



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

Dr. Still Education Center, 211 Church Road, Medford, New Jersey 08055

April 2021

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

Medford's Historic Business Properties Stokelan Winery

by Kyle Mason



This is the first in a planned series on Medford historic locations and the businesses that call them home. Stokelan Winery was an easy first choice. It's a stone's throw from Kirby's Mill, the well-known property of the Medford Historical Society, and has a rich history back to Medford's early days.

Located near the corner of Eayrestown and Church Roads in Medford NJ, the winery was established in 2019. Owner Deepa Lal and her team including vintner Andrew Dick have transformed the property in two short years into a working vineyard and are awaiting final approvals to begin operation.

The establishment of the winery is an exciting development; however, it is only the latest chapter in the long history of Stokelan and its surrounding farmland. Native Americans occupied the land for thousands of years before the first European settlers arrived. For the purpose of this article we will begin with the "recent" history that lead to Stokelan's creation. In 1691 Thomas Evans purchased 400 acres of land in what was the West Jersey. Later, in 1721, the land was sold to Joseph Stokes. It remained in the Stokes family and eventually Joseph Stokes inherited the land in 1847 and built Stokelan in 1853. Joseph's brother, Joshua Stokes, built his own home nearby in 1855 on Eayrestown Road, near the present day Wawa. That home still stands today.

Joseph Stokes, the builder of Stokelan, was a bachelor and died at the age of 61 in 1866. In his will the property descended to his nephew Joshua Wills. Joseph's sister, Lydia Stokes Wills, is seen living at Stokelan on the 1860 and 1870 census records. It was Lydia's daughter that first named the property Stokelan



Joseph Stokes
Builder of Stokelan, c. 1860

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Later Joshua Wills and his family occupied the house and undertook major renovation/improvements, including the addition of a bathroom, one of the first in the area. The home also featured an ice house, a necessity in the days before electricity and refrigeration. Ice would have been harvested locally in the winter and stored in the ice house, remaining for many months, often until the following winter.



Stokelan c. 1890

In 1910 Joshua and Rebecca Wills sold Stokelan for \$10,000 to their nephew, Ezra Evans. Ezra occupied the home with his wife and daughters. At that time Medford was home to dozens of dairy farms, in the area and also highlights the danger of fire in the days before sprinkler systems and smoke alarms. The news article reported on a fire at the farm of Ezra Evans [Stokelan] stating “The burned buildings were part of one of the finest dairy farms in Burlington County”. Fortunately no lives were lost and the main houses escaped damage, however 4 horses and several

head of cattle perished and the barn and outbuildings were destroyed. Although no longer standing today, the barn was rebuilt in 1922. The dairy farm at Stokelan remained in operation through the middle of the 20th century.

One common thread that unites the generations at Stokelan is the Quaker faith. Many of the early settlers in what would become Medford were members of the Religious Society of Friends, or Quakers, including the Evans and Stokes families, in particular Joseph Stokes. His commitment to Quakerism was maintained by subsequent generations at Stoklan. Finally the new owner Deepa Lal developed a friendship while living in India with members of the Stokes family, who originally traveled to India as missionaries. Those Quaker missionaries were, remarkably, descendants from a branch of the same Stokes family that founded Stokelan.

Today the winery sits on 10 acres of land with the beautiful main house surrounded by newly planted vineyards and several outbuildings. Approximately 112 acres of preserved farmland surround the vineyard ensuring the land around Stokelan will remain open space for future generations to enjoy.

The author would like to thank the owner and staff at Stokelan Winery. Special thanks to Alice Andrews for providing extensive background information and photographs and John Roohr for access to preserved farmland that surrounds the winery.



Barn c. 1955

MEDFORD COUNTRY DAY at KIRBY'S MILL - Saturday, May 8th, 12 - 4pm

Kirby's Mill will be open with the water wheel in operation grinding cornmeal, the smithy will be working the forge in the Blacksmith Shop and the Farm Museum in the Barn will also be opening for viewing. On the grounds, our collection of wagons and buggies can be found in the Carriage House.

Historic crafters will be plying their crafts along with other demonstrations. The big wheel lathe in the Cabinets Makers Shop, on the second floor, will be turning. Young visitors can take a turn at a hands on experience turning the big wheel and working the mortising machine in the Carpenter's Shop.

Any member who would like to demonstrate their hobby craft please contact John Hines at 609-531-1825. We also need volunteers to assist with visitors and help with demonstration of various items on display at Kirby's Mill. Masks are required inside all of our buildings. Admission is free.

QUILT SHOW - Saturday, June 5th & Sunday, June 6th

The Annual Quilt Show is Free to the public, free parking is available around the Mill and off Fostertown Road. The Quilt Show is held inside the Mill. No handicap access is available in the Mill. If you would like to display a quilt please contact Libby Zimbleman at contactus@medfordhistory.org or 609-535-5603. Masks will be required in the Mill.

LASAGNA DINNER - Thursday, June 10th, 6:30pm

The last Annual Lasagna Dinner was held March 5, 2020, just days before the Covid shutdown. To maintain the tradition, trustees would like to get the MHS membership together for an outdoor gathering. We are planning the Annual Lasagna Dinner for Thursday, June 10 at 6:30pm, with a rain date of June 17. Save the date!

The location will be the grounds of Kirby's Mill. There is no charge and we will use the chairs and long tables stored in the Mill.

R.S.V.P. to event hostess, Jeanne Woodford at 856-983-1617.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2021 (Until further notice, masks are required in all buildings)

General Meetings

Stay tuned for updates - September 2, October 7 , November 4

April to October

Milling Days - 2nd Saturday, 1 - 3 pm

May 8, 2021

Medford Country Day Open House - 12 pm - 4 pm, rain or shine

June 5 & 6

Quilt Show - Saturday & Sunday, 10 am - 4 pm

Annual Members Lasagna Dinner

June 10th, rain date June 17th, On the grounds of the Mill

July & August

Mill Open on Sundays 1 - 4 pm

July, August & September

Cross Keys School House - Open House 12 - 3 pm, 2nd Sunday of the month

Membership Application for 2021

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 - \$20 per year

Members receive a Quarterly Newsletter

Sponsor/Donor Levels

History Partner - \$100

Archival Partner - \$250

Patron - \$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 © (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.