



# Milestones

HARRISON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## HARRISON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY WINS PRESTIGIOUS 2023 AASLH ALBERT B. COREY AWARD

Nashville, TN – The American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) congratulates the Harrison Township Historical Society for winning the Albert B. Corey Award for their *Tornado!* exhibit.

The Albert B. Corey Award is part of the AASLH Leadership in History Awards, the most prestigious recognition for achievement in the preservation of state and local history. Named in honor of a founder and former president of AASLH, the Albert B. Corey Award is limited to one winner per year. It recognizes a primarily volunteer-operated organization that best displays the qualities of vigor, scholarship, and imagination in their work. This special honor includes a \$500 award for the organization.

Immediately following the EF-3 tornado that struck Harrison Township in 2021, the Society recognized the significance of not only the storm's devastation, but also the powerful stories of the community's efforts to recover and rebuild. With grant funding from the Gloucester County Cultural and Heritage Commission in partnership with the New Jersey Historical Commission/Department of State, the Society implemented an oral history project documenting this unprecedented event by preserving memories of the storm and its aftermath and helping the community process the trauma and shock of the disaster. Through powerful images, moving interviews, and accessible exhibition techniques, the organization put together an incredible exhibit that shared the experiences of local citizens and the process of rebuilding a community. The exhibition opened in September 2022, marking the one-year anniversary of the storm.

The awards committee was tremendously impressed by this project's rapid development, attention to best practices, and impact as a key component of the healing process for the community. They cited the project as an incredible example of a history organization serving its community by both preserving contemporary history and responding to the need for connection and hope in a difficult time.

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### YOU'RE INVITED TO A CELEBRATION! FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 4-6 PM

As you will read in this issue of *Milestones*, we have much to celebrate!

- The Society has received national recognition for its work by the American Association for State and Local History.
- Richwood Academy has finally been added to the NJ State and National Registers of Historic Places, joining the Mullica Hill Historic District and Richwood U. M. Church and Cemetery.
- The Society has received the second largest bequest in its 52-year history.
- The Asparagus Festival again was a great success. Congratulations to Marino's of Mullica Hill and the Cake Boutique for winning the Battle of the Chefs competition—and to blueplate, Dave's 322 BBQ, and Artisan Marshmallow for their culinary contributions. Also thanks to all our many generous sponsors and contributors.
- Major strides have been made this summer housing and cataloging the Society's archives.

We are on a roll, thanks to all of our volunteers, so on Friday, September 22, 4 - 6 PM. Please plan to come to a reception at Richwood Academy Cultural Center to celebrate our accomplishments and honor all our volunteers with refreshments and toasts.

*Kindly RSVP at 856-478-4949 or [hthsmhnj@gmail.com](mailto:hthsmhnj@gmail.com) Looking forward to seeing you there!*



**HARRISON TOWNSHIP  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
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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:*

*Joe Arni, Leona Ballinger, Donna Grasso,*

*Robert Greene, Karen Heritage,*

*Maier Hitchner, Cindy Hoagland,*

*Jeff Jacques, Chris Knisely, Cindy Madara,*

*Dollie Mann-Wells, Maxine Mino,*

*Dale Murtlow, 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*

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church  
Barbara and Paul Showers

**WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS**

Eric and Ashley Elder

Lawrence Moore

Jan and John Sanders

**IN MEMORIAM**

Alice B. Montagnoli

**REMEMBERING ALICE MONTAGNOLI**

With fond memories of a loyal HTHS member, we sadly report the passing of Alice Beckett Montagnoli. She and her husband Charles were active life members of the Society and both served on the Executive Board for many years. They were pleasant co-workers on many projects, especially hauling the Raccoon Valley General Store props and merchandise back and forth to Hagley Museum's Christmas Festival of Museum Shops. HTHS participated in this fundraiser for a decade! Over the years Alice often hosted at Old Town Hall on weekends and opening receptions and programs.

The Montagnolis were fun people to know and good neighbors on Sherwin Road in Mullica Hill for over 50 years. Alice was a sweet lady, a dear friend, and a blessing in our lives and community.

Judy S. Suplee



*Alice Montagnoli and her husband, Charles, at Old Town Hall, January 2000.*

## HERE'S WHAT'S HAPPENING AT OLD TOWN HALL MUSEUM AND RICHWOOD ACADEMY CULTURAL CENTER THIS FALL

### September

- 17 **Richwood Academy: Local Landmark, National Treasure**, 3 pm, RACC.  
Patrick Harshbargar, Hunter Research, discusses the history and significance of the Academy, recently listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- 22 **Celebration Reception for HTHS Volunteers, Members and Friends**, 4-6 pm, RACC See page 1 for details.

### October

- 1 **Letters to Lizzie: Sixteen Men in the Civil War and the Woman Who Connected Them All**, 3 pm, RACC  
Lecture and book signing by local author and historian Dr. James Scythes, West Chester University.
- 7 **Back to the Fifties** exhibition reopens, 1-4 pm, OTH . Continuing weekends to December 9.  
**21st Annual Mullica Hill Ghost Walk**, 6-10:30 pm. OTH
- 15 **10 for 100: The Ten Most Important Moments in Rowan University's First Hundred Years**, 3 pm, RACC.  
Dr. William Carrigan, Rowan University, marks the University's centennial with notable moments from the institution's past.
- 29 **South Jersey Glass in Bloom**, 3 pm, RACC. Lecture and book signing by Internationally acclaimed artist and pioneer in the studio glass movement, Paul J. Stankard.

### November

- 12 **Saxophones Center Stage**, 3 pm, RACC. Saxophonists from Rowan University present an eclectic program highlighting the versatility of this popular instrument.
- 25 **Lights on Main**, 5-9 pm OTH. Celebrate the holiday season at this award-winning festival and witness the annual tree lighting in front of Old Town Hall.

### December

- 3 **Sweet Singing and Seasonal Favorites**, 3pm. RACC. Renowned soprano, Julie-Ann Green, and celebrated pianist, Joseph Krupa, present a memorable afternoon of popular and classical music.
- 9 **Mullica Hill Christmas House Tour**, 3-7 pm, OTH.

### FUNDRAISING LECTURE 1879

Mullica Hill. Rev. Mr. Burk will deliver his highly entertaining and instructive lecture on Bugs, in St. Stephen's Church, Mullica Hill, on Thanksgiving evening, at 7:30 o'clock. A small admission fee will be charged to assist in defraying the expenses of the new clock. Having heard this lecture we can speak from personal knowledge when we say to those who have never heard him that they will be well repaid for going, as it far excels many of the higher priced lectures to which we have listened. To those who have heard Mr. Burk it will not be necessary to say go and hear him. We hope for him a large and appreciative audience.

*Gloucester County Democrat , 11/20/1879*



**Back to the Fifties** reopens for its final weeks on October 7 and continues through December 9.

## MEET THE SOCIETY'S NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Three new members were elected to serve on the Board at the Society's Annual Meeting in May. We are very pleased to welcome them aboard.

**Joe Arni** was raised in Rockland County, NY, where he met his wife, Patty. He attended college in upstate New York and started his career working for Scott Paper Company in 1979 before moving on to Honeywell.

"We moved here for the school system, as our three children were young and we wanted a home in a development so our children could socialize with friends," he explained.

He recently retired from Honeywell International where he worked as an Electrical and Instrument Engineer since 1992.

"I wanted to increase my volunteering and discovered HTHS through member Paul Showers," he said. "I joined the Society in 2021 and I realized the dedication of the members after participating in the Ghost Walk in 2022. I thought I could learn a lot about the history of our town and look forward to helping out with whatever needs arise."

**Cindy Hoagland** has been a proud resident of Mullica Hill for thirty years now. She is married and together with her husband has six children and eight grandchildren. After thirty-three years in education she retired as a special education teacher, most recently in Swedesboro-Woolwich School District. She and her husband own and operate a chrysanthemum farm, which he has been doing for over forty years.

On September 1, 2021, the EF3 tornado that devastated Mullica Hill made a direct hit on their farm and house. They were devastated, however, with the help of family, friends and community they made it through an incredibly difficult time.

"My husband and I went to the tornado exhibit at Old Town Hall," she said. "We were truly touched by the way in which the exhibit was presented and displayed, so much so that it was at that time I decided I wanted to be a part of the Historical Society and do my part in this wonderful community, that has been so supportive and enriching to our lives. I hope serving on the HTHS Board will offer me the opportunity to help shine a light on all the wonderful attributes Mullica Hill and its residents have to offer."

**Dale Murtlow** is a transplant from East Glenville, Schenectady County, NY. He grew up in a residential area with no town center surrounded by dairy farms usually in Saratoga County. He attended Clarkson College in Potsdam, NY, and graduated with a Chemistry degree, followed by an MS in Chemistry. He moved to Bound Brook, NJ, working for American Cyanamid as a chemist. After 7 years, he obtained a chemist position with Mobil in Pennington, NJ. In 1994, when the facilities in Pennington and Paulsboro merged, he moved to Mullica Hill. He retired in 2009 when Mobil Research was absorbed by other ExxonMobil organizations. Most of his career was involved with identifying the origins of any ExxonMobil problems.

"My interest in history likely originated with reading historical novels, nonfiction books and family histories," he noted. "An aunt traced my mother's family back to the Mayflower and my father's Murtlow family originated with two Welsh brothers arriving in Saratoga County, NY, in 1852. A collection of 200 postcards between my father's parents, family friends and siblings gave an insight into farming family life from approximately 1905 to 1925, after which time telephone calls replaced communication by postcards. The current HTHS displays are of interest because they could relate to the time of my parents' youth."

Welcome, Cindy, Joe and Dale!

### LEGACY GIFTS

Over its 52 year history the Society has been the grateful recipient of legacy gifts from its members. While the amounts have varied, all have strengthened our services to our community, from free programs for schoolchildren and admission-free access to the museum to our award-winning exhibitions and programs.

Just as the Society is about preserving our community's history for future generations, so too is estate planning all about leaving a legacy. Attorneys and financial planners can provide advice on how to make a bequest and make a lasting and meaningful investment in the Society's future.

## HTHS RECEIVES MAJOR BEQUEST FROM BRINKER ESTATE



*Beulah Lafferty Brinker at Old Town Hall posing with the produce wagon built by her father, Orville Lafferty.*

A little over a year ago, the Society was notified that the late Beulah “Bea” Lafferty Brinker had named HTHS as a beneficiary in her will. Last month, we received a letter informing us that we were to receive 10% of the remaining assets, amounting to \$116,820. This is the second largest bequest that the Society has received in its 52 year history.

Bea first visited the Society many years ago, and was surprised and delighted to discover that one of the produce wagons her father, Orville Lafferty, built, and that she had pulled around Pitman Grove as a child, was on exhibit. The wagon is still on view upstairs in *Living Off the Land: Food, Farms and Families*. She subsequently donated additional objects from the Lafferty Farm, in Monroeville. Her father’s family had deep roots around Ferrell, and Bea was the last member of five generations of her line of the Lafferty family.

Born in 1924, she moved from Pitman with her family to a farm in Monroeville where she and her sister Jeannette worked in the fields as was common on family farms. At the age of 8, her father gave her an accordion and said, “Play something,” which is how she learned that she could play by ear. Without lessons, she and her sister learned to play multiple instruments and performed as “The Lafferty Sisters - Music with a Smile.”

She began her distinguished career as an educator after graduating from Glassboro State College (now Rowan University) in 1946, teaching in

*Continued from page 1*

“I was so delighted to hear that the Historical Society won this award,” said Melissa Ziobro, the oral historian responsible for interviewing the affected residents, community volunteers, first responders and government officials. “The Society showed incredible leadership in acting quickly, yet sensitively to document this historic event in the words of those who lived it.”

This year, AASLH confers 53 national awards honoring people, projects, exhibits, and publications nationwide. The winners represent the best in the field and provide leadership for the future of state and local history. The Harrison Township Historical Society is the only organization from New Jersey included among this year’s awardees.

“We are honored to receive this prestigious award,” said the Society’s president, Robert Schumann. “This was the most challenging exhibition in my recollection that our Society has undertaken, and one of the most important. We are grateful to be so recognized nationally, and appreciative of the support and encouragement we received from our community. Most especially we are indebted to the residents who generously shared their stories with us so they can be preserved for future generations.”

The AASLH awards program was initiated in 1945 to establish and encourage standards of excellence in the collection, preservation, and interpretation of state and local history throughout the United States.

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Woodbury and North Plainfield, as well as at the State University of New York, Jersey City State College and Glassboro State. She received her masters Degree from NYU in 1960.

Bea traveled around the world and enjoyed a wide range of interests and activities. She was residing in Mullica Hill at the time of her death in 2022.

As the Society continues to expand its activities and holdings, our operational expenses also increase. Gifts such as this can be added to our investments to strengthen the Society’s fiscal stability going forward.

We are grateful to Bea Brinker for her gifts during her lifetime and the generous legacy she has left us. Thank you, Bea!

## **RICHWOOD ACADEMY NOW LISTED ON THE NJ STATE AND NATIONAL REGISTERS OF HISTORIC PLACES**

This past July Richwood Academy was added to the National Register of Historic Places, the culmination of a four-year project involving research, documentation and state and national level professional reviews. With support from the Richwood Academy Association, the Society secured the services of Hunter Research, an historical resource consultant firm based in Trenton, to prepare and shepherd the nomination application through the process. Patrick Harshbargar and his team, assisted locally by Karen Heritage and Jim Turk, developed the proposal. Mr. Harshbargar will present the findings at the Richwood Academy Cultural Center on Sunday, September 17, 3 pm, kicking off the Center's Fall program series.

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. A program of the National Park Service, the Register is part of a national undertaking to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources. The New Jersey State Register is a parallel program designating significant historic resources statewide. The NJ State Historic Preservation Office supervises this program and recommends nominations for national review.

Listing on the Historic Registers is not simply honorific. The designation offers a degree of protection when federal and state-funded undertakings threaten listed sites, such as road widening and highway projects. Listing is also required to apply for preservation funding from the New Jersey Historic Trust. Trust grants helped fund the restoration of Old Town Hall in the 1990s.

The Academy now joins the Mullica Hill Historic District and Richwood U. M. Church and Cemetery on the National and State Registers. In addition, the Jessup Farmhouse on High St., Mullica Hill, and the Horner Farmstead in Harrisonville are listed on the State Register.

This process was a lengthy one, involving extensive research and delays due to the pandemic. Acquiring State and National Register status was a major goal when the Society acquired the property, so this accomplishment is especially satisfying.

## **RARE ARCHIVES HOUSED AND CATALOGED**

Summer is an ideal time to undertake large projects around Old Town Hall. With the museum closed to the public it's possible to turn large spaces into work areas. This year we tackled the book and primary documents collection housed in the school room closets. These holdings include local business ledgers and journals, organization record books, diaries and personal journals, many of which are in fragile condition.



*Chris Knisely fabricates an archival enclosure.*

The best way to house these items is in acid-free enclosures that support the bindings and prevent further damage. These enclosures must be custom-made for each volume. Through Chris Knisely's diligence dozens of the Society's one-of-a-kind records are now properly housed.

At the same time, Karen Heritage focused on cataloging these rare materials to make them more easily accessible for research.



*Karen Heritage shows Mary Snively a 19th century store ledger from Richwood, which she is cataloging.*

## MULLICA HILL GHOST WALK RETURNS TO HAUNT MAIN STREET SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7

Mullica Hill's restless spirits again take center stage on Saturday, October 7, 6 - 10:30 PM. Tours depart every 10 minutes from the blueplate pavilion, 47 S. Main St., where Ghost Walk T-shirts will also be available for purchase.

Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased on-line at the Society's website, [www.harrisonhistorical.com](http://www.harrisonhistorical.com), and our Facebook page. Advance purchase is highly recommended as the tours fill up quickly.

This is a fun family event that explores the eerie side of our community's history as nightfall descends.



Veteran Ghost Walk Guide Vallarie Ricciuti and her husband Nicholas, dress for the occasion!

## Back to the Fifties

The Society's featured exhibition this year reopens for its final 14 weekends on Saturday, October 9. With the recent resurgence of interest in mid-century design, *Back to the Fifties* is a timely exploration of our community in the 1950s and early 1960s, a pivotal moment in our history. New schools, new residents, new fashions, rock 'n roll, these are all part of our not-so-distant past. For some, it is nostalgic, for others insights into what our community was and what it would become.

Don't miss this final opportunity to take a journey "back to the Fifties."

### HALLOWEEN 1893

Mullica Hill. Some of the young people of the town had a merry time on Tuesday evening, and presented quite a picturesque appearance as they marched through the streets in their novel costumes...some of them absurdly grotesque. The molasses candy party was altogether taken by impulse when the merry revellers marched in upon them without any ceremony, but masks prevented any recognition and they were obliged to submit to the joke, which they did very good naturedly and gracefully. A reasonable amount of innocent fun is lawful as well as wholesome.

*Gloucester County Democrat*, 11/2/1893

### THE YELLOW GARAGE ANTIQUES

PRESENTS:

### Fall Festival of Antiques At the Fairgrounds

Saturday September 30, 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)



***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.***

