



Milestones

THE HARRISON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HARRISON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

On July 15, 1971, a group of residents gathered in what was then the Township Municipal Building, 28 N. Main St. to organize a historical society. G. Webber Gaunt led the meeting at the direction of Township Committee, which had authorized the Society's funding in order to manage and preserve Old Town Hall. A half century later, the Society has grown in size, scope and prestige. The Society is a model public/private partnership that we are proud to celebrate this Fall with the long awaited reopening of Old Town Hall Museum and the inauguration of on-site programming at the Richwood Academy Cultural Center. We have much to be thankful for and to celebrate. Join us this Fall celebrating our fiftieth anniversary in person and on-line. Visit Old Town Hall Museum (OTH), attend a program at Richwood Academy Cultural Center (RACC), and enjoy the annual Ghost Walk. Here's to the next 50!

FALL HAPPENINGS

INFORMATION INSIDE THIS ISSUE

SEPTEMBER

Sunday, 19, 1-4 P PM Richwood Academy Reunion and Open House (RACC)

OCTOBER

Saturday, 2, 6:30 - 9 PM The Original Mullica Hill Ghost Walk returns to Main Street (OTH)

Sunday, 3, 3 PM Dulcet Guitar Duo (RACC)

Friday, 8, 4-7 PM Fall Museum Opening and 50th Anniversary Celebration (OTH)

Saturday, 9, 1-4 PM *Signs of Our Time: 50 Years Telling Our Stories* opens to the public, continuing weekends through 12/11 (OTH)

Saturday, 16, 9 - 3 Fall Festival of Antiques, Gloucester County 4-H Fairgrounds

Sunday, 17, 3 PM *African American History in the American Landscape & Archives.*
Wendel A. White, Stockton University (RACC)

NOVEMBER

Sunday, 7, 3 PM Voces Vocal Ensemble (RACC)

Saturday, 26 Lights on Main (OTH)

DECEMBER

Saturday, 11, 1-4 PM *Signs of Our Time* closes.



**HARRISON TOWNSHIP
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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08062**

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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

HOURS

**Please check the Society's Facebook page
for updates.**

EXECUTIVE BOARD & OFFICERS

President: Robert Schumann

Vice President: Dave Tinney

Recording Secretary: Paul Davis

Corresponding Secretary: Claire Bartholomew

Treasurer: Barbara Ridgway

Township Committee Liaisons:

John Williams, Adam Wingate

Board Members

Leona Ballinger, Paul Davis, Donna Grasso,

Suzanne Grasso, Robert Greene,

Karen Heritage, Maier Hitchner,

Chris Knisely, Cindy Madara, 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. Public is welcome.*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Autumn Angelus

Sharon Heritage

Bruce Matzner

Lisa Matzner,

Bret Mohrman

Karen Mohrman

William P. Reuter

Laurie Schleicher

Wayne Schleicher

Pat & Michael Settar

Barbara Shelmire

**BRING BACK THE BELFRY
RESTORATION PROJECT**

The Belfry Restoration Project was a great success.

Income from the auction and additional cash donations greatly exceeded our goal for a total of \$14,075.51. This additional income is funding our Fall Program series at the Academy as well as on-going operational expenses. We are thankful for all the contributors to this effort, including the following additional donors to the project.

John and Suzanne Grasso

Barbara Shelmire in memory of Olin Shelmire

Brian Yates

CONTRIBUTORS

Franklin Heim

**Fall Festival of Antiques, October 16, 9am-3pm
Gloucester County 4-H Fairgrounds
275 Bridgeton Pike, Mullica Hill**



This biannual show brings together dealers from throughout the Northeast. Managed by the Society's neighbor, The Yellow Garage Antiques, the show features a wonderful variety of quality antiques in the pavilions and on the lawns. A portion of the proceeds benefits the Society.

Unlimited parking—rain or shine.

MULLICA HILL'S ORIGINAL GHOST WALK RETURNS OCTOBER 2ND

After a year hiatus, the Society's popular Ghost Walk is returning to Mullica Hill on Saturday, October 2nd. Tales of the village's haunted history abound while exploring the Historic District during the 1½ hour guided tour.



The Jersey Unique Minds Paranormal Society (JUMPS) will offer even more goosebumps at Old Town Hall. A live feed from video cameras will set up on the purportedly haunted second floor of the historic building for a chance to observe other-worldly activity.

Tours will depart from outside blueplate restaurant, 47 South Main Street, every 10 minutes beginning at 6:30 pm. Tickets are \$10 per person and available on-line at the Society's Facebook page. If you require an early tour time, be sure to get your tickets as far in advance as possible as they sell out fast. Any tickets remaining will be sold at the event.

Families are welcome. Children in strollers do not require a ticket. Remember to bring your flashlights, cameras, and comfortable walking shoes. Current COVID guidelines will be observed.

Our popular Ghost Walk T-shirts will be on sale at the event as well as glow sticks with the Ghost Walk logo (cash only). All proceeds benefit the Harrison Township Historical Society.

Naples Ristorante at the Warehouse, 2 S. Main St., will be hosting a special Ghost Walk buffet beginning at 5pm and continuing throughout the event.

*Mullica Hill's original and most spirited
ghost tour for seventeen
spine-tingling years is back!*

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED!
*Harrison Township Historical Society's
50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
AND OPENING RECEPTION*

**SIGNS OF OUR TIME:
50 YEARS TELLING OUR STORIES
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 8, 4-7 PM
OLD TOWN HALL MUSEUM**



*2011 Harrison Township Day Parade.
HTHS Coll.*

**SIGNS OF OUR
TIME:
50 YEARS
TELLING OUR
STORIES**

Our community is more than a place; it is stories of lives lived here and the activities and things that they have created—and continue to create.

A half-century ago the Harrison Township Historical Society was established to preserve and give new life to a century-old landmark—Old Town Hall—and to save and tell the stories of this place.

In celebration of our 50th year, we are taking a glance backwards through the exhibitions we have presented and the objects we have collected to create a panoramic overview of Old Harrison Township's heritage—the “signs” of our time.

The topics we have explored are wide-ranging—family and community life, transportation, commerce, education, religious life, sports and leisure, paleontology, diverse communities, arts and music, architecture. Each of these projects has resulted in new acquisitions resulting in a remarkably rich local history collection. SIGNS OF OUR TIME draws on those resources to tell our story and that of Old Harrison.

We look forward to welcoming you back to Old Town Hall this Fall and celebrating the building's and the Society's anniversaries.

ALLEN CLARK AND THE MORTGAGE ON HELL A FOLK TALE FROM EWAN FOR HALLOWEEN

In the late 19th century there was a man by the name of Allen Clark who owned a general store in downtown in Ewan. Clark was credited as being a successful businessman and considered quite prosperous for his time. Back then William S. Fox held big livestock auctions in his sales barn on Back St. (now New St,) that attracted big crowds to town. On sales days Clark's store was especially live with business, with five clerks at work and all busy.

In addition to his mercantile business, Clark also lent out money and held mortgages on a number of farms and properties thereabouts. He was a man of considerable local prominence, respected by most, and recognized as no-nonsense when it came to business.

It was usual for men folks to gather at Clark's store to do a little business, but mostly to swap news and stories. One evening, a local fellow came into the store and announced that he had had the strangest dream the night before. Of course, everyone, including Clark, wanted to hear the whole story.

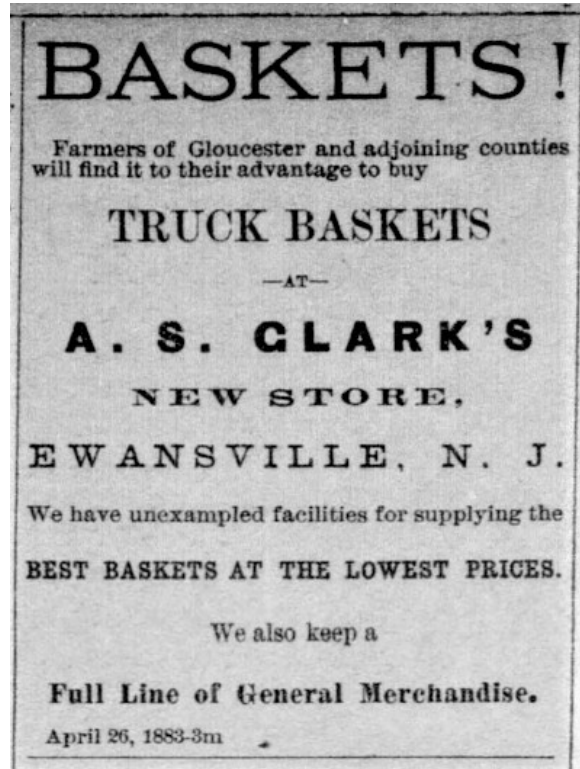
It seems that the fellow dreamt that he had died and gone to hell. And, you know, hell wasn't at all what he had expected. No fire and brimstone, just acres and acres of barrels as far as the eye could see. Naturally, this made the fellow pretty curious.

"What's in all them barrels," he asked the devil.

"Well," the devil said, "that's where I keep the souls of the damned. Go ahead and take a look inside if you want."

So, the fellow started lifting up the lids and to his surprise each barrel held one of his friends, all them gathered in the store listening, and he was mighty glad to see that he wasn't alone down there.

Just then, when he was about to look into another barrel, the devil screamed, "Don't touch that barrel!"



Gloucester County Democrat. Woodbury, NJ, April 26, 1883, p3

"Why not?" asked the man.

"That's where we keep Allen Clark, and if you let him out he'll have a mortgage on hell in five minutes!"

It's said everyone roared with laughter...except poor Allen Clark, who threw that fellow right out of the store.

-James F. Turk, as told by Walter F. Turk and David J. Turk

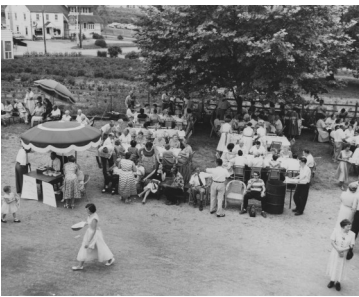
Allan Clark's "New Store" stood opposite Ewan M.E. Church for over a century until fire destroyed the landmark building. HTHS Coll.



RICHWOOD ACADEMY CULTURAL CENTER'S FALL SEASON

After a year delay due to COVID restrictions, we are excited to welcome audiences to our inaugural season of on-site programs in the Academy's refurbished meeting room. We have arranged a diverse series of events reflecting the Cultural Center's mission to enrich community life through the arts, humanities, sciences and civic engagement, effectively restoring the building's original educational purpose. All programs are free with parking available on the grounds. Because of the Academy's limited seating capacity, we are requesting attendees to register for the concerts and lectures at the Society's Facebook page. That said, these programs will also be live-streamed and archived for future viewing at our Facebook site.

The Cultural Center's programming is the result of our partnership with Rowan University's College of Performing Arts and we are grateful for Dean Richard Dammers' assistance and support. We are also developing programs in partnership with the township's IDEA Board through Julie DeLaurentis. Look for more new and innovative offerings in 2022.



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 1-4 PM. RICHWOOD ACADEMY REUNION & OPEN HOUSE.

It's Open House Day at the Academy. Alumni, Academy Association Directors, Old Home Day volunteers, HTHS members and the public are invited. Enjoy reconnecting with old friends and learning about the Academy's history and new life as the Cultural Center.

Old Home Day, 1954. HTHS Coll.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3, 3 PM. DULCET GUITAR DUO. Award-winning classical guitar duo Dulcet Guitar Duo is comprised of Caroline Kubach and Alex Pollock. Both are distinguished Rowan University graduates and will share and discuss some of their favorite music.



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17, 3 PM. AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY IN THE AMERICAN LANDSCAPE & ARCHIVES.

Lecture by Wendel A. White, Distinguished Professor of Photography, Stockton University. A 2021 Robert Gardner Fellow in Photography, Peabody Museum of Archeology & Ethnography, Harvard University, Wendel White has received international acclaim for his photographic works exploring the history of race through objects and material culture. This coming Spring Old Town Hall Museum will host his noteworthy exhibition, *Schools for the Colored*.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 3PM. VOCES.

"Voces," Latin for voices, is one of Rowan University's most prestigious chamber ensembles. Comprised of ten to twelve of the most flexible and strongest singers, their performances run the gamut from 17th and 18th century oratorios and madrigals to jazz improvisations and samba singing.



FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK FOR PROGRAM UPDATES

THE TRAGIC DEATH OF C. HENRY STRATTON, TEACHER

Karen E. Heritage

This past spring the Society submitted an application to the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office to include Richwood Academy on the State and National Register of Historic Places. I was tasked with writing the history of the building, and my main source was a collection amassed by my grandparents, W. Howard and Caroline R. Heritage. They were dedicated chroniclers of Richwood, and were particularly passionate about the Academy, which they both attended. Their collection includes documents, books and photographs, and one photograph that I especially like is of C. Henry Stratton.



*C. Henry Stratton, c1900
HTHS: Heritage Coll.*

My grandparents compiled extensive notes, and from these I learned that Henry Stratton was a highly respected and well-liked teacher at the Academy, but there was no mention made of what became of him after he left Richwood. I had always been curious how a person who seemed to be so popular in town could just disappear from the narrative. While doing further research for the application, I ventured beyond my grandparents' sources and discovered the tragic story.



*Richwood Academy, 1899. Stratton is standing to the right in the back with his fellow teacher, Elizabeth Tonkin.
HTHS: Heritage Coll.*

Charles Henry Stratton was born in Swedesboro in 1870. He taught at Richwood Academy from 1896 to 1901, then at Union Academy in Mullica Hill from 1901 to 1903. In the fall of 1903 he was set to begin teaching at the school in Pitman Grove, but only two weeks into September he was struck and killed by a train at the Pitman Avenue crossing. The following article from the September 17 issue of the *Gloucester County Democrat* graphically details what happened in the accident.

RAILROAD HORROR AT PITMAN.

Principal Stratton Killed, Mr. Clendening Seriously Injured.

[From our Pitman Correspondent.]

The long looked for horrible railroad accident at the Pitman crossing occurred this (Wednesday) morning at about nine o'clock, when the Cape May express struck a carriage in which were Mr. [J. S.] Clendening, of Richwood, and our school principal, Mr. C. H. Stratton. The carriage was demolished, the horse thrown nearly to the fire house and the men picked up—Mr. Clendening, dazed, with arm broken and side crashed in, and Mr. Stratton crushed and dying. Both were put on the train and hurried to Cooper Hospital, but Mr. Stratton died on the way or soon after arriving there, as word was received here shortly after ten o'clock

stating that he was dead. The full extent of Mr. Clendening's injuries could not be ascertained. Mr. Clendening had come over to take people to Richwood to attend the funeral of Mr. Aaron Knight. He had taken Mr. Stratton over to the schoolhouse to notify the very few children present that there would be no school on account of the dreadful storm, and they were returning and had just reached the track when the train struck them. The roar of the storm drowned the noise of the approaching train, *and the watchman was not on duty, being in the station at the time.* This fact makes it so much the worse as it brings serious trouble to the watchman and his family as well as to the other suffering ones.

The sudden death of Mr. Stratton will bring sorrow to the hearts of the many in this county who knew him and valued him for his sterling worth. He was about 34 years of age and has taught in the public schools of the county for about 12 years at Barnsboro, Richwood, Mullica Hill and this year as principal at Pitman. He was a son of Azariah Stratton, of Swedesboro.

LATER.

We are glad to state that Mr. Clendening is not suffering from internal injuries as was supposed. Aside from bruises and shock he is suffering only from a broken collar bone instead of broken arm as stated. He was thrown against the signpost. Mr. Stratton was thrown over on Pitman Avenue and was found lying face downward with arms outstretched. He expired while the train was passing through Woodbury, and his body was taken to the Camden morgue.

An inquest was held on September 21 in Camden, and according to an article in the next day's issue of the *Woodbury Daily Times*, the storm was a major factor in the accident.

THE HEADLESS MULE OF MULLICA HILL

From Roy C. Horner's *Mullica Hill Protective Association for the Recovery of Stolen Horses.*

Legend has it that on dark overcast nights an empty buggy pulled by a headless mule used to roam the streets of Mullica Hill and vicinity. The only sound you could hear as it went by was the faint jingle of trace chains. One night several of the town boys told the story to one of the boys from the outskirts who had ridden into town on his bicycle. They could see that he was pretty worked up and he wasn't long in getting started for home. Somewhere along the road some of the town boys were hiding in the bushes. When the boy on the bike came along the ones in the bushes started to jingle a couple of trace chains. The town boys said he stood straight up on the pedals and started to ride as though the devil was after him. He made the mistake of looking back and lost his balance and fell off the bike. He jumped up—left the bike in the road and took off on foot.



*The lamp from the bicycle left by the boy "pursued" by the headless mule.
Roy C. Horner Photo*

GROUNDHOG DAY DINNER

SAVE THE DATE—SATURDAY, JANUARY 29, 2022



GLOUCESTER COUNTY'S FAVORITE HOLIDAY EVENT
RETURNS NOVEMBER 27TH!

HARRISON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Old Town Hall Museum • Richwood Academy Cultural Center
PO Box 4 • Millica Hill, NJ 08062

