

MONTVILLE TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

SUMMER, 2026

MONTVILLE, NJ



Photo of Concurso delivery truck



Photo of Concurso River Front Farm stone barn

AN UPDATE ON CONCURSO'S

Over the past six months residents have rallied together in an effort to preserve the historic buildings on the former Concurso property and save them from potentially being demolished by the town.

Spring 2026

Beginning back in March, when the town announced the probability of the glass greenhouse being torn down, town residents have been following through in their commitment to historic preservation. During the March Town Committee Meeting, 150 residents

showed up in support of saving the almost 75 year old glass greenhouse. Many residents even spoke at the meeting, explaining the importance of preserving town history, some even outlining details about their structural soundness and the possibility of preservation if action is taken as soon as possible.

During the meeting, Devin Tremblay read a letter from Jackie Silvestri, who was unable to attend in person. Silvestri is the granddaughter of Bartholomew and Rose Concurso. In her letter, she talks a lot about her family's love for the farm

and the community. She also mentions how much Montville has changed over the last hundred years and how the family would love to see the portion of property, requested by the Historical Society, preserved for an agricultural museum. (Jackie's letter can be read in full on page 3).

At the end of the discussion regarding Concurso's Township Administrator June Hercek explained that they are approving an evaluation of the building and will be receiving an estimate for restoration. The residents took this for the small win that it was at the time for the preservation effort.

2026 MONTHLY MEETINGS

- January- History of Montville- Predating 250th timeline
- February- Jacksonville Gold Rush
- March- Founding Families
- April- Cancelled
- May- Serpentine Mines
- June- Postponed to July
- July- Founding Families
- August- No Meeting
- September- Historic Properties, Structures & Districts presented by the Montville Historic Preservation Commission and the Historic Society
- October- Our First Veterans
- November- Historic Restaurants
- December- Founding Families (Van Duynes / Van Ness)

GOT QUESTIONS? EMAIL US AT montvillehistoricalsociety@gmail.com

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MT HS NEWSLETTER 1

The Condurso property was a topic of discussion at the next Township Committee Meeting as well. This time the talk wasn't so much about preservation, but more about having the property tested, remediated, and cleaned. Before any preservation efforts are started the property had to first be cleaned with the removal of multiple piles of debris. The town allocated \$1 million for the remediation and clean up efforts.



Photo of the first glass-greenhouse that we're trying to save

Summer 2026

After minimal talk about Condurso's in the months that followed, Condurso's was finally mentioned again during the Historical Preservation Commission Meeting on June 22nd. Members of the Township Committee noted that some buildings on the property were scheduled for demolition. HPC President Anthony Angiolini explained to them that there are laws in place that require approvals from certain agencies when decisions of this caliber are being made, one of these agencies being the HPC. Township Committee Members argued that none of the buildings on the Condurso property are on historic registrars.

Just because a building is not on a historic registrar currently does not mean that it isn't historic or doesn't have historical value. Below is criteria that the HPC uses to determine if something can be deemed historic.

What Makes a Property Historic

- If it is 50 years old or older
- If it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
- If it is associated with the lives of significant persons in our past
- If it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction
- If it represents a significant and distinctive entity whose components may lack individual distinction
- If it represents the work of a master
- If it has yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory
- If it possesses high artistic values



Photo of the Condurso farmhouse built in the late 1800s.

Specifically, when looking at the structures on the Condurso property, although they are not currently on a historical registrar, they still meet more than one of the outline criteria. Almost all of the structures are over 50 years old, some of them embody the distinctive characteristics of a type,

period, or method of construction, they have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory, one of the buildings possesses high artistic values, and they represents a significant and distinctive entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

The HPC offered their assistance in reviewing buildings on the property explaining how they have engineers, archeologists, and architects on hand. Fano countered that he would make sure that the building analyses are respected but final decisions won't always make everyone happy.

In August, architect Anthony Garrett explained in a presentation to the Township Committee that they will need to decide what the property and building on the property will be used for before making a final decision regarding the buildings. His presentation also outlined a plan that included a \$10.3 million dollar price tag for the restoration of 17 of the 19 buildings on the property. Multiple residents spoke and agreed with the architect that the buildings should not be demolished until the town has a solid plan for what they want to do with the property.

Regardless of the push back from residents and architects, the town approved a resolution to remove 10 of the building from the property, including some of the remaining greenhouses, but not the glass one that residents have been fighting to save.

Town Committee Member June Hercek did confirm that the town is working with firms to evaluate all of the parks in town and residents will have an opportunity to express their ideas and desires for the former Condurso Property.

With this in mind The Montville Township Historical Society decided to be fully transparent with residents regarding their proposal for the property in a press release published by TAPintoMontville.

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Excerpts From Our Proposal

"The Historical Society is working to preserve those memories through the proposed Montville Museum-Agricultural Center. The proposal would not turn all 28 acres into a museum. Instead, the smaller area [1 ½ of the 28 acres] would preserve the property's most significant historic resources while leaving the remainder available for other Open Space uses."

"The proposed Montville Museum-Agricultural Center would tell a story much larger than that of the Concurso family or one farm. It would bring together photographs, documents, farm equipment, tools, other artifacts and personal stories from farms throughout Montville, Towaco, and Pine Brook, while providing space for school programs, agricultural demonstrations, gardening and horticultural education, community events and other programming."

The full proposal, including a plan for funding it, can be found at

<https://www.tapinto.net/towns/montville/sections/community-life/articles/preserving-concurso-s-what-s-possible-for-the-historic-property>

JACKIE'S LETTER TO THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE

Dear Montville Township Committee,

I am sorry I was unable to make it to the meeting, but I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. I am the granddaughter of Bartholomew and Rose Concurso. It has been brought to my attention that the historical society is requesting a small piece of the Concurso farm that the town acquired, in the aftermath of the auction.

I have enclosed a picture of my grandparents with the first 3 of their 8 children, I am guessing that it was taken in 1912. You can see how proud he is of his family.

I along with family members were relieved to hear that the land was acquired for open space. The thought of storage units, condos, etc. would be unbearable. I am sure the committee may know some of the family history as there are many stories dating back approx. 1905-6. Sacrifices, determination, love and raising a family of 8 children coming through the great depression; was not an easy task.

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Even when money and resources were scarce, the bond of this family provided comfort, hope, and resilience. Sticking together reminded everyone that love and support are the most valuable. Circa 1945, a storefront and apartment building was created, where our families lived, that was in the neighboring town Lake Hiawatha so it was "easy" for everyone to work together on the farm. This also included meal times in the summer kitchen and the house during the winter. We all ate in shifts the men first, then the children and women last. There were approximately 15 at each meal and tripling during the holidays.

My grandfather was a man whose life was defined by hard work, faith, and generosity. Deeply loved by his family, church and community, he never hesitated to lend a hand to those in need. Young men whose families feared they might find trouble in the city would come to the farm in the summer to work and find guidance. Whether it was offering someone a job, providing a place to work or shelter, or guiding them toward a better path, he changed lives with his kindness. The impact he made was evident in his funeral procession, which stretched across three towns — a powerful testament to how many people he touched and how deeply he was loved and admired.

I know first-hand how they all loved and cherished this land. They along with other farms in the community helped each other. By the river bridge, was an egg farm now sits I believe the town

garage. Across the street on the opposite side was a chicken farm (now office condos) just to name a few which are now long gone. Setting this space aside for the community to learn the history of the area would shine hope and remembrance into the darkness that has fallen over the farm.

Although many of his dreams were accomplished, the one of the farm always staying in the family was not. So it would mean the world to his surviving grandchildren, their families, but more importantly it would mean everything to Bartholomew and Rose and their 8 children if you decide to designate a small portion of this property to the historical society for a museum.

Thank you for your consideration,
Jackie Silvestri [née Concurso]

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THE VAN DUYNE CIDER MILL: HISTORY AND DEMOLITION



Photo of apple pressing process

The History

Built in 1795 and starting operation as a cider mill in the late 1800s, the Van Duyne Cider Mill was a staple in the Montville community for generations. The red three-story clapboard mill stood at 160 Pine Brook road for well over a century, producing cider that every resident loved.

In the early years the family used 1894 Boomer and Boschert mechanical screw press for their cider operation, later turning to more modern facilities and even refrigeration. In the early 1970 the mill changed management, but remained in the family, making it one of the oldest family owned cider mills in the country.

In 2017, the mill shut its doors for the final time, permanently closing to the public due to roofing issues.

It is clear through efforts made by the community in the years that followed, that many wanted to save the Cider Mill. In 2023, a local roofing company went out to survey the building with the hopes of donating a new roof. After looking more closely at the structure, it was determined that it was not stable enough to safely do work to it.



Photo of Cider Mill demolition on July 17th, 2026

The Decision

During the June 22nd meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission the proposal of the demolition of the Cider Mill came before commissioners. They ruled in favor of denying demolition, with the hope that the condemned mill could be salvaged. This left the final decision in the hands of the Montville Township planning board. They ultimately voted in approval of the demolition during their July 9th meeting citing that the building was a safety hazard with it being so close to the roadway and at risk of falling.

The Demolition

On July 17th, community members gathered to watch the demolition of the historic mill. People who have lived in town for decades and remembered the mill for its days serving the public, stood on the edge of Pine Brook Rd. watching as demolition equipment tore down the mill. Members of the Historical Society were also present, making sure to save items from the mill in the hopes of showcasing it in a museum one day.

UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER

October 11th - Montville Day
October 14th - Monthly Meeting
October 18th - Museum Opening

NOVEMBER

November 18th - Monthly Meeting
November 15th - Museum Opening

DECEMBER

December 9th - Monthly Meeting
December 20th - Museum Opening

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MTHS NEWSLETTER 4



ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BECOMING A DOCENT?

The Montville Township Historical Society needs docents for the Montville Museum and many other events! Please email montvillehistoricalsociety@gmail.com if you are interested in volunteering for any of the dates below.

Montville Museum, 6 Taylortown Rd. (1PM-4PM) October 18th, November 15th, and December 20th.

We are not just looking for museum volunteers. If you would like to get involved in other ways, check out our volunteers page at

<https://www.montvilletwp Historical Society.com/volunteer-opportunities>.

No need to be a Montville encyclopedia! We now have Docent Guides for each of our museums to assist you with sharing Montville's history.

SOCIETY T-SHIRTS



The Montville Township Historical Society & Museum will be selling originally designed t-shirts at select society events, as well as at the Montville Museum on open Sundays. They come in sizes S-2XL and will be \$25.00 each. All proceeds will go to supporting the Society & Museum.

There are 3 different options available to purchase. The Towaco Train (top right), Bonnieview Farms (bottom left), and the Morris Canal (bottom right). All come with the MTHS&M logo on the front (top left).

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT UPDATE

The Montville Township Historical Society has conducted over 25 interviews for the Oral History Project so far. We intend to 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.

FALL ELECTIONS

It is that time again! Fall elections are upon us. There are a couple positions up for election this year and a few open positions within our board.

The positions up for election this year are Vice President and Secretary. Our current Vice President is Pat Gamsby and our current Secretary is Devin Tremblay. The current open positions are listed below. If anyone is interested in one of these roles, please email us at montvillehistoricalsociety@gmail.com.

- Legal/Regulatory Director
- Membership Director
- Monthly Program Director
- Education Director
- Fundraising Director

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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Board of Trustees

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| • President | • Anthony Angiolini |
| • Vice President | • Pat Gamsby |
| • Secretary | • Devin Tremblay |
| • Treasurer | • Landi Simone |
| • Legal/Regulatory Director | • OPEN |
| • Communication Director | • Alec Grossman |
| • Membership Director | • OPEN |
| • Monthly Program Director | • OPEN |
| • Education Director | • OPEN |
| • Grant Director | • Alan Moors |
| • Museum Curator | • Meta Janowitz |
| • Fundraising Director | • OPEN |
| • Community Relations | • Eileen Strasser |
| • Entertainment Director | • Ben Zabel |
| • Newsletter Editor | • Devin Tremblay |
| • Trustee Advisor | • Linda Weisholtz |
| • Trustee Advisor | • Dick Seabury |
| • Trustee Advisor | • Dan Grant |

Currently, there are five Board of Trustees position open. If you are interested in any of the positions email montvillehistoricalsociety@gmail.com.

To become a member, please download and fill out the form on our website at <https://www.montvilletwphistoricalociety.com/membership-1>

Annual Membership

- Individual- \$25
- Student- \$15
- Family- \$40
- Senior- \$10
- Veterans- \$10

Lifetime Membership

- Individual- \$100
- Household- \$250

Corporate / Business Membership

- Annual- \$50

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