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FROM THE FRONT PORCH

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF MOORESTOWN



House Tours and Gift Shop Hours:

Sunday 1-4 PM

Tuesdays 2-3 PM

Research Library Hours:

Tuesday 1-4 PM

Second Sunday of each

Month 1-4 PM

Address

Historical Society of
Moorestown
Smith-Cadbury Mansion
12 High St.
Moorestown, NJ 08057

Phone

856-235-0353

Web Site

www.moorestown.com/history

E-mail

moorestownhistory@verizon.net

Facebook

[facebook.com/historical-society-ofmoorestown](https://www.facebook.com/historical-society-ofmoorestown)

Published by

*The Historical Society
of Moorestown*

View From the Porch

Hello friends!

Summer is drawing to a close and now is the time to begin making plans for the Fall. A Sunday visit to the Smith-Cadbury Mansion is a lovely way to spend an afternoon. Guided tours by knowledgeable and entertaining docents begin at 1:00. The building is open until 4:00. It's not too early to be thinking about Holiday gifts. The Gift Shop features unique and affordable items for all occasions. Stop by and take a look.

Tours are now also available Tuesdays at the Mansion from 2:00-3:00. The library and Gift Shop will be open on Tuesdays as well.

The General Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 13, 7:30 at the Community House. *Farm life in Moorestown* is the theme of the current exhibit at the Smith-Cadbury Mansion. Debbie Browning Hess of the Browning Hess farm will be the featured speaker at the meeting and will give a presentation about life on a farm.

Make plans to join us on the popular Ghost Tours. These fun and informative walking tours through Moorestown will take place on two weekends: October 14th, 15th, and 21st, 22nd at 7:00 and 9:00 PM. For more information, call 856-266-7607.

The Historical Society is involved with other groups in the community. Please visit our booth at the STEM festival on October 2nd. The Mansion is open for guided tours on October 8 which is *Autumn in Moorestown* and on *Candlelight Night*, Friday November 4th.

The Historical Society of Moorestown is actively participating in helping to raise funds to prevent demolition of the Old Swede Run barn, a beautiful historic landmark here in Moorestown. To learn more and how you may contribute, call 856-266-7607.

Our Spring Soiree fund raiser was a huge success and we are looking forward to planning another lovely event for the Spring. Many thanks to Julie Maravich, chair, Lynne Brill, hostess, and the committee, Mary Berardi, Patti DelDuca, Lisa Hammell, Lynne Japka, Ann Langerhans, and Gloria Senno.

I look forward to seeing you soon. If we haven't met, please come and introduce yourself.

Lisa Hammell, President

FALL MEETING & PROGRAM

**DEBBIE BROWNING HESS
of the Browning Hess Farm
discusses life on a farm**

**OCTOBER 13th at 7:30 PM
Community House**

*Light refreshments will be served
immediately following the program*

SEPTEMBER 2011

Fall Meeting and Program

Three generations of the Browning family moved to Moorestown in 1898 where they had bought an existing farm. Formerly the family had farmed in Delair. In the beginning, pigs were raised for sale and family consumption. There were chickens, too, and cows. Some crops were horse corn and hay for animal feed. Vegetables were raised for sale in Philadelphia and also for the family's use. Vegetables were also sold locally from a wagon . . .

Want to hear more? Come listen to Moorestown's

Debbie Browning Hess talk about Life on the Oldest Working Farm in Moorestown

OCTOBER 13th at 7:30 PM
Community House



Lester Hess, Vocational Agriculture Teacher at Moorestown High School , 1924-1953 [from our current exhibit Dawn til Dusk: Farm Life in Moorestown)

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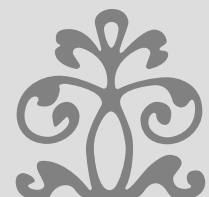
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When 'That Noble Dream' Becomes a Nightmare

I was a graduate student in American History when I first heard Charles Beard's musing on that so-called "noble dream" of historical objectivity; I never thought I'd be reminded of it while researching my own ancestry. Strangely enough, I recollected Mr. Beard's idea when I came across some data about my Great-Grandfather, Tom Connelly; or as I call him, "The Irish Immigrant Born in Athlone, Ireland Who Was a Second Generation American from Georgia." Who would have thought the life of an accountant could be so intriguing, fascinating, and filled with mystery?

Even though I started doing a genealogical survey of my heritage for my family, as a pseudo-trained want-to-be historian, I thought I should be as objective as possible. I aspired to follow in the tradition of the great Nineteenth Century Historian Leopold von Ranke. I was going to use his technique and write about the past "as it actually happened" while documenting all my data as thoroughly and as professionally as I could. Great-Grandpa Tom's story made this a little tricky. I wrote in a previous article of this publication about issues arising from the "disparity between memory and documentation." I never thought I'd encounter a situation where various documents conflicted with one another on basic facts.

There's an old family yarn about how my Great-Grandfather Tom Connelly (my paternal grandmother's father) came to the United States from Ireland when he was 12 accompanied only by his mother. I thought that would be easy enough to confirm, until I came across the 1920 Census Records. I viewed the primary source itself and it stated clearly that Tom Connelly was born in Georgia as were both his mother and his father. That was certainly interesting. I knew this was my Great-Grandfather because it listed Violet Connelly as his wife and Tom Connelly, Jr. (then one year old) as his son. I did some more sleuthing and I located Mr. Connelly's draft registration card for World War I (c. 1917). On that one, he very specifically indicated that he was born in Athlone, Ireland in 1892. That was really interesting. I knew that Ireland was part of the United Kingdom until 1922. Was it briefly part of Georgia, U.S.A. in 1892?

I mentioned earlier that the tradition is that Tom Connelly came to the U. S. from Ireland when he was 12 years old. Both my grandmother and my aunt told me that same story on different occasions and decades apart. On the Draft Registration Card, it states that Tom Connelly (I know it's him because of the other data on there) was born on June 12, 1892. The 1930 Census Record says he came to the U. S. in 1896, when he would have been four. There was no mention of Georgia this time. On that Census Record it reads that Tom Connelly and both his parents were from Ireland.

I knew my Great-Grandfather Tom was an interesting guy. He worked as a paymaster, a real estate salesman, and even an IRS Agent. The fact he claimed to be born in both Ireland and Georgia made him a lot more interesting than I ever could have imagined. I was also curious as to why on his draft registration card, the "Date of Registration" line was left blank. He was listed as an "alien" and a citizen of Ireland. He also declared that he was supporting his wife and mother at the time. Could either of those explain why? For that matter is it possible that the people responsible for processing draft cards were as thorough and proficient in their duties as census takers of the day? I was really surprised that my great-grandfather, a person who worked with numbers where precision was a hallmark of his trade, would leave a series of documents with so many open questions. It's very difficult to draw firm conclusions and details about Great-Grandpa Tom's life from all this.

Great-Grandpa Tom was a wizard when it came to numbers, but his public relations skills were an area he could have developed better. His legacy has the misfortune of suffering by comparison. In modern day language, he "married up." My Great-Grandmother Violet nee Bishop (or "Vi" as she was known) was the family historian/genealogist. She was related to the famous explorer and discoverer of Pike's Peak, Zebulon Pike. The town of Coatesville, Pennsylvania was named after one of her ancestors. By my research she was eighth generation American. As if that wasn't a formidable enough legacy to compete against, "Mom Vi" is remembered very favorably by all who knew her. When she was in her seventies she worked with handicapped people at the Woods School in Langhorne. She wasn't just loved, she was revered. Since her passing, her reputation has reflected that.

After researching my Great-Grandfather Tom's life with all the conflicting information, contradictory documents, and his being overshadowed by my great-grandmother's glowing reputation I wondered if objectivity was even possible.

(continued on page 4)

(When "That Noble Dream" Becomes a Nightmare, continued)

While Great-Grandpa Tom may not have originally been from the South, in spite of what the 1920 Census taker reported, that's where he chose to spend his remaining years. Robert Gray wrote in his "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" that "all paths of glory lead but to the grave." Great-Grandpa Tom's journey ended in Sarasota, Florida in March of 1960.

As lovers of history we all try to present the truth when we write about it. We all strive for that ever elusive goal of complete objectivity. After researching my Great-Grandfather Tom's life with all the conflicting information, contradictory documents, and his being overshadowed by my great-grandmother's glowing reputation I wondered if objectivity was even possible. I then realized that there was one thing missing in all this: Tom Connelly's voice. I remembered a story about Winston Churchill. During the Second World War Franklin Roosevelt and Josef Stalin asked Churchill how history would remember the way they conducted the war. Without hesitation Churchill replied, "History will remember us fondly." They asked how he could be so sure. Churchill responded, "Because I shall write the history!" It sure would be neat to read Great-Grandpa Tom's version of events. I don't know if it would be objective, but I can guarantee this: it would definitely be the most interesting work of history ever written by an accountant who was born in both Ireland and Georgia.

— Kevin Stephany

Acquisitions

"Forty Pounds of Gold and Silver"

Mr. Robert Fayles has been a loyal supporter of the Historical Society having given the society several interesting items relating to Moorestown. His most recent offering is an indenture (contract) for the sale of five acres of farmland on Salem Road. It is dated 1788. The indenture was given in memory of his parents, Sara and Russell R. Fayles.

The details of the sale were written on a fairly large sheet of vellum. The document had been folded and sealed with red wax which still adheres.

Today one can read with interest a description of the size of the property as measured by a surveyor. Salem Road is identified as one boundary. After that the other boundaries were unnamed and only described as lines from a stone at one corner to a stone at another corner to a fourth corner which joined the starting point on Salem Road. However, the description was filled out a bit by identifying John Haines as the owner of an adjoining property.

The vocabulary of surveying is interesting. The words "chains" refers to a measuring instrument once used by surveyors. It consisted of 100 metal rods linked together that were 66 feet long. "Perche" is another technical word. A square perche was equal to 30¼ square yards.

Unlike real estate sales in modern times, this transfer of property was paid for in cash — "forty pounds in gold and silver" — by William Foster of Chester Township. It was Richard and Abigail Edwards of Northhamton (sic) Township in Burlington County who sold it to him.

— Ann Condon, Acquisitions

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keep up
with the
latest
details on
happenings
at Smith-
Cadbury,
the
Historical
Society,
and local
history
issues?

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so you'll be
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information and
announcements



Help Save a Piece of Local History

Swede's Run Stone BUILDING



The Historical Society is partnering with the public and amazing professionals in town to save the stone outbuilding on Westfield Road at Swede Run Fields. This 133 acre tract of land was acquired by the town from the Benner family in 2001 and is designated as Open Space. The entire property is surrounded by a cinder path that is in constant use by joggers and walkers. The barn itself is one of the most photographed spots in town! Stay tuned for details of an upcoming photo contest. We'll post details on our website and facebook page.

The land itself is still being farmed and presently has a lush and maturing crop of soybeans. If you cross the footbridge strolling toward the rear of the property and glance back at the stone building; it is as if you are being transported back in time. You can imagine the farm on a little knoll next to the stream. It is a beautiful, hushed and truly peaceful experience.

The stone building, which may be 250 years old, is in urgent need of repair with a new roof being the top priority. We have partnered with dedicated professionals in Moorestown and have assembled an expert team to get the job done! Paul Canton is our construction supervisor. Kimberly Bunn (architect) and Tom Kulp (structural engineer) are working together to present drawings to the township for approval. The township is waiving permit fees for this project. Larry Tait will be recreating a durable new roof that will have an authentic look. The walls will be repaired by George Bobb a stone mason experienced in mixing "old style" mortars. Dave Schill has been invaluable providing advice, helping with fund raising and commissioning signs. Jack Cresson is a local archaeologist who has already uncovered artifacts and examined building materials and techniques that will help to more accurately date the structure. Joshua Kravitz, an Eagle Scout, has undertaken the door construction. Sue Poaletti has volunteered to be the township liason.

We have already raised \$8,700 and need just a few thousand more to get the project underway! We would love to see a new roof on our beloved building to protect it from the brutal winter to come. The constant rain has been creating a trench around the perimeter that is furthering the mortar deterioration. Please make a donation to help us. We are accepting checks made out to **The Historical Society of Moorestown**, with "**barn**" indicated on

the memo line. Mail checks to Julie Maravich, 660 Chester Ave., Moorestown, NJ 08057.

We now have a Paypal account. You can link directly to it from our website or facebook page (facebook.com/historicalsocietyofmoorestown).

— Julie Maravich



Bird's eye view of the building with Westfield Road at bottom left and Swede's Run to the right [Source: Google maps] [Photo at top by Sara Homer]

Library News

Ice History...

The February 2011 issue of the newsletter contained a listing of all the oral histories in the Historical Society's collection. We inadvertently omitted the most recent of these, an oral history with lifelong Moorestonian, Jim Laessle, conducted by Historical Society member Barbara McCall. As we say goodbye to the long, hot summer, enjoy these cool reminiscences, excerpted from Laessle's oral history, about the service that no family could do without:

"... the most unique man was the Ice Man and he served flat ice which was in that era before mechanical refrigeration. His name was Fred Waldis and I can't remember your name but I can remember his. He had a wagon with an awning over the back and a step on the back and a horse that would come from east to west on Second Street and a lot of people had a little sign they'd put in their window that would say how much ice they wanted. In other words, five pounds, ten pounds, you'd put up how much ice you wanted, and Fred would chop up I guess how much that ice was and put on a burlap thing on his shoulder, and then put it in your ice box and rearrange the other ice in there. I guess he got paid once a week. But his horse was very smart because Fred would get the ice and walk back into our house, but in the mean time the horse would go up to the next stop and wait for him.

In the summertime this group I told you, these guys, found that when they chipped the ice to make the size block there were all pieces in the back and they were a delightful treat. Of course they get these little stick, cheap pieces of ice, you don't worry about sanitation, and had it as a cooler. That was Fred Waldis. . ."

And a treat that everyone loves:

"... among many things we did in the summertime is we made homemade root beer. During the winter we would collect quart soda bottles and then we'd bottle the root beer, and the root beer was made out of a Hire's root beer extract, thick liquid, a lot of sugar, yeast and water. We'd mix this all in a big pot and then we'd put it in the bottles and cap it and put them down the basement. You'd have to let the stuff, the solution in the bottles sit for a couple weeks before they carbonated. So apparently the rate of carbonation was not uniform because I can remember often up in our living room hear this boom down in the cellar, and it was one of the bottles that got carbonated too soon and it blew up. So hearing a couple of explosions in the rack of the root beer in the cellar was not unusual. I found out the other guys witnessed the same thing because we all talked about it, but there was a lot of silly things we did then. I'm sorry kids miss it today. . ."

— Stephanie Herz



Keep an eye out for details of an upcoming photo contest featuring the Swede's Run stone building that we are working to save.

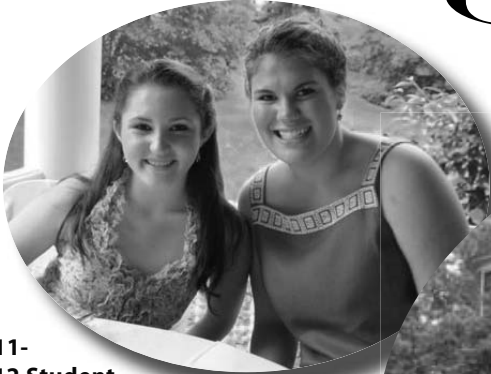
We'll post details on our website and facebook page.



A look
back
at our

Spring

HSM Board
Members
Gloria
Senno
and
Lynne
Japka



2011-
2012 Student
Trustees Kelly DeDuca
and Olivia Langerhans



The Spring
Soirée was held at
the beautiful home
of Dr. Robert and Lynne
Brill and was a huge success!
Thanks to all who attended and all
who helped out.



Pam
Gertie
and
our Soirée
Committee
chair, Julie
Maravich



Soirée

Thanks to Gina Zegel for the sponsorship sign
and to our amazing Soirée hostess, Lynne Brill

Visit Smith-Cadbury to see the continuing exhibit

Dawn till Dusk: Farm Life in Moorestown

In 1948 John Boenitsch purchased fourteen acres of land on Bridgeboro Road in Moorestown. With his wife Betty, he built a home and established a poultry farm, which they aptly named "Flying Feather Farm."

In 1954, John started construction of the permanent roadside farm market, where Bridgeboro Road intersects with Westfield Road. Opening in the spring of 1955, the market offered farm fresh eggs and Jersey produce, as well as fresh and rotisserie chicken.

To find out more about FLYING FEATHER FARM (and lots more!) come see our exhibit at Smith-Cadbury.



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome back to another exciting year at Smith-Cadbury Mansion!

Kick-off the fall season by visiting the Mansion to experience our continuing exhibit *Dusk till Dawn: Farm Life in Moorestown* Sundays between the hours of 1-4 PM and Tuesdays from 2-3 PM.

Thank you one and all who have renewed your membership with the Society. Please check to make sure you have mailed your renewal and if not, possibly consider upgrading to one of our Donor levels. The officers and trustees are grateful for your support in helping to preserve the Society's legacy.

Remember, your membership in the Historical Society of Moorestown entitles you to the Society's informative quarterly newsletter, a 10% discount in our Gift Shop, invitations to member only events and access to our historic research library.

The Society extends a warm welcome to **Kelly DelDuca**, our new student Trustee as well as thanks to our newest members and donors:

NEW MEMBERS

- Susan DeCesari •

CONTRIBUTOR LEVEL & ABOVE

- Betty Ross • Audrey Shinn • Louis & Linda Vizi •

New members are always welcome. If you have a friend or neighbor who might be interested in joining the Historical Society, please encourage them to contact me at (856) 802-0204 or email lynne_japka@comcast.net.

Till next time,

Lynne A. Japka, Membership Chairperson

NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME(S):

ADDRESS:

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY:

BASIC MEMBERSHIP: Student \$10 ____
Individual/Family \$35 ____

DONOR LEVELS: Contributor \$100-499 ____
Patron \$500-999 ____
Benefactor \$1,000+ ____

DATE:

TELEPHONE #:

EMAIL:

Make check payable to: *Historical Society of Moorestown*

Mail to: Historical Society of Moorestown

P.O. Box 477 / Moorestown, NJ 08057



HELP WANTED

We need lots of help to keep the Historical Society running throughout the year.

Here is a list of jobs, big and small, that we need to fill:

Activities/Events: Helps plan, organize and hold Society events.

Docents: Museum and special exhibit guides.

Exhibits: Helps create interesting displays.

Fund Raising: Helps plan and hold income-generating events.

Museum: Helps with maintaining collection.

Oral History: Collects oral histories and oversees written work.

Photography: Attends events and take digital photos for our archives and publicity.

Programs: Helps select programs and speakers, coordinates meetings.

Publicity/News/Web: Helps get Society information to the members and public.

If you can help out, call Lynne A. Japka at 856-802-0204 or email lynne_japka@comcast.net



CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 2011

Continuing exhibit *Dusk till Dawn: Farm Life in Moorestown*

- 11 *Smith-Cadbury* tours & research library, 1-4
- 18 *Smith-Cadbury* tours, 1-4
- 25 *Smith-Cadbury* tours, 1-4

OCTOBER 2011

Continuing exhibit *Dusk till Dawn: Farm Life in Moorestown*

- 2 Booth at STEM festival & *Smith-Cadbury* tours
- 8 Autumn in Moorestown *Smith-Cadbury* open; tours and gift shop, 9-2
- 9 *Smith-Cadbury* tours & research library, 1-4
- 13 Fall Meeting: *Debbie Browning Hess* discusses life on a farm Community Center, 7:30
- 14, 15 Ghost Tours, 7 & 9 PM
- 16 *Smith-Cadbury* tours, 1-4
- 21, 22 Ghost Tours, 7 & 9 PM
- 23 *Smith-Cadbury* tours, 1-4
- 30 *Smith-Cadbury* tours, 1-4

NOVEMBER 2011

Continuing exhibit *Dusk till Dawn: Farm Life in Moorestown*

- 4 Candlelight Night *Smith-Cadbury* open; tours and gift shop, 6-8
- 6 *Smith-Cadbury* tours, 1-4
- 13 *Smith-Cadbury* tours & research library, 1-4
- 20 *Smith-Cadbury* tours, 1-4
- 27 *Smith-Cadbury* closed

DECEMBER 2011

- 4 *Smith-Cadbury* tours, 1-4
- 9 Holiday Party, 5:30-8 PM
- 11 *Smith-Cadbury* tours & research library, 1-4

Replace the Lights!

Merry & Bright

The Society will continue our tradition of a holiday party at Smith-Cadbury this year with the theme of Merry & Bright (Replace the Lights!). A fabulous evening is planned for **December 9th** from 5:30-8 PM.

On a serious note, Smith-Cadbury Mansion still has knob and tube wiring lurking in its walls. Rewiring the Mansion will be a major financial setback for the Society, but one we have had to put off far too long. **Please save the date and mark your calendars now!** Let's see how much we can raise toward this essential project as stewards of one of Moorestown's most historic buildings!

If you would like to be involved in helping with the festivities, please contact Ann Langerhans at 856-235-5747 or thelangerhans@yahoo.com.

We will begin taking reservations on November 1st.

GHOST TOURS

*Our always popular Ghost
Tours are back again!*

DATES Friday & Saturday for two consecutive weekends in October at 7 and 9 PM: the 14th, 15th, 21st, 22nd

PRICES \$12 for adults; \$10 for Historical Society members and students; \$6 for children 12 and under.

INFORMATION Check our website (www.moorestown.com/history), the Moorestown Sun, and watch for our sign boards around town. Contact Julie Maravich (856-787-9888, mongeys@aol.com) for more information or to book a group tour.

Meet at Smith-Cadbury for the start of the tour!



**Animals!
Vegetables!
Minerals!
Photos!
Diagrams!
Historical
Documents!
Stories!**

our "FARM LIFE IN
MOORESTOWN"
exhibit has it all!

SEPTEMBER 2011



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