll be 10 years old!

As you know it's grown alot with your dedication and hard work. The main jobs have been filled but still need volunteers for making and stirring apple butter this year. Also, managing booths and things like that. Volunteer to help (call 983-7029) and have a fun day - it's all for a good cause!

19th Century Couturiere & Millinery RoomBarbara Crankshaw

Old portraits, old letters and old garments. These objects of a by-gone era bring us closer to those whose lives are long gone but not forgotten. Work-a-day garments went the way of clothing in general - picked apart, re-cut for smaller garments then cut again, leaving precious scraps to be used for further warmth for loved ones, as quilts. The garments that were left to us were preserved, possibly, as a memorial of a special moment in time.

Most owners of these lovely garments lived to a ripe old age but to us they will remain as youthful as on the day they donned their fine apparel for the first time.

When as in silks my Julia goes,
Then, then (me thinks) how sweetly flowes
That liquefaction of her clothes.

Next when I cast mine eyes and see
That brave Vibration each way free;
O how that littering taketh me!

Robert Herrick, c.1648

These quaint articles are not just artifacts, but remnants of peoples' lives. Belongings that, if they could but speak, would reveal times gone by; events now only read of in books, that surrounded and possibly reached into their owner's day-to-day existence.

All these pieces, in their quaintness, are a true utterance of old-time life; and their beauty, though sentimental, puts us in touch with the lives of our ancestors.

In the months to come, it is my hope to elevate the textiles and vintage clothing in the possession of the Medford Historical Society to a respected place within the Museum's archives. With loving restoration and maintenance these articles, entrusted to us, can be displayed for the public and examined by the private "student of fashion". My long range plans include restoration of worn and torn pieces, photographing and cataloging each item and insuring proper storage. A book is also being planned to include these articles in our local history.

Protection from dust and harsh lights is a necessary part of their proper care. Any donations of flat sheets and padded hangers would be greatly appreciated and put to immediate use.

I look forward to sharing my progress with you and hearing any suggestions you may have.

I remain, respectfully, your servant, Barbara Crankshaw.

"The village smithy stands..."Don Davis

It has been 80 years since old Barzillai Ingling stoked his forge for the last time. The dying embers signified a dying breed - the old time blacksmith. And with them went the shops, mostly into oblivion. The one at Kirby's Mill suffered a different fate, no less humiliating. The sooted walls were plastered over to become a home of sorts, from which was dispensed sodas and hot dogs, and canoes for the revelers at Lake Cotoxen. This, too, ended and neglect and decay set in. The late seventies, Clyde LeVan commenced stripping out the floor and wallboard, visualizing rebuilding the old shop. Then again decay and vandals took their toll.

Continued -

When John Hines and I started the restoration there was little more than a dilapidated shell - the sills were rotted, the rear shed in shambles, the foundations crumbling, the roof leaked, no windows or doors. But that is all now behind us. Timbers were salvaged from various places. Block for the foundations came from several members, the brick floor from an old patio, windows from Joe Gatto, new doors made from rough sawn Jersey white cedar, strap hinges from Harold Fox, roof donated by Christy's. (I made them an offer they couldn't refuse - "I'll do the work and you can take the credit.")

The forge itself, coming up from the footings of the original forge is constructed of handmade 200 year old bricks from an old smoke house. The tuyere was a gift from Coles Roberts. And I would still be laying bricks without the big help from Charlie Bakely. Most of the tools and other items were mine, collected with my father over many years. I've certainly forgotten the help and generosity of many others.

Through it all, old Barzillai has watched us with fixed gaze from his old photograph. I think he would be pleased with the results.

Kirby's Mill

Tom Chavis

Kirby's Mill is as much a part of Medford history as the southwest branch of the Rancocas Creek flowing through it's heart. Therefore, it is the goal of the Society to restore a small 19th Century industrial (grist mill) complex for the purpose of demonstrating the historic occupation of milling and preserving an aspect of the Medford Community's heritage. (The complex is to consist initially of Kirby's Mill, the blacksmith shop (rededicated on 6/26/88), barn and such other facilities and exhibits found to have historical significance.

In June the Civil Engineer, Charles Walton, completed a preliminary survey of the Mill for excavation of the postings, foundations and turbines and the needs for temporary shoring so that restoration plans can be formulated. Following that survey the restoration team, headed by Don and John, started construction of a coffer dam in the Mill pond. The purpose of the dam is to control the water flow under the building thus enabling excavation to proceed.

The excavation team will be soliciting Society members from time to time to join our Saturday work crews as excavation and construction proceeds. We also need help from friends for construction equipment and light and heavy transportation. We also need to borrow some heavy steel for temporary shoring. Let us know if you know of any sources.

The Society has engaged a mill restoration consultant who will report to the Civil Engineer as required.

A contest is on - guess how many sand bags are needed in the coffer dam. Prize: Two permits to work at the Apple Festival and a free apple strudel.

Mill/Museum News

John Hines

The electric meter we had put outside the Mill is now covered by a wooden cabinet and painted to match the Mill. The flume walkway has also been widened with a new railing added. Thanks go to Don Davis and John Hines for their hard work.

Continued

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Last Fall, Mother Nature knocked over a large willow tree into the pond by the flume. The tree had to be cut up with sections of the trunk used to stabilize the pond bank bulkhead. There is free firewood from the tree still available for the taking.

This Spring, the Mill steps and doors were painted to spruce up the building's appearance.

Now with the completion of the Blacksmith Shop restoration, more attention will be directed to improving the appearance of the Barn.

Inside the Mill, the walls were cleaned out with a number of "treasures" found, which are now on display. Work continues on expanding the displays with the many items received for the Museum over the years. Particular attention is being directed to the "Farm", "Harvest", "Cranberry" and "Hog-killin" time exhibits on the 1st floor, and the "Clothing" and "Textile" exhibit on the 2nd floor. Barbara Crankshaw is lending her talents with the clothing collection and exhibits.

A big thank you to the Sunday Mill Hosts/Hostesses which enabled the many visitors to enjoy Kirby's Mill & Museum.

The bridge widening by the County at Kirby's Mill is put off until next summer. The bridge roadway will be widened from its current 18 ft. to 26 ft. This is a compromise from the original 30 ft. width proposal by the County determined by the New Jersey Historic Sites Council which has review authority when public funds affect State and National Register sites. The bridge widening will be on the Mill side of the current bridge and will effect some parking in the front corner of the Mill.

The corner house next to the bridge is slated to be removed this August. The County has been cooperative in minimizing the project's impact on Kirby's Mill. As many of the trees and plantings as possible will be maintained around the bridge and house site as a buffer next to the Mill. The new guard-rails required for the bridge will be of wood and limited as much as possible. The new section of the bridge will maintain the same "look" as the current 1909 bridge.