

HIGHTSTOWN

NEW



EAST WINDSOR

JERSEY

Historical Society News

JANUARY 2013

Clara Barton and the School Bully

Taken from "Reflections from the Shrine: An Anecdotal History of Hightstown and East Windsor" written by John W. Orr, Jr., published by Longstreet House in 1998 and used with permission. Copies of the book are available for \$35 postpaid from Longstreet House, PO Box 730, Hightstown, NJ 08520

Clara Barton, a woman blessed of unbounded intelligence and a capacity for human understanding and compassion, was born on Christmas Day. We know Clara as the famous "Mother of the Red Cross" and the "Angel of the Battlefield", but how much do we know of her as a school teacher? No doubt some of us are familiar with the

Clara Barton Schoolhouse in Bordentown, N.J., but how many are aware of her school teaching days here in East Windsor before going to Bordentown?

Clara Barton, it is said, began her teaching career at about the age of fifteen. As a young lady, she came to East Windsor Township at the urging of her friend, Richard Norton, a Universalist the same as she. She began her school teaching here in a crude one-room wooden affair near Milford, New Jersey, in the year 1851. This school, located on the edge of Cedar Swamp on the Cedarville Road, provided the basic needs of the students. Today we would call these needs rather primitive. Against the sides and rear of the room were the roughly built desks, fenced in by heavy slabs of wood which served as benches. The boys and girls had to climb over them in the performance of their tasks. In the center was a large tin plate stove, around which were the seats for the smaller children. In front of the single window was the teacher's desk, with just enough room by the door for a water pail. Miss Barton's predecessors had been male teachers who had their wits and patience sorely tested by the students, and who early burned out in their efforts to educate their pupils. The "unruly spirits" in that classroom often felt the free use of the teacher's rod; usually to no avail

as some of these backwoods students were as big, and probably tougher, than the teacher. Nevertheless, several whips were kept prominently displayed resting on nails behind the teacher's desk.

There were some formidable looking fellows among the pupils that greeted Miss Barton on that first day. Chief among this group of troublemakers was Hart W. Bodine, who many years later said, "We boys had determined to make the place so uncomfortable that every teacher in that school would find it pleasanter to resign than to remain". Into this learning arena came this gentle young woman who, upon the first sign of defiance, asked the student involved to assist her in carrying the whips outside. Hart Bodine just happened to be the "unruly spirit" in this instance. Not understanding what she meant, Hart shambled up to her desk, watching out for her trick or "dodge" as he put it. Clara had Hart carry all the whips outside, where she asked him to break them into bits. She assured Hart that she would never need them, for he was one of her big boys and she could depend on him to help keep order in the school. Hart remembers being "simply overwhelmed" and confessed that he "bawled like a calf". From that time on, Hart was a model of obedience in the schoolroom. Throughout her

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY 2013

- 13 Society Luncheon at Santino's Restaurant, 1:00 p.m.

FEBRUARY 2013

- 5 Meadow Lakes program at 7:30 p.m. presented by Brenda Werner from St. James AME Church
- 23 George Washington Birthday Celebration at 8 p.m. at Hightstown Diner

HIGHTSTOWN EAST WINDSOR
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Hightstown, New Jersey
Founded 1971*

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

Shirley Olsen, Editor



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HOUSE TOUR A SUCCESS

Thanks for making the House tour "Time & Again" on October 21, 2012, a success.

The house tour drew a large attendance and was a great success, making just under \$7,000, including the quilt raffle of \$1,270. Chris and Cappy Stults won the lovely quilt Carole Nelson made and donated for the raffle. We had great homes on tour, perfect weather and an excellent reputation for conducting a good house tour. We wish to especially



thank our historians for doing such a fine job researching the history of each house. Each home was researched through the use of land title, historic architecture, genealogy, and

newspapers. We want to thank the homeowners on the tour for being so generous in allowing us the opportunity to place their residence on the tour. We thank all the committee chairs and tour volunteers for their dedicated service plus the Rocky Brook Garden Club for the most gorgeous floral arrangements and the Central Jersey Antique Car Club for their participation. Also, many thanks to the program book advertisers. Another tour is planned in two years. Please contact the committee if you would like to participate.



*Shirley Olsen and Robin Smith,
Co-Chairs, 2012 House Tour*

Annual Membership Application (January-December)

JOIN TODAY ~ BECOME A MEMBER!

- Individual Membership—\$20.00
- Family Membership—\$25.00
- Booster/Patron Membership— \$40.00
- Sustaining Membership—\$50.00
- Life (Individual) Membership—\$200.00
- Life (Married) Membership—\$275.00

Name _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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Please mail the completed application, along with a check made payable to the **Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society** to:

**2013 DUES
DUE
JANUARY 1ST**

Membership Committee
Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society
164 North Main Street
Hightstown, NJ 08520

Clara Barton and the School Bully

Continued from page 1

term at Cedar Swamp, her success as a teacher was a tale of wonder. During her service, it was recorded that "perfect discipline reigned and that her influence over her pupils has sometimes been attributed to her great knowledge of human nature."

While doing her works of mercy on the battlefields of the great Civil War, she learned of Bodine's presence in the army. She ordered an ambulance to take her to Brandy Station in Virginia, where his regiment, the 6th New Jersey, was encamped. She took a bundle of clothing, cakes, and jellies for her former pupil. A few years after the close of the war, Hart returned to East Windsor and domestic life. His family was soon blessed with a baby girl, and the father's pride and gratitude could only be expressed by giving his little daughter the name of Clara Barton Bodine.

The Bodine homestead, about a mile from the schoolhouse, was nestled on the shores of the Milford Pond (Etra Lake), at the junction of the Perrineville Road and Disbrow Hill Road. Hart's parents, Vincent and Sarah Bodine, came here in 1830 as newlyweds, and it was here in the little vine-covered house with the quaint garden and its lilies in front that "Auntie" Bodine died in 1898 at the age of 90 years. The Bodine cottage, which was about one hundred yards from the present day Etra Park, was sold to Lewis Greenberg in 1922 and has long since disappeared from the scene. Hart Bodine had at least three children: Clara Barton Bodine, who married a Reese and lived in Hightstown; another daughter who married Harry McCue and lived near Camden, NJ; and a son, Fred Bodine.

A sword used by 2nd Lieut. Hart W. Bodine, and a cane cut in 1888 from a tree on "Little Round Top" at Gettysburg, where he had been wounded, were loaned in 1961 for an exhibit at the Hightstown Memorial Library by Clarence B. Reese. Clarence Bodine Reese was a grandson of Hart Bodine, Clara Barton's protégé.

In 1897, Clara Barton, upon learning of a Memorial Day service to be held for the G.A.R. veterans in the Universalist Church, sent a personal letter of greeting to the veterans. I quote in part:

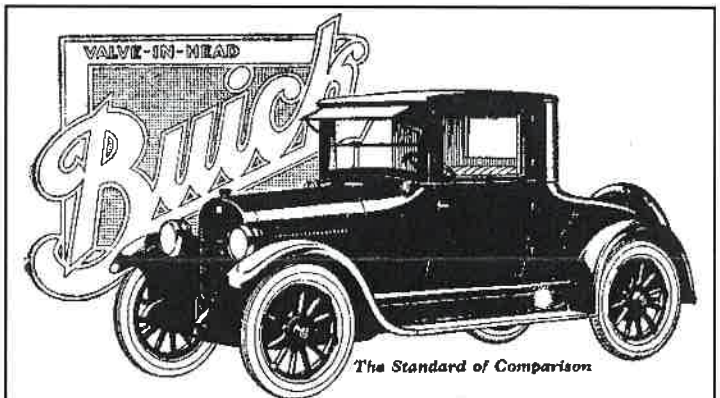
"...when that body of veterans are substantially my own, when among them are those whose soft brown boy locks my young hand smoothed in a teacher's approval, whose childhood shouts still linger in my ear; and possibly a little later wounded or sick, still scarcely more than boys, came again under my hand, and who today are the gray-haired veterans of the land—when all this passes in review, how thrice welcome is the privilege of sending a

little word of greeting! Tell them, please, how well I remember them, how I honor them, how precious their memory is, and how from my heart of hearts my love goes out to them—that their country gratefully approves them, the world honors them, and that like diamonds, and old gold, every year enhances their value.

Sincerely, Clara Barton."

From the files of the Hightstown Gazette

We do not know what year this car was advertised in the Gazette. But one wonders how comfortable they could have been and how fast they went and how much gas they used and how much maintenance they required.



A Cozy, Comfortable Coupe for Three

This Buick 3-passenger Coupe is economical and at the same time exceedingly comfortable for business, professional and family use.

Its wide doors open to an interior with every refinement and convenience for perfect comfort all the year. Its fine plush covered seat is low and comfortable. Disappearing door windows and adjustable windshields enable occupants to catch the summer breeze or exclude winter's cold.

Notable improvements engine and spring suspension have materially increased roadability and stamina.

Fours		Sixes	
2 Pass. Road.	\$ 855	2 Pass. Road.	\$1175
5 Pass. Tour.	885	4 Pass. Coupe	\$1895
3 Pass. Coupe	1175	5 Pass. Tour.	1935
5 Pass. Sedan	1395	5 Pass. Tour.	2195
5 Pass. Tour.		Sedan	1935
Sedan	1395	5 Pass. Sedan	1985
Sport Road.	1025	Sport Touring	1675

Prices f. o. b. Buick Factories; government tax to be added. Ask about the G. M. A. C. Purchase Plan, which provides for Deferred Payments.

D-15-58-NP

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When better automobiles are built, Buick will build them

St. James AME Church

The February 5th Historical Society meeting will be held at Meadow Lakes at 7:30 p.m. A program will be presented by Brenda Werner of the St. James AME Church in Hightstown (African Methodist Episcopal Church). Minister Brenda Werner will give an overview of the history of the church and share her early childhood memories. Members and guests are encouraged to attend.

George Washington Birthday Celebration

Come join us for wine and cheesecake tasting on Saturday, February 23, 2013, at 8 p.m. at the Hightstown Diner, 151 Mercer Street. The public is invited and encouraged to attend this historical society fund raiser to help support the maintenance and preservation of the museum and grounds. Tickets can be purchased for \$20 per person at the Hightstown Diner or by calling Bob Patten at 609-448-6352.



ANNUAL LUNCHEON

If you would like to learn more about the Society and hear our plans for the new year, join us at the Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society's annual luncheon. It will be held on Sunday, January 13, 2013, at 1 p.m. at Santino's Restaurant at 1240 Route 130 South, Robbinsville, N.J. The cost is \$32 per person.



The program will include a presentation by John Kilbride and Pierre LaCombe on the sleeper stones used to hold the first rails of the Camden & Amboy Railroad system that routed the John Bull Locomotive from Bordentown to South Amboy in the mid 1800's. Reservations must be made by calling Christian Kirkpatrick, 609-443-3138.

Visit our website at www.hewhs.com

Mrs. And Mrs. Robert Craig
4002 Nottingham Way
Hamilton Square N. J. 08690

Hightstown-East Windsor
Historical Society
164 North Main Street
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