

# *Historical Society News*

**The Applegate  
Maxwell House  
Behind the Red  
Door**

**Porch Restoration  
Gallery  
HEWHS Partners with  
Fine Homebuilding Magazine**

**Following up on  
the Hights  
Signatures**

**Hightstown-East Windsor  
Historical Society**  
164 North Main Street  
Hightstown, NJ 08520  
[www.hewhs.com](http://www.hewhs.com)

**Hightstown  
Historic  
Preservation  
Commission**  
What do they do?

**Frank Fogarty**  
Baseball Brevity

**Upcoming  
Events**



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 COURTESY OF FINE HOMEBUILDING MAGAZINE

## Editor's Column

With this issue, the Newsletter introduces a new look, designed by Rick Pratt, of Stockton Street Solutions in Hightstown. It is the first major redesign of the Newsletter since the early 1990s. It will allow some pages to be printed in color, and greatly enhance the use of illustrations and graphics.

Bob Craig, a professional historian and architectural historian who is both a charter member and a life member of the Society, has returned to active duty as Newsletter Editor. He has served several roles within the organization in past years, including Library Chairman, Program Chairman, and Membership Chairman. He was the Newsletter Editor from 1991-1995.

- Bob

### THANK YOU:

THE SOCIETY WOULD LIKE TO THANK GEORGE KEITH FOR REPAIRING THE LEG OF THE DINING ROOM TABLE.

### CORRECTION:

IN THE LAST NEWSLETTER, A STATEMENT WAS MADE THAT THE FACT THAT THOMAS HIGHT WAS A SON OF JOHN AND MARY HIGHT WAS DISCOVERED IN 1984. THE DISCOVERY WAS ACTUALLY MADE IN MARCH 1990.

### GUEST AUTHORS

#### Are you a writer?

Send us your article about Hightstown or East Windsor history, or historic house how-to, and maybe we'll print it.

### COVER PHOTO

*Applegate-Maxwell House*  
 503 North Main Street, Hightstown  
 Photo by: Rick Pratt

# New Members



## STEVE & DEIRDRE MISIURA

Hightstown - Steve has lived in Hightstown since 1998 along with his wife Deirdre and school aged daughters Fiona and Tara. They began to really take notice of Hightstown when the restoration of the historic homes started taking place along Stockton Street during the 1990's and being an architect as well as a history buff, he decided to purchase an older home for themselves. This part of the country is rich in history, unfortunately much has been forgotten, demolished and paved over, which is why they joined the Historical Society. He stresses the importance of history in the family and they are members of the Old Barracks Museum and the Princeton Battlefield Society. His daughter Fiona erected a historic marker for her Girl Scout Silver award at the site of a revolutionary war skirmish in West Windsor. They hope, one day to discover similar "forgotten" places or events in and around Hightstown that will further add to our local history.



## KRIS & JAMES ZITO

Hightstown - Kris and Jim Zito have lived in Hightstown for over 10 years and restored their home to a high standard. Kris has an eye for design and continues to enhance the interior of the home. Additionally, they have a beautiful garden in their side yard, meticulously maintained to perfection.

## BOB VONREIGEN & LINDA EARELY

Hightstown - Bob's ongoing goal is to improve the town in an historically accurate manner. A professional painter by trade, he specializes in historic properties. He lives in an Arts & Crafts house, with Georgian Revival influences. He is also a commissioner on the Historic Preservation Commission channeling his passion to restore historic houses. Linda is a psychologist and an historic house enthusiast.



## OTHER NEW MEMBERS -

- Dodie Colvecchio
- Deb Napolitano
- Montferrat Family
- William Searing
- Denny Hansen
- Mulleavey Family
- Joe Mannino

**GEORGE CHIN** - George is the Construction Official and Building Inspector for Hightstown. He is a strong advocate for the historic properties in Hightstown and has on numerous occasions notified the Historic Preservation Commission, (HPC) of potential degrading of the historic fabric. His role includes enforcement of the 'Certificate' of Appropriateness (presently called an 'Opinion') that is issued by the HPC once building owners have met with the commission.



## Hightstown East Windsor Historical Society

founded 1971

**to educate while preserving for future generations, our people and our community's history.**

### Officers for 2014-2015

President-	Vacant
Vice President-	Vacant
Recording Secretary-	Shirley Olsen 609-448-8388
Corres. Secretary-	Vacant
Treasurer-	Robert Szychowski 609-448-9490

### Committee Chairs

Finance-	Robert Szychowski 609-448-9490
Property & Grounds-	Warren Olsen 609-448-8388
Library-	Robert Craig 609-584-1806
Website-	Gary Stevens 609-469-1860
Membership-	Shirley Olsen 609-448-8388
Museum-	Cookie & Christa Cummings
Newsletter-	Robert Craig 609-584-1806
Programs-	Christian Kirkpatrick & Jane Cox 609-443-3138
Programs-	Nancy Laudenberger 609-443-6536
Publicity-	Shirley Olsen 609-448-8388

### Building Committee

Christian Kirkpatrick, Suzann Fallon, Shirley Olsen, Warren Olsen, Robert Szychowski

### Society Trustees

Marie Gerland & Irene Schubert

Layout by Rick Pratt  
Printed by Old Hights Print Shop

In the last Newsletter, we reported on learning of two manuscripts from the 1740s that might shed some light on a moment in the lives of John and Mary Hight about which little is known. Recently I had an opportunity to examine what has turned out to be three documents, and while it does not appear that we learned anything new about the Hights, the experience does highlight the complexities one often encounters while studying central New Jersey in the 18th century.

In June 1743, shortly before his death in Hopewell Township, a William Disbrow signed his last will and testament. Among the three witnesses who signed that document, one was a "Jno. Hyde." Circumstantial evidence suggested the possibility that this man perhaps was the John Hight who was living at the site of Hightstown at least by 1747. Hight had been a wheelwright and both he and Mary were members of the Cranbury Baptist Church beginning in November 1745 when the congregation was formed. Hight would have known, and may have worked with carpenters there. Henry Disbrow was a Cranbury carpenter active from 1736 until his own death in 1749, who may be the same Henry Disbrow mentioned in William's inventory. William, himself, was a shoemaker ("cordwainer") who may have been a part-time carpenter, because in the second document, an inventory of his real and personal estate also prepared in 1743, he was credited with an unfinished house, building

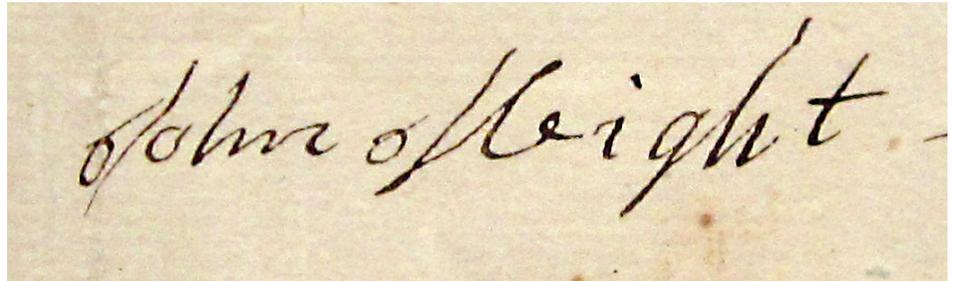
materials, and carpenter's tools. There may also have been Baptist church connections among these men.

There is considerable evidence that many persons in central New Jersey before the Revolutionary War confused the Hyde and Hight surnames, even if the Hight families that lived at what are today Hightstown and West Windsor, themselves, never did. When John and Mary were admitted into membership in the Baptist church in 1744, their surnames were both spelled "Hide." Some of the early references to Hightstown on maps and in other documents spelled it as "Hides Town" or "Hides-Town." If the spelling of the witness's name on the 1743 will had been a copyist's misunderstanding, such an occurrence would be understandable.

Disbrow's will exists, however, both as a signed original document and as a recorded copy, so the handwriting of the original signature can be compared to known signatures of John Hight.



*(signature from the 1743 will)*



*(comparison signature of John Hight from Hightstown)*

Unfortunately, known signatures of Hight date from a later period, the one reproduced above from a deed he signed in 1771, so they are not precisely contemporary. Still they are so significantly different that they evidently were signed by different men. Furthermore, other documents clearly show the existence of an extended Hide family in Hunterdon and Somerset counties during the same years. So while the estate documents of William Disbrow of Hopewell evidently do not reveal anything directly about the Hights of Hightstown, they do suggest that they may have had common acquaintances among the Disbrow family of Cranbury.

# Frank Fogarty



F. FOGARTY.  
Poole Made a Dandy Pickup



F. FOGARTY.  
Lance Was Taken Out of the Box



F. FOGARTY.  
Poole Walked to First on Balls

A SERIES OF SINGLE-CELL CARTOONS LAMPOONING THE LANGUAGE OF BASEBALL, BY THE CARTOONIST FRANK FOGARTY. HIGHTSTOWN GAZETTE, MAY 13, 1915.



F. FOGARTY.  
Murphy and Holmes Tried to Catch the Same Fly



F. FOGARTY  
Wiley Fanned the Ozone



F. FOGARTY  
Red Trapped Between First and Second

FRANK FOGARTY (1887-1978) STARTED OFF AS A SPORTS AND POLITICAL CARTOONIST, AND ALSO SPENT SOME TIME AS AN ART DIRECTOR FOR THE MOVIES. HE TOOK OVER THE CLARENCE SUNDAY PAGE FROM ITS CREATOR, CRAWFORD YOUNG, IN 1930, AND CONTINUED TO DRAW IT UNTIL 1949.

## New in the Library: the Hunts and Applegates

BY ROBERT W. CRAIG

Richard H. Morgan, a grandson of Dr. Edward T. R. Applegate of Hightstown, has written and published a remarkable new book on two prominent families from whom he is descended. Entitled *The Hunt and Applegate Families: A Descendant's Journey of Discovery in Time*, the book covers a remarkable odyssey of generations of the Hunt family of Hopewell that occupies the first part of the book, and a chronicle of the Applegate family of central New Jersey that fills the third part. The middle part tells the story of two remarkably successful Hunt brothers who were merchants in New York City in the 19th century, and seemingly involved in everything from Cooper Union to the trans-Atlantic cable.

Abraham Hunt (1741-1821), one of the Hopewell Hunts, became a merchant in Trenton and he lived in a prominent brick house at the corner of State and Warren streets, where he provided lodging for Hessian colonel Rall during the occupation of Trenton. And he had a curious, possible connection to Hightstown as well. Abraham had married a sister of Isaac Pearson, a wealthy property owner at White Horse, in what today is Hamilton Township. Both men were thought to have Tory sympathies, and Pearson may have been fleeing toward New York City when he was stopped by soldiers at Hightstown three days after the battle of Trenton, along with seven other men, one of whom was a Trenton merchant. Pearson was killed in this epi-

sode (see the Sept.-Oct. 2002 Newsletter) when he tried to flee. I have not yet learned the name of the merchant, but Abraham Hunt seems a likely suspect.

Morgan, the author, opens the story of the Applegates from the point of his great-grandfather Edward Taylor Riggs Applegate [Sr.] who was responsible for a two-page account of his own life in a Mercer County historical work in 1907. The marriage of Edward's father Abijah Applegate (1799-1885) to Sarah T. Hunt, sister of the two Hunt brothers who star in the second part of the book, allied the two families.

***Abijah and Sarah bought a farm in the village that was then known as Milford in East Windsor, and it was there that Edward T.R. was born in 1831.***

The book reproduces two fine portraits of Edward and his sister Mary. The chapter then traces Edward's life, from his marriage to Amanda Reed of Hightstown, through his pursuit of business opportunities and civic and political activities. In 1858 Edward was one of the leaders who were promoting a new "County of Stockton" that would have Hightstown as its county seat. It was one of several largely forgotten "new county" movements in New Jersey that, had they all succeeded, would have left the state with a strange-looking map indeed (to our eyes, anyway). But enough of them did succeed (eight new counties were created between 1824 and 1857) to give courage to the effort, even though no more would afterward be added.

A Democrat, Edward was elected to the New Jersey General Assembly in 1859, in which he successfully supported the creation of Washington Township (now Robbinsville Township) carved out of East Windsor. He ran and was re-elected in 1860, and this time he was in the majority, and had a share in the Assembly's leadership. One bill he sponsored incorporated the Hightstown and Perrineville Turnpike Company, which would pay for the improvement of Etra Road. He would for years afterward be a director of the turnpike.

Morgan does a good job of tracing the rest of Edward T.R.'s career, including his appointment in 1877 to be a judge in the Mercer County court. "Judge Applegate" he remained for the rest of his life. His best-remembered accomplishment was when in 1890 he gave his initials to become the new name of the hamlet where he was born. The Milford post office became the "Etra" post office in that moment, and it has been Etra ever since.

## 100 Years Ago...

A few items from the  
*Hightstown Gazette*:

**D. W. Measuroll**

112 MAIN STREET

Phone 274

Special attention to telephone orders.

First-class delivery service.

Best Skinback Hams, per pound.....	14	1-2c
Best Picnic Shoulders.....	10c	
Campbell's Baked Beans, per can.....	08c	
VanCamps, 15c size, Baked Beans, 2 cans.....	25c	
Fine Grade Red Label Sweet Corn, 3 cans.....	25c	
Fine Gradè Messenger Brand Tomatoes, 3 cans for.....	25c	
Regular Size Crisco.....	22c	
VanCamps Soup, 3 cans and 1 can spaghetti.....	25c	
Campbell-assorted-soup, 3 cans for.....	25c	
Fine California Peaches, 2 lbs. for.....	15c	
Evaporated Gold Milk, 3 tall cans for.....	25c	
Premium Condensed Milk, 3 cans for.....	25c	
LaFrance Tablets, 6 for.....	25c	
Corn Puffs.....	12c	
Kellog's Corn Flakes.....	08c	
Quaker Corn Flakes.....	05c	
Very Small Sweet Peas, 20c can for.....	16c	
Ozone and Babitt's soap, per cake.....	04c	
Dutch' Cleanser, 3 cans for.....	25c	
Jello, assorted flavors, 3 for.....	25c	
Toilet Paper, 3 extra big rolls for.....	10c	
Star Naptha Washing Powder.....	04c	
Mothers Oats, 3 for.....	25c	
Karo Syrup, blue label.....	08c	
Matches, 3 big boxes.....	10c	
National Biscuit Co., Uneeda, 2 for.....	07c	
Hires extract for making root beer, 2 for.....	25c	
Ladies Parlor Brooms, 25c kind for.....	19c	

The High School seniors enjoyed a class trip to Washington, DC, along with the seniors of Trenton High School. Of the ten members of Hightstown High's first four-year graduating class, seven went on the trip.

Jasper Hutchinson reported that his 20 hens had laid 3,050 eggs in one year.

The Pennsylvania Railroad began to repair the abutments of the bridge on Stockton Street, where problems had begun to appear with the stone masonry. The editor also reported that Hightstown was experiencing a building boom, and enumerated a lengthy list of buildings that were under construction or remodeling.

## Where is this?

In each newsletter we will show you a picture from somewhere in Hightstown or East Windsor. We will identify which town it is.

If you know where it is, send us the address either by mail (see page 10 for our address) or by email: [HPC@HightstownBorough.com](mailto:HPC@HightstownBorough.com) and include your address and phone number.

The first person to get it right will be entered into a drawing to be held at our annual dinner in January. The award will be determined by the membership committee.

*You are not allowed to enter if it's your house.*



*Hightstown*

## Coming Attractions

A report is expected soon that will focus on the history of the Main Street crossing of Rocky Brook, from the 17th century to the 20th. Main Street was part of the first highway for wheeled vehicles that completely crossed the colony of New Jersey, and a bridge has spanned Rocky Brook there since at least about the year 1700, even before any settlement had taken place locally.

This report is being prepared with public funding as a partial mitigation for the impact of Hurricane Irene flooding (Aug. 29, 2011) on the Main Street bridge. The Society has co-operated in the effort to compile this report, permitting the reproduction of photographs and postcards from Society collections that help tell this story. The report is being compiled for the New Jersey Department of Transportation by RGA, Inc., a Cranbury consulting firm.

## Sidewalks - 1915

Not so many months ago a question was raised about the materials of which the sidewalks in Hightstown were made and when they were popular. The *Hightstown Gazette* of May 13, 1915 can help settle the issue.

"What was the condition of the sidewalks in the Borough of Hightstown a few years ago? And today? The sidewalk improvements really began two years ago. Last spring, summer and fall many walks were laid. This spring the work has commenced again. Many miles of

*continued on page 10*

## Gertrude Maxwell

The Society owns a book titled, "My First Decade" with memories of Gertrude Maxwell, (1840-1939) who lived at 503 North Main Street in Hightstown. This is particularly fitting at this time because the Historic Preservation Commission is working to get this house on the National Register of Historic Places. The book describes the house she grew up in which is still standing, The 'Johnny Bull' and early Hightstown. The dedication from "May, Nineteen-Thirty reads, "To V.W. at whose bidding these reminiscences have been written, and to whome with other friends whose ministrations have been brightened the grey days of shut-in life, I present the little girl of long ago." Her first paragraph has memories from when she was seven and the third talks about when she was born. It appears then that her memories in the book were from approximately 1847.

### CHAPTER 1 SEVEN TIMES ONE

"The outstanding event of my seventh year was the death of my beloved grandfather. I was the only child in the home of my grandfather and parents. The other members of the family were four servants who had been slaves and refused to leave "Ole Marse" when slavery was abolished in the state in 1835.

All elderly, and all white and black alike, catered to my slightest wish. We lived close beside a small village in Central New Jersey. [Hightstown]

Old deeds in my possession show several tracts of land comprising our farm were purchased in 1774 by my great grandfather from the man whose surname is the prefix of the town [Hight], and whose given name I will use for this story. Four score and ten years ago when I was born, the thoroughfare of John's town was Main Street. It had been an Indian trail, a bridle path, and in the good old stage coach days was a popular rendezvous for the exchange of horses between Camden and Amboy and for the refreshment of the passengers from Philadelphia and New York.

Two other streets were projections. One leading westward to a college town bore the name of three eminent Jersey men who helped make the State historic. I am not sure which of the three was honored but I think it was the Commodore. [Stockton]

The other street leading to the State Capital was named for a gallant General who fell on a nearby battlefield in 1777. The County bore his name. [Mercer]

On this street in 1840 stood the lone Academy, a kind of public school governed by Trustees.

Little girls of tender age were not in my day in personal touch with the school room, but were taught at home. I could print a letter and manage fairly well a chapter in the First Reader when my seventh birthday was reached."

Skipping ahead a bit, "I was very fond of driving and the gig, family

carriage, carry all or sleigh did not leave the premises without me.

One favorite short drive was out a country road to a little settlement called Milford where there was a beautiful pond, a grist mill and a fulling mill. There was [a] place at Millford of great interest to me. It was the home of Mrs. Lottie Skinner, the daughter of the fulling mill proprietor. She had a curious little shop in the corner of her home full of blocks and band boxes.



Gertrude & Rev. James Maxwell, c. 1890

The blocks were used for pressing bonnets, for every Spring beautiful Leghorn and Dunstable straw bonnets were brought to Lottie Skinner to be made into the correct shape.

These bonnets were costly and a new one was expected to last several years. If it became soiled Mrs. Lottie cleaned it."

"The men's head gear was attended to in the town. A jolly little fat man called Jake manufactured beaver hats.

They were not tall and slender like silk hats of later days, but were short and dumpy.

In our town there were worn

until they were the worse for wear, and this process was hastened cause the owners, in shaving, almost always cut themselves and then they called lustily, "Fetch my beaver," from which they plucked a bit of fur to staunch the blood.

It did look funny to see on the green and in front of the Church on a Sunday morning so many men alike in their hats and little black patches on chin or upper lip!"

"My Mama was a keen observer and a good narrator. She has often told me of the completion of the historic Camden and Amboy Railroad and the excitement when the engine Johnny Bull steamed by in 1835. Crowds sat on fences and stood in fence corners, and carriages filled the roads, and hurrahs and hand clappings were deafening all along the route. And it was a great achievement and made the trip between Philadelphia and New York much shorter than in the old stage coach days.

In talking over old times, long after "Johnny Bull's" exploit, the granddaughters of some of the ladies of John's town said their grandmothers sat opposite each other on a journey to New York to watch the sparks which flew from the wood fire of the engine so holes would not be burned through their bonnets and clothes.

Locally it interested my Mama to know she could go to visit her brother in New York without lying over in the sailboat if the wind was contrary, or the boat becalmed. In her girlhood, she was often as many days making the journey as it would be hours now in making the same distance.

The railroad cut an ugly furrow through the eastern end of grandfa-

ther's farm and woodland to the north.

The only compensation received was a pass to New York closely written on a piece of paper half the size of the new bank bills of last year, and signed by Edwin A. Stevens of Hoboken.

## CHAPTER 2 THE SCENES OF MY CHILDHOOD

"We lived "in a house by the side of the road", not a "main traveled road" but leading to a mill, Mama's old home, most of whose patrons lived northeast from John's town. The house had three large rooms on the first floor, the parlor, the middle house, and the bedroom, which was the sitting room as well. All looked on the road in front and in the garden in the rear, for there were no back buildings.

*continued on page 10*

### **Monthly Meetings**

Anyone is welcome to attend our meetings. We discuss progress of each committee and welcome your input for new ideas and offers to assist with our upcoming programs.

#### **Meetings are held:**

The first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm in Ely House. 164 North Main Street, Hightstown.

## **Historic District Signage**

Thanks in part to a generous donation from Pfizer several years ago, and other minor fund raisers, the Hightstown Historic Preservation Commission will be purchasing a plaque describing the District. It will be mounted in the Methodist Church prayer garden on Stockton Street.

## THE STOCKTON STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

### LISTED ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

REPRESENTS A VIRTUAL TIMELINE OF DEVELOPMENT SPANNING NEARLY A CENTURY OF HIGHTSTOWN'S HISTORY. IT STANDS AS A LIVING LINK TO THE MEMORIES OF A FORMER CULTURE AND THE WORDS WRITTEN IN TEXTBOOKS ABOUT OUR PAST. THE DISTRICT INCLUDES RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS AND OTHER KEY CONTRIBUTING HISTORIC RESOURCES DATING FROM THE CIVIL WAR, THE INTRODUCTION OF THE RAIL SERVICE, AND THE TURN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. THE DISTRICT REPRESENTS THE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND ARCHITECTURAL TRENDS PREVALENT TO THE BOROUGH'S PAST. THE HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURALLY SIGNIFICANT BUILDING STYLES INCLUDE EARLY FEDERAL, QUEEN ANNE, ITALIANATE, SECOND EMPIRE, CARPENTER GOTHIC, AND COLONIAL REVIVAL. HIGHTSTOWN BOROUGH AND ITS RESIDENTS ALIKE ARE DETERMINED IN PRESERVING THE HISTORIC DISTRICT, RE-ESTABLISHING THE AMBIENCE OF THE ERA OF ARCHITECTURAL AND TRANSPORTATION SIGNIFICANCE, AS WELL AS THE RESIDENTIAL CULTURE THAT ONCE EXISTED DURING HIGHTSTOWN'S HISTORY.

*Decade - continued from page 9*

A door opened in the middle house, which was the dining-room and bright cherry. A large fire-place into which a back-log was rolled every morning from October to May almost filled one end of the room; there was just space for a closet and a small door on one side and my play-house on the other. A large side-board, a corner cupboard, drop-leaf and gate-leg tables, and Windsor chairs I think was all the furniture.

The second floor contained three bedrooms and two dark closets. All the bedsteads were curtained and all the floors covered with rag carpets. An uncurtained bed would have been considered as indecent as an unclothed man or woman in public.

There was a garret over the entire house, not the traditional one with broken furniture, cast off clothing and bits of choice rubbish, but an orderly garret, where chests and boxes of various kinds, and trunks of leather with the owner's initials in brass tacks were set primly against the eaves. The long space between was given up to spinning wheels big and little for wool and flax.

The stoop was the whole length of the house and overlooked meadow and field and woods, and at the back were more fields and meadows, and woodland with orchard and garden outbuildings.

There are many more beautifully described memories in the remaining pages of the book, not to mention the paragraphs that this author skipped for provision of space. If readers are interested we can reprint additional excerpts in coming newsletters.

## Query:

### Alfred Bennett and his Airfield (on Route 130)

The Society is seeking persons with information or records about the several airfields that were operated in the Hightstown Area during the 1920s and 1930s. Two of the key individuals with these airfields were local pilot Monty Norcross, who died when the plane he was piloting crashed in June 1932, and Alfred Bennett, who operated an airfield along Route 130 south of Gordon Road in (now) Robbinsville Township during the 1930s. With the exception of the Trenton-Robbinsville Airport on Sharon Road in Robbinsville, the local airports did not survive the war. Anyone with information about Bennett, his airfield, or any of the other local airfields, should please get in touch with Bob Craig, HEWHS Newsletter editor, by email at:

EditorHEWHS@gmail.com  
Thank you.

### Cement Walks - continued from page 7

cement walks, curbs, and gutters will be laidduring 1915."

The editor continued, "The laying of good cement walks improves property and enhances its value. The old board walk, the old brick walk and the old flag walk is now something of the past. They are ancient. Cement walk is modern. It is the best walk of the age." In the same issue of the Gazette, John C. Manlove, a mason and builder, advertised that "cement" sidewalks were his specialty, at ten cents per square foot!

## Membership ~Application~ Support us this year at the following rates:

- Individual \$20
- Family \$25
- Booster \$40
- Sustaining \$50
- Life (Individual) \$200
- Life (Family) \$275
- Newsletter ONLY \$10

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Email 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you hear about membership?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please mail the completed application along with a check payable to:

**HEW Historical Society  
Membership Committee  
164 North Main Street  
Hightstown, NJ 08520**

I would not like to be part of the New Member Spotlight.

## Volunteer Opportunities

I would like to volunteer to help out with the following committee(s):

- Property & Grounds
- Library
- Membership
- Museum
- Newsletter
- Programs
- Publicity



# Historic Preservation Commission

## What does the commission do?

**They assist property owners in protecting and maintaining Hightstown's Heritage**

Hightstown Borough Council established an ordinance to enable the Historic Preservation Commission to educate, advise and protect the homes within the historic district. If you live on Stockton Street or Rogers and have granite curbing, then you are in the district. The zoning map also shows the extent. We are doing our part to establish Hightstown as a destination; a place that heritage tourists seek out to stroll through our Historic District, and imagine a time of horse drawn carriages and cold iced tea on the porches sitting with neighbors or new friends.

***A homeowner within the District planning any work that structurally alters the house, that requires a building permit, or that is planned for the exterior of the house (other than painting) shall be reviewed with the Historic Preservation Commission. The Commission will then render an agreed upon opinion to be enforced by the building department.***

The Historic Preservation Commission has been established to:

1. Identify, record and maintain our Historic District and other designated landmarks throughout the Borough of Hightstown.
2. Act as an advisory commission to the Planning Board, the Mayor, and the Council in planning the Borough's revitalization.
3. Monitor and recommend to the Mayor and Council, the submission of any grants related to historic preservation.
4. Provide enthusiasm whenever possible for our Historic Heritage.
5. Provide publications and educational opportunities to promote Historic Preservation in the Borough of Hightstown.
6. Review, and render advice and recommendations to the property owners within the District towards maintaining and / or renovating their homes.

Examples of changes which require meeting with the Commission, which do not require a permit are changes to windows, window trim, doors and door trim, fascia, soffits, exterior wall materials, gingerbread, dentils, brackets, metal relief, lights, porches, etc.

We want to help you maintain the character of your house and offer you ideas that will coordinate with the era when your house was built. Remember that just because the big box home center doesn't stock it, doesn't mean that it isn't available. Or, that because they do stock it, that you should use it. Your house is special and we want to help you keep it that way.

We meet the third Thursday of the month at 7:30pm at the Historical Society. Please stop in and see us. We would be happy to talk to you about your home.

## Steward of Hightstown History

The Commission is seeking to bestow an award to a homeowner demonstrating a long-term commitment to preservation through maintenance, restoration or rehabilitation of their property.

The idea of granting a Steward of Hightstown History award has been discussed for about four years. The commission hopes to continue the tradition annually and encourage residents across the borough to strive to win the award.

The preservation of historic sites, structures, and homes is a result of our respect for the past, which created our today," said Councilman Connor Montferrat, liaison to the commission. "Preservation of homes in Hightstown

*continued on page 15*



THERE ARE 18 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THESE TWO IMAGES. SEE HOW MANY YOU CAN FIND.

## World War I Memorial Plaques

On April 17, 1919, to honor four of his friends who were soldiers in World War I and died serving their country, Walter C. Black planted four trees along Stockton Street in front of the school. They were Robert Harold Fones, Lewis Forman, Clifford Manchester and Samuel L. Platt, Jr.

In the early 1990's Darlene Nemeth, a 2nd Grade teacher at the school saw an old *Hightstown Gazette* in the administrative offices about these soldiers and decided that plaques should be placed in their honor at the base of each tree. She put together something called, "Pennies for Plaques" and the children contributed loose change for an entire year to pay for the plaques. The plaques were set by the district Buildings & Grounds Department and a celebration was held with Walter C. Black's grandson in attendance and decedents of the four soldiers.

Unfortunately, between then and now, the stones with the plaques on them settled into the earth and sunk down out of view. Last year Paul Hewins, the Director of Buildings and Grounds for the school district learned of the plaques and began searching for them. With the recollections of a fellow employee and a pole, he discovered all four just below the surface. He dug them up, restored them and mounted them on larger bases at the base of four young trees in similar locations as they were originally.

Thanks to Mr. Hewins fortitude, these men's sacrifice has once again come into the light.



## Fine Homebuilding Porch Gallery

**D**ear historical society members, A few months ago I had the pleasure of speaking with Rick Pratt, who contacted me about reprinting some content from *Fine Homebuilding* magazine in the Hightstown East-Windsor Historical Society's newsletter. Rick and I decided the first piece of content we would share with you would be a story that many of you can probably relate to, the rehabilitation of a "Porch from the Past" (p 16).

Rick then sent me a photograph of his porch restoration and told me of the many beautiful porches in your community. Porch restorations are always of interest to *Fine Homebuilding* readers so I would like to invite you to share with me a photograph of your home's porch. The submissions that show the highest level of craftsmanship and are historically appropriate to the house will be featured in an upcoming issue of *Fine Homebuilding* in a special Project Gallery dedicated to the historic homes of Hightstown and East Windsor.

If you'd like to see your home and community in the pages of *Fine Homebuilding*, please email a high-resolution photograph and description of your porch, your name and your contact information to me at [mfriedman@taunton.com](mailto:mfriedman@taunton.com). Submissions will be accepted through July 31, 2015 and the lucky folks who will be featured in the issue will be contacted the first week of August. Everyone who submits a porch photograph will receive a complimentary copy of the issue in which this gallery will appear and those featured in the gallery will also receive a copy of the *Fine Homebuilding* DVD, *Repair and Renovation of Old Houses*.

I look forward to seeing your porch photographs and learning more about your beautiful community.

Good luck!

Maureen Friedman  
*Fine Homebuilding* editorial

## Certified Local Government (CLG)

The Hightstown Borough Council has charged us with the application to become a Certified Local Government. The process is ongoing and has been well received by the State.

Preservation through Partnership: this is the goal of the Certified Local Government Program. Local, State, and Federal governments work together in the Federal Preservation Program to help communities save the irreplaceable historic character of places. Through the certification process, communities make a local commitment to historic preservation. This commitment is key to America's ability to preserve, protect, and increase awareness of our unique cultural heritage found in the built environment across the country.

Jointly administered by the National Park Service and the State Historic Preservation Offices, each local community works through a certification process to become recognized as a Certified Local Government. Once certified CLGs become an active partner in the Federal Historic Preservation Program, each community gains access to benefits of the program and agrees to follow required Federal and State requirements.

## Preserve America Community

Preserve America is a federal initiative that encourages and supports community efforts to preserve and enjoy our priceless cultural and natural heritage. The goals of the program include a greater shared knowledge about the nation's past, strengthened regional identities and local pride, increased local participation in preserving the country's cultural and natural heritage assets, and support for the economic vitality of our communities.

With the support of the Hightstown Borough Council, the HPC has applied to become a Preserve America Community. It is a stringent task of which we are very close to completion. Once accepted, we will join just five other communities in the State.

It is a prestigious designation bringing us notoriety and the ability to apply for significant grants to enrich the community.



### SAVE ME!

#### *Wyckoff Homestead*

This house is up for sale, and could be torn down if someone doesn't buy it to restore it. It's a gorgeous Italianate inside and out. It needs someone to restore and care for it so that we may all enjoy it for many years to come.

SPRING 2015

## Classic Towns Initiative

The Borough Council has committed to joining the Delaware Valley Planning Commission's Classic Towns Program, with the HPC as the information collector and conduit for information. The Classic Town initiative is committed to the growth, revitalization, and support of the region's older communities. At its core, Classic Towns is a marketing program that aims to promote the region's developed municipalities and neighborhoods as great places to live, work, and play. Classic communities are often at a competitive disadvantage when it comes to attracting new businesses and residents. Many small communities lack the resources necessary to launch sophisticated marketing programs.

The cornerstone of the Classic Towns program is a regional marketing strategy to benefit the communities in the program.

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*Steward* - continued from page 12 provides a better quality of life for the community and a living link to the memories of a former culture and our town's history.

Nominations are made to the HPC with voting at the May 21st meeting. A bronze oval plaque will be awarded to a homeowner this spring.

Once a homeowner gets a plaque, it's theirs for life. The goal is for it to stay with the house, even if it's sold. It's something that shows that this house was cared for, and hopefully the people that buy it would maintain the same devotion.

Submissions can be sent by email to [hpc@hightstownborough.com](mailto:hpc@hightstownborough.com) or by mail addressed to the commission at 156 Bank St., Hightstown, NJ 08520.

# finishingtouch

LASTING INSPIRATION



## Porch from the past



**Ghost of a post.** When the Millers removed the prairie-style porch, the outline of a large, low support post was clear, but there was no paint shadow of a full post.

Fifteen minutes after they closed on their new home, Pat and Dan Miller took a hammer to the stucco on the front porch. Certain that the prairie-style porch was an addition to their 1875 Italianate house, they were looking for clues about the historic home's original facade. Delighted to discover the clear outline of a large post base but confused by not finding the outline of a full post, the Millers did their research and learned that no post mark meant there originally must have been paired posts with only one post next to, but not touching, the house. Digging beneath, they found further evidence of the original porch: a thick piece of wood with huge kerfs, which led them to believe the original porch must have had large curved elements, probably arches. Their forensic research was helpful, but only vaguely hinted at what the original porch must have looked like. Unable to find any photos of the original porch, the Millers began a study of Italianate houses that resulted in the design pictured here.

To aid in the porch's reconstruction, the Millers made full-scale mock-ups of its components. Dan had bought old-growth redwood reclaimed from a Chicago water tower, which he cut, resawed, glued up, turned, and milled into the elements of the porch. A teacher, he made the parts in the winter and used three summers off to install them. When the scaffolding was finally removed, Dan says that he and Pat "actually danced a jig in the street."

For more photos, go to [FineHomebuilding.com/extras](http://FineHomebuilding.com/extras). —Maureen Friedman

DESIGN: Pat Miller, Elgin, Ill. CONSTRUCTION: Dan Miller PHOTOGRAPHS: courtesy of Pat and Dan Miller

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