

Historical Society News

East Windsor at two hundred and twenty

PART III

Route 130

Where the Modern
East Windsor Began

East Windsor in the Modern Era

The 20th Century
and Beyond

Writing the Story of RCA Astro

**Hightstown-East Windsor
Historical Society**

164 North Main Street
Hightstown, NJ 08520
www.hewhs.com



Features

3 **President's Messages**
BY CHARLES "CAPPY" STULTS, III

3 **ANTIQUe APPRAISAL SHOW**
Thank you Mike and Gene
BY CAPPY STULTS

4 **ROUTE 130**
Where the Modern East Windsor Began
BY ROBERT W. CRAIG

7 **WRITING THE STORY OF RCA ASTRO**
BY ROBERT W. CRAIG

10 **CHROME PRINT**
BY ROBERT W. CRAIG

10 **JOIN TODAY**
Become a member
Annual Membership Application
(January-December)

11 **EAST WINDSOR IN THE MODERN ERA**
The 20th Century and Beyond
BY ROBERT W. CRAIG

15 **PA TECHNOLOGY**
BY ROBERT W. CRAIG

15 **PUZZLE**
Where is this?
East Windsor
BY ROBERT W. CRAIG

16 **PUZZLE**
What's the Difference?
Winter Flora
BY RICK PRATT

COVER PHOTO

Former PA Technology, present Aurobindo USA
See page 15 for article
Photo by: Rick Pratt

Editor's Column

With this Part III of our East Windsor series, it becomes painfully obvious that one cannot do justice to the township's 20th-century history in 16 pages. The story of Route 130 is incomplete without tales of the businesses that sprang up along its length. And what can one say about Twin Rivers in just a few words?

We chose to focus this issue on the arrival of what was new and different in the township during the past eight decades, rather than on the lingering twilight of the railroad and of the rural landscape that was slowly but steadily disappearing. I came along in time to see it, not so much in its fullness as in its ending years. The rural feeling that was still palpable in 1962 when my family moved to East Windsor was gone by 1966, by which point the evidence of suburbanization was inescapable.

The 20th-century didn't just happen to East Windsor: like earlier times, outside forces played powerfully upon local outcomes. The arrival of the New Jersey Turnpike and Exit 8 made many things possible and some inevitable. The extent of the changes has been so great that their accumulated impact has made it very hard for the township's residents to imagine the historic past of the place where they live. And East Windsor has had its proud moments, from the building of a passive solar municipal building to four decades of technological wizardry at the RCA Space Center.

We haven't finished with East Windsor. There are many more stories to tell, and the need to tell even these stories more fully.



Early Rte. 130 signage, from 1947. Source: NJ State Archives.

President's Message

DEAR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS,

Your Society has been very busy this Fall. Yours truly gave a presentation at the East Windsor Library, Hickory Branch, on the history of East Windsor Township. I also gave a tour of the downtown and the Society to a group of German exchange students from Hightstown High School. Additionally I gave a talk at the Hightstown Library on the history of Hightstown. The talks were well-attended and we picked up a few members. In the weeks that followed a couple of attendees presented me with items for the Society library.

In October the Ely family held a two-day family reunion at the Society. There were speakers on the Ely family history which included our Bob Craig and members Alice Wikoff of Allentown, Linda Ely Mansmann from Chapel Hill, NC and Linda Ely from Neptune, NJ. Sharon Hazard also spoke on Kate Roosevelt Shippen's vacation farm in "Hightstown" (actually Millstone Township). The talks were excellent and the attendees donated nearly \$500 to the Society. The second day included a tour of the Ely landmarks in the East Windsor area. Dr. David Martin also donated copies of John Orr's book, *Reflections from the Shrine*, which we have been selling.

Later in October Gene Pascucci and his associate Micheal Myatovich of A-A Empire Antiques,

acted as appraisers for an Antique Show held at the Society and organized by Robin Smith. There were many in attendance and \$491 was raised for the Society. Bev Mann did her usual stellar job in having the grounds perfect for all of the aforementioned activities. Your officers and many volunteers held a clean-up day making the facility as good as it has been in year. Greg Ciano filmed a good portion of the Ely presentations and continues to work on a new mural in the Freight Station and on the John Bull children's play to be presented in the Spring. I am very grateful to all of the above and others that have worked so hard for the Society in 2017, not the least of which are Bob Craig and Rick Pratt on the newsletters, and Gary Stevens and Cookie Cummings on the website and Facebook, among other tasks!

It is dues time again. Please remember to send in your dues for 2018. A form is included in this newsletter. As always, feel free to reach out to me with any of your ideas and comments.

In closing, I wish you and your family a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and a healthy and happy New Year.

Cappy Stults, President
cstults@allenstults.com



Antique Appraisal Show

On October 26th, Michael J. Myatovich (left) and Gene Pascucci, owner of A-A Empire Antiques, Monmouth Street, Hightstown, volunteered their time and expert knowledge of antiques, at the Society "Antique Appraisal Show" fundraiser. It was a great turnout and all enjoyed hearing about their antiques and Gene's great stories about each item. Thank you Mike and Gene.

Photo by: Cappy Stults

Route 130 : Where the Modern East Windsor Began

BY ROBERT W. CRAIG

The single event that brought into being the modern East Windsor Township, the East Windsor of the automobile age, was the construction of U.S. Route 130. This one highway provided the basis for a different type of township to dominate local history in the second half of the century. If completing Exit 8 and the New Jersey Turnpike made it inevitable, building Route 130 made it *possible*. To understand how it came to have such an impact, one must first understand NJ Route 33. That road, at least the portion of it from the village of Robbinsville to downtown Hightstown, followed the right-of-way of the old Bordentown & South Amboy Turnpike, one of the early 19th century's "straight" roads. In 1918-19, just after World War One, this stretch was widened and improved when the New Jersey Highway Department created a state highway designated "Route 1," the first complete, concrete-paved highway in New Jersey. This road--not the Route 1 you're thinking of--was one travel lane in each direction, extending through the village of Windsor and into Hightstown over what is today Mercer Street, thence to Main Street and over North Main Street back out into the township again, enroute to Cranbury.

Road-building Politics

This road, enmeshed in New Jersey's highway politics, did not remain "Route 1" for long. As the 1920s proceeded, New Jersey's transportation planners realized they needed to build state highways for through traffic

that crossed New Jersey between New York City and Philadelphia. According to the highway department's annual reports, the road from Camden to Hightstown was "the most highly travelled road in southern New Jersey," and the road that carried most of the through automobile traffic "between the south Atlantic and New England states." Philadelphia was building the Benjamin Franklin Bridge across the Delaware River that would open in 1928, and the Port of New York and New Jersey Authority was building the tubes under the Hudson River that would open as the Holland Tunnel in 1929. Both needed modern highway approaches that were commensurate with the carrying capacity of the new river crossings. For Camden, that would become Admiral Wilson Boulevard, and for Jersey City it would mean the Pulaski Skyway, completed in 1930.



By the middle 1920s, they gave the identification "NJ Route 25" to a route cobbled from existing roads first from Camden to Bordentown, and then from Bordentown to Trenton. By the end of the decade, this designation was extended from Bordentown, skipping Trenton, directly through Robbinsville, Windsor, Hightstown and Cranbury to New Brunswick, and from there to Jersey City (NJ Route 26 was the original designation for what would later become U.S. Route 1 between Trenton and Jersey City, and Routes 25 and 26 had similar construction histories, carried out simultaneously.) Only after World War II would these highways become known by their current route numbers.

These routes were part of a second generation of state highways. The first generation were conceived as well-paved, two-lane roads with good signage, that followed direct routes from the center of one

Photo - NJ State Archives

Route 130- *continued on page 5*

town to the middle of another. The second generation was conceived on very different principles. World War One had revealed that through traffic of automobiles needed to be separated from local traffic, or the bottlenecks that already afflicted rail freight would become an insuperable barrier to effective highway logistics, for military and civilian traffic alike.



Construction Progress

Thus the new highways. Beginning with a section of Route 25 in Burlington County completed in 1930, these would become "dual highways," with two travel lanes in each direction, separated by a grassy island. They were also routed to avoid, or by-pass, the towns they would only indirectly link. Thus as Route 25 progressed northward, Bordentown would be by-passed, as would the village of Windsor. In turn, so

would Hightstown, Cranbury, and the smaller villages between there and New Brunswick. The work advanced in stages, section by section, along the route. It was a complex process. The state highway department not only had to maintain the existing Route 25 as it went through Windsor, Hightstown, Cranbury and the other towns, it also had to widen the links between them and first build, then widen the by-passes. Step-by-step they produced a dual highway.

The work reached East Windsor in 1935, when the highway department issued a contract that October for the grading of the "Hightstown By-Pass," which extended from where Route 130 today diverges from Route 33 as the latter moves north-eastwardly, becoming Mercer Street. The by-pass continued northwardly for 2.9 miles to what is today the Cranbury circle on Route 130, not yet then built. The site of the circle was where the main road between Cranbury and Hightstown (the old 19th-century turnpike road) crossed the route of the new highway.

The work was awarded to the construction firm called the Tidewater Stone & Supply Co., of Hackensack, NJ, which also received the much larger paving contract for this section. Plans and specs for this paving were approved in November 1935, and the contract was awarded at the end of December. Very little of the grading and none of the paving was completed that year. The late start and bad weather pushed nearly all the grading and related drainage work into 1936. The right-of-way for the entire dual highway, all four lanes and the island in the middle, had already been purchased and it was cleared of trees and other vegetation in this project, but only two of the four lanes were to be paved in this project.

Tidewater contracted to pave the two lanes through the full length of the by-pass, and this contract included building bridges across Rocky Brook and the Millstone River. A separate contract was awarded for the overpass bridge that carried the highway over the Pennsylvania Railroad's track that extended from Hightstown to Bordentown. The pavement was to consist of two 10-foot wide travel lanes of 10-inch deep reinforced concrete, with 10-foot wide shoulders of 8-inch deep gravel. The paving would begin immediately upon the completion and acceptance of the grading.

The highway department in September 1936 also awarded the contract for the widening of Route 25 between Robbinsville and the southern end of the Hightstown by-pass. Thus the road was under construction that year through the entire length of its passage through East Windsor. This contract also included construction of the by-pass around the village of Windsor, 1.5 miles long.

The paving of the first two lanes of the Hightstown by-pass was begun on March 24, 1936, postponed by winter weather. The work proceeded throughout 1936, under the project's watchful eye of "A.C. Ely," of Hightstown, the project's "resident engineer." It was completed, including the Rocky Brook and Millstone River bridges, on July 29, 1937. Also paying attention to the progress was the *Hightstown Gazette*, which provided regular updates about the construction. The Commissioner of the state

Route 130 - *continued from page 6*

highway department officially accepted the completed 2-lane Hightstown by-pass on August 17, 1937, and it was opened to traffic promptly thereafter. This permitted through traffic to bend around Hightstown for the first time, rather than get stuck in local traffic going through it.

At the same time, work was also begun to extend the highway northward. The project to pave the first two lanes of what was called the "Cranbury Re-Location" was started in September 1936 and completed on October 11, 1937, after 113 working days. This project also built the Cranbury Circle.



Photo - NJ State Archives

The second stage of the Hightstown by-pass paving was awarded in the spring of 1938 to general contractor John F. Lafferty, who began work on May 2nd. During the first few days of the project, either the contractor or the highway department sent a photographer to take photos of the by-pass, which reveal an East Windsor landscape that no one would recognize today. With good weather through nearly the entire period, the project was finished in 111 working days on October 21, 1938. Also evidently paying attention to all this construction was the Pennsylvania Railroad, which announced that passenger ser-

vice from Hightstown north would be discontinued on September 24, 1938, having already discontinued service from Hightstown to Camden.

When the paving of the section between Bordentown and Robbinsville was fully completed in 1940, the dualization of the highway was finished between Camden and Hightstown. The "dualizing" of both Route 25 and Route 26 (the future US Rte.1) between Trenton and Jersey City was also expected to be completed in 1940. Beginning in 1939, "highway beautification" projects had begun, to advance the finish landscaping that Route 25 required. The 516 shade trees required for the section between Robbinsville and Hightstown were supplied by Princeton Nurseries, not our own Village Nurseries.

Immediate Impact Small

Route 25 was completed as a dualized highway only shortly before the US entry into World War II, but the pattern was set for the postwar township. Within a period of five years, East Windsor had received a remarkable windfall in the form of a highway on a mostly new alignment that yielded more than seven miles of new highway frontage, nearly all of which would one day become commercial property. It would still take about two decades after the end of the war before the shape of this future became apparent, but a taste of it was evident almost at once when the Old York Inn was built on the northeast corner of Rte. 25 and the Hightstown-Princeton Road in 1940. This restaurant was the continuation of a business that had operated the Railroad Hotel in downtown Hightstown, which had a history from its beginnings as a tavern in the late 1700s. Between the decline of the railroad and the opening of the highway, the handwriting was clearly on the wall. The restaurant owner moved to the highway, the first of several Hightstown businesses that would move to the township during the following decades.

Writing the Story of RCA Astro

BY ROBERT W. CRAIG

In what would become arguably the most prestigious and important of the corporate research campuses in East Windsor, the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) Research Laboratories opened its "Astro Space Division" (RCA Astro) in 1958, in a building that had already been built for industrial purposes, but for whom or when has not been learned. RCA Astro subsequently built additional buildings to create its "Space Center," the identity of which was publicly revealed on a large water tower added to the property.

When RCA Astro arrived, the western reaches of East Windsor were a farming landscape, and the nearest identifying landmark was the one-room, former schoolhouse at Locust Corner, adjacent to the corner of Route 571 and Old Trenton Road. Indeed, "Locust Corner"--not "East Windsor"--was how RCA spoke of the location of the Space Center, and some of the surviving RCA old-timers still speak of it that way, and are among the last people who use the name. There were no new housing developments yet to accommodate the first employees, some of whom bought houses in Cranbury, West Windsor, Princeton, Lawrence, and other more distant places.

The purpose of the Space Center was to design and build satellites, and to ready them for launch into orbit. They did so for four decades, until the facility finally closed for good in 1998, a full forty years after the opening. At its peak, more than 3,000 employees worked at the Space Center, and many of them lived in East Windsor. An important part of the work was to test the functioning of components and entire satellites under conditions they would endure: the vacuum of space, radiation exposure, and near-zero temperatures, for which special chambers were built inside the Space Center.

There were four broad categories of satellite, and for each category both civilian and military craft were produced. *Communication* satel-

lites passed text, data, and imagery from station to station around the world. *Navigation* satellites tracked the location of places and things on the earth, and eventually led to the creation of modern global positioning systems (GPS). *Weather* satellites gave us weather radar, and *research* satellites performed photography, data gathering, and analytical functions in space. A large percentage of the employees were organized into groups that each specialized in one of the four satellite categories. Altogether, Space Center production amounted to hundreds of satellites, with civilian and defense craft in roughly comparable numbers.

One would be hard-pressed to learn these facts, however, from available published histories. The Space Center has not been well-chronicled in books about the space age. There is a large literature about rockets, the vehicles that launched all types of spacecraft, and a comparable outpouring of writing about astronauts and manned space flight. There are far fewer books about satellites, and evidently not a one that comprehensively chronicles their makers. In Gunter Paul's *The Satellite Spin-Off: The Achievements of Space Flight*, published in 1975, RCA is mentioned only once and its Space Center not at all. William E. Burrows' *This New Ocean: The Story of the First Space Age*, published in 1998, places satellites within the context of rockets and space flight generally, but has little to say about their makers. And Helen Gavaghan's, *Something New Under the Sun: Satellites and the Beginning of the Space Age*, which also appeared in 1998, likewise mentions the Space Center hardly at all. These works do slightly better with their treatment of Hughes Aircraft in Cali-



Photo Courtesy, Hagley Museum and Library, used with permission

fornia, one of RCA Astro's chief competitors, but from them one cannot gain an understanding of the importance of the Space Center in East Windsor. Nearly twenty more years have passed, but apparently no more satisfactory history of space satellites has yet been published, which ought to provide an opportunity for someone.

No full explanation of RCA Astro's work has appeared in print. Its defense-related work was understandably subject to secrecy, but even its civilian work has gone largely unappreciated. And it is even harder for a Society like this one to assess the role that East Windsor residents played in all of these developments. It will likely remain for former Space Center employees, themselves, to bring forward the stories of their experiences. Some groups of RCA old-timers still meet to socialize and remember with one another, but we should encourage them to tell their stories to the rest of us.



HIGHTSTOWN-EAST WINDSOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY





1. MODWAY FURNITURE WAREHOUSE AT FORMER NATIONAL LEAD SITE
PHOTO BY RICK PRATT

2. WAREHOUSE ON MILFORD ROAD

PHOTO BY RICK PRATT

3. CONAIR ON MILFORD ROAD

PHOTO BY ROBERT W. CRAIG

4. ROUTE 133 BRIDGE ACROSS ROUTE 33

PHOTO BY ROBERT W. CRAIG

5&6. EAST WINDSOR MUNICIPAL BUILDING

PHOTOS BY ROBERT W. CRAIG



Chrome Print

BY ROBERT W. CRAIG

The landscape of Route 130 has been almost fully transformed about three times since 1940, with many businesses having come and gone, leaving no visible remains. Who today remembers Big Eddie's Diner, Dey's Freeze, or the Quarterback Club? One elusive business in the 1950s was Chrome Print, a small American subsidiary of a Swedish company that pioneered in the field of metallic printing on glass, ceramic, and plastic surfaces. One early product category was printing on glass radio dials.

The company still exists today, by the Swedish name Cromtryck, and a visit to cromtryck.com touts the diversity of their products, especially for the automotive industry. Its American subsidiary is now located in Michigan, near Detroit, but in 1951, a young woman, Karin Lindholm, came from Sweden to Hightstown to manage an office that occupied a small building on the southbound side of Route 130. Lindholm later married Hightstown attorney Timothy Kelty, and they raised their family here, but this local business and the building it occupied are long gone. The Society has managed to collect one of its products, a commemorative plate.



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

East Windsor in the Modern Era: The 20th Century and Beyond

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS
BY ROBERT W. CRAIG

Major changes have washed over East Windsor about every hundred years, but they haven't lined up well with the turning of the century marks. The settlement of the Township began to take meaningful shape in the 1730s and '40s, when the forests were cleared for farming. The railroad came in the 1830s, and its local impact became evident by the 1840s. The first automobiles that coursed through East Windsor appeared in the year 1900, but those horseless carriages were riding over 19th-century roads, and drivers would wait for a generation before cars appeared that could deliver on the promise that highway driving held out. It took more than three decades for automobiles to become a mature technology that would be carried on its own infrastructure.

Until then, the railroads enjoyed their own heyday, which worked to the advantage of the Borough of Hightstown. East Windsor remained a township dominated by farming until after 1960. The opportunities it had for commercial growth were quite limited, lying mostly in areas near the Hightstown border, such as Mercer Street in the narrow zone between Hightstown Junction, where the Union Transportation Company brought trains loaded with farm produce up from Pemberton, and Summit Street, where the Borough effectively began. The Central Jersey Farmer's Cooperative would be built there in the 1930s. The Borough's population was growing faster than the township's, and the Borough doubled in size at East Windsor's expense in 1913, annexing about one-half square mile of township land on its border, more or less creating the lines that exist today. This added hundreds of people to the Borough population, subtracting them from East Windsor's. All done on the up-and-up, supported by a referendum.

As East Windsor persisted in Hightstown's shadow, agriculture still dominated the township. What was new after 1900 were a growing number of immigrant farmers, including several Czechoslovak families, who eventually organized a social club and built a clubhouse on Hankins Road after World War II. The Max Zaitz farm in the northern part of the township specialized in the raising of dairy cattle for sale. The Decker's Dairy farm operated from the 1920s through the 1960s along the east side of Route 33/130 near where the Walmart stands today. Conover's Dairy farm took over some of the former Village Nurseries acreage at Old York Road and Conover Road. The Heckalutz Israel Farm Institute, a Zionist kibbutz-type cooperative farm, was established about 1934 on Etra Road, at about the same time that the Jersey Homesteads (now Roosevelt Borough) was beginning to rise in Millstone Township. In 1938 Richard Lee began to raise turkeys as a 4-H project on his parents farm on Hickory Corner Road. Potato farming was another specialty to which considerable acreage was devoted. Hinting that some would take new occupational directions, however, Russell Van Nest Black--a grandson of the Blacks who had run Village Nurseries, became instead a landscape architect and master planner in the 1920s with a practice that spanned the United States. He wrote the zoning ordinance for the Borough of Hightstown at the start of his career, and he wrote the Mercer County master plan in 1931. (Today, Cornell University holds his papers, for which the finding aid alone is more than 200 pages long!) Apart from farming, there was little to attract young people to



remain in East Windsor, and the township's population dropped during the Depression years from 922 in 1930 to 845 ten years later. It wouldn't top 1,000 again until 1950.

Even so, forces that would lift East Windsor's fortunes began to stir in the 1930s, though at first the changes were hardly perceptible. Transportation advances were again responsible, but this time they came through state and federal action. The construction of Route 25 is chronicled in another piece in this newsletter, but the completion of the new highway, just before the U.S. entry into World War II, created miles of new frontage with commercial potential that would be exploited in the post-war decades.

The farming in East Windsor, like that across New Jersey, was buoyed for a time during the interlude of the war years, but its decline accelerated in the 1950s. By the middle of that decade, New Jersey was losing several farms a day, as prices for farm produce couldn't keep pace with accelerating costs, includ-

The 20th - continued on page 12

The 20th - *continued from page 11*

ing rising land values and taxes. The NJ Turnpike opened in 1952, and Exit 8 served both East Windsor and Hightstown. The Turnpike was a super-highway, meaning that it was grade-separated from all other traffic, and that it permitted access and egress only at controlled locations, which Route 130 did not. Route 130 had a growing number of traffic lights to control flow, which the Turnpike did not. The Turnpike took the interstate traffic function away from Route 130, allowing it to focus on its secondary roles, to provide a East Windsor a commercial corridor for postwar development and to continue as a north-south arterial road for Middlesex, Mercer, and Burlington counties.

As a sign of the improving times, East Windsor in the 1950s built a new township hall on East Ward Street, and produced a township master plan in 1954. The local chamber of commerce sponsored a "Locate at 8" campaign in the 1950s. Whether that campaign was directly responsible for the first major corporations to move facilities to East Windsor, they nonetheless came, along with smaller firms. The Mettler Instrument Company, a German firm, decided to locate its principal American subsidiary in East Windsor, and built its offices on the Princeton-Hightstown Road in 1954.

The McGraw-Hill Company, book and magazine publishers founded in 1888, brought its first functions to East Windsor in 1958. The Radio Corporation of America (RCA), which had its major research arm along Route 1 in West Windsor, established an Astro Space Division in 1958--after Sputnik--to pursue the building of space satellites, and began the



development of its "Space Center" campus by buying a recently-built factory building on Old Trenton Road near Locust Corner. East Windsor in 1960 clocked in with a census figure of just under 2,300 persons.

The early 1960s continued this trend. The National Lead Company (later, the NL Corporation) built its "Hightstown Laboratories" in the Township in 1962, on the east side of the Turnpike along Wyckoff Mills Road. McGraw-Hill expanded its local presence in 1963 with the building of its local headquarters building, and later expanded its warehouse operation. In the last phase of its existence, the Hightstown Rug Company built a new factory in 1964 on the Princeton-Hightstown Road just west of Locust Corner (today the Shiseido factory). These companies, especially the Space Center and McGraw-Hill, created the sense of Princeton-Hightstown Road as an axis of industrial production and corporate research, a showcase of the township's most important private enterprises.

In the wake of the first corporate arrivals, the construction of suburban housing began. Old York Estates was begun on Old York Road at Windsor-Perrineville Road about 1961, and Brooktree estates on Dutch Neck Road shortly after. A major expansion of Brooktree was begun

in 1963. Several other developments followed during the decade, filling out most of the street plan that still characterizes East Windsor's residential areas today. These were septic tank developments, built on half-acre lots, which characterized much of suburban New Jersey. Many of these systems were poorly constructed and failed in the early years, causing their owners to pay for expensive repairs. Several garden apartment complexes helped provide some diversity in housing choices and price points. Two "trailer parks" (mobile home parks) emerged along Route 130 in the 1950s.

In 1966 East Windsor made the crucial decision to create a municipal utilities authority (the EWMUA). This authority was charged with providing public water and sewer to the new developments in the Township, and with hooking up some of the existing ones. The Authority built a sewage treatment plant on the south side of the Millstone River, into which the treated effluent was discharged. The EWMUA also pioneered a little-used technique of spray irrigation over an extensive field to enhance its ability to fully treat sewage. These were major

The 20th - continued on page 13

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

The 20th - continued from page 12

changes that transformed the township. They permitted a density of water--and thereby occupancy--that otherwise would not have been possible. It was also the major step toward the type of town infrastructure that Hightstown Borough had begun to acquire since its incorporation. Thereafter it made good sense for the two municipalities to consider a merger, for which an unsuccessful attempt was made in 1970.

Other governmental changes followed. Since the 19th century, East Windsor had been governed by a three-person township committee. The township's needs had grown and this old form of government was replaced in 1970 by its present form, consisting of a strong mayor and a seven-person council. The township also strengthened its planning board, and drew up a new master plan in 1969. Perhaps the most momentous decision that the planning board made was the approval for the construction of Twin Rivers, at the eastern edge of the Township, straddling Route 33. The brainchild successively of developers Gerald Finn (of Old York Estates and Brooktree) and then Herbert Kendall (of Kendall Park, NJ), Twin Rivers was a Planned-Unit Development (PUD), New Jersey's first. A PUD was meant to be a single real estate development that ideally blended housing, retail, and industry, and many expected it to portend the future. The housing came quickly, but the industry did not and the retail was mediocre at best.

Instead of more "estates," Twin Rivers provided townhouses and "quads," two on either side of Route 33, enough to house 10,000 people. Interestingly, there was open space in the middle of the Twin Rivers plan--some of the first protected open space in the township--and a tunnel under the highway to promote pedestrian and bicycle access throughout the quads. In its entirety, Twin Rivers was an experiment in density that seemed to have paid off in some ways. The housing was heavily marketed, not in central New Jersey as many locals expected, but rather within New York City. Many residents came to Twin Rivers while still keeping their occupational feet in the city, and their commuting, more than two hours daily, left them with little time for their adopted township. As a result, however, East Windsor suddenly gained

excellent bus service to New York, provided by Suburban Transit. By the end of the 1970s, Twin Rivers was approaching build-out, with Quads 3 and 4 under construction.



With market forces lined up since the 1960s to favor the development of East Windsor, and few tools to stop the influx or shape the township that was being made, many East Windsor residents feared that the entire township would be built out within only a relatively few years. East Windsor's population surpassed 11,000 by 1970, and reached

The 20th - continued on page 14



*Hightstown East Windsor
Historical Society*
founded 1971

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

Officers for 2016-2017

- President- Charles "Cappy" Stults
609-448-0110 cstults@allenstults.com
- Vice President- Robin Smith
- 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
Beverly Mann
- Library- Robert Craig
609-584-1806
Eileen Couturier
- Website- Gary Stevens
609-469-1860
- Membership- Cookie Cummings
cookcumplings@yahoo.com
- 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, Shirley Olsen,
Warren Olsen, Robert Szychowski

Society Trustees

Nancy Laudenberger, Bonnie Lou
Field, Warren Olsen, Irene Schubert,
Bev Mann and Gary Grubb

Layout by Rick Pratt
Printed by Harwill Express Press

The 20th - *continued from page 13*

21,000 by 1980. This figure was a more than nine-fold increase since 1960 and made the township more than three times the size of Hightstown Borough. There even was for a time a vision that East Windsor would be developed with six or seven PUDs on the scale of Twin Rivers, a prospect that had little public support beyond planners, developers, builders, and tax ratable hunters.

Nature provided a break to this momentum. For most of the 1970s, a sewer hookup "moratorium" was imposed upon the township by New Jersey's Department of Environmental Protection, to control the amount of treated sewage effluent that East Windsor could release into the Millstone River, as well as the level of treatment that that effluent was required to undergo. It took the EWMUA several years to enlarge and improve its treatment capacity to enable the moratorium to be lifted. The same decade saw the township build a passive solar municipal building in 1979, to respond to the second Middle East oil embargo of the decade.

Farming had been in a long decline in the northern and western parts of the township (Lee's Turkey Farm being the notable exception), but when the Conover's Dairy properties along Old York Road and Conover Road were sold for development in the 1970s, it hastened the loss of farmland south of Hightstown Borough and north of the Turnpike. The eventual result was a development usually called "Centex" after the company that held the rights to most of the land, but a rival developer whose own interests were harmed by the proposed development held up the process with litigation. The resulting development surrounded the remaining acreage of Village Nurseries south of Conover Road.

The Turnpike, itself, was one factor that limited real estate development in the southeastern reaches of the township. Some natural gas lines were run across the Old York Road bridge in the 1960s, to service Old York Estates and nearby areas, but to bring public water and sewer across the Turnpike was another matter, indeed. The Turnpike Authority would not permit sewer lines to be tunneled under its right-of-way, the Turnpike, itself. This issue affected all parts of the area south of Rocky Brook, but permitted industrial development north of Etra Lake along Milford Road.

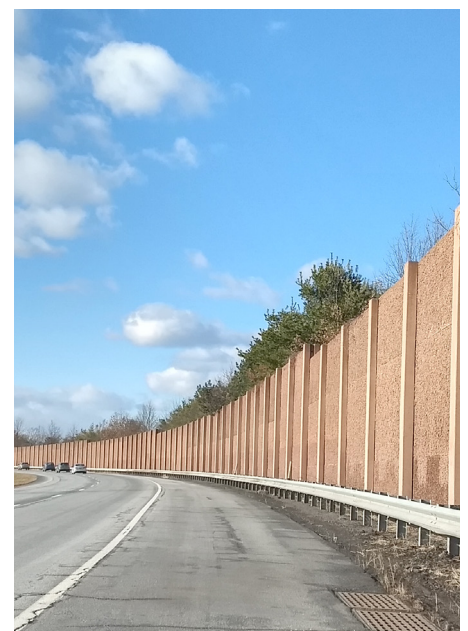
This factor inhibiting development gave the township an opportunity to protect some areas of good farmland when New Jersey ramped up its Green Acres and farmland preservation programs and funding in the 1990s and subsequently. The Township had already created the Etra



Lake Park centered upon the old 18th-century millpond at what had been Milford until the 1890s. Farmland preservation funding allowed for the further protection of open space along Cedarville and Windsor-Perineville Roads. Some of that land is used today, ironically enough, to grow nursery stock, as it was in the heyday of Village Nurseries. East Windsor's open space preservation efforts also buffered the Assunpink Wildlife Refuge that had been created in the 1970s and which touched East Windsor's southern end.

The Route 133 bypass of Hightstown

through the northern part of East Windsor was built between 1995 and 2002. It resolved both for the township and for Hightstown Borough the perennial problem of how to more efficiently move east-west traffic between Exit 8 and points west of Hightstown. New Jersey had long planned to build a major east-west highway known as "S-92,"--it was in their plans since the 1950s--but for environmental and other reasons it was never built. Hightstown residents had long been especially aroused by the issue of getting through truck traffic out of the Borough, which Route 130 and the Turnpike had achieved for north-south traffic. The issue of east-west traffic was only resolved with the opening of Route 133, which linked Route 33 west of Twin Rivers with Route 130 and the Hightstown-Princeton Road. Although it lacked the number of lanes expected of a super-highway, it was one in other respects. With its elevation and grade separation, its limited access, and its noise walls, it has something of the character of an open-air tunnel.



The 20th - *continued on page 15*

Within the past decade, the most recent major physical change in the township has been the widening of the Turnpike and the resulting need to fully reconstruct the Exit 8 interchange. The new interchange was completed just a few years ago, upon a greatly expanded design, one that makes a seamless connection with Route 133, permitting west-bound traffic to avoid local roads altogether. With this final improvement, the infrastructure has been completed to provide for the flow of car and truck traffic through East Windsor that has been sought for decades, has been sought, in fact, for most of the past century.

PA Technology

BY ROBERT W. CRAIG

Built in 1985, this building was the American debut of British architect Richard Rogers, in collaboration with Princeton, NJ architectural firm Kelbaugh & Lee. It was built for a British-based corporation, PA Technology, who were international management and technology consultants, and who had previously hired Rogers for their British headquarters. Much of the company's work involved "product and process development" as *Progressive Architecture* described it in an August 1985 article.

Locally, long-time residents will remember that it was initially widely derided as the "Tinker-Toy Building" (after the popular children's structural toy set) for its exo-skeletal system in which major tensile members hanging from central masts joined at steel circles to lesser hangers that supported a flat roof. The original, bright orange color of its structural members further announced its novelty.

Where is this?

In each newsletter we will show you a picture from somewhere in Hightstown or East Windsor. If you know where it is, send us the address by mail (see page 10 for our address) or by email: cookcummings@yahoo.com, and include your address and phone number.



The triangles formed by the mast support a cradle that contains the HVAC and other process equipment needed to service both the building's environmental needs and its power distribution requirements. The result inside was a nearly column-free environment--and thus a nearly wall-free environment--for the type of client whose "spacial and mechanical requirements [were] entirely unpredictable" (*Progressive Architecture*). In this respect, Rogers' building was taking the design of a research facility a step further than it had been taken before. Laboratory design in the U.S. at least since before World War II had emphasized both floor plans that encouraged collaborative work and the flexibility of spaces adaptable to changing experimental requirements. Such places as Bell Labs in Murray Hill (1941) in Union County and Camp Evans (1941-43) in Monmouth County featured experimental spaces with easily moveable and removable walls. So did the National Lead laboratories (1962) in East Windsor. The PA Technology Building, however, did away with interior walls almost completely.

Rogers' choice of partner in this project, Kelbaugh & Lee, was no stranger to architectural innovation. Its principal, Douglas Kelbaugh, had pioneered trombe wall passive solar construction in the United States a decade before, with the building of his own house in Princeton. The internationally known firm Zion & Breen, of Imlaystown, designed the landscaping. PA Technology represents East Windsor's experience of the globalization of architectural services that followed the globalization of corporate research-and-development.



What's the Difference... at Longwood Gardens' Christmas Display?



THERE ARE 14 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THESE TWO IMAGES. SEE HOW MANY YOU CAN FIND.