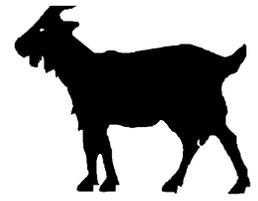


Nannygoats



Vol. 3 Issue 3

Newsletter of the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society

Fall 2005

Bulldog Football "Passed"

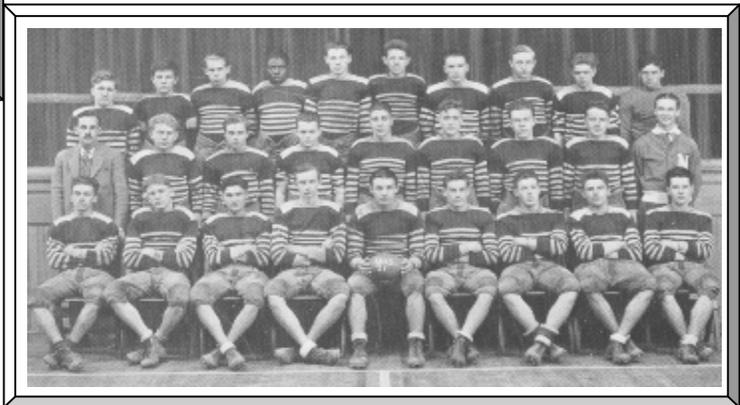
These photographs are only a very small sample of the local sports history images that can be found in the Society's archives in the Grimstead Room. If you can provide any assistance in filling in some of missing names of the 1911 team's players, please contact the Editor at 732-452-1381 or at ayersallenhouse@msn.com.



1911 Metuchen

High School Eighth Grade Football Team

The reverse of this photograph is marked with the following: **Back Row:** Mifford Runyon (?), Bill Crehore (Captain), Wilson Morris, Bob Martin, Thomas VanKirk (Principal), *Unknown*, Kingsley Powell, Bill Smith, --- Breen. **Middle Row:** Frank Morris, Charlie Prickett, Arthur Drake, Harold Batsford. **Front Row:** Spencer Robinson, Foster Hahm, Dubois Thompson (Mascot), Walter Molineaux, Merrill Thompson.



1932 Metuchen

High School Football Team

The 1932 team didn't have a winning record - in fact they didn't win a single game season (Point Pleasant 0-6, Somerville 6-32, Leonardo 0-14, Scotch Plains 0-54, South Amboy 6-27), but they did have a "very tough tackle" in their Captain, Mike "Pat" Marzella (front, center). The remaining players are not named.



1958 Metuchen High School Football Team

According to the 1958 yearbook, the *Blue Letter*, that year's team "was considered by many as one of the best in Metuchen's history" and a record number of its members received all-state and all-county recognition. An outbreak of the flu was blamed for the team's only two losses at the beginning of its nine-game season, during which the most dramatic victory was against Scotch Plains, 47 to 0 - quite a contrast to the 1932 score! The players, from left to right, are as follows: **First Row:** Ken Grushewsky, Dick Groben, Joe Prehodka, Don Burns, Lou DiMuzio, Jimmy James (Co-Captain), Cecil Jackson, Bailey Molineaux (Co-Captain), Tup Perry, Chuck Williams, Ted Grushewsky, Joe Leiss, Gordie Hoagland, Pip Lindquist. **Second Row:** John Uchrin, Walt Rasmussen, William Bolton, Louis Fow, Edward Obszarny, Steve Bonk, Aloph (sic) Grabenstetter, Fred Kutner, John Fig, James Miller, Maurice Milo, Bill Ammon, Roy Lyons, Bob Watson.

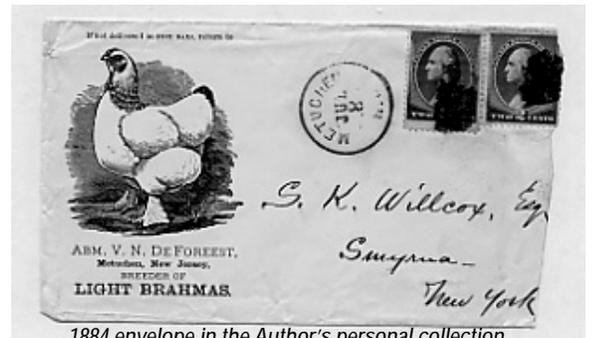
The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society was founded in 1974 with the primary purpose of promoting an interest in and appreciation of the history of the Borough of Metuchen and of Edison Township.

Ye Olde Metuchen Mail Bag

by Andrew Kupersmit

Being a Metuchen resident and a professional philatelist, it is only natural for me to accumulate envelopes and post cards mailed from Metuchen. Fortunately, longtime resident James Moran's modest collection became available a few years ago after it was in limbo in an attorney's safe for about five years after his passing.

One of the more interesting items from the Moran collection was this envelope with an advertisement for Light Brahmas for sale by Metuchen farmer Abm. V.N. (Abram or Abraham Van Nest) DeForest. The envelope was sent to Smyrna, New York and has backstamps dated 1884 from both Smyrna (receiving) and New York City (transit), and is franked with two 2-cent stamps to pay the double weight rate.



1884 envelope in the Author's personal collection

Thanks to the internet, the Author gathered basic information about both the chickens and the farmer. Light Brahmas are still available today. They are a very old breed of chicken probably originating in India and brought to this country around 1850 by Yankee sailors on their return from trading in Far Eastern ports. They have full feathered shanks and toes, and a striking black and white plumage pattern. Brahmas are exceptionally quiet, gentle, and easy to handle. Their small pea comb, great size, and heavy plumage make them almost immune to cold weather. The hens are good layers of brown eggs, especially in winter, and will also set. Cockerels develop a tremendous frame, grow rather slowly, but when fully fleshed make a beautiful roasting chicken. They are easy to dress with light plumage and yellow skin. Baby chicks are creamy white, but some have shades of gray on the back.

Internet research also revealed that Farmer DeForest was a direct descendant of one of the first of the Dutch settlers in New Amsterdam (now New York City) arriving in the second quarter of the 17th Century.

His grandfather, of the same name, (1749-1847) served under Washington in the Revolutionary War. Although the internet yielded great information about the other members of the DeForest family, there was not much about this particular member. A trip to the Metuchen public library failed to enhance the information. No one named DeForest was listed in the September 2, 1878 school roll included by David Trumbull Marshall in his *Boyhood Days in Old Metuchen*. The 1880 Federal census lists the only Abraham DeForest as a clerk in East New Brunswick. If readers know anything about the location and years of operation of the DeForest farm, it would be much appreciated. Please feel free to contact the Author at akupersmit@hrharmer.com. *Editor's note: the Author, Andy Kupersmit, is a professional philatelist. He resides in Metuchen with his wife and year old son.*

Evelyn Hale (1922-2005)

Evelyn Jeanne Weber Hale, 83, a long-time member of the Society, died at JFK Medical Center on April 24, 2005. A native of the Bay Ridge section of Brooklyn, NY, Mrs. Hale moved with her family to Metuchen in 1925 and was residing in what had been her childhood home at the time of her death. Evelyn graduated from Metuchen High School in 1940 and from the Ballard School in New York City a year later. She worked as a secretary from then until the birth of her only child in 1955 after which she became a full-time homemaker. She also belonged to the Reformed Church of Metuchen and the Matochshoning-Rebecca Cornell Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution. In later years, family genealogy became her hobby. Society members probably most recall Evelyn for the many years she served as hospitality chair when she came to be called "the refreshment lady" and was best known for serving her "sparkling golden punch" (equal parts chilled white grape juice and ginger ale). She will be sorely missed by all.

County Grants Update

The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society continues to work on two projects funded in part by grants awarded by the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission/Board of Chosen Freeholders, and the New Jersey Historical Commission, a Division of the Department of State. First, this past summer we completed our second year of transcribing our oral history collection. The transcriptions allow more of the public to "listen" to the 1970s interviews of Metuchen area residents.

The value of oral histories is that they provide an insight into the everyday, human aspect of living and working in a community. Local residents will find the stories told both interesting and informative. When the transcriptions are complete, they will be available in both the Metuchen and Edison libraries as well as for sale at a nominal fee.

Our second project is to begin working with a newly donated collection. Sidney and Ruth Frankel have donated to the historical society his collection of mid-twentieth century documents related to political events in Edison Township.

- Nancy Zerbe



For on-line access to Historical Society information, newsletters, and historic photos, visit www.metuchen-edisonhistsoc.org

From the Caribbean to New Jersey: the Anguillians of Perth Amboy

On Sunday, September 18, 2005, the Society hosted another successful program sponsored by the New Jersey Council on the Humanities. The speaker, Dr. Lawrence Hogan is a Professor of History at Union County College and has presented programs to Society previously, notably on the Shady Rest Country Club and Negro Leagues Baseball. The topic this past Sunday was "African-American History as Immigration History: The Anguillians of Perth Amboy." A number of attendees were of Anguillian descent, and some were even featured in the accompanying slide show of early to mid-twentieth century photographs.

Dr. Hogan described the circumstances surrounding African-American immigration from the Caribbean island of Anguilla to Perth Amboy starting at the turn of the century and through

the 1930s. Primarily, the Anguillians who came to New Jersey left to find year-round work instead of the seasonal agricultural work primarily available on their home island. And, instead of a mass migration, Dr. Hogan explained that this was more of a "chain migration," starting with only a few people who moved to Perth Amboy. After these initial immigrants became established and employed, others from the close-knit communities of Anguilla joined them.

Although assimilating in many ways, many of these immigrants remained in cohesive communities once here, as evidenced in various church congregations and in the Caribbean festivals still held in Perth Amboy today.

-Tyreen Reuter



Historical Society Slide Show On Display

The Metuchen Savings Bank will soon be hosting a continuously running computer slide show in one of the windows of its offices on Main Street in Metuchen. The slide show features photographs from the Metuchen and Edison area, and pedestrians can stop and watch as photos of people and places from the last 125 years are displayed. The entire slide show runs for more than 30 minutes, and since it is being shown continuously, you'll be able to catch one of the more than 17,000 showings per year by arriving any time of the day or night!

-Jim Halpin

Edison History Day is October 23rd

The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society, the Edison Museum and Tower Board, and the Edison Historic Preservation Commission are jointly sponsoring the 5th Annual Edison History Day on Sunday, October 23, from noon to 4:00 PM at the Edison Main Library, 340 Plainfield Avenue in Edison.

During this free event, browse through photographs, documents, maps, personal accounts, and artifacts that span the history of what is now Edison Township from the archives of the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society, and memorabilia from the Edison Memorial Tower Museum. Features include: a guided tour of the historic Stelton Baptist Church cemetery (across the street from the library), the final resting place of many early European settlers, conducted by noted historian Mark Nonesteid at noon (don't be late!).. - Nancy Zerbe



Fall Programs at the Old Franklin School

October 20, 2005 at 1:30 p.m.

"Government News in the Borough of Metuchen" presented by Metuchen Councilmember Marion Price and Special Guest, Mayor Edmund O'Brien.

November 17, 2005, 1:30 p.m.

"The Gibson Girl Friday Meets the Victorian Lady" presented by Barbara Meyer Darlin. Sponsored in part by the Horizons Speaker Bureau of the New Jersey Council on the Humanities.

These programs are free, open to the public, and hosted by the Borough Improvement League. The ca. 1807 Old Franklin School is located at 491 Middlesex Avenue in Metuchen.

Development Committee News

The inaugural meeting of the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society's newly formed Development Committee took place on April 14, 2005, with new volunteers Sue McCoy, Deb DeSantis, Liz Murray, Evelyn Grant, and Dick Weber. Committee Chair Becky Seely, President Nancy Zerbe, and Vice-President Bob Takash were also in attendance. After much discussion it was determined that the immediate focus of the committee was to continue to raise funds through the sale of newly developed merchandise and marketing items with pictures from the archives. Work on this was continued through the summer, as has been the development of a logo for the Society. The future focus of the committee will involve developing community outreach programs and a long range plan for sustained funding and support of the Society. The agenda for the October committee meeting will be to further develop these concepts as well as support the Board's overall agenda.

- Becky Seely

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Metuchen-Edison Historical Society
P.O. Box 61, Metuchen, NJ 08840
Tyreen A. Reuter, Editor

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

The name of the newsletter, "Nannygoats," is taken from the title of a collection of anecdotes, reminiscences, articles, 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.

New in the Archives...

On behalf of the Society, Curator Marie Vajo has recently acquired a set of aerial photograph views of north Edison and portions of South Plainfield. These 1955 views, taken by an unknown photographer, show Wood Brook Farms as well as some of the neighboring farms.

Edison History Day

The 5th Annual Edison History Day will be held from 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, **October 23, 2005** at the Edison Main Library at 340 Plainfield Avenue in Edison. See inside (page 3) for additional details and information.



November Program:

A Piece of Granite Made in Two Weeks: The Rise and Fall of New Jersey's Terra Cotta Industry, 1870-1960.

On November 13, 2005 at 1:30pm, Dr. Richard Veit will present a program on Terra Cotta in New Jersey at the Metuchen Public Library. Dr. Veit, who holds a Ph.D. in Historical Archaeology, has directed several archaeological excavations in eastern North America, including a recent project at the Edison Memorial Tower. Please contact Steve Reuter at 732-452-1381 for additional information or with any questions.



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