

# Newsletter

**Kirby's Mill**  
275 Church Road  
PO Box 362  
Medford, NJ 08055

**Cross Keys One-Room Schoolhouse**  
55 Mill Street  
Medford, NJ 08055

**Haines-Tomlinson House**  
51 Union Street  
Medford, NJ 08055

**Mill Phone: 609-654-7767**

[www.MedfordHistory.org](http://www.MedfordHistory.org)

**November 2025**

## RELICS OF AN EARLY MEDFORD INDUSTRY

by David D. Gladfelter

Shown here are two small-denomination merchant scrip notes printed to order of Joseph E. Ballinger, owner of Aetna Mills on Ballinger Lake, during the war of 1812 when metallic coins were taken out of circulation and hoarded.



The denominations of "Six and a Quarter Cents" and "Twelve and a Half Cents" look strange to us today, but they were common at the time. The Spanish dollar, or "piece of eight reales," was then our circulating monetary unit. One real was worth one-eighth of a Spanish dollar, or 12½ cents in United States currency, and was called a "bit" for short. Half of that was a half real, or 6½ cents, or a half bit. The equivalent of a U.S. quarter dollar was two reales or two bits, an old colloquialism we sometimes still hear today.



Aetna Furnace was built in 1766 by Charles Read, whose enterprises marked the beginning of the iron industry in South Jersey. At the time, Medford was an unincorporated village within Evesham Township, the location given on the Ballinger notes. The furnace was not successful and was abandoned after Read's death in 1783. The property was acquired by Shinn Oliphant, who built a grist mill and saw mill on it. Joseph Ballinger bought the grist mill in 1790.

*The Camden County historian, Charles S. Boyer, wrote in 1931: "The foundations of the gristmill are still visible. These mills were known as Aetna Mills or Ballinger's Mills. ... The property is now being developed as a summer colony under the name of Medford Lakes. In a few years its old name will be entirely forgotten and every vestige of the old mills removed."*

Photographs from the Mickle Collection

(Continued on page 2)



Charles Read House



Ballinger's Saw Mill



Ballinger's Grist & Flour Mill in Winter

## Medford Historical Society Officers 2025 - 2027 Fiscal Year

President Bill Pflug 856-235-2543 plugfixes@gmail.com	Haines/Tomlinson House Michael Gallagher 856-296-4060 mgalla48@gmail.com	Kirby's Village John Hines 609-531-1825 jxhines15@gmail.com	Apple Festival MHS Staff 609-654-7767 medfordhistorynj@gmail.com	Cross Keys School-House Pat Alvino 609-410-6950 talvino12@comcast.net	Secretary Ambriel Gerber 609-828-5163 ambriel.gerber@gmail.com	Newsletter Dennis McDonald 609-353-7502 medfordhistory@gmail.com
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TRUSTEES EXPIRES 2025 EXPIRES 2026 EXPIRES 2027	Patricia Alvino, Carol Milich, Dennis McDonald, Clark Perks, Leslie Jones Libby Zimbleman, Michael Gallagher, Dan Gaehring, Andy Middleton, one vacancy Edmund Gager, Tom Gerber, John Hines, Ambriel Gerber, Mike Yekenchik
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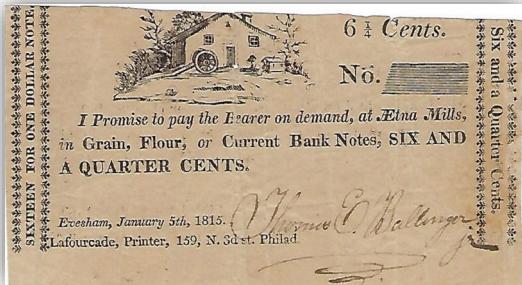
TRUSTEE EMERITUS - Jeanne Woodford

## Cover story –continued

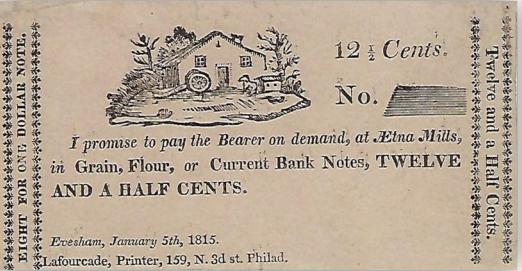
Edmund Gager, who grew up on Stokes Road, remembers seeing a few of these vestiges. There wasn't much more than a foundation in the 1940's. Editor Dennis McDonald took me to the site, recently improved with a new dam and flood controls. Now, even the last vestiges of the grist mill are now gone, destroyed by a recent flood. Charles Read's house was demolished in 1959 to build a gas station. Read was a Quaker of frugal disposition. His house, as you can see in the accompanying photograph, was plain and simple, with none of the grandiosities of the estates depicted in the 1876 Scott Combination Atlas Map of Burlington County.

A detail of the map of Medford appearing on page 42 of the 1991 reprint of Scott is shown here. Viewed together with the map of Aetna Furnace in Arthur D. Pierce's book *Iron in the Pines*, one can pinpoint the lost locations of Ballinger's grist mill and Read's house. Read's house has a marker placed by the Medford Historical Society. It would be nice to put up appropriate historic markers at the mill sites.

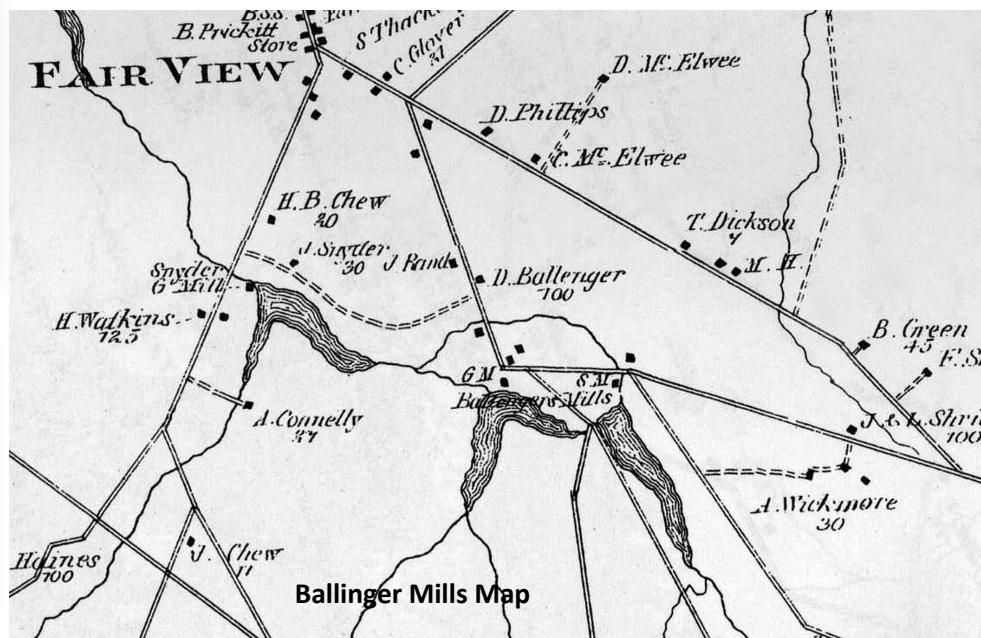
As for the notes, Philadelphia printer P. L. Lafourcade was something of an artist in decorating them with hand-drawn cuts of the grist mill office building. Merchant scrip notes of this period were almost always printed inexpensively from plain-jane typeset forms, several to a sheet. We have him and his patron Ballinger to thank for leaving us with a pictorial representation of what this mill looked like back in the day. We see a two-wheeled cart parked near the door, and a dog house and guard dog on the other side of the door. The building is probably one room, with two windows and a chimney, situated on high ground with trees nearby. Compare the cuts – they are individually drawn, not made from a master. The notes are dated January 5<sup>th</sup>, 1815, a Thursday. The 6½ cent note (you got 16 of them for a dollar) is signed and did circulate. The other note was not signed, did not circulate and is called a remainder. The notes were good for "Grain, Flour, or Current Bank Notes."



Aetna Mills merchant scrip note for Six and one quarter Cents



Aetna Mills merchant scrip note for twelve and a half Cents



The detail from the 1876 Scott Atlas shows the Ballinger (Ballinger) Mills, near the center of the map. shows GM (Grist Mill) black box and a SM (Saw Mill) black box. Across the road from the Grist Mill was Charles Read's house. The Ballinger Sawmill was located at the northern end of present day Aetna Lake, probably where Beach One in Medford Lakes is today. Mill was in terrible shape in the early 1900's & was located Northside of present day Ballinger lake. Ballinger Grist

## SOURCES

Charles S. Boyer, President, Camden County Historical Society, *Early Forges & Furnaces in New Jersey* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1931), 154-190.

J. D. Scott, *1876 Combination Atlas Map of Burlington County* (Burlington County Historical Society: Revised 1991), 42.

Arthur D. Pierce, *Iron in the Pines* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1957), 156-173.

Robinson's 1813 Philadelphia Directory, 258.

Robinson's 1816 Philadelphia Directory, 243.

George W. Wait, *New Jersey's Money* (Newark: The Newark Museum and Society of Paper Money Collectors, 1976), 121.

## Presidents Page

Writing this piece for the Newsletter provides me the opportunity to reflect on what has been accomplished this year and how to best continue the effort for our continued success. We added a Car and Craft Show, increased the open houses at our buildings (okay not the outcome we hoped for), expanded the Apple Festival, held Country Day, the Quilt Show and the Flea Market. Improvements were made to the Mill Museum, the Sawyer House and the Haines - Tomlinson House. There is much going on behind the scenes than you might imagine. I am overwhelmed by what our team has accomplished in my short tenure. My gratitude to all who made this year possible and as successful as it was. Our membership is growing as a result of our success as people want to associate with winners. There are plenty of opportunities with the MHS for willing individuals to make their mark on our own history.

This was our 46<sup>th</sup> Apple Festival, which was another success, even though wet. We had over 130 juried crafters, the full complement of food vendors in Court 1 and new additions for eats in the Court 2 location. We had a first with Stokelan Winery providing tastings this year. It looks like it was well received. Only Footprints were back as the musical backdrop for the festivities. The Blacksmith shop had steady attendance as the two Dans kept things heated up. All in all we showed up and showed off.

There are new additions to the second floor of the Mill. John Hines has added two new displays for Medford's involvement in the Civil War and WWI located in the passage way. New risers for the display downstairs and two upstairs give a much better view of our artifacts. New lighting has been added to a formerly dark area of the industrial revolution display. If you have not visited this part of the museum please take time to do so.

The Sawyer House and storage shed are much brighter today as they have been power washed, sealed, primed and painted by Kepler Painting, a Medford business, who by the way makes excellent biscotti... The Sawyer House is clad with cedar and was showing its age.

There is a group that meets with Medford Township officials in an effort to help promote next year's national anniversary. It is called Medford 250 and is headed by Mike Panarella. Donations have been made to enable the purchase of a stone monument commemorating the anniversary. This will be located in Freedom Park and unveiled on Memorial Day, along with an interpretative sign. There is more information to follow on this subject.

We have sent out our 2025 fundraising letter by the time you read this. Our fundraiser costs should be slightly lower this year and if we hit similar responses to last year's results (better than expected) We anticipate it will be another winner. Remember this is our second attempt, so we will improve, I am sure.

The Cross Keys Schoolhouse will be open and hosting jolly old Santa Claus once again this year on December 6<sup>th</sup>, as a prelude to Medford's Dickens Festival. Pat and Tom Alvino, Leslie Jones, and the Schoolmarm offer a unique opportunity for children and families to take time with Santa in a personal, cozy setting. This event has elicited many heartfelt comments from those who have attended. The faces of the children, well, that tells the real story.

Our residential gem, the Haines – Tomlinson house at 51 Union Street was built in 1760 and happens to be a shuttle stop during the Dickens Festival. We are hosting an open house that evening where guests can visit and tour the oldest home in Medford Village. The home will be decorated for the holidays, thanks to the continued hard work of two unsung volunteers, Kathy and John Gerber. Most of the current transformation and decorating are through their helping hands. Light refreshments and food will be served. Please contact Mike Gallagher if you wish to volunteer at the Holiday Open House.

We will be kicking off the Holiday Season with the annual Charlie Zahm concert on December 11 from 7:00 to 9:00 pm at the Quaker Meeting House on Union Street. Charlie never fails to provide a well-rounded repertoire of songs and stories to raise the Holiday spirit.

To close, all of our gatherings and events take place as a result of the dedicated individuals who show up to ply their skills to the task at hand. I always wondered what made these folks tick, a desire to help others, getting to meet new people, personal growth and skill building, or just a belief in contributing to the common good. It may be one or all of those traits that drives them, but it is a great joy to see the outcome and rewards from their involvement. We and the Historical Society grow as a result of the actions of people like this. There are many opportunities to be of service to our community within the organization. Offer to be a part of this dynamic group. You will not be disappointed. - Bill Pflug

## In The Museum By John Hines

In the continuing effort to improve the Museum, three more of the old-fashion display cases were raised to allow for easier viewing. The case on the first floor was put on casters to allow easier movement for special displays. Thanks to Bill Pflug for the fine cabinetry work. Each case was given a fresh interior and exterior coat of paint.

This past Summer two new displays were completed on Medford's participation in the Civil War and WWI. The Civil War display shows the 23<sup>rd</sup> Volunteer Infantry which was made up of all Burlington County Men. The WWI display profiles two Medford "boys" --- one being in the new draft and the other enlisting. Thanks to Kelly Maguire for the computer "magic", making the exhibit presentable and easy to read.

Continuing the theme of patriots, a display is in the works for 2026 about Medford and the American Revolution. A display of Centennial and Bicentennial memorabilia is also planned.



## Welcome Our Newest Members - Bob Hess, Judith Rockhill, & Donna Woodhull

A Correction from our August newsletter—Schoolmarms are properly named below.



Victoria Ebiri at Teacher's desk



Christina Lorenz at recitation



Barbara Barkemeyer explains how the Schoolhouse was moved

Medford Historical Society President Bill Pflug, left, and Larry Godfrey look over a recent donation of Peacock Family Deeds.

Mr. Godfrey is a descendant of Adonijah Peacock who was killed in a gunpowder explosion in 1777 while drying gunpowder for George Washington and the Continental Army.



### A Poem to Santa written by Pat Alvino

## The Schoolmarms Get Ready for Santa

The days before Christmas are busy indeed,

Getting ready for Santa with due diligent speed.

Cross Keys School must be ready to greet such a guest,

Cross Keys School must look perfect and at its best!

Our schoolmarms like elves are up to the task,

They get right to work without being asked.

**Barbara** donned her face mask to clean out the shed,

While **Leslie** swept the floor where children will tread.

**Joyce** polished the desks till they sparkled, so it seemed,

And **Victoria** dusted the shelves till they gleamed.

**Christine** checked the pot-bellied stove for more wood,

While **Danielle** and **Marilyn** hung the garland as high as they could.

**Debbie** made sure Santa's reindeer were fed,

So, they'd be up to the task that lies ahead.

**Pat** then announced for all to remember that

**“Santa is coming the sixth of December!”**

*The Medford Historical Society Welcomes  
Everyone Naughty or Nice!*

## **SANTA AT THE SCHOOLHOUSE**

**Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup>   Noon-3:00PM**

*Stop by before the Dickens Festival*

**PICTURE THIS!** Hot apple cider brewing, a warm potbellied stove, the schoolhouse adorned with 19<sup>th</sup> century holiday decorations and of course a visit with St. Nicholas. **FREE** admission.



**Historic Cross Keys Schoolhouse  
55 Mill Street, Medford, NJ**  
(next to entrance to Memorial Middle School)

# Charlie Zahm

IN CONCERT

Hosted by the Medford Historical Society

OUR FAVORITE

*Songs of Christmas*

Thursday, December 11<sup>th</sup>  
7:00 PM

The Friends Meeting,  
14 Union St., Medford

Folk songs new and  
old, plus beautiful  
songs of the season  
brought to life as only  
Charlie can.  
All are welcome!

**\$10**  
Minimum  
Donation

*Supports the Medford  
Historical Society*



## Membership Application

### Donations/Sponsor Levels to Preserve History

Of course if you have already paid, Thank you for your promptness.

Lifetime members may disregard this notice.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to the  
Medford Historical Society, PO Box 362, Medford, NJ 08055  
Membership

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual/Family Membership - \$40 per year  
Members receive a Quarterly Newsletter

#### Sponsor/Donor Levels

History Partner - \$100

Archival Partner - \$250

Patron - \$500

Lifetime - \$500

Benefactor - \$1000

Donation of your choice - \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donors are supporting the mission of the Medford Historical Society to research, record, preserve, maintain and promote the general history of Medford and Medford Historical Society holdings, making them available to the community, schools, and other organizations.

These donor levels will be acknowledged on our website

Donor levels will have the option of donating anonymously

The Medford Historical Society is a non-profit corporation in the State of New Jersey and is registered as a charity SIC #5006-04935. Our Federal Tax Exempt Number is 22-1911164.

We are exempt from Federal Income Tax under Section 501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code dated 12/7/71. Donors may deduct contributions to the Medford Historical Society as provided in Section 170 of the Code. Bequests, legacies, devises, transfers or gifts to the Medford Historical Society are deductible for Federal estate and gift tax purposes under Sections 2055, 2106 and 2522 of the Code.

## Preserve History - Give the Gift of Membership Time to Renew or Become a Member of the Medford Historical Society.

Your contribution helps support the mission of the Medford Historical Society: to research, record, preserve, maintain and promote the general history of Medford and Medford Historical Society holdings, making them available to the community, schools, and other organizations.

We need your help. 10% of our members renew annually but we would love to double that number. Memberships are for 1 year. We do not automatically renew memberships but will invite you to renew each February. As a member you will receive our newsletter that contains articles about Medford history, MHS news, and upcoming events. You'll also learn about volunteer opportunities and have the satisfaction of knowing that you've helped preserve Medford's history for generations to come!

Memberships for Individual/Families are \$40, or choose from one of our many membership levels.

Please visit the form on our website [MedfordHistory.org](http://MedfordHistory.org) or copy and paste this link in your address bar:  
[medfordhistory.wufoo.com/forms/qqqalje1xon9f6/](http://medfordhistory.wufoo.com/forms/qqqalje1xon9f6/)