

THE JEFFERSON JOURNAL



A PUBLICATION OF THE JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY
"COMMITTEE FOR '76"



Spring 2009

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Calendar of Events

J.T. Historical Society/Museum:

April 2nd

General Membership Meeting
CANCELLED

April 5th

Museum Open 1-4 pm

May 7th

Presentation: Ringling Mansion
Camp Jefferson 7:30 pm

May 9th

Museum Open 11-3
Garden Club Plant Sale
JT Museum 11-3 pm

June 7th

Museum Open 1-4 pm
Display of Circus Memorabilia

June 10th

Senior Awards Night
J.T.H.S Auditorium 7pm
Sally & Walter Harlacher
Scholarship Award

President's Message - The Greatest Show On Earth—Christine Williams

"The Greatest Show on Earth....Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey Circus" This is a phrase we all seem to be familiar with; but did you know it is also part of our local history here in Jefferson Township, specifically Ringling Manor.

In 1913, Alfred T. Ringling came to the town of Petersburg and fell in love with the area located between Greenpond and the Bowling Green Mountains. He bought the entire town of Petersburg along with 600-1000 acres for approximately \$200,000. Ringling hired Joe Headley of the Headley Sawmill to help him plan an estate which would include a 26-28 room mansion and at least nine out buildings. Ringling's plan was to live in the mansion and have facilities to audition circus acts during the winter months. Construction was from 1913-1916. Headley oversaw the

mansion's construction employing about 90 men.

Ringling, his wife and son Richard lived in the house from 1916-1919. During that period it became the winter headquarters for the circus. Leaving the Oak Ridge train station a parade of circus animals delighted local residents. The animals which included leopards, lions and elephants were marched down Longwood Road (Oak Ridge Road/ Berkshire Valley Road) to winter at specially constructed buildings on the estate. Ringling spent his time auditioning acts such as trapeze artists and cowboys. He also entertained at lavish parties having such famous entertainers as opera star Geraldine Farrar in residence.

Ringling died suddenly of heart disease on the estate, 10/22/19. He was survived by his wife, his son Richard, and three surviving Ringling Brothers. At the time of his death he was head of the firm of

Ringling Brothers valued at more than eight million dollars.

On May 7, 2009, the Jefferson Township Historical Society will offer a presentation on the history of the circus and its relationship to Ringling Manor. This will be a power point presentation beginning with the history of the circus with rarely seen photographs and featuring historical society's photographs of the construction of the Ringling mansion along with commentary. There also will be displays of costumes worn by Ringling guest and the society's collection of the original pictures of Ringling's beloved cats along with other artifacts from the Manor. Refreshments with a circus flare and other surprises are planned for the evening which will begin at 7:30 P.M. in the Main Lodge of Camp Jefferson, Weldon Road.

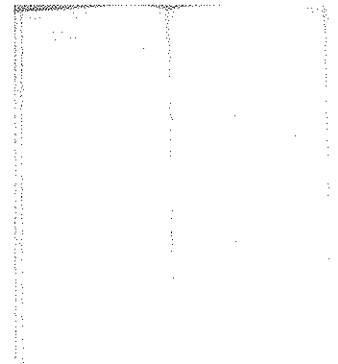


Director's Highlights - Treasures in the Basement - Carol Keppel

The daunting task of restoring the basement of our museum to its original purpose as a kitchen yielded plenty of sneezes and sore muscles but happily, some unexpected fine artifacts. We moved shelves and cabinets, emptied bags and boxes, and explored the depths of the storage boxes. Among the maps, papers, and boxes of wigs and bowties, two fascinating ledgers

emerged. These worn but legible journals from the 1890's tell volumes about consumer spending in those days. Not only were we amazed by the size of our resident's orders but the variety of wares offered in the general store. Would you care to line up with your market basket behind these folks?

(continued inside)



What's the Dirt? - Museum Garden Club - Roberta Shaw, Master Gardener

Welcome Spring! With the days getting longer and the sun getting stronger, every gardener is looking forward to working in their garden. As you begin to clear away the leaves that the winter winds gathered in the shrubs be cautious not to expose your perennials too prematurely. There are many cold nights still to come. If you left your ornamental grasses untouched for winter interest, now is the time to cut them.

It's also a good time to cut away any dead or damaged branches on shrubs and trees. The forsythias will soon be blooming, which is the perfect way to remember that it is time for an application of fertilizer with crabgrass preventer for your lawn.

The Museum Garden Club will be holding its' annual plant sale May 9th between 11-3pm. This year, in addition to perennials we will also offer herbs and

vegetables for sale. Spring is the perfect time to divide summer flowering perennials. Always water plants a day or two prior to dividing, this will help reduce stress. If you plan to divide hostas or daylilies, it is easiest to do so before they leaf out. Please consider donating some of your divided and potted perennials for the plant sale.

Come join us on April 18th for a spring clean up at the Museum Garden.

Past Times - R. Richard Willis, Trustee

Circa 1913-1919

On the Lake Hopatcong section of Jefferson big things were going on. Businesses were booming. There were approximately 16 hotels and rooming houses, an expanding railroad business and an amusement park at Nolan's Point.

There were enough people to occupy all those hotels and have fun since many came by train from the city to vacation. Dances were common place, boat racing on the lake, motion picture shows at the "Idle Hour Movie Theater" and live

entertainment. Especially the "Rose Midgets" that performed as well as summered at the Espanong Hotel. Since the theaters in the city didn't have air conditioning Broadway would close for the summer. Johnnie & Blanche Jess were also regulars for the summer. They played "Maggie & Jiggs--Bring up Father".

On September 8, 1919 one of the great hotels burned to the ground. This Hotel was Allen's; fire wasn't new to this hotel since it burned in the fall of 1894 only 7 years after it was built. By the winter of

1919 Allen's had built a new hotel, this building still stands today, although it once again had a tragedy in the winter of 1949 when a major blizzard struck and part of the building collapsed. Today the "Windlass Restaurant" is all that is left of the Allen's #3 building.

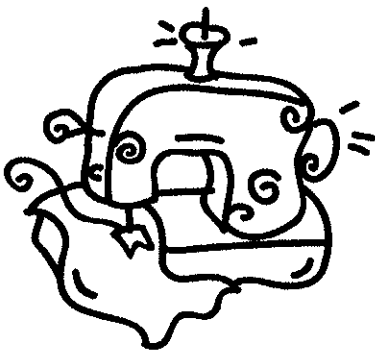
Archivist - Jana-Lee Bair

The crazy archivist is crazy about crazy quilts! Pulling from the quilt archives, a crazy quilt is an item you would find in a Victorian parlor. Crazy quilts were popular between 1880 and 1910, they were made up of bits and pieces left over from

your very best clothing. There would be silks, satins, velvets and ribbons among other things. The Victorian era being a time of showing off, a crazy quilt would also contain expensive threads, your best needlework, fancy stitches and embroidery.



Curator's Corner - Lynda MacDonald



Being a curator, I get to count, sort, clean, repair and sometimes play with our collections. I even have a wish list and guess what? I've had a wish granted! AND I'll get to play with it!

Our treadle Singer sewing machine * is cleaned, oiled, and ready for show and sew. As you have observed in the past we do have quilts on display and quilters in our membership. We are all excited and are very grateful to a certain expert

sewing machine repairman who made a house call recently. Thank you Jon.

Being a decent docent doesn't include being able to sew—however from now on you may find one of us doing just that when you come to visit. We can hardly wait to show you our fancy footwork.

*treadle means foot powered—no electric—we are green!!

Society News & Announcements

Membership

Please welcome our new Patron member Bob Nicholson of Eastern Propane Corp.

We currently have 1 Patron membership, 35 Life members, 3 Family 5 Individual memberships.

Thank you to continuing paid 2009 members: Arnold Arvidson, Emil and Margaret Babich, Horace and Joan Chamberlain, Dianna Filan, Florence Grey, Carol McGreat, David and Roberta Shaw, Marion Shuttler, and Barbara Westergaard.

Museum on the Web!

For all of you who could not attend our last general meeting, we previewed our new website. It is just wonderful!

It includes pictures of past events, back issues and current issue of our newsletter and general information and links. Many thanks to Richard West for his many hours of dedication. Our new website is now up and running. Please check us out at: www.jthistorical society.org

Giving (Donations are Tax Exempt)

The JT Society is not solely supported by membership dues. Therefore the society always welcomes needed donations. Checks payable to JT Historical Society can be sent to the Jefferson Township Museum, 315 Dover-Milton Road, Jefferson Township, NJ 07438

All Historical Society, Museum and Garden Club updates are sent via email. If you wish to receive these updates, send your email address to Christine Williams at info@jthistorical society.org

Miss Elizabeth's Shoppe

Miss Elizabeth's Shoppe" is open for business. It has been stocked for spring and summer with a wide variety of interesting items. A recently introduced line of handmade aprons is exclusive to the Shoppe. There are vintage glass ware and other kitchen pieces available. A line of specialty teas and bath accessories are being offered. The hand-crafted pieces in the shoppe make wonderful gifts. Framed photographs of the Museum during the four seasons and note cards have just been added along with unique garden pieces. There are

News

•Sgt. Stephen Deyoung with the 56 Stryker Brigade, son of James and Joan Deyoung, is still serving in Iraq.

•Corporal Jonathan Shaw, son of David and Roberta Shaw is still serving on board the USS New Orleans as a member of the Marine Expeditionary Unit.

Councilman Bob Birmingham has moved from Morristown Memorial Hospital to a rehabilitation facility.

always homemade baked goods in the shop case. The Gift Shoppe, located in the original kitchen of the Museum is open during Museum hours, the first Sunday of each month from 1-4 P.M. We are accepting donations of vintage items and pieces on consignment that would be appropriate for the Shoppe. The Shoppe has become a place to purchase unusual thoughtful pieces and yes, we gift wrap.



Director's Highlights - Treasures in the Basement (Continued) - Carol

Wm. Chamberlain	
8# pork	\$1.00
2oz. smo. tobacco	.04
Patrick O'Rourke	
1 1/2 dozen eggs	.30
John Whittle	
12# nails	.86
Mrs. Janice Jennings	
3 1/2 # sugar	.20
2 cakes soap	.10
4 oz tea	.15
1 pr boys boots	1.75
Milton School District	
1 cedar pail	.50
1 tin cup	.05
Mrs. Burt Dunn	
2 bushels potatoes	1.35
23 1/4 # butter	6.47
1 can oysters	.20
1 broom	.30
23# ham	3.80

Moses Moore	
1 hat	1.25
1 pants	1.75
1 pr shoes	2.00

Are you wondering what was John building? What was Mrs. Dunn going to do with *all that butter*? Was Moses going on a trip? As always, one discovery leads to the next investigation. Come explore with us at your township museum and you too will make some delightful discoveries. In our Shoppe, just like Mrs. Dunn and Mr. Chamberlain, you can peer into the display case and find something special for sale.

The League of Historical Societies of NJ

The Jefferson Township Historical Society is a member of this league. The league is a conglomeration of historical societies within NJ. They also publish a newsletter outlining historic events and exhibits from other societies throughout the state. If you would like to receive an electronic copy send your email address and request to barts@att.net

Jefferson Township Historical Society

"Committee for '76"

315 Dover-Milton Road Jefferson Township, NJ 07438

Museum Hours:

First Sunday of the Month

1-4 pm or by Appointment

973-697-0258

Visit our website: www.jthistoricalsociety.org

For additional information email us at
info@jthistoricalsociety.org

Jefferson Township Historical Society

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Carol Keppel

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Nancy Chamberlain

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Donna West

Secretary
Mary Parr

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Anyone interested in joining the editorial
staff, please email your interest to the
editor

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Museum Director
Carol Keppel

Assistant to the Director
Marilyn Reitzel

Curator
Lynda MacDonald

Assistant to the Curator
Jana-Lee Bair

Archivist
Jana-Lee Bair

Jefferson Township Historical Society
315 Dover Milton Road
Jefferson Township, NJ 07438

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tear off here

Membership Form

I would like to become a member/renew my membership:

Type of membership: (Circle Type requested)

Individual \$ 15.00	Business \$ 100.00
Family \$ 25.00	Life \$ 250.00
Sustaining \$ 75.00	Patron \$ 500.00

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

**I am a current member and would like to make an additional
donation in the amount of \$ _____**

To be used towards the following:

- ◇ General Fund
- ◇ Scholarship Fund
- ◇ In memory of: _____

Please make checks payable to:

Jefferson Township Historical Society

315 Dover Milton Road

Jefferson Township, NJ 07438