

Williamstown Monroe Township  
Camden County

March 9<sup>th</sup> 1859



## HISTORICAL SOCIETY ★

*In Pursuance of an Act of the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey*

With these words, the settlement first known as Squankum then Williamstown petitioned the Governor for an Act by the General Assembly to form a new Township to be called Monroe from part of the Township of Washington in the County of Camden. Taxable inhabitants convened at the house of Charles Husted for the purpose of electing officers. The reading of the Act was performed by John Bodine. On March 9, 2009, Monroe Township began its 150<sup>th</sup> year.

In celebration of this historic event and another historic event that being the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Williamstown Fire Company, Mayor Michael Gabbiannelli has designated the week beginning August 15, 2009 through August 22, 2009 as the official Town celebration. **YOU ARE WELCOMED TO ATTEND AND ENJOY ALL OF THE FUN AND FESTIVITIES AS OUTLINED HERE!**

**Art/History Contest Reception** – The Historical Society sent out a challenge to the students of Monroe Township to submit their concept of this historic anniversary by art, poetry, essay or music. We have received such talented entries, we cordially invite you to attend the opening of an exhibit of the students' response. A reception will be held on Sunday, July 26, 2009 at the Reading Room, Main and Library Streets (next to the Grand Theatre) from 1:00 p.m. to

4:00 p.m. Music will be provided by Sandy Beth Munyan, Kelly Munyan, Alexandra Wear, and Caitlyn McAloon under the direction of Debbie Krauss. There will be Peoples' Choice voting throughout the celebration with prizes awarded at the closing ceremonies.

### **150<sup>th</sup> Grand Celebration and Parade**

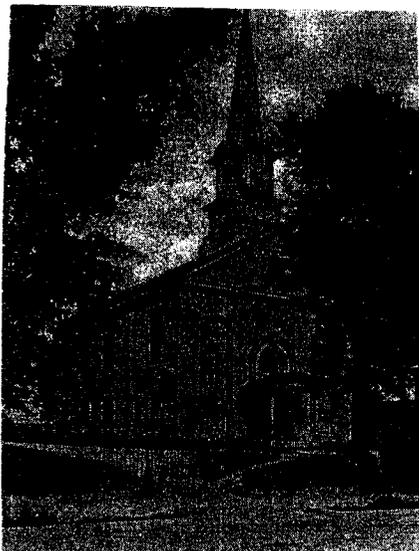
The Williamstown Fire Company is sponsoring a Grand Parade which will be on Saturday, August 15, 2009 beginning at 1:00 p.m. at the Middle School. The Parade will proceed down Church Street to Main Street and then to the Fire House. There will be an Open House and Beer Garden at the Fire Company. The Ireland House and Reading Room will be open for visitors prior to and following the Parade to provide an additional opportunity for voting of the student art/history contest



WASHINGTON HOTEL, WILLIAMSTOWN, N. J.



**Historic Church Pilgrimage** – On Sunday, August 16, 2009 beginning at 1:00 p.m. a self-conducted tour of several historic Williamstown churches will take place. You are cordially invited to participate in this prayerful afternoon. Each church will have an Open House starting with a short prayer service for the people of Monroe Township beginning at 1:00 p.m. at New Brooklyn Methodist Church, Malaga Road and New Brooklyn Road. 2:00 p.m. First Presbyterian; 3:00 p.m. First Methodist Church, both on Main Street, 4:00 p.m. Downer Methodist Church, Fries Mill Road. New Brooklyn Methodist and First Methodist will be celebrating their 150<sup>th</sup> next year.



Presbyterian Church — 1840

If you would like to carpool or need a ride for the Church Pilgrimage, please contact Susanne 856-629-3368

**Monday, August 17, 2009**

At 7:30 p.m. you are invited to a Porch/Lawn concert at the Ireland House on Main Street and Blue Bell Roads presented by the Sweet Adelines. The women barbershop singers will perform patriotic songs and historic songs in keeping with a gentler time. They have promised some sing-a-longs so we need your voices. Following the concert, we will have a candlelight tour of the House. Please bring your lawn chairs. In the event of rain, we will retreat to the Reading Room, one block down Main Street at Library next to Grand Theatre.

**Tuesday, August 18, 2009**

On Tuesday, several Williamstown Associations including the Women's Club and Williamstown Alliance will be presenting an 1859 dinner at the Pfeiffer Community Center by invitation.

**Wednesday, August 19, 2009**

Parks and Recs under the direction of Jim Bonder will be screening the movie *Invincible* which is the life story of former Phila. Eagle, Vince Papali. Vince Papali will be making a guest appearance. The movie will be shown at Owens Field, Rt. 555, Williamstown. Bring a lawn chair. Starts at 7:00 p.m.

**Thursday, August 20, 2009**

If you are interested in attending the Civil War Ball, period dress is encouraged but not required. If you are interested in having a gown made, we have several seamstresses who are sewing dresses. For further information concerning the Ball, dresses, etc. please call 856-629-3368. If you sew yourself, there are patterns out there at JoAnn's or on the internet. Linda, our dance caller, reminds the ladies to wear their gloves. Light refreshments will be available in case anyone gets "the vapors."

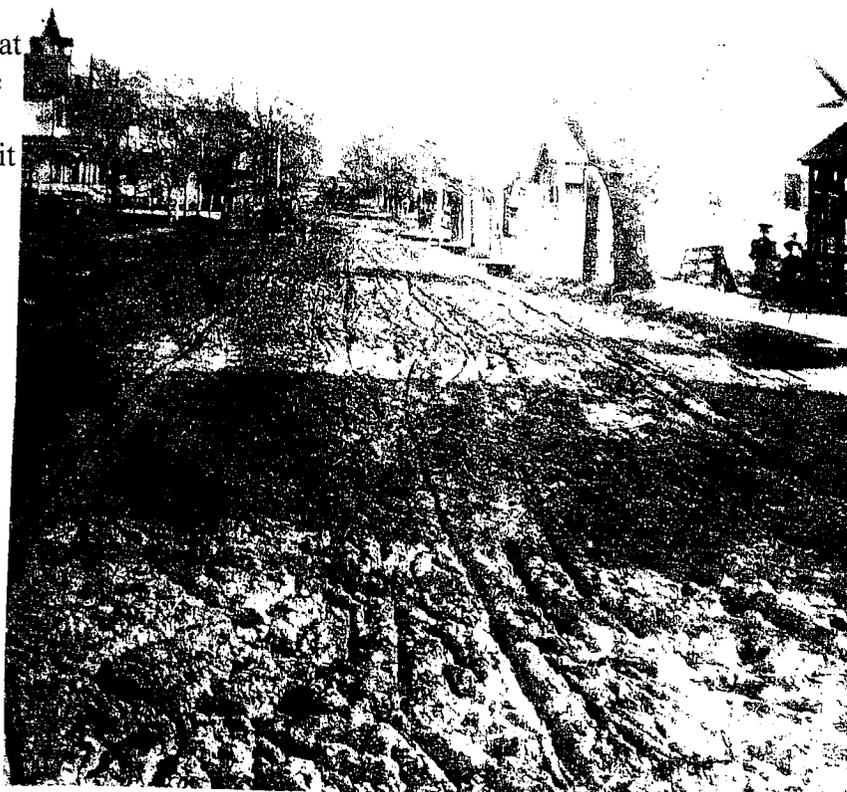
**Friday, August 21, 2009**

Hall Street "Little School" reunion and historic "Walk Down Old Main Street." We cordially invite all to attend a Hall Street reunion at the Little School on Hall Street just off of Main Street behind the Library at 7:30 p.m. If you are not yet a member of the Hall Street School Alumni and Booster Association, Friday night would be a good time to stop by. Following a get together at the School, we will take a walk along Main Street narrated using a handwritten history from the late 1800s which describes Main Street as it was. We will end up at the Reading Room for coffee and more voting of the art/history entries. We hope everyone will take the time to visit Old Williamstown during these celebration days.

**Saturday, August 22, 2009**

Closing ceremonies are planned at Owens Field which will include a town picnic, inflatables for our young'ins, entertainment, fireworks, and lots of good old hometown fun. 4:00 to 10:00 p.m.

During this celebration, we will be looking back over the last 150 years, but then we will get back to our own lives and our own histories that we are making in our own place in time. As we continue our journey down Main Street day to day, we can't help but think of those who walked Main Street before us. I have no doubt we will make every effort as they did to preserve our hometown to the best of our ability on our watch. Hopefully when they celebrate the next 150<sup>th</sup>, there will still be a Historical Society remembering all of us.



*THE MONROE TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
PRESENTS:*



## *A CIVIL WAR BALL*

*You are cordially invited to attend a ball to be held Thursday, August 20, 2009 starting at 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Pfeiffer Community Center, Main Street and Blue Bell Roads, Williamstown, NJ. You do not need to know the dances ahead of time. The dances will be taught by our Dance Caller, Linda Harting.*

*Dances will include: Virginia Reel, Patticake Polka, Nine Pins, German Waltz, Snowball Reel (intermission) What's Good for the Goose is Good for the Gander, Tennessee Traveler, Gothic Dance, Carillon deDunkirque, Broom Waltz.*

*Period dress is encouraged and ladies are reminded to wear their gloves. Gentleman in military uniforms are requested to remove their heel plates. Non-reenactors are asked to dress appropriately as for any dance. Tickets are \$10.00. Please send check or money order to Monroe Township Historical Society, 313 South Main Street, Williamstown, NJ 08094 for your tickets. For further information Contact Susanne McKee @ 856-629-3368.*

*For those who wish to brush up on proper etiquette, here are some websites that are most informative:*

*Ball Etiquette: [http://www.civilwardance.org/articles.htm#Ball Room Etiquette](http://www.civilwardance.org/articles.htm#Ball%20Room%20Etiquette)  
Victoriana: <http://www.victoriana.com/Etiquette/ballroomdancing.htm>*

### **School Tours**

This year we hosted Holly Glen, Radix Elementary and Whitehall students. 300 strong on multiple days touring the Ireland-Hofer House, Reading Room (Williamstown's first library) and Hall Street Little School.

We have a team of volunteers who man the buildings in period clothing and present living history exhibits to the children. This year Wayne Johnson, a Civil War history interpreter came in full uniform to the Reading Room. Wayne was dressed complete with spurs as he was in full calvary uniform. I never realized how hard it is to walk in spurs until I saw Wayne. We would also like to thank George Bopp and Gary Bopp who worked on the train at the Little School. They gave up several Saturdays in order to reconfigure the tracks and the train is most popular with our young visitors who really appreciated their good work.

### **School Library Outreach**

Maureen Coelho, School Librarian was appointed by Superintendent, Chuck Earling as his liaison to the Historical Society Board. Maureen suggested that we provide a treasure chest to the school libraries and fill the chest with pieces of Williamstown history such as photographs that the teachers could borrow for their respective classes. The items in the chests could be changed each year to promote interest among the students. Jackie Flint, our Curator, has been working with Maureen and she has prepared chests for the Middle School, Holly Glen, and Whitehall. We hope to extend this program to some of the private schools in the community in the new school year.

### **High School History Exhibit**

Jackie Flint also coordinated a World War II history exhibit at the high school in which a highlight was Leon Rennebaum's history. Leon was the most decorated Gloucester County veteran of World War II. Jackie who is a Board member at the Millville Airfield Museum used her experience at both that facility and the Williamstown Historical Society to present a fantastic exhibit to inspire our high school students. The Historical Society will also be maintaining a continuing history exhibit at the new Library on Marsha Avenue after its opening.

A special thank you shout out to Jackie who picked up all of the art contest entries throughout the school district and got them safely to the Reading Room. This was no small task when you see the delicate three dimensional projects that were created. Thanks again, Jackie.



### Letter from Jesse Hendrickson

At our last Historical Society meeting, Alexandra Vandelft attended. Alexandra you may know, had an antique shop in Pitman for many years. She has visited us before and gave us copies of Glass House script and copies of the Williamstown train schedules. This time Alexandra gave us a copy of a letter that was written by Jesse W. Hendrickson to his cousin, Jessie Heritage. The letter was written July 31, 1955 when Mr. Hendrickson was living at the Odd Fellows Home.

Here are a few excerpts: "Old Gilda Chew told me she bought many a quart jug of rum for 12 cents." "Uncle Jimmie was a glass blower. Couldn't read or write but could count money and save it." "Steven Park was a soldier in the Civil War, was a prisoner of War in a Rebel Prison. Didn't get freed for a while after the War. All his folks thought him dead as they hadn't heard from him for a long time. His mother and father just finishing supper. He walked in and said, 'Hello Folks.' His mother was glad to see him, swooned, and died at the table. Some of the folks said Steve, you should not of came home without letting us know. He stayed until after burial and said, 'I won't bother you any more. He left and was never heard of again."

"Dad farmed the Garwood and Bodine farm out Clayton Road. You will know it as the 'Ed Evans Farm.' Dad raised steers and hogs and chickens, eggs, milk, all kinds of vegetables for the Glass House Store. The Glass Store had their money called Shin Plasters. Only money glass blowers got. Had to spend it in company store. Grandfather got paid in Shin Plasters. When he shod a

blower's driving horse, mother said a lot of Grandfather's friends, 'Would you trade me 2 good dollars for 2 dollars of Shin Plasters?' I want to go on train to visit my relatives."

"There was a lot of big woods between Cross Keys and Williamstown when (I was) a small boy, a Toll Gate about a ¼ mile from our house on North Main Street. Dad would pay toll to get to Williamstown."

"When we were kids, Uncle George was a great user of Japanese Oil for bruises and sprains and a tonic called Kidney Wort."

These are just a few samples from this wonderful piece of history. We have several handwritten diaries that families have shared with the Historical Society that are just fantastic. We knew about the Williamstown Toll Gate which was at the northernmost exit driveway from Holly Glen School. We had Rick Coe some years back research the deeds to prove its location but this first hand account of someone using the Toll Gate is wonderful to find. If you have any handwritten histories or letters in your family, the Historical Society would love to have a copy for our files. They give us a window into the past that is otherwise lost forever. Thank you Alexandra once again.

