



Places in Time

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Fall 2021

Lawrence Historical Society Announces Formation of Junior Historians of Lawrence Township

The Lawrence Historical Society is pleased to announce the creation of the Junior Historians of Lawrence Township.

The Junior Historians is the new student chapter of the Society. It is open to all high school and middle school aged children throughout the township, regardless of whether they are attending public or private school.

The idea for creating the student chapter was originally proposed by two students from Lawrence High School, Julia Ciccone and Nate Kunkel. "History doesn't have to be boring," explained Ciccone. "Students who join should find this really interesting. I think we'll be able to have some cool projects and speakers. Plus, we'll have some volunteer opportunities, so it'll be a chance for students to complete their community service hours."

Ciccone and Kunkel attended Community Day in October to promote the chapter and solicit student members. They are already planning to have guest speakers talk to members about local history. They also hope the chapter can develop projects to promote National History Day and local history to children in the township. In addition, the group plans to assist at Society events like the Tanner lecture and Hogmanay.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to educate children on our diverse local history in a fun way," stated Society President, Katherine Meeker-Cohen. "We're thrilled to support the students in this effort."

The Junior Historians is planning to meet monthly on the third Tuesday of each month, from 7-8 pm at the historic Brearley House. Their first meeting will be on November 16th.

For more information, please contact either Julia Ciccone (julia.ciccone@ltps.edu) or Nate Kunkel (nathanial.kunkel@ltps.edu).

Upcoming Events

November 16:

Junior Historians open meeting
(Brearley House, 7-8 pm)

November 21:

Brearley House tours
(2-4 pm)

December 2:

LHS board meeting
(Brearley House, 7-8:30 pm)

December 19:

Brearley House tours
(2-4 pm)

December 21:

Junior Historians open meeting
(Brearley House, 7-8 pm)

January 8:

60th annual Col Hand Historic
March

January 16:

Brearley House tours
(2-4 pm)

January 19:

Junior Historians open meeting
(Brearley House, 7-8:30 pm)

President's Message

Dear Friends,

As Thanksgiving approaches we are grateful that the Canal House, the bridge tender's house on the D&R Canal built in the 1830's wasn't more severely damaged. August's Hurricane Ida flooded the historic house and ruined the mechanicals in the basement and the furnishings on the first floor. Quick action by Laura Nawrocik and her brigade cleaned and sanitized the residence. Stephen Carey, our treasurer, has managed the estimates for repairs we are able to make on our own. The Port Mercer Canal House is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a New Jersey State Park. For more information see the description on our website, thelhs.org. We hope to reopen Canal House in the spring of 2022.



Visit us at the Brearley House on one of our Sunday afternoon tours. See our other events posted on the website, thelhs.org.

Best wishes,

Kathie Meeker-Cohen

New Members and Renewals

Ruth Barringer
 Martin Bloomenthal
 Mr and Mrs H.L. Boyer Royal
 Anthony and Karin Cermele
 Dolores Davis
 Douglas Raiche
 Eugene Krystyna Podraza
 Marjorie Silk
 Kathleen Topley

Many thanks to our new and continuing members. Your generosity helps ensure that the Society can continue its mission of preserving and promoting the history of Lawrence Township.

LHS Board of Trustees

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The Story Behind the Sign

By Joe Ciccone

Sculptures by internationally renowned artists normally do not grace the entrance to affordable housing complexes. Yet, that is exactly what we have here in Lawrence at Eggerts Crossing Village (ECV), where Seward Johnson's playful "Adventure" sculpture greets residents and visitors alike at the entrance to ECV.

The origins of the sculpture date back to the origins of ECV itself.

Eggerts Crossing Village was the first subsidized family rental housing development in Lawrence Township. It was dedicated in 1974 after years of advocacy by a dedicated group of township residents led by Fred Vereen.

The architect for the project was John Zvosec, whose office was in the former School Number Four on Route 1. At the time, Seward Johnson was leasing space from Zvosec for his studio. Johnson would later gain fame as the founder of the Grounds for Sculpture, but in the early 1970s time he was just starting his career. Johnson heard about the new housing development from Zvosec and wanted to make a contribution to honor the noble cause. Hence, the sculpture.

The three boys in the sculpture were based on three real children. One boy was a resident of ECV, another was one of Johnson's sons and the third was Cliff Robinson.

That's Cliff, age 10, bent over, giving another boy a boost up. Cliff's father was an ECV board member at the time. Robinson recently described Johnson as being a "very nice, quite thoughtful fellow [who was] very easy-going with a child." Before their session began Johnson gave Cliff a tour of his studio. Cliff recalled that Johnson already had a sketch and knew exactly how he wanted Cliff to pose. Afterwards, Johnson took Cliff out for a cheeseburger, which was definitely the highlight of the experience for Cliff!

According to Paula Stoeke, the curator of the Seward Johnson Altier, Johnson normally sculpted out of bronze. He would begin with a tabletop model, which he would then enlarge to a life-size statue. The entire process would normally take about a year and a half.

The result in this case was a lifelike representation of youthful exuberance.

Almost a bit too lifelike perhaps. Fred Vereen recalled that an elderly resident once approached Vereen's wife with a complaint. "She came over to the office one day and told my wife, she said – my wife's name was Peggy – she said, "Peggy, those damned kids are out there climbing on that sign!"

So the next time you have a chance, take a drive over to Eggerts Crossing Village and see if those damned kids are still there!



Joe Ciccone serves on the board of the Lawrence Historical Society. He is a member of the Society's newsletter committee.

Society Co-Sponsors Event to Commemorate Washington's March to Yorktown

240 years ago this summer, soldiers in the Continental Army under George Washington and French soldiers under Jean Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, compe de Rochambeau, marched through Lawrenceville along the King's Highway — today's Route 206 — on their way from Princeton to Trenton, where they encamped at the estate of Trenton's namesake, William Trent. Their ultimate destination would be Yorktown, Virginia where they would surround and capture British General Cornwallis' army in the last major battle of the Revolutionary War.

To commemorate this historic march, the Lawrence Historical Society, along with the Trenton City Museum and National Washington Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Association, sponsored an event in late August at the Trent House in Trenton. The event, entitled "On the Road to Victory at Yorktown – The Encampment in Trenton, August 1781", was attended by more than 100 people, including reenactors from the 1st Rhode Island Regiment and John Lamb's Artillery Company. Reenactors from Le Regiment Bourbonnais and Le Regiment Saintonge represented Rochambeau's army. Activities included demonstrations of military drills and camp life. Paul Larson represented LHS on the planning committee.

Back in 1781, for the original force of almost 6,300 soldiers, the Trenton encampment was a brief respite on a journey of almost 680 miles. Most had been traveling since early August from locations as far away as Rhode Island. Washington had used deception to confuse the British about his intentions for as long as possible — were the combined forces gathering in New Jersey to attack the British in New York City or continue to Virginia to attack Cornwallis? By the time Continental and French troops arrived in Trenton on September 2, 1781 there could be little doubt among the British that Yorktown was the final destination..

The troops eventually reached Yorktown in late September and laid siege to British forces, with the British ultimately surrendering in mid-October.



Participants included re-enactors of African American infantrymen of the 1st Rhode Island Regiment (left) and of French infantry from Le Regiment Bourbonnais (above.) Both images courtesy of David Crow.

Society's Booth Draws Crowds at Community Day

The Lawrence Historical Society and other civic organizations gathered on a gloriously sunny Sunday afternoon to celebrate a sense of community.

The Society was one of several dozen organizations which participated in Lawrence Township's annual Community Day event on October 3rd. This was the first time the event had been held since 2019 due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Our booth was staffed by five volunteers: board members Stephen Carey and Joe Ciccone, Will Carey, and Junior Historian Club cofounders Julia Ciccone and Nate Kunkel. All hands were needed as the Society's booth was the scene of constant activity throughout the afternoon.

Visitors to the booth were able to learn more about the township's history, the Society's activities and peruse our collection of books and other merchandise. More than two dozen visitors registered for our mailing list, while Ciccone and Kunkel registered eight students for the Society's new Junior Historian club.

The amount of activity exceeded our expectations. "This demonstrates that there's a strong desire to learn more about the township's history," noted Stephen Carey. "Our common heritage provides a solid foundation for a sense of community."

Individuals who could not make it to Community Day but who want to learn more about the Society's activities can visit our website at: www.thelhs.org.



LHS Board member, Stephen Carey, and his son, Will, meet with visitors to the Society's booth.



Julia Ciccone registers two new members of the Society's Junior Historians club (above), while Nate Kunkel and Will Carey (left) talk to a visitor about one of the Society's historical maps.



This Month in Lawrence Township History

November 1906 — 27 residents of the Slackwood neighborhood meet to organize the Slackwood Fire Company, making it the first of the township's three fire companies.



Slackwood Fire Company, ca. 1939

The mission of *Places in Time* is to serve members of the Lawrence Historical Society (LHS) by:

- educating them about the history of Lawrence Township; and
- informing them of the activities of the Society.

Places in Time is issued quarterly. Comments, questions, or submissions should be directed to the editor, Joe Ciccone, at jciccone83@gmail.com. Deadlines for submissions are as follows:

December 15th (Winter issue)
 March 15th (Spring issue)
 June 15th (Summer issue)
 August 15th (Fall issue)

Preferred length of submissions is 800-1000 words for feature articles and 400-500 words for reviews. LHS does not provide a commission for submitted works. *Places in Time* and LHS assume no responsibility for statements made by contributors.

Places in Time accepts advertisements from businesses which provide services that would be of interest to LHS membership. Rates and other related information can be obtained by contacting Joe Ciccone at jciccone83@gmail.com. An advertisement (or sponsor recognition) appearing in *Places in Time* does not constitute an endorsement or recommendation of the advertiser's product or service by LHS or *Places in Time*.

Places in Time is made possible, in part, by a grant from the Mercer County Division of Culture and Heritage, in partnership with the New Jersey Historical Commission, Division of Cultural Affairs/Department of State.

Brearley House Open for Public Tours

The Brearley House has once again reopened for public tours. Beginning in September, members of the public can visit between 2 and 4 pm on the third Sunday of each month. Reservations are not required.

The Brearley house was restored in the late 1990s by the noted Philadelphia firm of Theodore H. Nickels under the plans of architects Ford, Farewell, Mills & Gatsch. Visitors to the Brearley House can expect to see the interior of the house looking as it did in 1761, or as much as modern research and technology and present day needs make feasible.



For more information on the Brearley House, check out the Society's website at: <https://www.thelhs.org/1761-brearley-house>

Hurricane Ida Pounds Port Mercer Canal House

In late August Hurricane Ida slammed Lawrence Township and the rest of New Jersey with torrential rains. The Delaware & Raritan Canal overflowed its banks, flooding nearby areas. Unfortunately, the historic Port Mercer Canal House, situated next to the canal, was not spared. By the time the storm was over, the house's basement was flooded completely, the rear kitchen halfway.

A team of volunteers led by Laura Nawrocik immediately took remedial effort to mitigate the damage. While the house was still structurally sound, all of the mechanical equipment in the basement was damaged beyond repair.

To learn more about how you can help with the restoration of the canal house, please contact the Society at: <https://www.thelhs.org/contact>



Lawrence Historical Society
PO Box 6025
Lawrenceville, New Jersey 08648

Return Service Requested



Renew Your Membership for 2021

Use your credit card to renew online today at www.thelhs.org, or complete the form below and return it with your check.
Please be sure to include your email address.

Please renew my membership today (circle level):

David Brearley (\$250)

Colonel Hand (\$175)

Captain Lawrence (\$100)

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Name: _____

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Email: _____ Phone: _____

Please make check payable to: The Lawrence Historical Society, PO Box 6025, Lawrence Township, NJ 08648

The Lawrence Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.
Dues and donations are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.