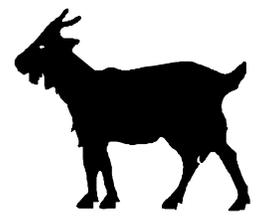


Nannygoats



Vol. 10, Issue 3

Newsletter of the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society

Fall 2012

The following article was written by Chris Crane, the son of the founder of the *Criterion News Advertiser*. The Society wishes to thank Mr. Crane not only for sharing the history of his family and business, but for his support over the years by publishing our program announcements in the Community Calendar. Also, look for a series of the Society's historic photographs featured in *The Crit* throughout its 60th anniversary year.

THE CRITERION

Sec. 34.66 P. L. & R.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT No. 1
STELTON, N. J.

VOL. I — No. 1

STELTON, N. J.

MAY 29, 1952

60 Years of Family & Community

by Chris Crane



A number of years ago, Metuchen resident Steve Tardosky was renovating a bathroom in a home he and his wife just purchased. As he took up the old linoleum he discovered old newspapers lining the floor, a common practice to eliminate floor squeaks. Among the yellowed papers was a November 1954 issue of *The Criterion News Advertiser (The Crit)*. On the second page in the upper corner appeared a birth announcement. Delighted with this piece of Metuchen folklore, Steve headed to the Criterion office and hand-delivered the issue to the baby boy turned General Manager, Chris Crane.

The Criterion News is the brainchild of Chris' father, William 'Bill' Crane Sr. A shopper was a

novel concept in the 1950's, providing small business with an opportunity to merchandise directly to local consumers. In selecting the name, Bill Sr. was sending a message that he was running a business

Continued on Page 4

Also in this issue

- Local Montford Point Marines Honored*
- New in the Archives*
- Class of 1931 History (continued)*
- 1928 Directory excerpt*
- Society Merchandise for Sale*
- Upcoming Events and Programs*
- Crumbs of Comfort Historical Dinner*
- Woodwild Park Plaque Project*

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.

Historical Dinner at Hailey's Harp & Pub

by Steve Reuter

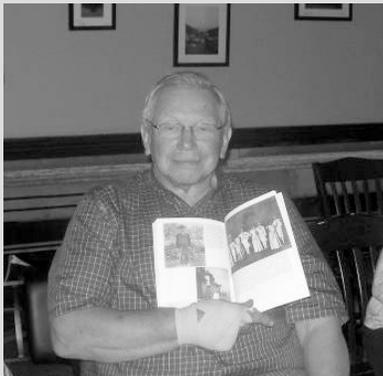
On Tuesday, August 21st, 2012, Haileys Harp & Pub hosted an "1888" historical dinner in conjunction with the Society. Based on recipes found in the "Crumbs of Comfort" cookbook compiled by the "Ladies Aid Society of the Presbyterian Church" of Metuchen in 1888, the dinner featured five recipes found in the book, each paired with a beer the Pub selected for the dinner. The recipes chosen were; Mrs. Emery's Chow-Chow, Filet of Beef and Lobster Rolls; Mrs. Gilbert's Chicken for Supper; and Mrs. Rowland's Pickled Raspberries. Hailey's also created a Trifle for dessert named in honor of Mrs. Mason, wife of then Reverend Mason, a very influential figure in Metuchen for many years. For the occasion, Hailey's Harp and Pub also ordered a cask-conditioned beer from NJ's Carton Brewery, made just for the event.

During the course of the dinner, the Society's own Tyreen Reuter gave a talk and slide show presentation of some of the life and history of Metuchen during the 1880s, and longtime board member Walter Stochel was also on hand to answer any questions from the thirty plus diners. The crowd was a good mix of Society Members, history buffs, Hailey's regulars, beer connoisseurs, and even some Hailey's staff enjoying a night off! The event was also covered by the Sentinel and NJ.com.



The dinner was originally the idea of Haileys' Moshe Atzbi, who picked up a copy of the old cookbook and was intrigued by the recipes. "Moe", along with Chef John LaBarbera teamed up to make the challenging, sometimes vague recipes into delicious dishes, while Owner/Proprietor Chris Flynn was the gracious host. The Society, in addition to assembling the slide show and history, also provided copies of "Crumbs of Comfort" to all who attended and awarded a "Metuchen" book as a trivia prize.

Left: Dr. James Oliver posing with a photograph in of his Civil War ancestor of the same name. *Top:* Hailey's Proprietor and a Society member converse. *Above:* Diners at the east end of the banquet room enjoy the historical creations and craft beers.



Eagle Scout Work at Woodwild Park

Woodwild Park, the 3.5-acre nature reserve featured in the Fall 2010 edition of *Nannygoats*, has been the focus of an Eagle Scout project conducted by local resident Jesse Schafer.

In addition to organizing a community cleanup, Schafer raised funds for and installed three plaques in the park. One plaque explains the glacial kettle hole, another describes the wildlife inhabiting in the park, and the third marks the sleigh hill. For more information about the history and natural environment of Woodwild Park, visit www.woodwildpark.org.



Nannygoats will be 10 years old...

The Winter 2013 issue will mark ten years that the Society has been publishing *Nannygoats*. Want to be a part of that history? We encourage submissions to be considered for the newsletter. A history of your family, house, local event? We welcome a wide range of diverse topics.

Congressional Gold Medal Presentation Ceremony for local Montford Point Marines

On August 29, 2012, a very special ceremony took place outside Metuchen Borough Hall. Two long-time residents, Mr. Daniel Robinson and Mr. Austin Banks, were presented with Congressional Gold Medals in honor of their service with the Montford Point Marines during World War II. The honor, which is the nation's highest awarded to civilians, was bestowed to the 368 surviving Montford Point Marines in a special Congressional ceremony in June, 2012. Since Mr. Banks and Mr. Robinson were unable to attend the ceremony in the Capitol, the Marines came to Metuchen to honor them.

In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order No. 8802 establishing the fair employment practice that began to erase discrimination in the Armed Forces, and soon after training began at Camp Montford Point, a segregated boot camp in Jacksonville, North Carolina. For more history of the Montford Point Marines, visit www.montfordpointmarines.com.

Metuchenite Cecile Lefebvre and her family live near these two gentlemen, and offered a few words about her neighbors:

They are often outside on their front yard talking and laughing with each other. Daniel once told me that he first moved to Metuchen and then invited his friend Austin to move in the house next door (I think this was back in the 60s, although I am not sure). They are both in incredibly good shape for their age and always have big smiles on their faces! Austin grows his garden and always shares his vegetable with the neighbors. And he still walks every morning (my husband, Chris, often sees him while on his way to the train station in the morning). Austin even sawed apart a big tree which had fallen in front of his house after a big storm 3 years ago! It took him some time but he did it! I believe they are, along with their very good friends Mary and Everett Webb who live the house next door, the longest residents of the street.



Mr. Daniel Robinson and Mr. Austin Banks.
Photograph courtesy of Julie Walton Shaver.

PARKING SPACE IN REAR LI-8-7600 FREE DELIVERY

Drake's MIDDLESEX HARDWARE

395-397 MAIN ST. METUCHEN, N. J.

Customer's Order No. Date: 3/14 195...

M. Clarence Kjersgaard

Address 82 Kempson Pl

QUAN.	DESCRIPTION	PRICE	AMOUNT
1	Softener	not	23000
300 lb.	Salt	225 675	
	10%		68
			607
			23607

ALL claims and returned goods MUST be accompanied by this bill.

Rec'd by: _____

NEW IN THE ARCHIVES...

The Society is thrilled to have received numerous Thornall Family items from Connie Thornall Hope. We are in the process of creating an inventory of this collection, and will feature it in an upcoming edition of *Nannygoats*.

Also new in the collections is a receipt from Drake's Hardware, as explained in a short letter from its donor, Robert C. Thomas:

The enclosed receipt may be of interest to you. I found it in an old desk that has been in the family for a long time. Claren Kjersgaard was my maternal grandfather. The street address should be Kempson Place. I grew up in Metuchen (on 82 Kempson). I only remember Drake's being in one building – from the 70s to the 90s(?). I think I remember it being in #397 (Now the Buttery Bake Shoppe). #395 is a long building (now Metuchen Dance Center on the Main Street front) that goes all the way back to Pearl Street. Was this building that long in the 70s? If you go in the alley, on the railroad/#385 side of #395, there is an advertisement for Drake's. It is very faded, but if you know what you are looking for... Sincerely, Robert C. Thomas. P.S. Notice the price of the salt!!!

with high ethical standards. Bill had gained publishing experience working as a correspondent covering trade conventions throughout the Northeast as well as producing a publication with his older brother Marvin, called *Tradewinds*. On May 29, 1952, the first edition of *The Criterion* was pieced together at the Crane's kitchen table and published. It has become a mainstay of the community appearing in mailboxes like clock-work every week for generations.

Through the Years

1952 – Metuchen was semi rural area that was bustling with new development. New homes were going up. Just about anything could be bought right downtown; a woman's dress, a car, an overcoat, lumber, sporting goods, groceries. Development was considered a sign of prosperity. Appropriately, *The Criterion's* tagline was "Serving the Area of Greater Development."

1960s- All the Crane children, Kathleen, Priscilla, Christopher, Bill Jr. and Elliot, began working at the paper starting in the mailroom. During this time their father delivered important lessons. When a child bought something like a sweater or baseball bat, he would inquire: "Where did you buy that?" If they responded with the name of store that was not a company client, he retorted, "Why didn't you buy it at (citing the name of a client) instead. Spend your money with the people who spend money with you."

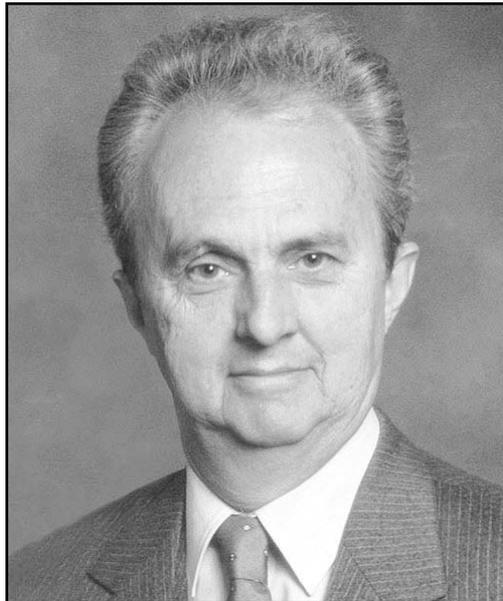
1970s– The postal strike in April 1970 during found the family and employees hand delivering the paper for several days. Chris explains: "I learned a lot of respect for the postal carriers." In the mid 70s the face of retail in the area began to change with the renovation of the outdoor mall at Menlo Park and the new Woodbridge Center. These shiny, new complexes were drawing shoppers away from downtown centers.

1980s – Changes in technology brought about new methods for performing production work. Typesetting is now done on large CompuGraphic equipment. This process required each text block to

be typed on a keyboard and output to a paper film cartridge. There was no screen to review and no saving. Mistakes meant starting again from scratch. The pages were still hand pasted together. Even so, the process is more streamlined. The mailing database is now maintained digitally, rather than with an individual metal plate per address.

1990s – There were 16-18 empty storefronts in Metuchen and many more throughout Edison. The big box stores like Home Depot and Price Club (now Costco), Target and others started opening up. Smart marketing tools for small business become even more critical. Technology takes an even greater step forward with the introduction of the personal computer and associated software, allowing the entire newspaper to be produced digitally.

2000s – The advent of the Internet places additional strain on the operators of local small business. Many begin to wonder why consumers, once so loyal, have begun to pass them by. Bill Sr. passes away in 2007 leaving his children, Chris and Priscilla, to run the business he worked so hard to build in the community he loved so much.



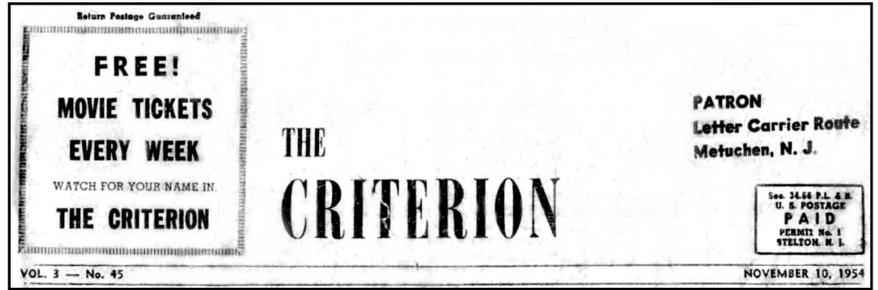
Serving the customer and the community

Small business does not have easy access to consumer research. Through its associations with the New Jersey Press Association and National Newspaper Association, *The Criterion News* has access to consumer market trend study information. These studies become a very useful tool in helping to create and run ad campaigns that truly resonate with the consumer, coupled with years of experience creating marketing plans. Chris describes: "We take a lot of time discerning a client's need. Tell me about your customers, how they think and what they want. Tell me about your products. We craft the ad message and the placement timing for the best results and return on investment".

Since their beginning, *The Criterion* has always been a direct mailed publication. "Advertisers and consumers want their information clean and dry"

Chris says. "Not picked up from the street". This has always been a far more effective way to reach readers, though a more costly process.

The Metuchen Merchant program, which provides discount ad space to Metuchen business, was first published in the 1970s and again in the late 1980s. In 1997, after discussions with the Chamber of Commerce, *The Criterion* began to offer the Metuchen Merchant program on a continuous basis, devoting one issue per month to highlight Metuchen



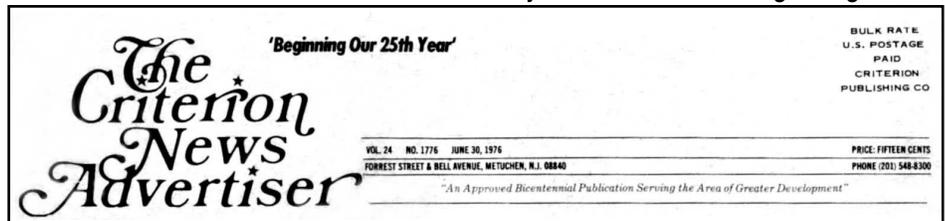
relied on the newspaper to get the message of their own hard work to the public.

An interesting footnote in the modern era is how the presence of the Internet has actually benefitted the local business. "Statistics show that the great majority of consumers still rely on a trusted source like their community newspaper for information on significant purchases," Chris explains. "Small business really does not have the resources to spend to be the first noticed from an Internet search. By promoting your business' website in newspaper advertising you achieve two results: saving money by saying less in your ad and pointing the consumer to your website, and gaining sales



businesses. Estimates are that since the fall of 1997, they have provided well over one million dollars worth of advertising discounts to Metuchen business, in order to help them compete.

The Criterion and the Crane family are woven into the community's fabric. William served with the Lions and Rotary Clubs, and the newspaper is a founding member of the Metuchen Chamber of Commerce. William served as its President, son Elliot on the Board of Directors, and Chris has been involved in running many of the chamber's activities over the years, in addition to serving on several municipal commissions and the Board of the YMCA. Because of the nature of their business, hundreds of local community groups have



because now you have reached the ideal local target consumer."

Like their father before them, the family strives for the long-term relationship with the client and the community at large, "We are only as good as you are. We are only as healthy as your business is. This is why the client is so important to us" But

perhaps the most important message *The Crit* conveys, is from a lesson learned long ago, Put your money where your house is.



Images included in this article

Front page: The headline of the first issue, and a 1950s photograph of *The Criterion* offices on Pearl Street. Page 4: William 'Bill' Crane, Sr. Page 5: Headlines from the issues of *The Criterion* from the 1954, 1965, 1976, and 2012.

Metuchen High School's Class of 1931 *History of Metuchen*

The following is continued from the Class of 1931's *History of Metuchen*, which is being reprinted in *Nannygoats* serially (beginning with Volume 5, Issue 2, Summer 2007). While the history contains some known factual & grammatical errors, the document is reproduced exactly as originally written.

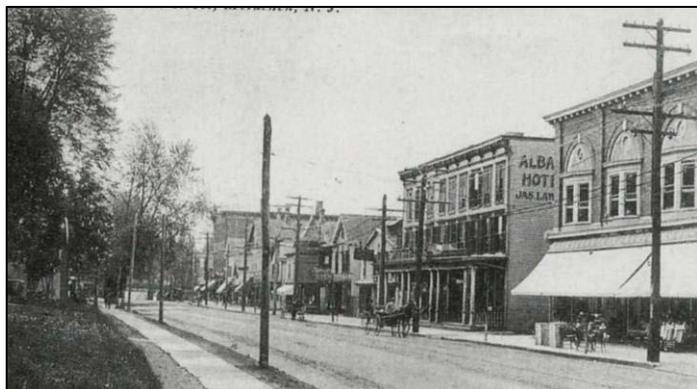
GOVERNMENT AND ZONING, *continued*

And now cast your eye backward for a glimpse of Main Street in the 1800s. Then, as now, the center of town activities, it, nevertheless, presents a more open appearance. There is little need for zoning laws.

The first store, a grocery establishment owned by John James Clarkson, is on the corner of Middlesex Avenue and Main Street where Danford's store is now situated. Metuchen being the business center of Fords, Rahway, South Plainfield, Piscataway, and Bonhamtown, the farmers from the surrounding towns group around the fire in the Clarkson store and talk for hours about their crops.

Throughout the years more stores gradually spring up. Next to Clarkson's is Mr. Freeman's Fancy Good Store, and beyond that a Stove Store and Anderson's Drug Store. These stores are situated on Main Street between Middlesex and Highland Avenues. Most of the next block is taken up by the Robins Estate but there are several stores on the opposite side of the street. Among them are Kramer's Department Store (which is standing today), a Feed Store, and a hotel owned by Van Sicycle. Further on, at the corner of Main Street and Amboy Avenue (where Dughi's Candy Store is now located) is a grocery store owned by Freeman Edgar. This is Metuchen of the 1800s.

Wander about the streets of Metuchen, one wonders, perhaps, where they got their names. Many of them were named after people who lived here in the eighteen hundreds. Graham Avenue was named for David Graham Thomas, who is responsible for the development of Southwest Metuchen. Thomas Pond and Park were also named for Mr. Thomas. Clive Street was named for Mrs. George S. Silzer's brother, Clive Waite,* and



Carleton Road was named after Henry Ayer's son, Carleton.

NEWSPAPERS

Metuchen has had several newspapers throughout the course of her history and they have always played an important role in the life of the community.

The first was merely a pamphlet of the church edited by a Methodist minister. It continued, for quite a time, to be a weekly paper for Metuchen residents.

Years later it was taken over by George Kempson, the editor of the *Metuchen Inquirer*. It consisted of four pages, which was not very much, but it was looked upon with pride by the people.



Coming down to the present day we find two weekly newspapers, the *Metuchen Recorder* and the *Metuchen Review*. The latter has a brief history, having been founded in 1923, but the Highland Park Publishing Company but sold in 1931 to the Metuchen Publishing Company with office in Metuchen.

The *Recorder* was started nearly forty years ago by Joseph Bromley Adams, a well informed and public spirited citizen of Metuchen who later became city editor of the *Elizabeth Daily Journal* and sold the paper to our J.A. MacLauchlan (father of our present townsman). J. Fraser Kempson assisted for a time as a business manager and when he left Mr. MacLauchlan conducted it for several years with the assistance of members of his family. Then the *Recorder* came into the hands of the present owner and for thirty years has been conducted by three generations of the Prickett family.

*A handwritten note found on the 1931 document reads: Clive Street was named after Lord Clive of Scotland, by Mr. George Tait, father of Thorfin Tait, who owned an extensive strip of land along that street at one time.

Above: the May 21, 1898 edition of *The Metuchen Inquirer*. Left: Main Street in 1891.

Next Issue: "Library."



Society Merchandise Available For Sale

A selection of books, maps, cards, and more – all perfect gifts for local history buffs.

Visit our website for order forms.

Books

<i>Images of America: Edison</i>	\$19.00
<i>Images of America: Metuchen</i>	\$19.00
<i>Exit 10</i>	\$16.00
<i>Boyhood Days in Old Metuchen</i>	\$15.00
<i>Researching the History of Your House</i> (workbook) ..	\$15.00
<i>Marty's Musings</i> (paperback).....	\$18.00
<i>Marty's Musings</i> (hardcover)	\$25.00
<i>Hole in the Donut</i>	\$10.00
<i>Metuchen Coloring Book</i>	\$5.00
<i>Guide to Edison</i>	\$5.00
<i>1888 Crumbs of Comfort Cookbook</i>	\$1.00
<i>How to Research a House</i> (pamphlet)	\$1.00

Posters, Prints, and Maps

Toonerville Trolley Poster	\$3.00
1868 Metuchen Map	\$3.00
1876 Raritan Map	\$3.00
Franklin School Print.....	\$15.00

Miscellaneous

Postcards	\$1.00
Old House Notepaper (12 per box)	\$3.00
Metuchen's First Auto magnets	\$3.00
Ayers-Allen House Napkins	\$4.00

1928 Directory of Metuchen, Column 8

Below is the eighth column of entries from a 1928 Directory of Metuchen that includes both addresses and telephone numbers of local residents. The small "r" after the name indicates the entry is for a "residence." The Society began reprinting the entirety of this directory in the Winter/Spring 2010 issue of *Nannygoats*.

Manning S R r 587 Amboy av..Metuchen-157-M
Manufactured Rubber Co
Whitman av..Metuchen-636
Manziano C r 36 School.....Metuchen-330-J
Marcana M Miss r
103 Durham av..Metuchen-259-W
Margaretten N M r Bounty.....Metuchen-411
Marinero D A contr 287 Main.... Metuchen-444
Marion Bronze Co Plainfield av..Metuchen-385-W
Markano J C r 27 William.....Metuchen-314
Martin A C r 15 Lincoln av....Metuchen-187-R
Martin Bros pntrs & decrtrs
129 Columbia av..Metuchen-648
Martin E r Clinton pl.....Metuchen-121-R
Martin F K r 43 Oak av.....Metuchen-41-W
Martin J C r 60 Spring.....Metuchen-12-W
Martin Phebe Mrs r 36 Clive...Metuchen-198-E
Martin M Mrs r 447 Main.....Metuchen-591
Martin Wm J r Fords.....Metuchen-239-W
Marzello C r 56 School.....Metuchen-509
Mason J Gilbert Jr r
245 Chestnut av..Metuchen-169-W
Mayo B J r 52 Jonesdale av....Metuchen-30-W
Mayo S E r 8 Clinton pl.....Metuchen-210-J
Mayo & Lytel radio & elec supp
425 Main..Metuchen-474
McAdams C H r 172 Plainfield av..Metuchen-473
McCullough Wm A r 11 Pleasant.Metuchen-309-R
McGrath T F r 59 Charles.....Metuchen-680
McGuinness A E Miss 419 Main...Metuchen-27-J
McGuinness J r 60 Henry.....Metuchen-477-R
McHarg W K r 23 N Thomas...Metuchen-233-M
McHose L H Inc clay Sand Hills..Metuchen-160
McHose M M r 181 Amboy av....Metuchen-273
McKaig J J r 31 William.....Metuchen-603
McKaig N Miss r 31 William.....Metuchen-603
McKenzie W V Mrs r 43 Graham.Metuchen-138-J
McKeown Thos H r 70 High...Metuchen-322-W
McLaughlin J S r Wilbur pl...Metuchen-30-M
McMullen Wm r Midland av....Metuchen-662
Meade Louis H r 85 Rector....Metuchen-232-J
Meadows W r 16 Sylvan av....Metuchen-383-W
Meeker D M r Old Post rd....Metuchen-241-W-2
Mehringier Jas genl store Nixons..Metuchen-772
Menlo Hall Menlo Pk.....Metuchen-568
Menlo Park Fire House Menlo Pk.Metuchen-403
Messeroll Wm r 40 Jonesdale av.Metuchen-289-M
Metuchen Auto & Garage Co
503 Middlesex av..Metuchen-201
Metuchen Borough of—
Borough Clerk 396 Main.....Metuchen-50
Borough Hall Main.....Metuchen-543
Fire Department—
Eagle Hk & Ladder Co
398 Main..Metuchen-228
Washn Hse Co
505 Middlesex av..Metuchen-237
Police Dept Headquarters Main.Metuchen-80
Chief's res 32 Plainfield av....Metuchen-102
Public Schools—
Edgars 67 Brunswick av...Metuchen-426
Franklin High 596 Mdlsx av.Metuchen-425
Washington School Simpson.Metuchen-427
Metuchen Coal Co Christol.....Metuchen-190
Metuchen Contg & Trucking Co—
287 Main

METUCHEN FRUIT & VEGETABLE MARKET

419 Main Street

We Deliver All Day - - Every Day

TELEPHONE: METUCHEN 199

Metuchen Golf & Country Club
Plainfield av..Metuchen-515
Metuchen Hardware Co 411 Main...Metuchen-26
Metuchen Inn 424 Middlesex av...Metuchen-793
Metuchen Masonic Bldg Assn Inc
483 Middlesex av..Metuchen-723
Metuchen National Bank
406 Main.*Metuchen-126

Published by
The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society

P.O. Box 61, Metuchen, NJ 08840

Tyreen A. Reuter, Editor

732-452-1381

ayersallenhouse@msn.com

Board of Trustees

Frederick Wolke, President

Dominic Walker, Vice President

Walter R. Stochel, Jr, Treasurer

Marilyn Langholff, Recording Secretary

Tyreen Reuter, Corresponding Secretary

Phyllis Boeddinghaus

Russell Gehrum

Jim Halsey

Catherine Langholff

Marilyn Langholff

Steve Reuter

Byron Sondergard

Marie Vajo

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 collecting and recording so much of our local history.

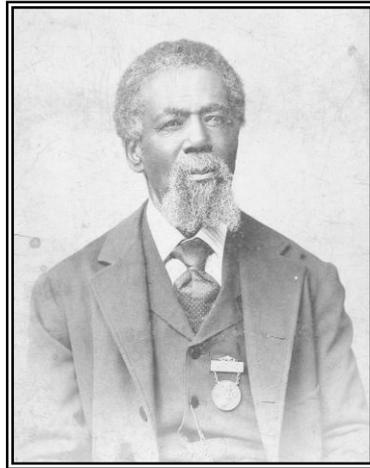
The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

To Cast a Freedman's Vote **Sunday, November 4, 2012**

Join us at 2pm on Sunday, November 4, 2012 at the Old Franklin Schoolhouse (B.I.L.) for a special presentation by New Jersey author and historian Gordon Bond, who will present "To Cast a Freedman's Vote" about Metuchen-born Thomas Mundy Peterson, who made Civil Rights History as the first African-American to vote in an election under the 15th Amendment.

Learn about the truly remarkable convergence of circumstances that made that moment possible. Bond's article about Mr. Peterson was featured in the Winter 2012 issue of Nannygoats, and we are thrilled to be able to bring him here in person. For more information, contact Steve at 732-713-9080.



Local History Day **Sunday, February 10, 2013**

Mark your calendars for Sunday, February 10, when we will once again hold our popular annual event at the Metuchen Public Library.



Metuchen-Edison Historical Society
P.O. Box 61
Metuchen, NJ 08840

Interested in back issues of Nannygoats?

All back issues are available for download from our website at
www.metuchen-edisonhistoc.org.



On Facebook? Join the
Metuchen-Edison Historical
Society's Facebook Group!