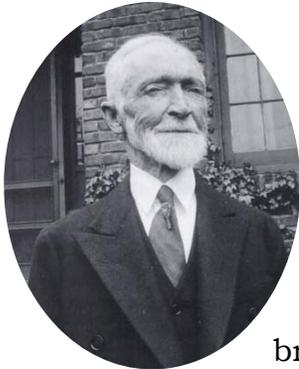


Nannygoats



The theme of Local History Day 2019 was 'Prohibition' in observance of the centennial of the ratification of the 18th Amendment of the Constitution establishing the prohibition of "intoxicating liquors" (as defined in the Volstead Act). The amendment was proposed by Congress at the end of 1917 and was ratified by the requisite number of states on January 16, 1919. Prohibition came into force at midnight on January 17, 1920 and violations commenced immediately.

The movement had been underway for decades and was driven by many factors, including a genuine desire to improve the quality of life for



PROHIBITION & THE PASTOR

lower and working classes, as well as growing anti-immigrant sentiment. In addition, the same rising Nationalism that eventually led to the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan resulted in Protestant zeal and suspicion about Catholics, who were thought to have a higher allegiance to the Pope than the Flag. Mixed in to all this was the devastation of the first World War, which did not engender kindness towards wealthy German brewers or their patrons. Many like to point to Women as responsible for

Continued on Page 4

1918

Four Saloons Are Given Death Blow In Metuchen Vote

METUCHEN, May 22—After a long and hard fight, under the leadership of Rev. James G. Mason, pastor of the Presbyterian Church and one of the most active members of the National Prohibition Party, Metuchen has spoken the word which puts at an end the licensed saloon in this borough.

The "wets" had expressed the utmost confidence in the outcome of yesterday's local option election and their disappointment was great when they learned that, although they had won in the second poll, the "drys" had secured sufficient votes in the first poll to offset this and make the town prohibition territory.

There are four licensed places in the borough, two of which must close almost immediately as they were licensed since the passage of the local option law, while of the others one must close in September and one in December.

The places to close in the minimum time are those of James Lawless and John B. Mc Guinness. David Gross, at the Hillside Inn, must close in September, while Charles G. Petriens can keep open until December, the law specifying that where a place was licensed before the adoption of the local option legislation, the owner can continue in business until the expiration of his license.

A total of 524 votes were cast, the "drys" securing 278 as against 246 for the "wets." The total voting population of Metuchen is 680. There are between 60 and 70 soldiers from Metuchen in active service and some of these received ballots which will be counted later. The Metuchen borough clerk, however, said today it was impossible to locate fully half of the soldier boys from Metuchen and declared that even if all of the soldiers who got ballots should vote "wet," the result would not be changed.

James Lawless' saloon was in the Albany Hotel at 431-437 Main Street (now Pink Lotus), McGuinness' Saloon was at 419 Main Street (current Brewed Awakening), and David Gross' Hillside Inn was on a large lot bounded by Main Street, Highland Avenue, Robins Place, and Hillside Avenue. Charles Petriens' place may have been The Pines on the Lincoln Highway. Local History Day 2019 attendees were invited to cast their own votes to go "Dry" or stay "Wet," and the Wets won handily this time around, 69 to 12.

The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society was founded in 1974 with the primary purpose of promoting an interest in and appreciation of the history of the Borough of Metuchen and of Edison Township.



Because many of the residents worked at Westinghouse? Because they gave away a free radio set when the home was purchased???

Actually, the Metuchen neighborhood known as the "Radio Section" or "Radio District" is named for the developer, the Radio Associates/Radio Home Builders, Inc. They had a convoluted and often troubled corporate history, but were responsible for purchasing, laying out, developing, and selling homes in the northwestern section of Metuchen in the 1920s. They also built neighborhoods of houses in North Plainfield, Iselin, and Woodbridge in the early 20th century.

RADIO HOME BUILDERS, Inc.

We Finance and Build That Home You Want

BEAUTIFUL COZY SUBSTANTIAL

Your Dream Comes True for Balance Payable Like RENT.
 \$100. Legal Rate of Interest No Extra Charges. We
 Only. We Make You Happy Help You Save

We Are Builders and Boosters of Metuchen

Main Street, Metuchen, N. J. Phone 374

\$100. DOWN
 And No More
Total Price \$2950 And Up

New complete 4, 5 and 6 rooms and bath; all city improvements, a few minutes' walk from station. Built on lots 40x100 with all modern conveniences; full cellar; gas, electricity, city water, sewer, lath and plaster; furnace, full plumbing, etc. Nobody Need Pay Rent to a Landlord.

30 Minutes from Newark.
 52 Trains Daily.

Terms Monthly Like Rent
 Come out and convince yourself at our expense. Call or write for booklet, or apply on Premises.

RADIO ASSOCIATES
 Main Street Metuchen, N. J.



RADIO ASSOCIATES

1901 City Directory, Column 11

Below is the eleventh column of entries in the sections relevant to our area of the 1901 *Polk's New Brunswick City Directory*. The Society began reprinting the entirety of this directory in the Winter/Spring 2016 issue.

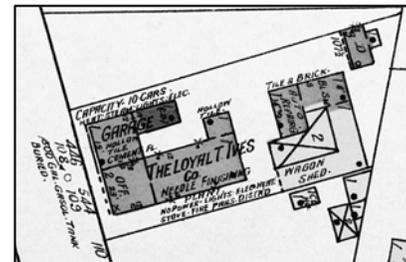
Nicholson Charles S. salesman, h Main c New
 Noe Eugene, clerk, h Middlesex ave
 Norcross Thomas, h Walnut
 O'Brien John, h LeGrande ave
 O'Brien Michael, h Main
 Oliver Harry D. real estate, h Durham ave
 Oliver James, painter, h Durham ave
 Opelt John H. h Orchard
 Opelt William, clerk, h Orchard
 Orton Frank, bus. N. Y. h Hillside ave
 Orton William, bus. N. Y. h Amboy ave
 Osburn W. R. well driver, h Graham ave. c High
 Oxenford M. C. clerk, h Graham ave. c High
 Payne Thomas E. retired, h Linden ave
 Peck H. T. Mrs. pres. and treas. Middlesex Shoe Co. h Grove c Middlesex ave
 Peck Lewis, sec'y Middlesex Shoe Co. h Grove c Middlesex ave
 Pery Jessie, stationery and printing, Main, h do
 Perry John H. h LeGrande ave
 Perry William H. mechanic, h LeGrande ave
 Pierson C. O. h Elm
 Pierson John N. architect, h Elm
 Post Albert, h Grove
 Potter Ellis F. (Dr.) dentist, Hillside ave. h do
 Power David A. bookkeeper, h Main c New
 Power James, emp L. V. R. R. h Main c New
 Power John sr. harness maker, Main c New, h do
 Power John jr. emp P. R. R. h Main c New
 Pratt Frank, h Main
 Prickett Charles A. druggist salesman, h Woodbridge ave
 Prickett S. B. D. reporter, h Woodbridge ave
 Prickett W. B. bus. New Brunswick, h Woodbridge ave
 Randolph Abbie, h Prospect
 Randolph Joseph, bookkeeper, h New Brunswick ave
 Randolph Raymond, clerk, h Main
 Reddell Thomas, butcher, Main, h Elm
 Reilly John, h Walnut
 Reynolds J. J. W. bus. Jersey City, h Woodbridge ave
 Rice John, h Cedar
 Rice William sr. h Cedar



Valentine's Day Gift Steals Society's Heart



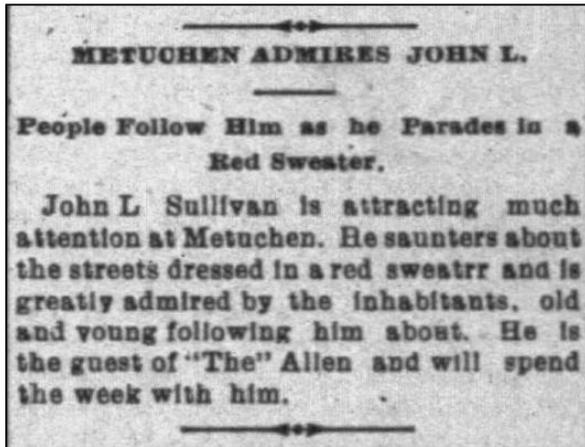
On February 14, 2019, Society volunteers were wooed and wowed by the donation of an original 1920 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Book for Metuchen. The Schenck Agency's John Jeney, a long-time area resident and volunteer, hand-delivered the century-old, 9-sheet set of full-color maps and upon his arrival, this *Nannygoats* editor tossed aside chocolate and roses, and spent the remainder of the day in thrall to the stunning surveys!



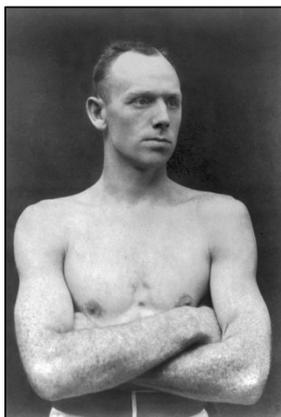
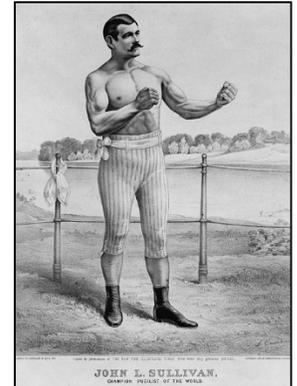
THE BOXING BOROUGH?

For decades a story has circulated that the Champion Bare-Knuckle Boxer John L. Sullivan (1858-1918) spent time in Metuchen. It was said that he trained at what is now part of St. Joe's High School, a Catholic preparatory school for boys on Plainfield Avenue.

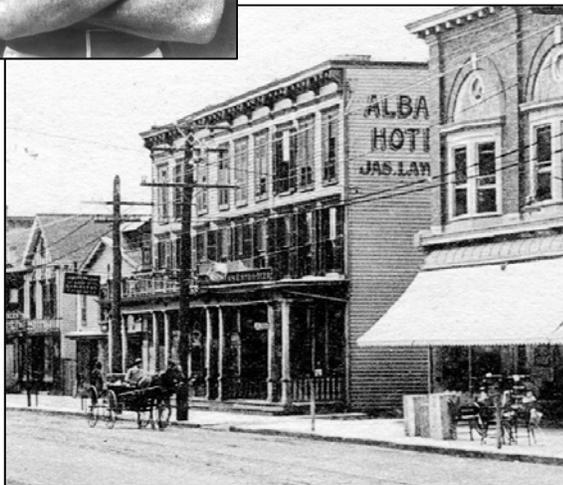
Some doubted the truth of the story, believing there was no way the famed "Boston Strong Boy" would have found reason to come to this part of New Jersey. However, seasoned "History Mystery Detectives" at the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society doggedly followed the leads, including the fact



that the former owner of the St. Joe's building, one Thomas Allen, was known to have co-owned a bar near Times Square in Manhattan with the famed & troubled boxer. Further research led to information about Allen's forays into Tobacco farming in the Borough and his legal disputes with Sullivan regarding their shared Saloon, Dante's Inferno at 1177 Broadway. Finally, a short article from June, 1900 which detailed Metuchenites' reactions to the pugilist was located and dealt a knock-out punch to the doubting Thomases.

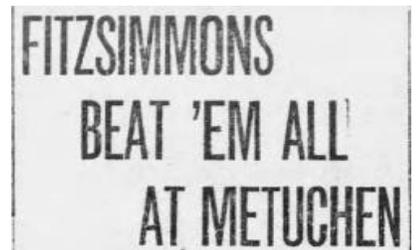


Perhaps, however, Metuchen wasn't such a random locale for ringsters; information has recently surfaced that "Lanky" Bob Fitzsimmons, the Cornishman who achieved fame for beating Gentleman Jim Corbett (the man who beat John L. Sullivan) also pounded the pavement. A July 24, 1913 article told of a game of Quoits played by the boxer while staying at James Lawless' Albany Hotel (431-437 Main Street, currently Metuchen Wine & Liquor/Suite Beverly/Pink Lotus).



Added to this, as reported in the Summer 2011 edition of *Nannygoats*, former heavyweight champion Jack Johnson was arrested for speeding his "high-powered car" through Metuchen in 1922!

Wonder who will show up for the next "round"?



Lanky "Bob" Fitzsimmons, who has been spending a few days in this section, took a run over to Metuchen Monday and renewed acquaintances. He called on his friend Jim Lawless, proprietor of that well-known hostelry, the Albany Hotel, and incidentally he issued a broad challenge to all quoit pitchers of the brainy borough. Ex-Chief of Police John T. Gedney, ex-Assemblyman Luther H. Tappen, Charles M. Drake and ex-Councilman Thomas Horan accepted his challenge, and over in Robin's field there was started a quoit match, the like of which has never been seen in these parts. Fitz beat 'em all one right after the other. He had his hardest job with Judge Tappen, and Tappen did put a few over on the former heavyweight champion of the world.

LICENSES IN METUCHEN.

Once again the troublesome matter of liquor licenses in Metuchen has come before the court, and once again Judge Strong has taken advantage of the opportunity to make statements and advance opinions that do not stand the test of common sense and that will not commend themselves to even the judge's best friends.

A man named Whalen, who has kept a saloon for a number of years in Metuchen, is an applicant for a renewal of his license. The place has come to be considered as one of the institutions of the village and there was no remonstrance, individual or organized, to the renewing of the license. There was absolutely no evidence submitted to the court to show that there was any logical reason why the application should not be granted. It was an old place and, as far as the judge knew, had always been conducted in accordance with the law. Nevertheless, Judge Strong let it be plainly seen that he was inclined—one might almost say determined—to deny the application for a renewal.



Men stand, and a dog lays, along the steps of Whalen Hall at New and Main Streets. This building was moved here from Middlesex Avenue and Center Street, and had previously served as a school. This is where Daniel Whalen would have been operating his saloon in 1908. By the time Prohibition was enacted, it had been converted for use by the Second Baptist Church.

1908
**CHURCHES
VS. SALOON**

Metuchen has another license fight on its hands. The application of D. C. Whalen for a removal of his license, was laid over by Judge Booraem until next week. The fact of it being laid over gave ground for rumors concerning the probable disposition of it.

Yesterday the opposition took definite shape when petitions were circulated in three of the borough's seven churches against the granting of the license.

It is understood that the Law and Order League is back of the movement and that the League will try and show the court that Metuchen has too many drinking places already. Whalen has conducted a saloon in Metuchen for about fifteen years. About a year ago he transferred his business from New street to a new building at the corner of Main and New streets.

Temperance - and there were many who campaigned - but only one woman ever voted for it; the sole (and first) female member of Congress, Jeannette Rankin of Montana. There was no popular referendum on the issue, and even so, women didn't have the vote until the 19th amendment (ratified the following year). Also surprising to some is the fact that Carrie

Nation, practically the symbol of the militant Dry movement, had died in 1911.

Like much of the country, the Metuchen-Edison area had been struggling with the saloon question for many years. We had our own Carrie Nation in the form of the Presbyterian pastor, Reverend Dr. James Gilbert Mason. Mason was also nationally prominent in the movement, and as seen in news articles about his campaigns, he

ASBURY PARK EVENING PRESS, TUESDAY, MAY 6, 1916.

DR. J. G. MASON IS LOOMING UP AS CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENCY

Metuchen, N. J., Pastor, Well Known Summer Resident of West Alenhurst, Is One of the Most Militant and Ablest Leaders of His Party.

ALREADY ENDORSED BY HIS HOME STATE

Born in Tennessee, Civil War Splits Family, His Father Fighting For the Confederacy and He Battling For the Union.

OFTEN NOMINATED FOR HIGH OFFICES

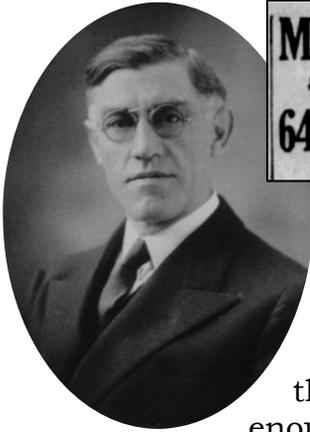
REV. DR. JAMES GILBERT MASON

convention, is a summer resident at his place in the first half of his class West Alenhurst, where he occupies a W. - Splits Family.

1913

PROHIBITION HEADQUARTERS

METUCHEN, N. J., July 10.—The Rev. Dr. J. G. Mason, Prohibition candidate for Governor, has gone to Alenhurst, where he will maintain a campaign headquarters in his bungalow on Deal Lake. Dr. Mason says he will tour every county in the State.



Metuchen Street Is Bathed in Rum * * * * * 640 Gallons Are Poured Out by Mayor

fervently utilized every means available to him, including pulpit, politics, and pull; he preached, ran for office, and enlisted his famous friends, like Thomas Edison, to make statements on behalf of the cause. Mason lived to age 96, long enough to see the repeal of the "Noble

Experiment," but he campaigned for it until the end and proudly proclaimed himself to be a Militant Dry.

Edison TV put together a short film about Local History Day 2019, which viewers can watch online via the Edison Municipal website. We invite Edison TV to return – along with all attendees – for Local History Day 2033, when we will recognize the centennial of the 21st Amendment that repealed the 18th. So, mark your calendars now for February 13, 2033 – perhaps it will even be a BYOB event!

**DR. JAMES G. MASON VISITS EDISON
AND IS ASSURED FAMOUS INVENTOR
BELIEVES IN PROHIBITION LAWS**

**Metuchen Minister, 89,
Learning to Drive Ford for
Campaign Tours**

At the top of the page is Arthur K. Hillpot, the Mayor/Funeral Director who, in 1928, requested an axe from the Police Department and released 640 gallons of intoxicating beverage onto the streets of Metuchen. In 1930, Mason was learning to drive and visited Thomas Edison in his campaign to preserve Prohibition, which was facing serious challenges. Three years later, in 1933, Mason was "Still in the Fight" against repeal. In 1938, Metuchen's Militant Minister passed away at his home on William Street.

STILL IN THE FIGHT
Rev. J. Gilbert Mason of Metuchen, militant dry, and once a candidate for President on the Prohibition ticket, admits that the wets have the advantage in the coming election on the repeal of the 18th amendment, but he promises that a fight will be made by his party.

EDISON DESCRIBES DRY GAIN TO MASON

Inventor Tells Prohibition Candidate, Shore Man, Wives No Longer Intercept Pay.

METUCHEN, N. J., Oct. 4—Whereas 200 women gathered weekly at the gates of the Edison plant to intercept their husband's pay in pre-prohibition days, there is now no such assemblage, Thomas A. Edison, the aged inventor, told Rev. James Gilbert Mason of West Allenhurst Metuchen.

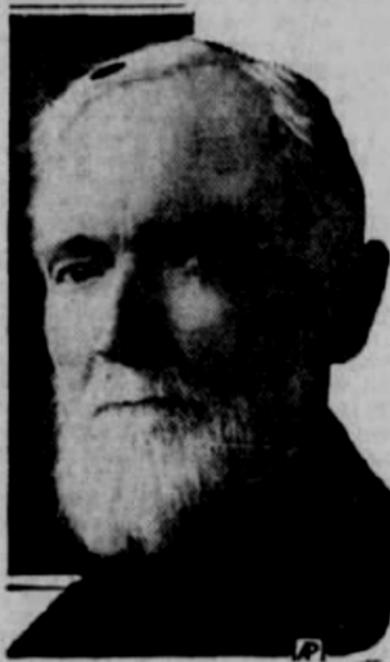
Dr. Mason, Dry Leader, Dies in Metuchen at 96

Borough's Oldest Resident Occupied Pulpit at Presbyterian Church for 48 Years ; Ran for President, Governor and Senator on Prohibition Ticket

METUCHEN, March 19. — The Rev. James Gilbert Mason, oldest resident of the borough and former pastor of the Presbyterian Church, where he occupied the pulpit for 48 years, died at his home on William street at about 8:30 o'clock last night. He observed his 96th birthday in October of last year.

In 1916, before the advent of prohibition, Dr. Mason was a candidate for president of the United States on the Prohibition party ticket. Three years earlier he was the party's candidate for Governor of New Jersey, and in 1930 he aspired to the United States Senate.

A close friend of the late Thomas A. Edison, Dr. Mason rode on the inventor's first trolley car and it was in the clergyman's church in this borough that Edison's first talking machine was placed on exhibition.



METUCHEN AND HER HISTORY, 1870 (X)

The following is the next installment of Dr. Ezra Mundy Hunt's "Metuchen and Her History," written in 1870, which we began reprinting serially in issues of *Nannygoats* beginning with the Winter/Spring 2015 edition. Many thanks to Society President Dominic T. Walker for transcribing this document.

Although this great epoch, both in European and American history, did not reflect any very wonderful events into Metuchen, yet a gradual increase of population and thrift, and the changes already noted, were foundations for progress, which the lapse of time has made more apparent. Material prosperity was increasing, religious interests were advancing, and intelligence was at least so valued that, as I judge from a subscription list I have seen, a circulating library had been secured.

The patriotism which had been evolved by the memories of '76, and replenished by the events of 1812-14, continued to be cherished. The Fourth of July was an occasion of more significance than now, as often the comrades in patriotic service met together, and with marches, and reading of "The Declaration," and a good dinner for all, they renewed and re-consecrated the precious memories of the hard-fought and well won triumphs of liberty.

Besides this, the yearly Training Day, which had been appointed for the purpose of preserving a military spirit, and for practice in tactics and fire-arms, was still an institution, and served to awaken the latent enthusiasm of all the commonwealth. Continental and militia captains imagined themselves once more on duty, and tried to adjust the home-guards and untrained militia in something of military order. Old suits and new, swords, bayonets and fowling-pieces, cavalry horses and spurs, stars and stripes, were quite in demand, and as the citizen soldiery trained along to the music of fife and drum, the whole township was roused to patriotic zeal, and the people generally held grand holiday.

But alas, time seemed to develop the fact that many fell out of line; that defenders of our country were not to be made by such methods, and some accustomed to sobriety would on this special occasion lose their hats and return to the bosom of their families somewhat tipsical. The result was that "general training" incurred the disapprobation of some of the more sturdy yeomanry, and as it was fondly hoped that was would never come again, a few years later all the brave legions were excused from this fatigue duty and allowed in retracy to rest upon the laurels they had won.

So much as to the Forefathers. As to the Fore-mothers, they were mostly models of industry and comeliness. They laid their hands to the spindle, and to weave and knot and make a sampler, were accounted necessary accomplishments. They no doubt followed the fashions then as now, protecting their head and ears from the inclemency of the weather and the rays of the sun by bonnets, any one of which would now furnish material for a

dozen cockle-shells. They had little occasion for veils or parasols, and dared to appear in the same silk dress at least sixteen times in a year. As to what the young ladies wore, I see some here present, older than then, but jolly yet. How they managed and how they won; they can spin that yarn better than I. Among the daughters may there be many such like.

The next quarter of a century, from 1825 to 1850, I must notice by reference to somewhat shorter intervals. Between 1825 and 1835 Ezra Ayres, (1825) Steele Manning, (1828) W.M. Ross, (1832) and Frazee Ayres, who had gone from here when young and been successful as merchants in New York, lured by a love for their former homes, returned and settled in this locality. Rev. Holloway W. Hunt became pastor of the Presbyterian church (1828) after the brief pastorate of Rev. Michael Osborn, and Lewis and David G. Thomas (1881) of Woodbury, Conn., settled here. All these persons became prominently identified with the place, and by their influence or individual enterprise did much to give moral and material basis for future advance.

In 1828 M. Freeman, the father of R.R. Freeman, moved here from New Brunswick. Lewis Campbell and Lewis Thomas, Lenox and Tucker (1834) were actively engaged in merchandise or more general trading; Samuel Voorhees superintended a thriving carriage and blacksmith business where Mr. Marshall now lives, and the village seemed gradually becoming a more important centre. A Post Office was first established at Metuchen March 29th, 1832, and was kept in Upper Metuchen by Lewis Thomas until February 2, 1839, when George B. Stelle was appointed.

Continued in the Next Issue



The Grimstead Room at the Metuchen Public Library contains a wealth of local history information, including thousands of photographs, maps, oral histories, manuscript & subject files, postcards, and ephemera. If you have a specific interest in a particular area of Metuchen or Edison history, contact us at info@metuchen-edisonhistsoc.org

with as many details as possible. Although our archives are not conducive to browsing, if we have any relevant information we will be pleased to arrange, by appointment, for one of our Board members to assist you with your search.

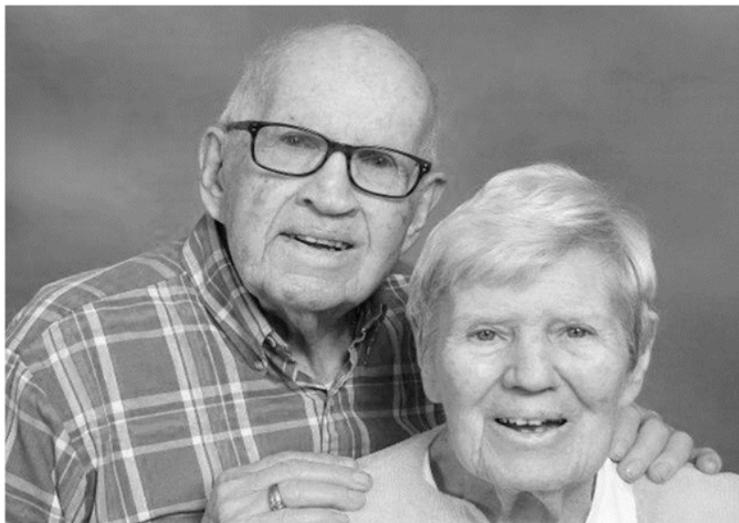
“Doc Ainslie” ~ Dr. William H. Ainslie, Sr.

The Society is very sorry to share the news that longtime member Dr. William H. Ainslie, Sr., 98, passed away on February 12, 2019. Born in Perth Amboy in 1921, he grew up in Metuchen and later moved to the Clive Hills section of Edison. He graduated from Phillips Exeter Academy and Harvard University, and received his medical degree from Tufts Medical School. He served in the US Army Medical Corps during World War II.

Dr. Ainslie was one of the first board certified obstetricians and gynecologists in the area, and built his Amboy Avenue office in 1954. He was a key member behind the effort to build JFK Medical Center in the 1960s and was greatly admired for his warm-hearted approach to medicine. He delivered over 10,000 babies during his long career, and although he stopped delivering babies in 1986, he did not enter full retirement until 2000.

In addition to his love of travel and remaining physically active the Metuchen YMCA and Metuchen Golf and Country Club, he enjoyed his involvement in the community. He joined the First Presbyterian Church of Metuchen in 1936; he once told this editor of *Nannygoats* that he was baptized by Rev. James G. Mason. He was an active member of the Metuchen Riding and Hunt Club, Metuchen Exchange Club, Metuchen-Edison Historical Society, Raritan-Millstone Heritage Alliance, and was dedicated to the restoration of the Colonial Cemetery in Metuchen.

Dr. Ainslie was predeceased by his parents Thomas and Mary (Horn) Ainslie. He is survived by his wife of 75 years Nancy (Wilson); son Dr. William H. Jr (Marnie); daughters Barbara (Matteo) Settembrini and Susan (Chris) Dunn; grandchildren Lisa, Brad, Jon, David, Laura and Ian; great grandchildren Connor, Kaia, Briar, Dylan, Theodore, and Lillian.



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The name of the newsletter, “**Nannygoats**,” is taken from the title of a collection of **anecdotes**, articles, reminiscences, and letters compiled by photographer J. Lloyd Grimstead. He took more than 2,800 photographs of the Metuchen-Edison area, mostly during the 1930s, which make up 80 percent of the Historical Society’s photographic collection. The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society dedicates this publication to Lloyd Grimstead, as a way of honoring him for preserving so much of our local history.

The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Society Merch!

Looking for that perfect ensemble to wear to your next soiree?
The Society has the answer...

Front



Back



\$15 Tees

Army Tan with Khaki Green ink



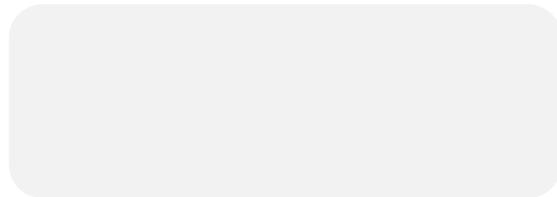
Postcards 50¢

Reproduction Arsenal postcard with history on the reverse.

To order online, visit
www.metuchen-edisonhistsoc.org



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Metuchen, NJ 08840



Want to write an article for Nannygoats? Have a History Mystery you need help with? An interesting photo or memory to share? Contact the editor... we love submissions from our members and readers!

“PEOPLE IN PLACES”

An exhibit of historic images of Metuchen & its people.

SUNDAY, MARCH 24, 2019

2:00 p.m. -4:00 p.m.

Transformations Gallery
at the Old Franklin Schoolhouse
491 Middlesex Avenue, Metuchen

View the collection and browse photograph albums
from the Grimstead & Frey Sen Collections

MIDDLESEX
C O U N T Y • N J

HISTORY FAIR

Saturday, May 18, 2019

10:00 am - 4:00 pm

East Jersey Old Town Village at Johnson
Park, 1050 River Road • Piscataway, NJ

Liberty Baseball Games, Historical
Societies Tent, Antiques Show, Craft
Demonstrations, Horse & Wagon Rides
and Children's Activities.

EDISON HISTORY DAY

Browse photographs and displays highlighting the
history of the southern part of Township

SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2019

10:30 a.m. -3:30 p.m.

Edison Public Library, 340 Plainfield Avenue, Edison

For more, contact: info@metuchen-edisonhistsoc.org

Save the Date!

Metuchen Country Fair
Saturday, October 5, 2019