

Hightstown



East Windsor

Historical Society News

Winter 2022

Serving Jury Duty in Hightstown?

by Cappy Stults

Having to serve jury duty in Trenton, New Brunswick or Freehold got you down? Well, our forefathers in 1871 weren't really happy with it either. Because it likely took 4 hours to get to Trenton from Hightstown, and similar for our neighbors in Monroe to New Brunswick or Allentown to Freehold, there was a movement to create a new county named **Centre (Center)** and the county seat was to be in, you guessed it, Hightstown. This wasn't just passing fancy. There were many meetings, and you will recognize most of the names of those who attended. The story is best told by reprinting directly from the Gazette. (Map is my approximation-CS).

Gazette January 12, 1871

In accordance with the call published last week, the citizens of the proposed new county met in convention at the Town Hall, Hightstown, on Thursday afternoon the 5th. The hour named for the meeting was 1 p. m., but the majority of those interested living at some distance from the place, there was a necessary delay. However, the hall was soon filled, and Mr. Outcalt called the meeting to order and nominated John Dawes, Esq., of Upper Freehold, for Chairman. Mr. Dawes was elected, and Sering Shangle, Esq., appointed Secretary. On taking the Chair, Mr. Dawes expressed his regret that so few of the Hightstown people seemed to be interested in this matter, but said that for himself and others who lived in the adjacent townships, his ardor was as strong as ever. He insisted on the necessity of work and agitation in order to make the movement a success, and he could prove that it would pay. Taxes don't recede, or standstill, but are advancing from year to year, and all should look well to this. Taxes will probably never be as low as they were ten years ago,

but it was a question worth attending to, and taxes should be kept down as low as possible. Make this new county and the property within its limits will be



worth a hundred thousand dollars more. The people will have to pay at least \$30,000 for new county buildings, and we shall have a net gain of from sixty to seventy thousand dollars in our pockets. The borough of Hightstown is more interested in this new county than any other section, and the speaker was astonished that so few of her leading citizens should be present at this meeting and take so little interest in the movement. The very men who ought to be here are not here; they should be up and doing and enlightening the people as to the benefits to be derived from the formation of the new county. After further

(cont. pg 3)

President's Message

Dear Members and Friends,

We have had quite a year as we hopefully have transitioned back to being with friends and neighbors, face to face! Even with the difficulties, due to the hard work of our officers and dedicated members, HEWHS was able, due to Greg's hard work, to have a successful children's theater and a Virtual House Tour. Thanks again to the Dilgers, Smiths, and Kendalls for letting us in their homes and their financial contributions, and to you for your support.

The big news is the Society approved a renovation and addition project to begin immediately. Our library/archive space has been overwhelmed by new accessions. As you send in your dues and plan your year-end giving, I request that you strongly consider a donation to this project. If we reach \$20,000 in gifts, a family is going to match it with a gift of \$20,000, essentially doubling your donation. You can give a 2022 gift and a 2023 pledge which will go towards the total. Feel free to contact me with any questions.

We are continually contacted by both local families. Relocated families and descendants of families who were here in prior centuries. Just this week as I write this message on a Thursday, I had three email contacts and one walk-in to my office. If you are interested in assisting in responding to these inquiries, please let me know.

Thank you all for your kind comments about the newsletter. All contributors enjoy both the drafting and learning from the research they do to craft the same. Feel free to offer to contribute with an article, note, or picture. Officer and committee positions are open as well.

We hope you had a great Thanksgiving and will have a healthy and happy holiday season.

Cappy Stults, President

609.712.1811

cstults@gmail.com

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Happy Holidays!



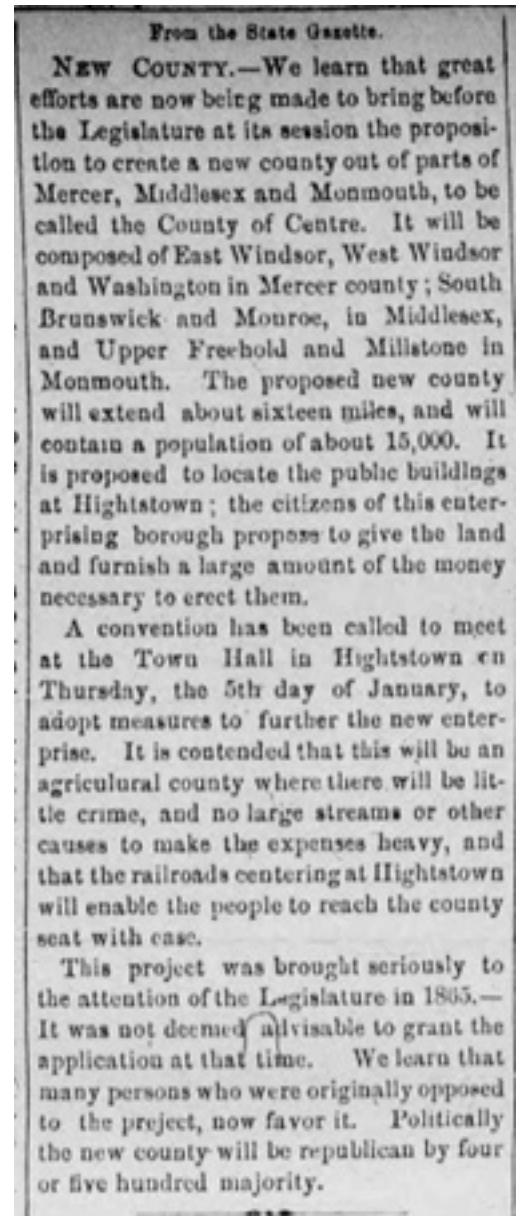
from the Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society

Serving Jury Duty in Hightstown?

scolding the sleepy burghers, the speaker said that the proposed new county would be a model county; the people included are models of morality, intelligence and industry; it was a model agricultural district; the bummers of New York, New Brunswick and Trenton would be left out in the cold (A voice—"Middlesex will take care of them!") Our county expenses would not then be \$60,000 a year. Yet men make such a nice calculation about the cost of new buildings, the pay of county officers, jurors, &c., that they lose sight of the great advantages resulting from the new county. If the people of Hightstown keep out of this movement because it will cost them what would be a mere pittance compared with their means, he would tell them other people are interested beside them, and as for himself, who lived some 8 miles distant, he should go in for it as heartily as ever. Mr. R. A. Outcalt then made a few remarks on the advantages to be derived from the new county. Every citizen in the new county must be benefited. The advantage of having the courts within a few miles of their residence is a great advantage. There are scores of other advantages to be derived from the new county, but the above will do to begin with. If we go into this measure heartily we shall succeed, but we cannot succeed without making a proper effort. We should all pull together in this matter. T. B. Appleget, of the Gazette, alluded to the convention as an index of the real aspect of the question. He said it had been urged that this is a Hightstown movement, but in the hall to-day there are ten persons from the country to one from Hightstown. So far as he recognized individuals, there were many more from Middlesex County than there were from the borough. This was a fair sign of the general feeling. Monroe and South Brunswick were almost unanimous in favor of the county. He quoted from letters from that section in support of what he said and read from an article in the N. B. Fredonian in regard to the Middlesex authorities,

and the proposed expenditures of \$200,000 on the streets and roads of New Brunswick. These things were opening the eyes of the Monroe and S. Brunswick people, and they wanted the new county. We here in Hightstown are obliged to pay for forty-thousand-dollar bridges and culverts in Trenton, and other extravagant county expenses that we derive no benefit from. The people of Millstone and Upper Freehold don't want to pay thirty or forty thousand dollars for a bridge over Squan River, which does not benefit them in the least. The people all around us want to get rid of these heavy taxes, and the only way to do it is to form a new county. A citizen of Prospect Plains says nine out of every ten voters in that section are in favor of it, and so say the people of Cranbury, and wish we would hold meetings there for the purpose. But the prospect looks black for success this year. The question will not be kept out of politics, and we cannot expect much help from our representatives in either Middlesex, Monmouth, or Mercer. If we were represented by the right men for it, the measure would go. David M. Perrine, Esq., of Monroe, on being called on said he was opposed to a new county with the boundaries as proposed before, but came to hear, and would say nothing against the movement.

Attention was here called to the fact that objections are made to the boundaries in some cases, and, the whole project might fail because of these objections. The townships of Monroe and South Brunswick are to be cut in two in the middle, and that will make some in those townships oppose the new county. The Chairman said that the map presented only gave a general idea of the proposed boundaries, and that if serious objections were made in certain quar-



Meeting announcement in the January 5, 1871 Gazette

ters because of them, they could be modified when the bill was presented to the Legislature. On motion of Mr. Shangle, a committee of three from each township, to propose boundary lines, was appointed, viz :

Upper Freehold: Collin B. Meirs, John Dawes, Bennington Gill.

Millstone: John B. Robbins, Anthony Wilson, John H. Wikoff

East Windsor: Chas. Keeler, Joshua R Norton, Reuben Norris.

West Windsor: Samuel Fisher, John D. Rue. Amos H. Tindall.

Washington: Randall C. Robbins, Forman Hutchinson, Mathias M. Combs.

South Brunswick: James Scudder, Selah Gulick, MD, William Cox.

Monroe: David Applegate, David K Perrine, Abijah Applegate.

In regard to petitions, the Chairman suggested in answer to an inquiry of Mr. Samuel Fisher, that names could be added to the old lists. On motion of Mr. Outcalt, an Executive Committee of one from each township was appointed, viz :

Upper Freehold: John Dawes.

South Brunswick: Elston Hunt.

Millstone: John H. Wikoff.

Monroe: John B. Appleget.

West Windsor: William G. Bergen.

East Windsor: John H. Silvers.

Washington: Ezekiel Gordon.

The Executive Committee was authorized to circulate petitions in each township, and also to have power to fill any vacancies in their own number. The finances of the convention were then attended to, and the meeting adjourned. Among the many prominent Middlesex men present was John F. Babcock, Esq., from whose account in the "Daily Fredonian" we have drawn largely in making up this report. The Fredonian is of course opposed to any movement that looks toward making a change in the political aspect of Middlesex but has published so many true words about the extravagance of the officials of that county, that we may consider Mr. Babcock as the man who has done more than any other towards making Monroe and South Brunswick see their true interests.

Gazette 1.26.1871

THE NEW COUNTY. The committees of the New County movement are busily engaged preparing for a thorough canvass of the hold. As to the prospects of success we can form no opinion, as it is impossible to know how much attention will be paid to the wish of those interested by those in power. One thing is certain if

we can believe what we hear on all sides, and that is, that, if left to a popular vote in the limits proposed, it would be almost unanimously carried. The objections come from those who are taking narrow political views, or who are moved by jealousy. The cry, of the short-sighted and the envious, as promulgated especially in the Monmouth Democrat, is that "Hightstown would be benefitted." We take it for granted that that is true; it may also be true that Hightstown will be particularly benefitted. But this does not hinder the people outside of Hightstown from wishing to have a new county. There may be a few who choose to submit longer to the inconvenience of being a dozen miles from their county seat, and who choose to continue to pay more than their share of taxes, on the ground that in order that they may be rid of this burden, it is necessary to benefit Hightstown; but there are not many of our neighbors so narrow-minded. The great majority of them say, "We need a new county, and we don't care who is to be benefitted." But what the people want, and what they may get, may be different things. The new county cannot be made by the wish of the people. Its creation depends on the Legislature, and it may be profitable to consider how that body will view the question. It is calculated that with the boundaries proposed the new county would be Republican in politics, while it would probably leave Mercer and Middlesex doubtful, and make Monmouth still more strongly Democratic. As a party measure, therefore, the movement presents no particular advantages or disadvantages on either side. In the Senate we have Jarard from New Brunswick and Little from Monmouth, of opposite political parties, but both of them from their local prejudices probably opposed to the movement, and this probably made a certainty by the open hostility of the

Fredonian and Democrat. Dr. Woolverton, from Trenton, is also naturally against the dismemberment of Mercer, although, so far as we have noticed, the political or-

gans at Trenton, and especially the State Gazette have shown none of that selfish jealousy that characterizes the press of Middlesex and Monmouth. How many intimate friends the movement has in the Assembly, of course we cannot say. It was understood about election time that the successful candidate from this (3d Mercer) District was sound on the Center, but how it is now we know not. The truth of the matter then is briefly this: The people of this section are almost unanimously desirous of being set off into a new county. Freehold says No because Hightstown will be benefitted; New Brunswick says No, because she can't spare the tax-payers. Now what does Trenton say, and—that will decide it.

To Be Continued including info about the proposed County of Stockton in 1859



Cuffed Pants Will Land You In Jail

by Cappy Stults

There was much hardship during WWII. Besides the many soldiers lost and the atrocities of the Third Reich and the Emperor of Japan, locally citizens suffered through loss of family members but also of "rationing". Limits on gas and coal, sugar and other items. So we think we have problems today?

On a lighter side, in order to limit the use of fabric, see the edict of the War Production Board as reported in the Gazette on May 21, 1942.

Cuffless Pants Are Now Mandatory Unless You Prefer Striped Suits

Our male civilian population is fighting a little war of its own. It's all over relative merits and demerits of cuffless pants. May 9 was the last day men could safely and legally order two pair of pants "with." War Production board orders say taboo for pants "on the cuff."

Many rationed males are flocking to their tailors to have cuffs removed from last year's model. They seem to agree with stylists who insist the new "style" is perfect. Designers predict that within a few

months a guy will look antiquated in a pair of cuffed pants.

Most of the complaints have come from students and business men who buy their suits from ready-made clothiers and large custom tailors. Some may ask for the left-over strip, "so ma can sew 'em on." we presume. But even that's a crime today.

The tailors were given until May 9 to cut trousers with the customary "bottom fold." Deliveries of same are void after May 30, "pants memorial day." Cuff bootleggers will be liable to \$10,000 fine and a year's prison term. If you sew YOUR OWN pants cuff back on after May 30, you're a bootlegger, according to the WPB. (This reminds us of prohibition days.)

Back in 1908, hardly more than three decades ago, straight bottom trousers were the rage. The height of style was swagger trousers. "Hot dogs" of today were not yet in short pants then! So, cheer up all ye males. Cuffless pants make formal and evening clothes smart; maybe they'll do the same for your business and sports suits.

Better be without cuffs than with stripes on your pants!



Peddie Class of 1942 Top left, George Coons, Howard Eldridge, Willis Hancock, Jr., Richard Reeves, Bottom Row, John Sprout, Charles Stults, Jr., Ernest Thompson. All in cuffless pants I assume.

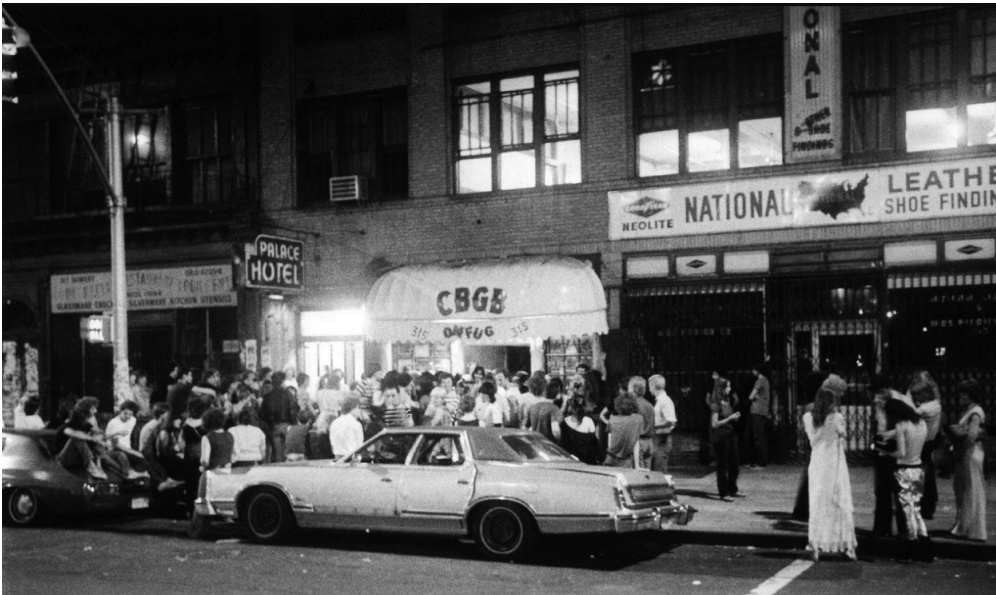


We had some space to fill so we're adding this photo of Main Street taken last year while waiting for the Franklin Street light to change.

Hightstown: The Birth of Punk?

by Gregory Ciano

It's December 1973. Hillel "Hilly" Kristal opens a club in the Bowery section of Manhattan. That club is CBGBs, the future home to bands like the Ramones, Talking Heads, Patti Smith, Blondie, and pretty much any Punk or New Wave band that was popular in the 1970s and 1980s. This club grows to become world-renowned and they eventually make a movie about the club's heyday starring Alan Rickman (Professor Snape in the Harry Potter series) as Hilly.



People lining up to get into CBGB, home of Punk and New Wave

So what does this have to do with our local history? Hold on, this is going to take a moment.

Hilly's parents, Shamaï (sometimes spelled Shammai) and Bertha were Russian Jewish immigrants. Shamaï was a Russian pogrom survivor [Side note: Pogrom is an organized massacre of a particular ethnic group]. After immigrating to Manhattan, where Hilly was born on September 23, 1931, Hilly and his parents moved to a chicken farm (now K&S Sunshine Farms) in the Village of ETRA section of East Windsor in March 1932. And there, my friends is your Hightstown-East Windsor connection.

I ended up on this "Who Is Hilly Kristal" path after being introduced to Randy Now of Randy Now's Man Cave located in the former Perennial Home building on West Ward Street. Randy is a fount of knowledge when it comes to Rock-n-Roll. Before opening his vinyl record shop he was the Promotions Director for City Gardens, a nightclub in Trenton. Randy booked bands like Nirvana and Metallica before they hit it big. More importantly, for this story, he knew Hilly. When Randy told me Hilly grew up in the area I had to start doing some digging. But back to the Kristals.

The Kristals were very active in the local community. Shamaï

(who also went as Sam or Samuel) was a member, and occasional president, of the Tri-County Co-operative Auction Market Association. He was also on the Board of Directors for the Central Jersey Farmers. Shamaï, as the local chairman of the State of Israel Bonds, was instrumental in bringing Eleanor Roosevelt to the area as the guest of honor at a State of Israel Bonds event held at the Stacy-Trent Hotel in Trenton according to the November 26, 1953, edition of the Hightstown Gazette. Shamaï and Bertha also contributed regularly to the War Work Fund during World War 2.

Like his father, Hilly's name is also mentioned multiple times in the Hightstown Gazette as he made the honor roll for most marking periods and usually had a violin solo in the school orchestra productions since he was trained in classical violin from a young age. By his early to mid-twenties, he had taught himself to play guitar, piano, and many other instruments.

Hilly shows up as a sophomore in the 1947 Hightstown High School yearbook, but you won't see him in the 48 or 49 yearbooks. Here's why. Hilly hated living on a farm and hated working the farm so he ran away from home at fifteen years old. His history becomes a little fuzzy here, but at some point, he attended the Settlement Music School in Philadelphia and spent time in the Marines in the 1950s. He was stationed at the Cherry Point Airbase in North Carolina and because of his background as a performer, he was assigned to the Special Services in the Entertainment Division. He and his friend Dick Joseph worked at the WCPR radio station doing comedy sketches and radio show spoofs. Hilly also hosted a classical music show. His time at the radio station made the local Hightstown Gazette on November 26, 1953 (the same edition that featured

an article about his dad bringing Eleanor Roosevelt to Trenton).

Gets Marine Award

Cherry Point, N. C. (FHTNC). Marine Cpl. Hillel Kristal, son of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Kristal of R.D Hightstown, N.J., has been awarded a letter of commendation for efficiently producing radio shows for the Marine Corps Reserve. Cpl. Kristal is currently staying as an announcer at radio station WCPR of the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station here.

Hilly was very busy in the years following the marines. He was part of the men's choral group and soloist at Radio City Music Hall. He was close to being signed as a singer/songwriter by Atlantic Records, but the deal fell through when Atlantic President Herb "Doc" Abramson left to form his own label. Hilly recorded under this new label, but the label folded after a few months. He was the manager of the jazz club Village Vanguard in Greenwich Village, booking such jazz greats as Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, and John Coltrane as well as comedian Lenny Bruce. He opened a restaurant/bar at 62 West 9th Street holding a musical showcase every weekend. An early performer in this showcase was an unknown Bette Midler. While running that restaurant he co-founded the Rheingold Central Park Music Festival with Ron Delsner. This landed Hilly in the Hightstown Gazette yet again on June 2, 1966.

Kristal Is Partner in Producing Firm

Thomas P. Hoving, parks commissioner of New York City, recently signed a contract with Kristal-Delsner, Inc., a producing firm, which will bring 92 concerts of jazz, rock n' roll, pop and folk concerts to Central Park. Hillel Kristal, a partner in the firm, is

the son of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Kristal of Windsor-Perrineville Road. He attended Hightstown High School. Performances, under the direction of Kristal-Delsner, will be given each Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday through September 5.

Somewhere among all this bumping into history Hilly met and married Karen in 1951 (can't seem to find her last name anywhere) and had two children Lisa and Mark. The marriage didn't seem to last very long, and I think Karen moved back to Hightstown in the early 1960s because Lisa and Mark, much like their father, keep popping up on the honor roll in the Hightstown Gazette.

This brings us back to the beginning of this article, CBGBs. Originally named "CBGB and OMFUG" which stood for Country, Bluegrass, Blues, and Other Music For Uplifting Gourmandizers, but was thankfully shortened to CBGBs [Side Note: the space was originally a saloon in the 1800s].

In the early days, most musicians found CBGBs accidentally. Beat Writer William S. Burroughs lived a few blocks away, and musicians became curious about the bar as they passed it on their way to Burroughs' home. Tom Verlaine of the band Television convinced Hilly to book his band even though it didn't fit any of the categories in the name's abbreviation. Eventually,



This was the farm Hilly grew up on. Today it is the Kyle Family Farm.

more bands came along, and despite the initial intentions, the club became home to Punk and New Wave bands. In Hilly's New York Times obituary Patti Smith is quoted as saying,

"There was no real venue in 1973 for people like us. We didn't fit into the cabarets or the folk clubs. Hilly wanted the people that nobody else wanted. He wanted us."


Being able to say that you played CBGBs became a bragging right for musicians worldwide and became the headquarters for innovative local groups. Record executives soon became part of the audience and the "people that nobody else wanted" found

themselves with a record contract.

Hilly is quoted as saying,

"I certainly didn't love every band that played CBGBs, but I did love to encourage them to do their own thing, to challenge the establishment. I've always felt the stronger you are about yourself and your own ideas, (in this case musical ideals) the more satisfying your success, hopefully, the more rewarding your future."

Ultimately, this club grew into the inspiration for musician-friendly rock dives around the world and the Club became a tourist draw. Hilly resisted any changes to the club and it became a relic of rock history and a living museum of graffiti. The club's logo became so well known that T-shirts and other memorabilia were bringing in \$2 million a year. People all over just wanted a part of CBGBs.

CBGBs eventually closed in 2006 due to a disagreement with the landlord, who opted to not renew the lease. Hilly considered moving the club to Las Vegas or Tokyo, but nothing ever came of that. Probably because Hilly passed away on August 28, 2007 from lung cancer at 75 years old. But the spirit of CBGBs hasn't left yet. The exterior of the club is currently a stop on walking tours of the Lower East Side. And to think all of this started on a farm in the Village of ETRA. 

Letter to the Editor


This is a letter to the editor of the May 1, 1890 Hightstown Gazette and it comes within inches of saying "we need some kind of parent and teacher association" while pointing out that parents should be more involved with their children's schooling.

There are societies [sic] and orders, and clubs without number, and for every imaginable object—religious, secular, convivial, scientific and nonsensical—but there is none whose business it is to visit the public school to see how the pupils are progressing and how the teachers discharge their duties. How would it do to organize a society of parents and guardians, whose duty it should be to visit the institution where their children are preparing for the solemn duties of life say once in a decade, more or less. — Monmouth Democrat.

What he's describing sounds a lot like the modern P.T.A. Here's the Gazette Editor's response.

The Democrat's suggestion is a good one. Parents display a wonderful indifference on the subject of our public schools. The most important part of a child's life is spent in these institutions; they have more to do with character-building than anything else, possibly excepting the home, and yet nine out of ten parents never step inside the school-room, have no idea what sort of discipline or training their children are receiving, and many do not even know the instructors by sight. In private schools the case is different, parents investigate the character of such schools thoroughly and are most careful as to the guardians they employ for

their sons and daughters. But as a general rule people seem to require much more personal acquaintance with their children's tailors and dress-makers than with their teachers in the public schools. One reason for this may be that the latter are free, and folks dislike to "look a gift horse in the mouth," but it does not relieve parents from the charge of indifference in regard to an important matter. Our school officers and teachers are, as a rule, worthy of the highest confidence, but it is not fair to put so much responsibility upon them.

The P.T.A. didn't form until February 17, 1897, but "Monmouth Democrat" was about seven years ahead of the curve. 

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Joline Albaugh & Diana Wence's Trip to Hightstown, October 2021 (Rooney, Conover, Lidke Families) by Joline Rooney Albaugh

I am Joline Rooney Albaugh. My sister Diana Rooney Wence and I had a most wonderful genealogy trip to Hightstown, New Jersey, and surrounding areas last year. In 1950 my parents Delmar "Joe" and Dorothy Mae Conover Rooney bought some property on Hutchinson Street, close to his mother's house. When we moved back to Newberg in 1954, our parents had four daughters, Joline, Diana, Catherine, and Rhonda. We left Newberg in 1957 for Oregon. Diana and I are the only two who remember Hightstown and our time there.

I have had the compulsion to go back to Hightstown New Jersey for about 6 months or so. Diana and I talked about going last June but nothing came of it. I called Diana early one morning and said we *have* to go to New Jersey! Like soon. We had already heard that 3 of our first Rooney cousins had died in the past 2 years and Diana's grandson was going to be born at the beginning of the year. We all are getting older so who knows what will happen. Even though our health is great it can all change. Diana agreed, even though October was going to be a busy month for her. She had another baby shower to attend, her best friend having knee surgery, along with her regularly busy life. We picked the third week of October and made the plane reservations.

The weather was perfect for each day, sunny and just barely cool and only on the last Monday, October 25th did it start to get cloudy, windy, and cold. Neighborhoods were decorated for Halloween; a Back East touch was all the flowering Mums, which are never seen in Arizona, making the atmosphere festive.

It was so fun to meet people who were interesting. Everyone was so nice to us and charming to talk to. Even bureaucrats went out of their way to help us. Generally,

I find people pleasant and bureaucrats somewhat helpful but rarely cheerful so it is not a surprise to me that people will be nice. Maybe it was because of the weather, or the pride in their homes, or that it was obvious we were excited to be there. This is a fun story to share that everyone went out of their way to be part of.

Wednesday, October 19, 2021

Diana was anxious to go to see our old house on Hutchinson Street in Hightstown so we went there first but before going to the house we went down to the creek which I now know is named Rocky Brook. It was just as wonderful as we remembered as children. Maybe a foot deep about 12 feet across, with lots of trees on both sides. The bank was about 3 feet down, which I did not remember. It had a nice flow. Diana thought it looked wider than she remembered and took a little video of it. We were transfixed. Hutchinson Street dead ends at the brook. Our old house was about 5 houses up a slight hill from it. I think some of the houses closer to the brook were not there in the mid-1950s.

After a while, we got back in the car and drove up to our old house, parking across the street from it. We got out of the car again, walked towards it, taking pic-



Rooney family: Joline, Dorothy, Diana, Cathy, Rhonda, Delmar "Joe". C1955

tures and were excited to be there. In a few minutes, a pleasant woman named Julie Morgan came out of the front door and asked "why are you taking pictures of my house?" We told her why and she invited us in, warning us that her house was a mess. I assure you it wasn't. She had her sewing machine out on the dining table making a baby quilt but everything was clean and picked up, unlike my house! She happily showed us the whole house. She had done some of the remodeling work herself and some had been done before her. Maybe she was in her early '40s? She finished out the attic, putting in a couple of bedrooms and a bath. The basement was finished nicely also (these two areas were never done while we were in the house). It was all very charming. The rooms are small but it all worked out well. A real sunroom had been added on in the back. The backyard was a great size with large trees.

She said next door to her (which used to be our Aunt Ardis

Horne's old house) is currently owned by a school teacher who had scary stories to tell about Ardis haunting her. It certainly was on the list to visit that house. I showed her some pictures of us in the house and out on the side kitchen steps. Then it was 11:55 and she said, "I have a 12 o'clock meeting I have to get to".

We walked over to Aunt Ardis's house, but we knew the owner probably was at school so I wrote a note and put it in her mailbox. Then wrote a second one to put under her floor mat beside the door under her carport. It was peeking out so she could see it.

Julie told us that the woman directly across the street had lived in that house her entire life. That house is on the corner of Lincoln and Hutchinson. We went and knocked on the door and a woman came to the door. We told her our story of how we lived across the street back in the 50s. She didn't invite us in but she talked to us from the porch steps. She did confirm that she lived in that house her whole life inheriting it from her mom and that she had an older sister. She was born in 1953, so it would have

"well it will be a fun story to tell her about us." She did say she knew Mark Lidke (who is a grandson of Beatrice Rooney Lidke) who mows her grass. She said he had not been doing well since his mother's death and how his mother suffered from Alzheimer's (We found out a few days later that his Mom - Susan Lidke had died just on July 16, 2021, at 80 years old).

We moved on down Lincoln Street to where our Grandmother Rooney and her husband, our step-grandfather Vincenzo "Jimmy" Moneto had lived. Just as we parked in front of it. We saw a man closing the garage door. We knocked on the front door with a sign letting us know that oxygen is being used in the house, another pleasant woman answered the door and

her husband was right behind her. We told them who we were. They were happy to meet us. So sweet. They walked out to the yard and took us around to the back. I brought up a picture of us 3 older girls outside with "Jimmy" and Frank McBee said, "Oh yes, that is this yard". The backyard was large. It is in an "L" shape where the panhandle goes behind several lots to the right side. Mr. McBee showed us his handiwork on the deck which had been added to several times. He was very proud of his property. They both were in their early 80's. The neighbors had filled them in about "Jimmy" when they moved in years ago.



Pictured left-right: Diana Rooney, Unknown Man, Joseph Rooney (Joline & Diana's father) Unknown Man, Catherine Rooney, Unknown Woman, Rhonda Rooney, Unknown Man.

been impossible for her to remember us. She said her mother told a story about how when the two houses were being built across the street, the men helped themselves to her hose to take it over to the construction site for some water. Her Mom did not like that at all.

She said Ardis died in the house and had not been found for several days. We asked if she could ask her older sister about us living there. "Oh no, she still works and she is tired when she gets home. She calls me every night at 7." I tried one more time

They ushered us into the kitchen, like our original house all the rooms are small. The McBee's added an addition to the side of the house with a couple of bedrooms bath upstairs and a family room downstairs with a garage/workshop. The whole house is filled with collectibles, they showed us around and talked about each room. When

we were in the family room there was a glassed-in shallow bookcase with Hummel figurines. He said, "please select one for yourselves". Diana picked one, I had my eye on the Nativity scene but thought that may be too greedy, so I picked "Angel Duet" thinking I could put it on my desk as a wonderful souvenir.

The whole house was a museum of collectibles. We admired some more of Mr. McBee's artwork. He made a very cool wooden flag. When we went back upstairs to the dining room which used to be the living room to take our leave we took their picture. Joan McBee had been a teacher. Their daughter in Florida wants them to move there. While we were saying goodbye. Mr. McBee says to us "do you like history?" Diana said her husband does. So he gets up and goes to the bookcase along the front wall and picks up an old collectible President plate stopping about with Truman and hands it to Diana. He goes and gets some bubble pack for our treasures. It was very fun and pleasant. We both remember the house as little girls, it was dark and the rooms were gloomy. We remembered the "grandmother" (we are not sure now who she was) who lived in one of the two bedrooms. I hope to learn who she was. Maybe the bedridden grandmother was a mother-in-law or our grandmother.

Mr. and Mrs. McBee recommended the Hightstown Diner for lunch so we made our way over. Our waitress, who proudly told us she was 80 years old, was amusing us with her wisecracks. That diner had been there for decades. After lunch we drove over to the Cedar Hill cemetery. I wanted to find a couple of gravestones. We hoped to find an index or a website to see where people were located, but could only find a phone number to call. We called the number and the man said he would check to see where Beatrice and Alfred Lidke were buried. As we walked around a bit we did see this one gravestone with Lidke on it, which was right by

the road. I have not been able to expand the family tree to know who the younger people are, but the names on this headstone were David and Dennis. David born in 1962, died 2013 and Dennis born 1960 – died 2007. Wasn't sure at that point if they were our relatives or not. After I got home, I learned those men were grandsons of Beatrice and Alfred. I wonder if Dennis Lidke was named after his grandfather Dennis Rooney?

After the cemetery we went over to see "Cappy" at his office. Cappy's family has lived in Hightstown for several generations. The Walter C. Black Elementary school Diana and I went to was named after his great grandfather. He has an insurance business and he is President of the local Historical Society. I had emailed him before we left home to invite him to lunch. Our niece Michelle Eurich had contacted him several months ago to ask about Hightstown and he was very knowledgeable. He gave us a website www.digifind-it.com/hightstown This website has the old newspapers from the area. He is the same age as Diana and they both were in Kindergarten at Walter C. Black the same year. Ed. note: We have now figured that they were in different rooms.

We visited with him for a while; he had copies of a couple of newspaper articles from the Hightstown Gazette for us, one article dated Aug. 30, 1956 saying how Miss Joline Rooney, 4 years old (but I was 6) broke her arm. So now I know when that accident happened. Also had article dated Aug. 16, 1956 with class assignments for 1st grade. I was in Room 5 with Mrs. Stern. Also a copy of Nana Marie Conover's obit Sept. 20, 1956. I had one similar that had been in the Trenton newspaper but not the local one. Cappy also knew Mark Lidke, he told us where he lived. Diana had already left a message for him on his phone. Cappy said he was giving a Historical Hightstown walking tour the following evening at 5:30 for 18 dollars. Diana and I both would not have missed it for a minute.

Thursday, October 21, 2021

Thursday morning we woke up and drove to Trenton, Mercer County seat to look up old records. We made it to Vital Records, where they keep birth and death certificates. We wanted our Nana Conover's death certificate and I wanted Marcella Rooney's birth certificate. She was our Uncle Gerald's daughter who I knew had died young but that was all I knew. It was mentioned in her sister Maureen's obit this year. While there we received a text from the school teacher who said to come by at 5pm that evening.

The helpful clerk pulled Aunt Ardis's records. We haven't yet looked through all these records but several things popped off the page. She was living in Snowhill, MD in 1950. We lived in Snowhill in 1952 when Cathy was born. Aunt Mary (Uncle Gerald's wife) was her executor for her will. For a dollar she sold the

deed to the lot where our house was built. This dollar for a deed is a typical transaction for some reason. We saw where both of our parents then owned the property where the Hutchinson Street house is. Aunt Ardis's house was valued after her death in 1998 for \$85,000.

We tried to look up records for our Grandparent Conovers' old motel "Conover Motel". We found a mortgage for \$6,000.00, 6% interest to be paid in 10 years, dated February 21, 1951. They were residing at the Township of Washington on Highway 25, Windsor (Ed note – now Main Street in Windsor or what is now Rte 130, depending on actual location). There is some information about the location but would require a surveyor to figure it out.

We found a record of Delmar Rooney & Dorothy Rooney, of Hightstown getting an "Indenture" in January 1951 along with Aunt Ardis of Pocomoke City, MD for some property in Hightstown. A first mortgage is held by the Hightstown Savings & Loan Association of Hightstown NJ.

We met up with the school teacher, Sandra Tinsman, who teaches Algebra and Geometry, at 5 pm at Aunt Ardis's old house. She was adorable, very happy to talk about her house and show us around. She said she was the third owner but maybe she is the fourth, need to check. Sandy said Ardis haunted the house for the first few years she lived there. She had lots of stories of being locked out, and hearing noises. She said she didn't believe in ghosts but now she is not so sure.

Her boyfriend is a carpenter and did lots of remodeling. There was the original farmers' sink in the kitchen which she sold for top dollar to a man building a fancy barn house. When the boyfriend removed the cabinet she saw an envelope with pictures of the house in it's first stages! She took the pictures to school and put them on the projector to show her students and one them said "There is a woman and dog in one of the pictures!" Undoubtedly this was Ardis and our black dog. The whole house was charming. When she told us she had been teaching for 34 years, we were stunned. She appeared to be 34 years old. She had the attic and basement remodeled also. Her boyfriend wants her to move in with him, but she is happy with her house. Of course, I bet he didn't have a brook a few houses away...and a resident, now quiet, spirit.

At 5:30 we met with Cappy at the Historical Society. He gave a brief lecture and then about 10 of us went on the tour. It was such a pleasant evening- the weather was perfect, Cappy was entertaining and informative. They had discovered old stones which used to support the railroad lines, and they had a section where you could see them. In the late sixties and early seventies the town was starting to fail but the city received some money

from Urban Renewal funds and built it up a bit and added nice apartments for the elderly.

We learned about Peddie School which is a prep school started in the late 1800's by the Baptists. It is a very exclusive school on about 800 acres. Our step-grandfather "Jimmy" Moneto worked there as a chef and our Aunt Beatrice Lidke worked in the dining room. Current tuition is \$60,000 a year for boarders and \$40,000 a year for day students. Several famous rich people went there and have given them millions in funds through the years. It specializes in science and engineering. All students have to participate in sports and theater.

Friday, October 22, 2022

The next day, we drove back to Hightstown and went to the library. Using the website that Cappy told us about we found the article about our father wanting water service to Hutchinson street in 1950. We found the article about our little 4 year old first cousin Marcella Rooney (Gerald's daughter) being killed running across Academy Street on April 16, 1942. The truck driver stopped, picked her up, and kindly carried her into the house where she had lived. Her parents got her to the doctor quickly but it seemed that she probably died right after being struck.

The man from the cemetery called us and told us where our Aunt and Uncle Lidke were buried. We went back to the cemetery and brought a little present and said a prayer for them. Beatrice Lidke was our mom's favorite sister-in-law.

We had dinner at 12 Farms, a trendy restaurant in Hightstown. It was excellent and a nice dinner on our last night. I bought a cheap bottle of wine at the liquor store and they didn't even charge a pouring fee. Went back to our Airbnb and packed our luggage for our trip home the next day.

Facts we found in no order of importance:

Our Aunt Mary (married to Uncle Gerald/George Rooney) was the executrix of the last will and testament of Ardis T. Horne (Dad's sister). Mary was in California at the time. The house was worth \$85,000.

John D Horne had been in the area for 35 years, when he died on January 22, 1976. He was WWII vet. He was buried in St. Mary's Cemetery in Trenton, as was Grandma Rooney Moneto.

Feb. 1, 1945, 3 pm. Marcella Rooney Nimmo of 214 Franklin Street Hightstown married Thomas P. Dowgin in Washington Township which is now Robinson. Ardis Horne and Clarence Hopkins were attendants.

Jan 27, 1977 Mary Rooney of Reno, Nevada visited Mrs. Thomas Doyle of Hightstown and her sister Ardis Horne on Hutchinson Street.

Beatrice (Rooney) Lidke worked at the dining hall of Peddie school for 33 years. She lived at 119 Forman Street, Hightstown.

Mr & Mrs Rooney of Windsor had a baby girl, Joline Rooney weighed 6 lbs, 13 and half ounces.


September 7, 1950 Joseph Rooney requested water service to Hutchinson Street.

Marcella C. Rooney of 278 Academy Street died April 16, 1942. She is buried in Trenton. Ed note: I am going to guess she is also buried at St. Mary's Cemetery.

Conclusion of the Hightstown Chapter

The living siblings of our father all moved to Hightstown NJ from Martin County Minnesota; Beatrice, Ardis, Marcella, and Gerald/George. Gerald and his family left first, not sure exactly when. But as early as 1940 the "Rooney" family was there. They all lived in very modest houses, some were duplexes. Beatrice's family, the Lidkes,

are still in the area but she was the only Aunt who had children. Aunt Marcella was fond of her sister-in-law Mary and her children, they came to visit all the way from California & Nevada. Gerald's family and our Dad's family left the Hightstown area. I do think our Dad was trying to do everything his older brother did.

Hightstown is such a charming town, but you really cannot say it is a tourist town. There are no B & B's in the close area and just a couple of AirBnB in the greater area. The Peddie Lake and Rocky Brook helps with the atmosphere. Being the home of The Peddie School, an exclusive prep school must be a huge help for the local economy. The houses are all historic, but all were well kept. We both could live there in a second. 

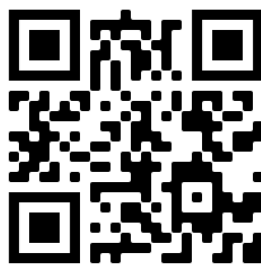
Virtual Tour/Annual Meeting


We had our Virtual House Tour/Annual Meeting on October 18 at Old Hights Brewery. Tickets to the event included pizza and a round of beer (thanks again to Jay and Robin Smith for supplying the pizza!). The video included a look inside and out of the homes at 513 South Main Street, 523 South Main Street, and 866 Old York Road plus a history of Dodge told through the two historic vehicles of Earl Groendyke. A big thanks to Sue and Tom Dilger, Robin and Jay Smith, and Sandy and Bill Kendall for inviting us into their homes and showing us around.

On a side note: the in-person House Tour will be back for 2024!



Left - right: Dilger house, Smith house, Kendall house, and Groendyke cars



If you couldn't make the event you can still see the video at our website (hewhs.com) or through the QR code on the left. 

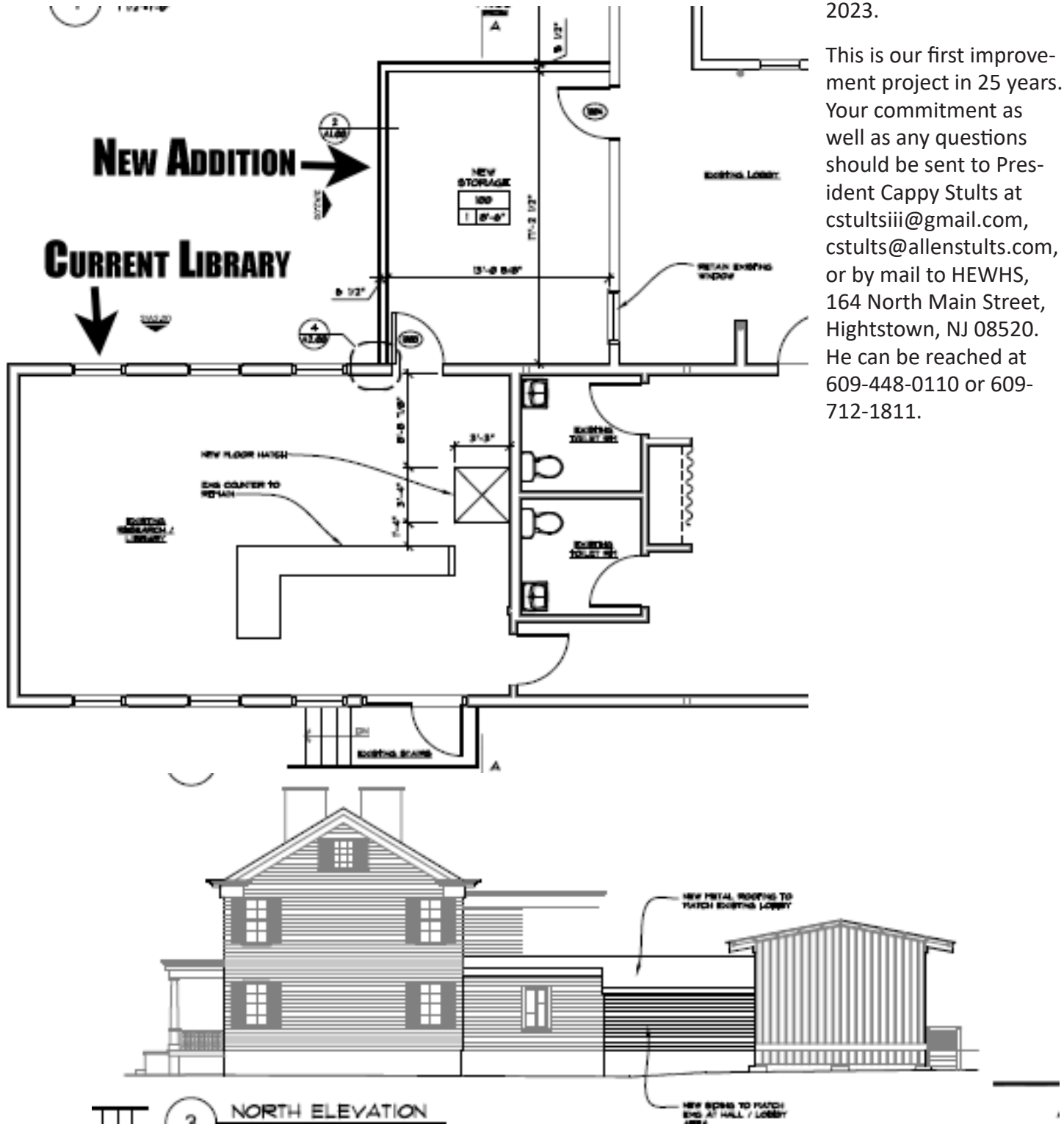
We are out of space and we need your help!

The Society's library archives space has been overwhelmed by great and important accessions. To be able to accommodate and properly archive these materials, the officers and members present at the November 7th meeting approved a construction project that will open more space in the existing building by removing a staircase and closet and adding on a 220 square feet addition. The combination of this work more than doubles our

archive space.

A family has offered a \$20,000 challenge gift towards this \$50,000 project. If members and friends donate \$20,000 total between now and the end of 2022, they will match it up to \$20,000. These donations can be paid in 2022 and 2023.

This is our first improvement project in 25 years. Your commitment as well as any questions should be sent to President Cappy Stults at cstultsiii@gmail.com, cstults@allenstults.com, or by mail to HEWHS, 164 North Main Street, Hightstown, NJ 08520. He can be reached at 609-448-0110 or 609-712-1811.



Hightstown East Windsor Historical Society

Founded 1971 to educate while preserving for future generations, our people and our community's history.



Officers

President: Charles "Cappy" Stults
609.448.0110 - cstults@allenstults.com

Vice President: Robin Smith

Recording Secretary: Shirley Olsen
609-448-8388

Treasurer: Robert Szychowski
609-448-9490

Committee Chairs

Finance: Robert Szychowski
609-448-9490

Property & Grounds: Beverly Mann
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Library: Joe Louderback
Robert Craig
609-584-1806

Website: Eileen Couturier
Gary Stevens
609-469-1860

Membership: Cookie Cummings
cookcummings@yahoo.com

Museum: Cookie Cummings
cookcummings@yahoo.com
Robin Smith
Sue Dilger

Newsletter: Charles "Cappy" Stults
609.448.0110 - cstults@allenstults.com
Gregory Ciano
gregory.ciano@gmail.com

Programs: Gregory Ciano
gregory.ciano@gmail.com
Christian Kirkpatrick
Nancy Laudenberger
609-443-6536

Publicity: Shirley Olsen
609-448-8388

Building Committee

Curtis Crowell, Christian Kirkpatrick, Shirley Olsen, Robert Szychowski

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

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Membership Application

Support us this year at the following rates:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual\$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family.....\$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Booster\$40 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining.....\$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life (Individual)\$200 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life (Family).....\$275 |

Name: _____

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Where did you hear about membership?

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

HEW Historical Society

Membership Committee

164 North Main Street
Hightstown, NJ 08520

Or pay online by clicking "Become a Member Today" on our website: hewhs.com

☐ 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):

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Property & Grounds | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Docent |

More History of RCA East Windsor


by Curtis Crowell & Cappy Stults

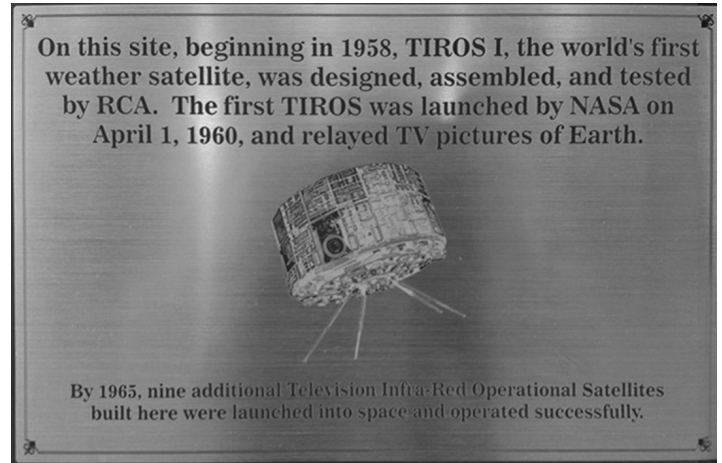
After reading the RCA article in our Summer 2022 newsletter, member Curtis Crowell sent me a few emails with the picture of this plaque that was in the lobby of one of the office buildings on the RCA site. Curtis worked in that building for seven years, long after the aerospace offices had moved. Curtis writes that the site is listed as an environmental clean-up site on the web, possibly also a 'superfund' site, but the terminology used is unclear. GE Astrospace is the site owner of record, at least at that time. Maybe a roadside history plaque is in order.

Curtis writes:

It's weird to think of the hours spent in those basement rooms, now littered with construction debris (once abandoned to my knowledge the basement rooms have not been put to use since).

There were a few other "artifacts" of the aerospace development that went on. The building I worked in had an extensive series of basement rooms that were entirely below ground level, used as fabrication rooms. In one corridor there was a massive walk-in vault with a sign indicating that it had been inspected by the National Security Agency. The basement rooms themselves appear to have been used as fabrication laboratories apparently, and it seems a fair amount of chemical solutions were used in circuit board construction that leached into the ground water under the building.

This I was told after working once on a week-end (I did software engineering for a pharma company at the time and often it involved long hours) I heard an alarm going off in a small outbuilding on the outskirts of the parking lot. The building maintenance fellow told me that the building housed injection pumps, which injected molasses into the ground water. The alarm went off because there had been a power failure of some kind. The molasses fed organisms in the soil that were apparently able to consume the solvents that contaminated the ground water. 



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Historical Society
164 North Main Street
Highstown, NJ 08520
www.hewhs.com