

MONTVILLE TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

SPRING/SUMMER, 2024

MONTVILLE, NJ



DOREMUS HOUSE HISTORY AND EVENT

Situated right in the center of town is a small Dutch Stone Farmhouse, built around 1760, known to many Montville locals as the Doremus House. Considered to be a rarity, the Doremus House remains relatively untouched by time, as it does not contain modern amenities like plumbing, electric, or heating. The house is most notably recognized for housing George Washington during his retreat from the Battle of Springfield on June 25th-27th in 1780. Washington stayed in the lower room on the west end of the building, which is the left side, viewed from the front of the house. He was with 40 of his aides and about 2,000

troops. Some of his more recognizable traveling partners were Alexander Hamilton, Tench Tilghman, and Robert Hanson Harrison.

Washington's stay wasn't the only time the Doremus house had thousands of troops residing in its orchards. A little over a year later, General Rochambeau and about 5,000 of his troops stayed on August 27th as they traveled south to Yorktown, which would become the last battle of the Revolutionary War. They returned about a year later as they headed home.

On May 5th of this year, the Montville Historical Society participated in Morris County's 15th annual Pathways of History tour. The society featured the Doremus House, making this the first time it was to be opened to the public since prior to COVID. Members of the society volunteered to be docents for the event dressed in colonial-era attire to provide tours for over 130 visitors. Member Ben Zabel performed colonial-era music, contributing to the overall experience of being transported back in time. It was especially exciting to over 25 Doremus descendants in attendance at the event, some pictured in the photo above.

PAST AND UPCOMING MEETINGS @ 7PM

- 12/14/2023, The Out Kitchen, Presenter- Meta Janowitz
- 1/18/2024, Morris Canal, Presenter- Meta Janowitz
- 2/7/2024, Geological Mining, Presenter- Richard Seabury
- 3/13/2024, Dr. Marietta Huntoon Crane Woodruff, Presenter- Pat Gamsby
- 4/10/2024, Dutch Stone Houses, Presenter- Meta Janowitz
- 5/8/2024, Doremus History/Pathways Of History Recap, Presenter- Alec Grossman
- 6/12/2024, Rocks in the Garden: A Public History of Slavery in Morris County, Presenter- Mike Snyder
- 9/11/2024, School Days in a One-Room Schoolhouse, Presenter- Joan Schaible
- 10/9/2024, Meet Lesser-Known First Ladies, Presenter- Joan Schaible
- 11/13/2024, TBD
- 12/11/2024, TBD

Meetings will be held at the Montville Senior Center, Unless Notified Otherwise.



FOSTERING COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

May 14, 2024 – Trustee Richard Seabury, on behalf of the Montville Township Historical Society, presented a framed map of 1860's Montville to our Town Council leadership which can be proudly showcased at Town Hall.

From left to right: Deputy Mayor June Witty, Councilman Frank Cooney, Mayor Matt Kayne, Councilman Richard Cook, councilman Richard Conklin, and Montville Historical Society Trustee Richard Seabury.

THE MONTVILLE MUSEUM'S HISTORY AND RE-OPENING

A small one room, red brick schoolhouse dating back to 1867 following the Civil War can be found right at the bottom of Taylortown Road. William Hixson, the eastern district superintendent of the Morris Canal, donated the land to the town that the schoolhouse was built on with the intent it be used for the public's benefit. If the family disagreed with how the land was being used they ensured that they had the right to take the land back.

Prior to becoming the museum for New Jersey's 300th anniversary, the building was used for Montville's Town Hall in 1911 after being a schoolhouse.

Once the town hall was relocated, the building then became home to the local post office in 1939 until a larger one was opened in 1961. The building was then empty until the opening of the museum in 1963. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in December of 2009.

Unfortunately, the museum was closed in 2020 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The newly reinstated Montville Township Historical Society is currently working on getting the museum reopened again with plans to open its doors in the Fall.



COMMUNITY CLEAN UP EVENTS

Since the reforming of the Montville Historical Society, there have been many community events held in order to get many of the town's historic sites ready for visitors.

Volunteers from the society participated in an Earth Day community clean up right outside of the Montville Museum on April 20th this year. The society plans to hold two more clean up events this year, dates to be announced.

Pictured are some of the volunteers that participated in the first clean up event!



Oral History Project

The Montville Township Historical Society is, and will continue, interviewing longtime Montville citizens who have memories and stories to share with both present and future generations. We are still looking for people to participate in this Oral History and be interviewed. Please reach out to us at montvillehistoricalsociety@gmail.com if you or someone you know is willing to share some important Montville Memories.

The first interviewee was Toby Cohen, 50-year math teacher at Lazar Middle School. Also interviewed was Dan Grant, a lifelong Montville resident, and Mary Ellen Warholic, a 91 year old resident who moved to Montville in 1959 with her husband Frank.



Upcoming interviewees include Richard Seabury, an 86 year old Montville resident, who recently celebrated half a century on the Morris County Parks Commission and was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Boy Scouts of America. As well as, Adele Decker, a 91 year old Montville resident, whose grandparents were owners of the Jacobus General Store on Whitehall Road, Towaco.



JUNE PRESENTATION RECAP

The Montville Historical Society hosted Mike Synder, a local historian known for his research regarding the history of Slavery in Morris County History. Through historical documents and records kept by local churches he has been able to track the lineage and placement of slaves in Morris County. The church records provide more details and fill in blanks left in the records kept by Morris County. Diagrams, also kept by the church, show where "blacks" would sit during services. Citizens would have to pay for their family

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER PRESENTATION PREVIEW

Sept: Revisit reading, writing, and arithmetic late 19th century style as the schoolmarm engages "students" in a one-room schoolhouse experience! Pupils will learn about various school buildings, daily classroom routines, textbooks, school supplies, discipline, and expectations for teachers and students. Class begins at the bell, so don't be tardy! Expect a "homework assignment!"

Oct: Discover the women who unexpectedly became First

pew in the church, which is why such records have been kept. Documentation of slaves has also been kept in Wills, as they were viewed as an investment during this time, and also by doctors for medical treatments administered.

One slave in particular, originating from the Beverwyck Plantation, is known as Phoebe of Beverwyck. Her life is said to have been the basis for some of the stories used in "Uncle Tom's Cabin".

Another recognizable Morris County name is Peter Kemble, who was buried on his Morristown property off of Mt. Kemble Ave. In his Will, he left his twelve enslaved people to his heirs.

Some other notable slave owners mentioned, with names recognizable in Morris County, were Silas Conduct, John Doughty, Stephen Vail, George P. Maccullough, and the Gibbons Family.

Ladies when their Vice Presidential husbands assumed the Presidency after a death or resignation. Also, become acquainted with two influential spouses who became First Ladies after the death of the President's first wife. Each woman assumed this unexpected position and ultimately proved herself on a national and even international stage.



Every year Montville residents celebrate our town and community during a town celebration referred to as Montville Day. Live music, food trucks, and free fun for kids make a great combination for family fun. Join us on October 13th for this year's Montville Day!

SPONSOR SHOUTOUTS



The Montville Historical Society would like to personally thank Condurso's Garden Center for graciously hosting our first five meetings this year.

We would also like to thank SeaBreeze for providing guest parking during our Doremus House Pathways of History Event.

A special thanks goes out to the fire department for the use of their chairs for our meetings, as well as Unique Photo for the use of their camera equipment.

GOT QUESTIONS? EMAIL US AT montvillehistoricalsociety@gmail.com

A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

I just wanted to take some time to formally introduce myself to you all! My name is Devin Tremblay and I have recently become a member of the Montville Historical Society, but my love for our town and our history started way before joining.

I have lived in Montville my entire life and my parents are also life long Montville residents. I graduated from Montville Township High School in 2019 and continued my education at The College Of New Jersey, majoring in

English and minoring in Marketing. I graduated with my Bachelors of Humanities and Social Science in 2022 and currently work pursuing my passion in publishing.

Since graduating, I have been trying to become more involved in the preservation of our town for future generations. It's my goal to help Montville maintain the same small town feel and community that my parents grew up with and I got to experience in

my childhood.

Please feel free to let me know of any stories you would like to see in future Newsletters!



