

BROADSIDE

Spring 1985

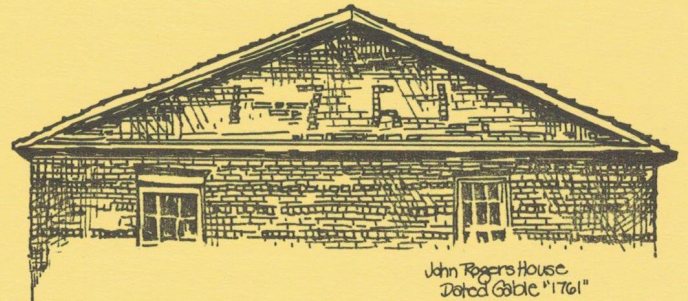
The John Rogers House

Back in the Eighteenth Century, John Rogers built his family a house. We know this because, like many proud builders, he signed and dated his work. Brick by different-colored brick, he worked his initials and the year into the gables of his creation: 1761 and J + R R.

At that date, in the northern part of New Jersey, bricks weren't cheap. They had to be transported from South Jersey (at the closest) where clay is plentiful. Consequently, while the northern colonists were constructing simple wooden structures, their counterparts to the south were putting up brick buildings with the same distinctive architecture and "checkerboard" pattern that was used by John Rogers. (This pattern is known to masons as Flemish bond.)

The application for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places called the John Rogers House "...probably the northern-most example of the type in the state." It was this distinction that qualified the Rogers House for both the State and National Registers—the only building in West Windsor to be so listed—and it was these designations that saved the house from destruction while Mercer County Park was being put together.

Most West Windsor houses from the 1700s have disappeared, mainly in the last twenty years, as developers tear up the farmland and tear down the farmhouses to build "contemporary colonials." (We destroy genuine



colonial houses to put up fakes. Isn't progress wonderful?) The John Rogers House is the Historical Society's chance to save a piece of our heritage.

Mercer County, which owns the Rogers House as part of its Central Park, has indicated that it would like to have the building restored, and has shown its willingness to fund and work on projects of historic interest by its restoration of the Howell Farm at Belle Mountain. The Parks Commission wants us to work with them on the Rogers House.

The first order of business will be to stabilize and repair the structure. The County has taken the first step by removing two 20th Century porches, thereby revealing the original line of the building. The Society has contacted an architect who has done restoration work for the State to aid us in this phase of the project. Recently, a group of Society members were able to survey the interior of the building to see what needs to be done. (We'll report on this in a future issue of Broadside.)

Once the building is repaired, it is the Society's dream, money and County permitting, to restore the interior of the John Rogers House to its 1761 room configurations and to furnish it in appropriate 18th Century style.

Saving the John Rogers House will take time, money, and people—people with ideas, with skills or without, people with a willingness to work. It will take YOU.

Come to the Society's meetings. Get involved in saving your home town.

—Carol Silvester



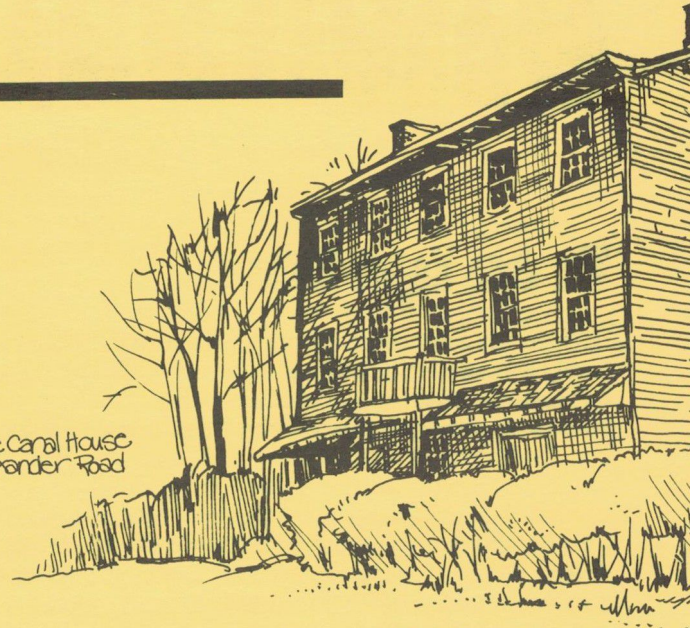
A Bit of West Windsor History

Joseph H. West wrote the following article for the Trenton Sunday Advertiser in December 31, 1905. Much of the information in it has been lost to those of us new to West Windsor. Therefore, we are reprinting the article with the addition of comments and information by Carol Silvester. We are grateful to Dorothy Tindall for giving us the copy of the article.

The lands included in what are now the bounds of West Windsor Township were once chiefly owned by Thomas Warne, William Penn and the Lyells, who were land speculators. (Penn and the Lyells have been remembered in the Penn-Lyle Rd.) Warne's lands appear to have been the first sold to actual settlers. It was not until 1737 that John, Thomas and Richard Penn sons of William Penn, sold the immense tract of land of about 6,500 acres, and it seems the balance of the Penn tract, to John Conover (Covenhoven) and Garret Schenck, who came here from Monmouth County. The westerly line of the purchase followed the Province line from the Assanpink Creek one and a quarter miles to the line of Thomas Warne. I think that the road that runs easterly from the Clarksville school house known as the Tamy Swamp Road is for nearly a mile on the old line between Penn and Warne lands. (According to old maps the school was located right across Quaker Bridge Road from Clarksville. This road still exists and runs along the railroad tracks from the bridge west to Quaker Bridge Road.)

Actual settlers soon began to occupy, subdue and cultivate the land. Deeds for lands along this road speak of it as the road leading to "Totaymy's Swamp," abbreviated to "Tamy" swamp. This Indian (Native American) was one of those who preferred to stay here when most of the others went to the reservation in Burlington County. (The reservation is located in Indian Mills.) "Totaymy" may have been Moses Totamy who was one of the attorneys or agents appointed by the Delaware tribe in 1758 to treat with the whites, but he continued to live here and died in the heavily wooded tract that bears his name and is buried on a rising piece of ground in the meadows now owned by David Bergen, east of the farm formerly known as the Richard Mount farm. (Where these farms are located today is a question we would like to ask our older residents. We believe the farms were located somewhere between the railroad and Village Road West. Any additional information will be appreciated.)

The Canal House
Alexander Road



Probably one of the first houses erected on the northwest part of the Conover-Schenck tract was a log house that stood until 1832 on the corner opposite the Clarksville school house. (Where was it?) It was destroyed by fire intentionally by neighbors to drive out the cholera germs, two members of the Crequi family having died there during the epidemic and having been buried in the field hard by in coffins made by John Flock. (John Flock owned the farm now part of American Cyanamid. He lived to be 91. At 9 years of age he saw British troops captured by Americans during the Revolution.) This cholera epidemic of 1832 was the same that killed many workers on the Delaware & Raritan Canal.



"Brides
Now and Then"
April 28

Calendar

April 28, 1985 — Brides Fashion Show — American and International bridal outfits from 1980s back to the 1800s will be modeled.

Tour of Dutch Neck — Plans are being discussed for a tour of the village of Dutch Neck during spring or early summer 1985.



Nostalgia Corner

Did you know that 8 homes along U.S. 1 between Penns Neck and Quaker Bridge Rd., have been demolished?

Do you remember swimming in:
the sheepwash?

the Princeton Swim Club?

the Paradise Pool?

Grover's Mill Pond?

the irrigation pond behind the tennis courts?

Do you remember white flannel slacks and blue jackets for boys at 8th Grade graduation? White dresses for the girls?

During World War II, do you remember:
Convoys of Army trucks carrying men to camp?

Air raid drills with complete blackouts?

Ration books for gas and meat?

Lines for butter and nylons?

Scrap metal drives?

Do you remember:

An airport on U.S. 1 at the site of the Bakers Basin Motor Vehicle Bureau?

Watching anything that flew overhead: small planes, dirigibles, balloons that threw out sand if they got too low?

Do you have any reminiscences or photos to share with us?

—Mary Schenck

Join Us Today!

Historical Society of West Windsor
P.O. Box 38
Princeton Junction, NJ 08550
Attention: Kay Reed, Treasurer

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Exhibits Committee Report 1983-84

West Windsor Library Opening—November 13, 1983
Historical paintings, photographs, and memorabilia were assembled and exhibited in the library. These pertained to West Windsor history.

Holiday Toy Exhibit—December 1983 and January 1984
Toys and books, covering a span of the last hundred years, were exhibited in the display case of the West Windsor Library.

Valentine's Day Exhibit—January and February 1984
Articles containing Valentine motifs, dating back one hundred years, were exhibited in the display case in the West Windsor Library.

Senior Citizens Day Exhibit—May 15, 1984
Textiles including coverlets, quilts, samplers, and handmade clothing, were displayed in the Princeton Junction firehouse.

Delaware-Raritan Canal Day—June 23, 1984
Exhibits included: Tools, Kitchen Utensils, Furniture, Boating and Yachting Equipment. Photographs and books covering the history of the Delaware-Raritan Canal were also displayed.

Education Week Exhibit at Maurice Hawk School—
November 1-30, 1984
Photographs, calligraphy, and personal articles belonging to Maurice Hawk were exhibited at the school. We were especially appreciative of the assistance of Annabelle Hawke Jantz in providing us with the Stetson hat worn by Mr. Hawk.

—Susan Lodge, Committee Group Head

Acquisitions

The Society has been fortunate in receiving several acquisitions of historic importance:

■ A cape, a skirt and drawers were donated by Frances Tindall McGovern Sodano. The skirt was her mother's, Ruth Stelle Tindall. The cape belonged to her grandmother, Phebe Stelle. All of these articles of clothing are from the Tindall Farm (1758) on Old Trenton Road

■ Wedding dress, slip, gloves and shoes, worn by Stella Cook Hawk (sister of Maurice Hawk) when she married David Stuart Gordon in 1911, were donated to the Society by the bride's daughter, Sarah Gordon Cox. The dress will be the focus of a Bride's Fashion Show to be presented April 28, 1985.

■ Mrs. Cox also gave us two citations received by Maurice Hawk, as well as the original architect's drawing of the Maurice Hawk School.

■ A folding screen from the Coward House was given by Ruth Finkelstein, who also gave us a lovely quilt top to use in furnishing the Rogers House

Broadside is a publication of the Historical Society of West Windsor.

Designed and edited by Ruth Strohl Palmer.

Contributors to this issue: Susan Lodge, Joan Parry, Mary Schenck, and Carol Silvester.

The Historical Society of West Windsor
P.O. Box 38, Princeton Junction, N.J. 08550

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