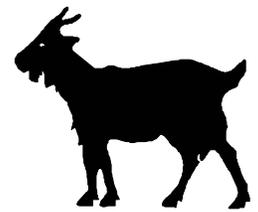


# Nannygoats



Vol. 5 Issue 3

Newsletter of the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society

Fall 2007



Above: The Frey Sen Studio storefront at 214 Main Street.

Below: Wernik's Pharmacy Vehicle  
Right: John Onofrey and his Camera



Below: A 1960s aerial view of Metuchen. Main Street appears vertically on the left, and Hillside Avenue is horizontal, below center.



## A Glance at the Past

Shown here are only a few of the hundreds of images recently donated to the Society by David Glasofer of Image Up Studios earlier this year.

This important donation, announced in the previous issue of *Nannygoats* and featured in a May, 2007 Home News Tribune article, consists of nearly 1000 mid-twentieth century black & white photographs and negatives. Mr. Glasofer found the images in the basement of his photography studio on Main Street. The business, which he purchased in 1985, had previously been owned and operated by John Onofrey and Sigurd Griesen (hence the name Frey Sen), who shot the photographs in and around the Metuchen and Edison area during the 1940s, '50s, and '60s.

The photographs depict a wide variety of subjects, including local parks, industrial and commercial businesses, individuals and groups of people, street scenes, community events, parades, automobiles and dealerships, homes under construction, sporting events, brides, tanks, secretaries, offices, banks, sweet shops and ice cream parlors, restaurants and diners, dedication ceremonies, and more.

The Society has been able to identify many of the images, with the help of Mr. Glasofer prior to the donation and through its volunteers' efforts, but is also reaching out to the public as part of its program to display the images on October 28, 2007 (see "Upcoming Programs and Events" on the back cover).

A small sample of the unidentified images are shown here on Pages 3 through 5. If you have information about any of these, please contact the Editor at 732-452-1381 or [ayersallenhouse@msn.com](mailto:ayersallenhouse@msn.com).



Above: A view of some Main Street storefronts.

**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.**

# SOCIETY MEMBERS GO DOWN THE SHORE

A number of Society members spent Sunday, September 23, 2007 down the Shore... except they only had to travel as far as Piscataway. While most people believe New Jersey's beaches begin at Sandy Hook and end at Cape May, the members who attended the Society-sponsored field trip know that there is a little bit of the coast at the Cornelius Low House Museum on River Road, as evidenced by the photograph below of one of our youngest members.

In fact, Society members visited the Middlesex County Cultural & Heritage Commission's latest installation at the Low House, entitled "Down the Shore: the Coastal Heritage of New Jersey." The exhibit explores the various aspects of New Jersey's 127 miles of beaches... the resort towns, lighthouses, shipwrecks, Victorian and Doo Wop architecture, boardwalks, ecology, and popular mythology. Although the exhibit is displayed in a mid-eighteenth century stone house overlooking the Raritan, visitors can still play Skee Ball, snack on James Taffy, and walk the "Boardwalk."



*Sam Reuter frolicked on the "beach," complete with sand and a lifeguard station from Barnegat Light, outside the Cornelius Low House.*



The exhibit will be open to the public through June 15, 2008... so anyone looking for a bit of Summer during the upcoming cold weather months may want to make their escape to Piscataway...the museum is open from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. everyday except Monday, Saturday, and Holidays, and admission is free (so is the taffy). If you would like more information about visiting the Low House and its "Down the Shore" exhibit, please call 732-745-4177 or visit the Commission's website at <http://co.middlesex.nj.us/culturalheritage/museum1.asp>.

*Dr. Ainslie and Society President Walter R. Stochel, Jr. take in one of the many displays.*

## ***New in the Collection...***

In addition to the acquisition of the Frey Sen Photograph Collection, the Society has recently received some other notable and generous donations from its members.

William Molineaux, a long time Metuchen resident now living in Williamsburg, Virginia, donated nearly twenty photographs from his time at the Metuchen High School during the 1950s, including two shots of the 1952 commencement exercises. Mr. Molineaux also sent his copy of the remarks he gave at his commencement. Some of these images and the text of his speech will be included in a future issue of *Nannygoats*.

Many thanks also to Ernie Docs, who has shared with the Society a number of items, including a Metuchen Recorder article about his American Legion-sponsored experience at Jersey Boy's State in 1952, old advertisements from the Docs Agency, and information about his late wife, Rosalind, who founded the ABZ Academy on Hillside Avenue in Metuchen.



*In a photograph taken by George Pearse (MHS '51) and donated by Mr. Molineaux, Paul W. Schmidtchen is shown teaching in 1951. The following year he became principal of Metuchen High School..*

## **Interested in Becoming a *Nannygoats* Contributor?**

Do you have an interesting story, fact, or image that you think would make a good addition to a future issue of *Nannygoats*? If so, please contact the Editor... If your submission is published, we'll send you a complimentary copy of the 1888 "Crumbs of Comfort" history and cookbook! The submission deadline for the February 2008 issue is January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

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## *Recognize Any of These Images?*

The seven photographs shown below and on Pages 4 and 5 are some of the unidentified images in the Frey Sen Photograph Collection. The Society would appreciate any information you may have that would help identifying the subjects, locations, and events depicted. Please contact us at 732-452-1381 or [ayersallenhouse@msn.com](mailto:ayersallenhouse@msn.com) or attend our October 28<sup>th</sup> program featuring the collection.



Above:  
*A group of ladies,  
perhaps gathered  
for some sort of  
special  
presentation.  
Many are holding  
what may be  
membership cards,  
but they are  
undecipherable.*



Left:  
*This scene appears  
to pre-date the  
Frey Sen Studios'  
era, but perhaps  
was a reproduction  
of an earlier  
photograph.*

For on-line access to the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society's newsletters, membership information, program announcements, historic photographs, merchandise, and more, visit our website at [www.metuchen-edisonhistsoc.org](http://www.metuchen-edisonhistsoc.org)

Right:  
A newly built home,  
possibly part of the  
Precision Built  
Homes near  
Kempson Place and  
Amboy Avenue. If it  
still exists, its  
resident or a  
neighbor should be  
able to identify it.



Below:  
Are these perhaps  
the proud builders of  
the new home above?  
The man in the suit  
appears in another  
photograph, seated  
at a desk with the  
pipe-smoker. They  
appear to be looking  
over a ledgerbook.





Upper Left: *This bride certainly had a memorable gown... does she look familiar?*

Upper Right: *A festive group of men and women pose with two bears... were they live "dancing" bears (or perhaps the handiwork of a local taxidermist) brought in for a New Year's Eve party?*

Below: *A new home under construction, with its proud residents-to-be posing in front of the progress? We know that a woman named Gardenia Emanuel had a house built at 219 Central Avenue. Could this be her with her children?*



## Class of 1931 History

The following text is continued from the "Real Estate" chapter in Class of 1931's *History of Metuchen*, as reprinted in the Summer 2007 edition of *Nannygoats* (Volume 5, Issue 2). Please note that there are some known factual and grammatical errors in the document, but it has been reproduced exactly as written.

### GENERAL NOTES

The oldest roads of Metuchen and its close vicinity are: Main Street was an old Indian Trail from Red Brick Creek (Bonhamtown) to Short Hills (Plainfield). The route goes out the Oak Tree Road, and the reason for the curves from Clive Street West to Central Avenue was the presence of a deep swamp south of the road. Durham Avenue went from Metuchen to New Durham and on through New Brunswick to points west.

The New Brunswick-Amboy Road, known as the Old Post Road, or the King's Highway, practically follows the present road behind and north of Bonhamtown School. The present Woodbridge Avenue was the original and only road from Metuchen to Woodbridge.

The Lincoln Highway, Middlesex Avenue in Metuchen, was completed from Newark to New Brunswick in 1806. It was not paved until the end of the last century, but at that it was the first street in Metuchen to be paved.

Metuchen, we have found from old post marks, was once Franklin Village.

### OAK TREE SECTION

Somewhere in Oak Tree there is an old house with a note of some kind scratched in one of the window panes. It is supposed to have been done by a soldier who was wounded in the Revolution.

The old house on the North-East corner, as you turn to your left in Oak Tree for Plainfield, dates several years before the Revolution.

### BONHAMTOWN

The biggest thing in Bonhamtown is the Raritan arsenal. Part of the land was first owned by a farmer by the name of Tappen. During the Revolution the same site was used by the British as a camp for men and supplies.

The old Tappan Tavern, built in 1740, in Bonhamtown, is still standing. On passing through the town, on the Old Post Road, Washington spent the night there.



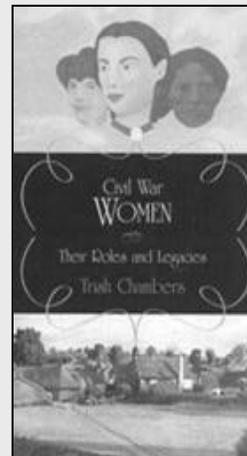
The Jerome Ross house was located on the northeast corner of Main Street and Woodbridge Avenue in the Bonhamtown section of Edison.

Society Members & Guests are invited to attend the Borough Improvement League's upcoming Program...

## **Civil War Women: Their Roles and Legacies**

**Thursday, November 15, 2007, 1:30 p.m.**  
**presented by Trish Chambers.**

Author/Speaker Trish Chambers will perform a historical character interpretation based on her book "Civil War Women: Their Roles and Legacies," written to illuminate the achievements and struggles of the women of the Civil War period. Ms. Chambers, who has been a consultant on the Civil War to the History Channel and in the making of the motion picture *God and Generals*, will be available after the program to sign copies of her book.



**For more information, call Phyllis at 732-548-1391.**

The John Ross house, which dates to before 1750, was used, during the Revolution, as a British Officer's headquarters.

The Old Manning House, on the Post Road was built in 1765, and the old Grimstead home dates to 1795.

**Future issues of *Nannygoats* will continue with chapters from the Class of 1931's *History of Metuchen*, including *Prominent People*, *A Little Local Color*, *Social Life*, *The Trend Toward Modern Improvements*, *Sports*, *The Wars*, *Churches*, *Government and Zoning*, *Newspapers*, *Library*, *Schools*, *The Fire Department of Metuchen*, and *Police*.**

## Grimstead Room Hours

The Society's Grimstead Room archives, containing thousands of local history images and documents, are located at the Metuchen Public Library and access to the collections is available from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on the following upcoming Saturdays: October 13, November 3, December 1, and January 5 (2008). For more information, contact Tyreen Reuter at 732-452-1381 or [ayersallenhouse@msn.com](mailto:ayersallenhouse@msn.com).

## Gertrude Caroline Leis

The Society regrets to inform its members that long-time Honorary Member and lifelong Metuchen resident Gertrude Leis, aged 89, passed away at her home on August 6, 2007. She was predeceased by two sisters, Mildred Meta Leis and Sister Elizabeth Marie Leis, and is survived by her sisters Joan Leis of Metuchen, Claire Duigon of Toms River, and Florence Mumford of Ridgefield, CT.

Miss Leis became active in the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society in the early 1970s, served as Recording Secretary, and was instrumental in developing its membership and genealogy departments. She was made an honorary member for these contributions as well as her dedication to research of our area's local history and service on the Hospitality & Refreshments Committee.

## Interested in reading previous issues of *Nannygoats*?

All of the back issues of *Nannygoats* are available online at the Society's website, [www.metuchen-edisonhistsoc.org](http://www.metuchen-edisonhistsoc.org)

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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 collecting and recording so much of our local history.

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

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If you are interested in becoming one of *Nannygoat's* supporters, please contact the Editor.

## Upcoming Programs & Events

### **FREY SEN PHOTOGRAPHS** **OCTOBER 28, 2007**

The newly acquired Frey Sen Photograph Collection, as featured in this edition of *Nannygoats*, will be displayed on **Sunday, October 28, 2007 at 2:00 p.m.** at the Metuchen Public Library at 480 Middlesex Avenue.

In addition to displaying the photographs, we will be asking the public's help in identifying the unknown subjects, dates, locations, and more. For more information about this program, please call Steve at 732-452-1381.



### **AMERICAN LEGION** **NOVEMBER 4, 2007**



In a continuing effort to explore the history of our local organizations, the Society is sponsoring a program on the American Legion, hosted by the Fugle-Hummer American Legion Post #65, located on Lake Avenue in Metuchen on **Sunday November 4, 2007 at 1:00 p.m.** Light refreshments will be served following the joint presentation. Please call Walter at 732-906-0529 for more information.



**Metuchen-Edison Historical Society**  
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**Metuchen, NJ 08840**

**Interested in becoming a member? Want to renew a membership? Members will receive program announcements, invitations to special events, a subscription to this newsletter, and the satisfaction that their support helps to preserve our local history by "Saving the Past for the Future."**