



# Milestones

HARRISON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## NEW EXHIBITION

### Back to the Fifties

On Sunday, March 26, the Society opens a new exhibition exploring the era of rock and roll, the Cold War, Civil Rights and mid-century advancements as reflected in Harrison, South Harrison and Elk Townships.

The post-World War 2 period presaged the changes and growth that were to take place over the next 60 years.

While farming continued to dominate the local economy, more residents, many new to the community, were working outside of the township. New arrivals stimulated a need for housing and several of the larger residences in Mullica Hill were converted into apartments. Farmers began selling off lots with road frontage for new homes, all of which stimulated the need for new schools. The decade was bracketed by new school construction in 1950 and 1960. New meeting halls built by Ewan Fire Company, the newly formed American Legion Post and Mullica Hill Grange provided new spaces for social gatherings, and the old schoolhouse in

*Continued on page 4*



*The Elmer & Bertha Maust House in Ewan is a classic example of mid-century residential architecture. Its Bauhaus-inspired design is unique in the township.*

*Source: Google Earth*



## ASPARGUS FESTIVAL RETURNS SATURDAY, MAY 13, 10 - 3

On the morning of May 17, 1922, a Fokker airplane loaded with 1,000 pounds of Gloucester County asparagus flew from Mullica Hill to Boston. History was made that day, for this was the first time fresh produce was shipped by air in the United States and it all started right here.

101 years later the Harrison Township Historical Society commemorates this event and celebrates Spring at Old Town Hall with food and fun. This year the Festival features a “Battle of the Chefs” tasting contest, as blueplate, Marino’s of Mullica Hill and Dave’s 322 BBQ vie for Best Asparagus Chef of 2023. Check the Society’s website and Facebook page for ticket information. Tickets are limited, so get yours early to secure your place at the table.

In addition, there are special exhibits, a town-wide scavenger hunt, activities for children, 50/50 raffle, and a vintage cookbook sale. Also, the 2023 Festival T-shirt will be available for purchase.

Come and spend the day - the Mullica Hill Arts and Crafts Festival is also taking place on the 13th with more to see and do all through the town.

Proceeds from the Festival support the Society’s exhibitions and programs throughout the year.



**HARRISON TOWNSHIP  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
PO Box 4 ♦ Mullica Hill, NJ 08062

Phone: 856-478-4949

E-mail: hthsmhnj@gmail.com  
harrisonhistorical.com

**Follow us on Facebook**

**Old Town Hall Museum (1871)**

62-64 South Main Street, Mullica Hill, NJ

**Richwood Academy Cultural Center (1870)**

836 Lambs Road, Richwood, NJ

**OFFICERS & EXECUTIVE BOARD**

*President: Robert Schumann*

*Vice President: Dave Tinney*

*Recording Secretary: Paul Davis*

*Corresponding Secretary: Claire Bartholomew*

*Treasurer: Barbara Ridgway*

*Harrison Township Committee Liaison:*

*Michelle Powell*

*Board Members:*

*Leona Ballinger, Donna Grasso,*

*Robert Greene, Karen Heritage,*

*Maier Hitchner, Jeff Jacques, Chris Knisely,*

*Cindy Madara, Dollie Mann-Wells,*

*Maxine Mino, Alice Montagnoli,*

*Richard Ridgway, Mary Snively, Judy Suplee,*

*James Turk, Michele Vallone, Marion White,*

*John Williams*

*Executive Board meetings are the second Wednesday of each month, 7 pm, except July and December, at Richwood Academy Cultural Center. Members and the public are welcome to attend.*

**ANNUAL GIVING CAMPAIGN**  
**THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE**  
**SOCIETY'S EXHIBITIONS AND PROGRAMS**

Kay Aliberti

Betty & Wayne Bailey

Leona Ballinger

Claire Bartholomew

Sharon & Brian Bartholomew

Andrea & George Benas

JoAnn & Scott Bergman

blueplate

Joan Boarts

Philip Correll & Ronald Magill

Dolores Daniels

Roxanne & Paul Davis

Michael DiGiamberardino

Marlyne & Roy Duffield

Law Office of Brian J. Duffield

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Eleanor Madara

Marino's of Mullica Hill

Susan Massaglia

Elizabeth McCutcheon

Kathleen Howard &

Daryl Mecklem

Maxine Mino

Alice Montagnoli

Faith & Evans Neale

Gerri & Dan Oldt

Joanne & Lawrence Owen

John Pinzka

Plain Hope Fund

Doris Reuter

Barbara & Richard Ridgway

Sandra & Mike Ridgway

Round Tree Farm

Rachel Rowe-

Weichert Realtors

Marge Scerbo

Laurie & Wayne Schleicher

Ann & Bob Schumann

Mary & John Snively

Elizabeth Stevenson

Judy Suplee

Louise Taggart

Lydia Taylor

Tori's Cleaners & Tailor

James F. Turk

Phyllis & Cornelius Walker

Peggy Warner

Marion White

Brian Yates

**WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS**

Cindy Hoagland

Michael DiGiamberardino

Michael & Dana DeGrande

Daniel Rappaport

Stella & Ray Landry

Ashley & Eric Elder

**IN MEMORIAM**

Elizabeth Jessup

Ron Wohlrab

## A NEW SERIES OF LECTURES AND CONCERTS COMES TO RICHWOOD ACADEMY CULTURAL CENTER

Another exciting program series is coming to the Academy this Spring. In coordination with the Society's featured exhibition, *Back to the Fifties*, three presentations are focusing on mid-century history and popular culture, and we continue our partnership with Rowan University's College of Performing Arts featuring the faculty and the college's emerging young artists. Presentations all take place on Sunday afternoons at 3 pm in person and on-line at the Society's public Facebook page. Register for a free ticket at our Facebook page to attend in person. The programs are also archived for subsequent viewing. You do not have to have a Facebook account to access our page. Plan to join us for these exciting events!

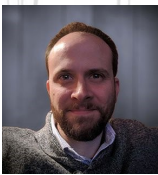


### **April 23, 3 PM** *Songs of Praise and Protest: Music of the Civil Rights Movement*

Dr. Lourin Plant, distinguished scholar and performer from Rowan University, discusses the fascinating relationship between music and social change in this program of song and story.

### **May 7, 3 PM** *The DuMont Television Network Remembered: Allen DuMont & New Jersey Trailblazers on the Tube.*

Dr. Alan Delozier, Seton Hall University, tells the story of television pioneer Allen DuMont, whose network featured early TV stars like Jackie Gleason, Milton Berle and Ernie Kovacs.



### **May 21, 3 PM** *Les Paul: Jazz Guitarist, Inventor, Genius*

Les Paul and his wife, Mary Ford, are remembered as popular 1950s recording artists, however, there's much more to Les Paul's story. Rowan University's Kevin Stahl discusses Paul's inventions and recording innovations in this fascinating talk.

**June 4, 3 PM** *Jazz in June.* The Spring series closes with a concert of jazz favorites by the outstanding young musicians from Rowan University's College of Performing Arts - the perfect way to begin the summer!

## REMEMBERING DR. IRENE HILL-SMITH

Mullica Hill's Dr. Irene Hill-Smith was Gloucester County's foremost civil rights activist. She served as president of the Gloucester County and New Jersey NAACP and rose to become the Association's national vice president from 1967 to 1979. Always at the civil rights forefront, she worked with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and was one of the community leaders called by President Lyndon Johnson to help craft the landmark 1964 Civil Rights Act.

A panel of family members gathered at the Academy on March 5th to share memories about her life and her accomplishments with a full house. HTHS Board member Robert Greene organized and moderated the event. The program remains available online at the Society's Facebook page. Sincere thanks are due to Mr. Greene and the panel participants for an enjoyable and insightful program.



*Dr. Irene Hill-Smith's family gathered for a group photo following the panel discussion of her life and work at Richwood Academy Cultural Center on Sunday, March 5th.*

Continued from page 1

Richwood - today's Richwood Academy Cultural Center - was repurposed as a community hall. All were indications of more dramatic changes that were to come.

*Back to the Fifties* reflects back on this moment in time to examine life in our community from the late 1940s to the early 1960s. The exhibition features a variety of artifacts and photography from the Society's collection, many of which are being shown for the first time. In addition, three programs in April and May at Richwood Academy Cultural Center explore mid-century history and popular culture. Check out the schedule on page 3.

We invite you to come and celebrate the exhibition's opening with light refreshments on Sunday, March 26, 1-4 pm, as we journey "back to the Fifties."



*Richwood Academy, 1908, and Harrison Township School, c.1950*  
HTHS Collections  
All the township's 19th and early 20th century schoolhouses closed when Harrison Township School opened in 1950. Richwood Academy, built in 1870, was the oldest building still in use and housed kindergarten classes. In contrast, the new school was a state-of-the-art facility. The new kindergarten room featured indoor and outdoor play areas and indoor plumbing, a far cry from the Academy. The students didn't just move into a new building; they left the 19th century behind.

## FASHIONABLE HATS—1909

From the *Gloucester County Democrat* 4/15/1909

Ewan. Special Easter services were held in the Ewan M.E. Church on Sunday, when the spring suits and hats made their appearance. The hats the ladies of our village chose are a compromise between the over turned dish pan and inverted bushel basket style, and the Merry Widow of last year, but not quite as ridiculous as either. We fail to see the beauty in the new styles of hats and wonder how our sensible sisters can bear to attract so much attention by wearing them.



*The Richwood Sewing Circle in their finery, 1917*  
Courtesy of Karen E. Heritage



## HARRISON TOWNSHIP SCHOOL STUDENTS RETURN TO OLD TOWN HALL MUSEUM



*School Program Coordinator Mary Snively introduces Second Graders to shopping in a general store like those once found throughout Old Harrison Township.*

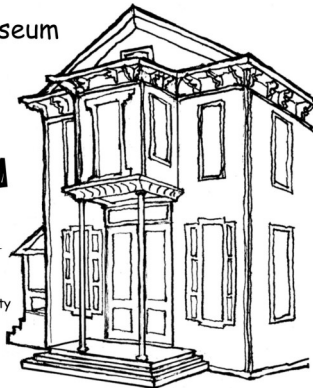
Harrison Township schoolchildren have been learning about their community at Old Town Hall Museum for over 40 years. It is the Society's oldest continuous community service with multiple generations of families now having benefited from the program. Over the years the program has evolved and grown, but the core mission has remained constant—our commitment to provide educational services to our schools free of charge. The support of our members and friends and our fundraising events make this possible.

Each child also receives a booklet with follow-up activities based upon the program. We are grateful to the Rotary Club of Mullica Hill for underwriting the cost for printing this special publication and to the volunteers who guide the children through the program.

Old Town Hall Museum  
Mullica Hill, New Jersey

**MY MUSEUM**  
A Display Booklet by

Harrison Township Historical Society  
South Main Street & Woodstown Road  
Mullica Hill, New Jersey 08062  
www.harrisonhistorical.com  
856-478-4949



Supported with funding from the Rotary Club of Mullica Hill

## HISTORY AND YOU PERFECT TOGETHER

Talk with anyone who volunteers at the Society and we believe they will tell you how much they enjoy their time spent here. Indeed, everything that the Society accomplishes happens because of the time and talents freely shared by our volunteers. We are able to welcome our visitors (well over 1,000 last year) thanks to our weekend hosts during the Spring and Fall. Without them, we would not be able to open our doors.

In fact, there are lots of interesting ways to participate here.

Weekend hosts, so critical to our operations, enjoy interacting with our visitors, especially during major townwide events like Lights on Main. Mary Snively and Maxine Mino coordinate the schedules and can show you the ropes.

Do you enjoy working with children? The student's reactions and questions make the annual school program very special and coordinator Mary Snively and her colleagues will show you how to confidently guide the children through the program.

Do you enjoy special events? The Asparagus Festival brings together folks that do everything from getting business sponsors and distributing publicity materials to setting up the festival grounds around the museum, managing tasting event ticket sales, children's activities, and the cookbook sale as well as helping visitors enjoy the exhibitions. Co-chairs Cindy Madara and Dave Tinney welcome your ideas and participation.

Likewise the annual Ghost Walk, our other major fundraiser, has many roles to be played...literally. Site interpreters relate the ghostly stories, guides lead groups through the tour, clerks take care of check-ins and T-shirt and souvenir sales. A great opportunity to channel your inner thespian.

Want to learn how to research and develop exhibitions and work with collections? There are work groups Tuesday and Thursday mornings.

Best of all is the camaraderie, satisfaction and joy knowing that you are contributing to the quality of life in our community. Give us a call (856-478-4949) or email us ([hthsmhnl@gmail.com](mailto:hthsmhnl@gmail.com)) and tell us what interests you. You'll see that history and you are perfect together!

## **SOCIETY ACQUIRES CHILD'S ROCKING CHAIR MADE BY MULLICA HILL CHAIRMAKER, JOHN DUBOIS**

Museums routinely take inventory of their collections and occasionally objects come to light that do not fit within their subject focus. Such artifacts frequently were accepted before clearly defined guidelines for what should and should not be collected had been formalized or were included within a larger donation. Such was the case about 20 years ago when the Society received a collection of 19th century photographs in which there were several dated stereocards identified as a small village in Pennsylvania. As they were not pertinent to Old Harrison Township, we offered to the county historical society where the town was located. Upon receipt, that society informed us that what we had sent were images of a town that was destroyed by devastating flood. These were the only photos taken before the catastrophe - a rare and welcome find for which they were very grateful.

In January the Salem County Historical Society sent us a photo of a paint-decorated child's rocking chair that they suspected was made by the Mullica Hill chairmaker, John Dubois. We immediately recognized that the attribution was correct and was similar to other examples in our collection. Assured that it was not relevant to their collecting focus, the Society authorized that it be donated to us. We might note that we have transferred archival material relevant to Salem County to them as well over the past several years.

John Dubois lived on High Street where he appears to have had his chairmaking shop. His house still stands on the corner of High and Eric Road, moved there from its original location across the street where Friends School is now. Dubois made traditional South Jersey rush-bottom ladderback chairs. Like the better known Ware family chairs of Salem and Cumberland Counties, Dubois chairs have maple frames and three-corner rush seats, but tend to be more generously proportioned. As is typical of Delaware Valley ladderbacks, the slats are graduated in width from top to bottom with the largest at the top where the greatest strength is required. Simple ring turnings appear on the front legs only between the stretcher and the seat. The front stretcher has a simple center turning that can vary from chair to chair. Rockers are attached to the sides in the same manner as the Wares. He also stuffed the seats with rush to create a thick cushion. What makes his chairs especially distinctive, however, is the use of paint. Dubois was a house painter as well as chairmaker and all the known examples of his work show that they were originally painted, including the rush seats.

Dubois' chairs for children, however, represent his most original work. Unlike his chairs for adults, these pieces take their inspiration from fancy arrowback armchairs of the 1840s. The paint decoration consists of striping and abstract flowers and leaves, and are appropriately more playful than the decoration on adult chairs. The example from the Salem County Historical Society exemplifies Dubois design aesthetic and retains what appears to be an early, if not original seat, although it is not painted.

It is curious that the announcement of Dubois' death made no mention of his work as a chairmaker, noting instead that he was "a painter by trade." Census records indicate that between 1860 and 1870, Dubois' principal occupation was no longer chairmaking, even though he apparently continued to make and sell chairs.

We are grateful for the Salem County Historical Society's donation, which complements our holdings of work by Mullica Hill's most prominent - and last - chairmaker.



## SPECIAL EVENTS IN MULLICA HILL APRIL - JUNE

Both the Mullica Hill Business Association, of which the Society is a member, and the Township, are sponsoring several special events this Spring. Be sure to stop by your museum while enjoying the festivities.

**Saturday, April 22, 10 am - 4 pm**

Antique and Upcycle Street Festival along Main Street

**Saturday, April 22, 8 am - 2 pm**

Military Show and Sale

American Legion Post 452, 141 North Main Street

**Saturday, May 13, 10 am - 4 pm**

Arts and Crafts Festival along Main Street

**Saturday, June 3, 5 - 9 pm**

Harrison Township Day - Celebration on Main  
Music, food, vendors, amusements and fireworks  
throughout town. Rain date June 4.

**Saturday, June 10, 9 am—3 pm**

The Annual June Festival of Antiques  
Gloucester County 4-H Fairgrounds  
275 Bridgeton Pike

## KEEP UP WITH THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE SOCIETY

***The Harrison Township Historical Society is a very active organization - a lot goes on between issues of Milestones.***

***Keep up-to-date about programs and noteworthy news by sending us your email address to [hthsmhnj@gmail.com](mailto:hthsmhnj@gmail.com)***

***We promise not to inundate you with messages and assure you that we do not share our contacts with any other organization or agency.***

### APRIL SHOWERS—1909

From the *Gloucester County Democrat*  
4/22/1909

Harrisonville. There are two young men working on a farm near here one of whom on last Wednesday – (it will be remembered it was raining) asked his boss if he should give the horses corn. When his boss asked him why he asked the question when he knew it was a daily custom, replied "I thought sure you wouldn't want the horses to have corn when it rains." At noon the boss asked "Jack" "if he wanted any dinner" for, he said. "it is raining and surely you don't want any dinner." Jack has learned a lesson for once.

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**  
**MAY 13 . 10 AM - 3 PM**  
**THE ASPARAGUS FESTIVAL**  
**RETURNS TO**  
**OLD TOWN HALL MUSEUM**  
**HISTORY NEVER TASTED SO GOOD!**



### THE YELLOW GARAGE ANTIQUES

PRESENTS:

**The Annual June Festival of Antiques  
At the Fairgrounds**

**Saturday June 10, 2023, 9am-3pm**

(Severe Weather Check FB/IG/Website)

**Gloucester County 4-H Fairgrounds**

**275 Bridgeton Pike, Mullica Hill, NJ 08062**

**A portion of the proceeds benefits the Society.**

**Unlimited Parking**

**Admission \$6 (\$5 at ticketleap.com)**

**Collecting Non-Perishable (Un-Expired) Food for Local Food Pantry**



***The Harrison Township Historical Society's arts and history programs  
are made possible in part by funding from  
The Gloucester County Cultural and Heritage Commission at Rowan College of South Jersey,  
in partnership with  
the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State  
and the National Endowment for the Arts  
and the New Jersey Historical Commission/Department of State.***

