

BROADSIDE

Fall & Winter 1986

The Year in Review

The year 1986 was a busy one for the Society. Here's a summary to bring you up to date.

John Rogers House — In order to sign a lease with the Mercer County Parks Commission a liability insurance policy in the amount of \$500,000 is required. We are in the process of obtaining such a policy, and hope to sign the lease in spring 1987.

Landmarks Directory — Our listing of pre-1910 houses is being up-dated by Frances and Walter Conover and Mary and Warren Schenck. Photographs already taken of Landmark Houses will be organized and further photographs will be taken as needed.

Fund-Raisers — In April, we raised almost \$300 through a Flea Market held at Tamarack Farms. Other non-profit organizations, as well as crafters and flea marketers, rented 14 tables. An unexpected bonus occurred when Jeannette Flickinger, Tom Lodge and Bernt Midland agreed to take groups on tours through the "Castle" which raised an additional \$200.

Our Holiday House Tour set a record by bringing in over \$1,000 in ticket donations, gift shop sales and membership renewals. The five houses opened for our Tour, located in the Grovers Mill area, were those of the Guilbault Family (c1862); Self Family (1690); Koch-Werner Family (1879); MacPherson Family (1758) and the Bruno Family (1780). Our thanks to all of them and the 40 guides that manned the houses.

Exhibits — Senior Citizens Day in May hosted our exhibit of Township photos and vintage clothing recently contributed to the Society. A comprehensive photo display of West Windsor, old and new, and antique toys and artifacts entertained residents at the Township picnic in August. Our annual exhibit at Maurice Hawk filled their Library windows with a similar selection of photos and artifacts in November.

Meetings and Programs — The Society met six times during the year. In March we hosted Elmer W. Fry, Jr., who spoke on the trolley lines that used to run through the area. In November Malcolm Roszel spoke about Dutch Neck in days gone by.

We have other projects that are waiting on the back burner for lack of people to help. If you can spare some time for us, please call either Carol Silvester (799-0444) or Joan Parry (452-8598).

Notes on West Windsor History

*The last issue of **Broadside** took Carol Kehoe's historic narration from the 1800s to 1960. Here is the conclusion of her remarks during the Brides Fashion show, plus a few thoughts about the future.*

In the 1970s West Windsor was hit by a jolting, growth spurt, bringing with it changes to accommodate the increasing population. The West Windsor-Plainsboro High School opened for classes September 1983, on the site of the old Coward Farm. Prior to 1973, high school students had to go to Princeton or Trenton high schools. Traffic near the high school brought the Township's first traffic light on the corner of Clarksville and the Hightstown Roads.

In 1966, the Mercer County Library opened its first West Windsor branch in the old Chapel and Sunday School of the First Presbyterian Church of Dutch Neck. Before it opened, a weekly Bookmobile serviced the community. The building also housed the Municipal Court.

Mercer County Community College opened in 1972 at the very border of West Windsor and Hamilton Townships. Next door, work began on the lake in Mercer County Park closing South Post Road to through traffic forever. The park itself opened in 1972 consisting of 2,700 acres. Another sign of civilization came in 1970, when the Acme was built, West Windsor's first and only supermarket. Later in the decade the adjoining stores and bank were added. Princeton Junction, with its commercial activities and train station, became "Downtown West Windsor."

Both Quaker Bridge and Mercer Malls opened just across the Township border in 1976, giving West Windsor the traffic; Lawrenceville the ratables. The Route One Corridor development had begun. During the 70s ecology became a prime interest. Our schools sent students to pick up trash along the roads on Ecology Days. Perhaps these events turned the tide in winning the debate over allowing girls to wear pants to school.

The municipal offices moved to Princeton Junction when the Municipal Building was erected in 1977. The old Town Hall in Dutch Neck was demolished, also in 1977. The library stayed until November 1983, when its new building opened at the Municipal Center.

The 1980s continue the enormous growth of our township. Developments rise in every farm field.

Services and businesses are strained to meet the increased demand.

Today, the population of the WW-P High School is 1,000 students — about the population of the whole Township at the turn of the century. A referendum was passed in 1984 to build a middle school in Plainsboro to handle 7th and 8th Grades. Now another elementary school has been proposed.

Carnegie Center on Route One and Alexander Road covers a tract of land that once grew potatoes. Its Hyatt Regency Hotel brings a touch of the Big City to West Windsor. More traffic lights are put in at major intersections along the Princeton-Hightstown and Clarksville Roads to the great relief of local drivers. Amid torn up roads, West Windsor moves from septic systems to a functioning sewer system as each new development is built. Older parts of the Township wait their turn to hook up.

Where now? The future looks bright and interesting for our Township. Whether development will be a blessing or a curse, we'll have to wait to find out. From the point of view of most people it is both. A blessing because new residents from the city come for open space, clean air and water, good and uncrowded schools — and they will work to keep them. Progress will only be a curse if development is allowed to happen unchecked, with no one watching the Big Picture. It is up to us, the people of West Windsor and our elected officials, to see that the joys of country living are not destroyed.

—Carol Kehoe



Sponsorship

This issue of **Broadside** has been made possible by a donation by Princeton Condominiums, Inc. We greatly appreciate their support.

We hope other generous companies, organizations, and/or individuals might consider sponsoring all or part of the next issue of **Broadside**. Sponsors will receive prominent mention in the issue, our heartfelt thanks, and a tax-deductible contribution.

The Aqueduct Story

The following story of the Aqueduct area of West Windsor was written by Mrs. Robert H. Engelke (Ida Louise Williamson). Mrs. Engelke was the daughter of A. Leroy Williamson and Sarah Louise Snook Williamson.

My parents and I lived on Edgehill Street in Princeton until my father's death when I was seven years old. Between that time and my marriage, the old Williamson homestead at the Aqueduct was home to my mother and me. She had graduated from the Normal School in Trenton. Teaching positions were scarce. She taught at Princeton Model School, was a principal in the Lyons Farms system, and then went to Newark as a supervisor. I stayed with my uncle, Frank Babcock Williamson and his two sisters, Araminta and Annie Williamson, in the little village of Aqueduct.

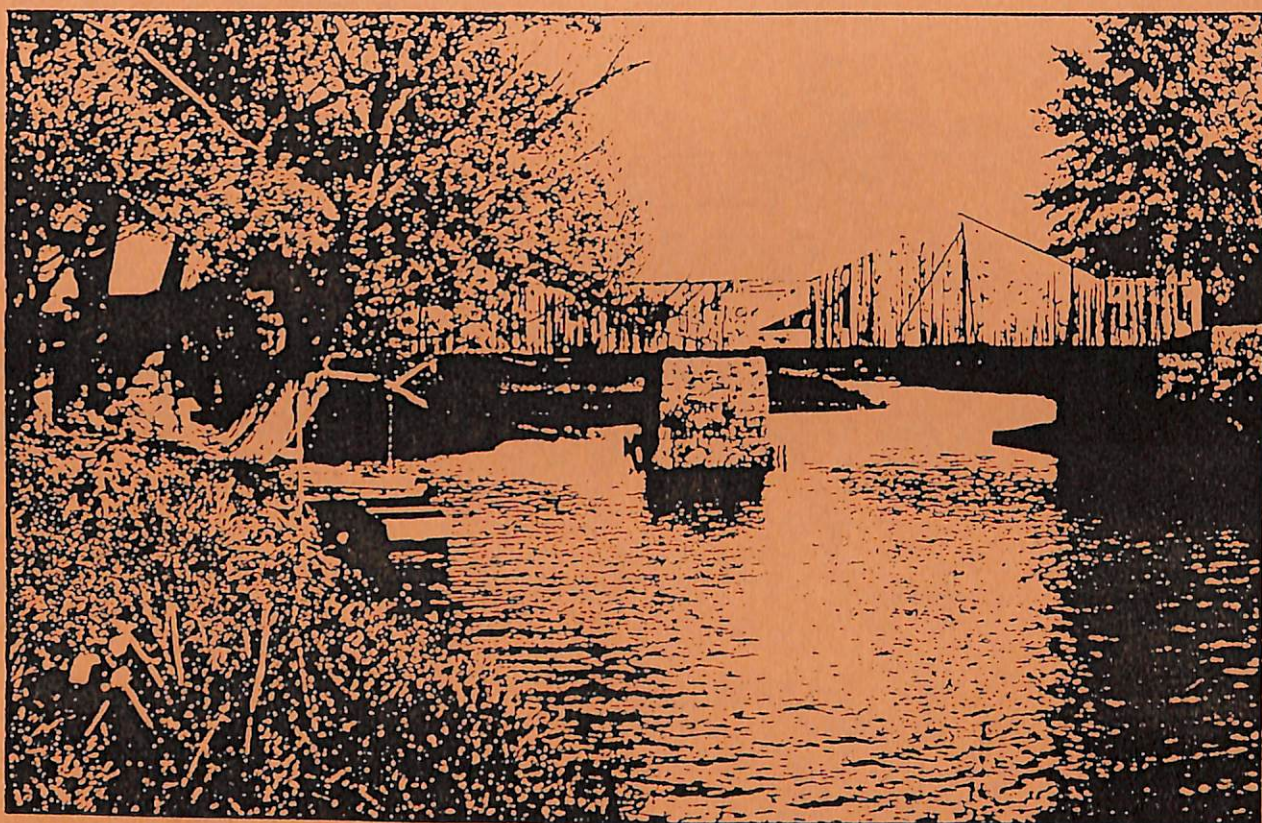
The tiny settlement was located at the juncture of the Plainsboro-Kingston Road with the old stagecoach road between Trenton and New Brunswick — a part of the much traveled dirt highway between New York and Philadelphia. The road from Plainsboro went through the village and turned to the right at the mill on its way to Kingston. On the other side of the mill it branched off to the left and went over the small bridge that spanned the part of the Millstone River which trickled through the flood gates while the main part of the stream was turned to run the mill. Beyond the bridge, the road swung around and connected with Harrison Street not far from what is now Logan Drive. There was no other Harrison Street connection with what is now U.S. 1 except the road around the old Logan home.

In the early eighteen hundreds toll roads began to be built. Funds for their construction came from private contributors. Tolls were collected to pay them back. The Brunswick Pike known also as the Straight Line Turnpike was said to be the "most famous toll road in New Jersey." It was chartered in 1804 and straightened the course of the old Indian trail. It later became what is now U.S. 1.

Two events spurred activity in the little settlement — the construction of the Delaware and Raritan Canal and, at about the same time, the building of the Camden and Amboy Railroad which followed the route of the canal.

The canal was begun in 1830. It was opened for travel in

Photos of the Aqueduct Area

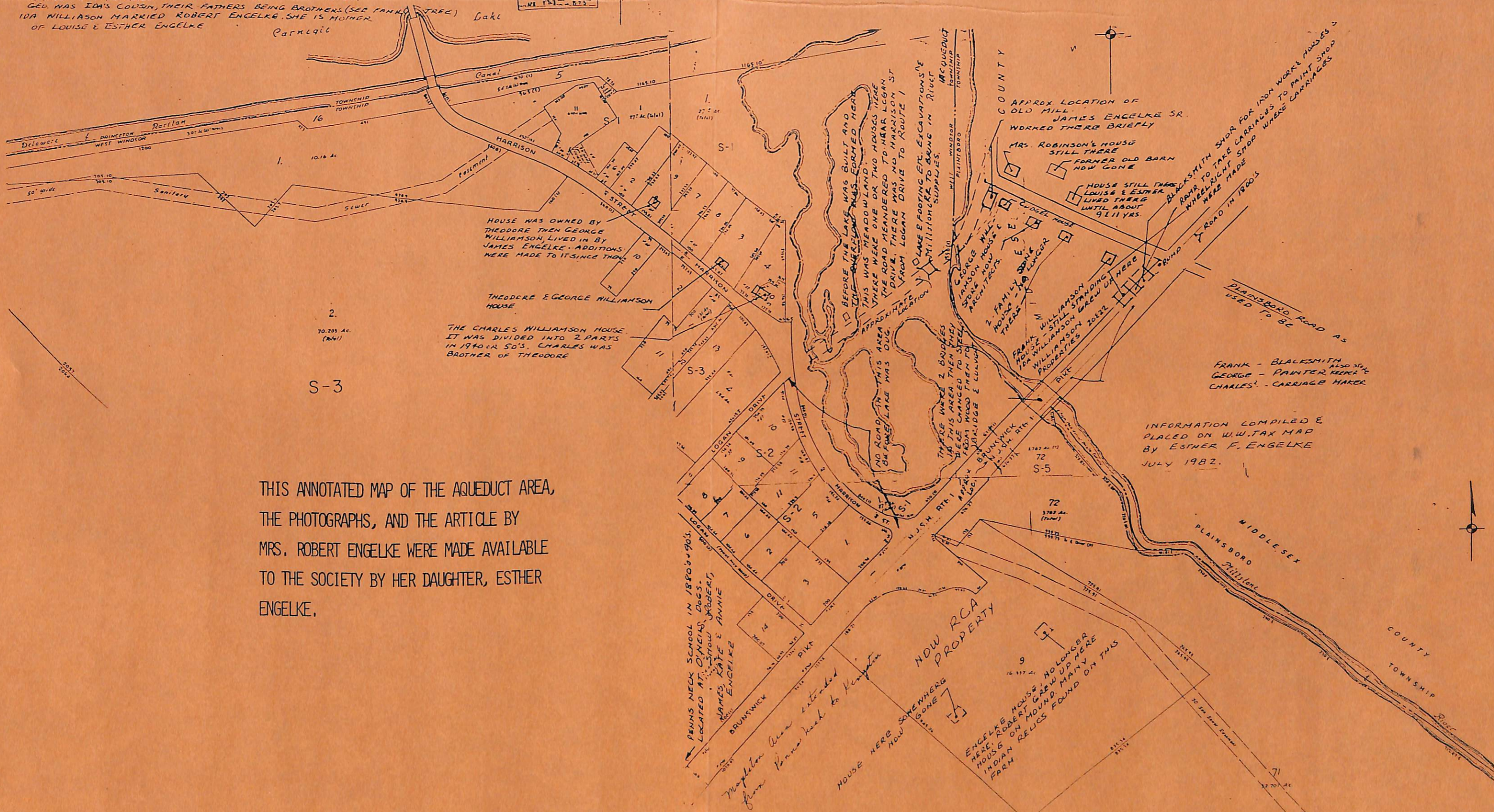


THIS IS A PHOTO OF THE OLD WOODEN BRIDGE OVER THE MILLSTONE RIVER AS IT APPEARED BETWEEN 1800 AND 1900. THE LAND BORDERING THE RIVER WAS THE OLD WILLIAMSON PROPERTY.

(THIS PHOTOGRAPH, RENDERED AS AN 8x10 INCH DRAWING BY RUTH STROHL PALMER, IS AVAILABLE FROM THE SOCIETY @ \$3.)

ROBERT ENGELKE & IDA WILLIAMSON WERE LOUISE & ESTHER'S PARENTS

JAMES ENGELKE WAS ROBERT'S BROTHER - JAMES SR. WAS ROBERT'S FATHER MADE IN
THEODORE WILLIAMSON WAS GEORGE WILLIAMSON'S FATHER. GEO. MARRIED ANNIE ENGELKE, ROBERT'S SISTER. GEO. WAS IDA'S COUSIN, THEIR FATHERS BEING BROTHERS (SEE FAMILY TREE) IDA WILLIAMSON MARRIED ROBERT ENGELKE. SHE IS MOTHER OF LOUISE & ESTHER ENGELKE



S-3

S-5

THIS ANNOTATED MAP OF THE AQUEDUCT AREA, THE PHOTOGRAPHS, AND THE ARTICLE BY MRS. ROBERT ENGELKE WERE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE SOCIETY BY HER DAUGHTER, ESTHER ENGELKE.

PENNS NECK SCHOOL IN 1890's LOCATED AT O'NEALS DOGS. (SHOW ROBERT) JAMES, KATE & ANNIE ENGELKE

Moxleton Area extended from Penns Neck to Kingston

HOUSE HERE NOW SOMEWHERE GONE

NOW RCA PROPERTY

ENGELKE HOUSE NO LONGER HERE. ROBERT GREW UP HERE ON MOUND. MANY INDIAN RELICS FOUND ON THIS

INFORMATION COMPILED & PLACED ON W.W. TAX MAP BY ESTHER F. ENGELKE JULY 1982.

FRANK - BLACKSMITH ALSO SP. GEORGE - PAINTER KEENE'S CHARLES - CARRIAGE MAKER

PLAINSBOURD ROAD AS USED TO BE

APPROX LOCATION OF OLD MILL. JAMES ENGELKE SR. WORKED THERE BRIEFLY

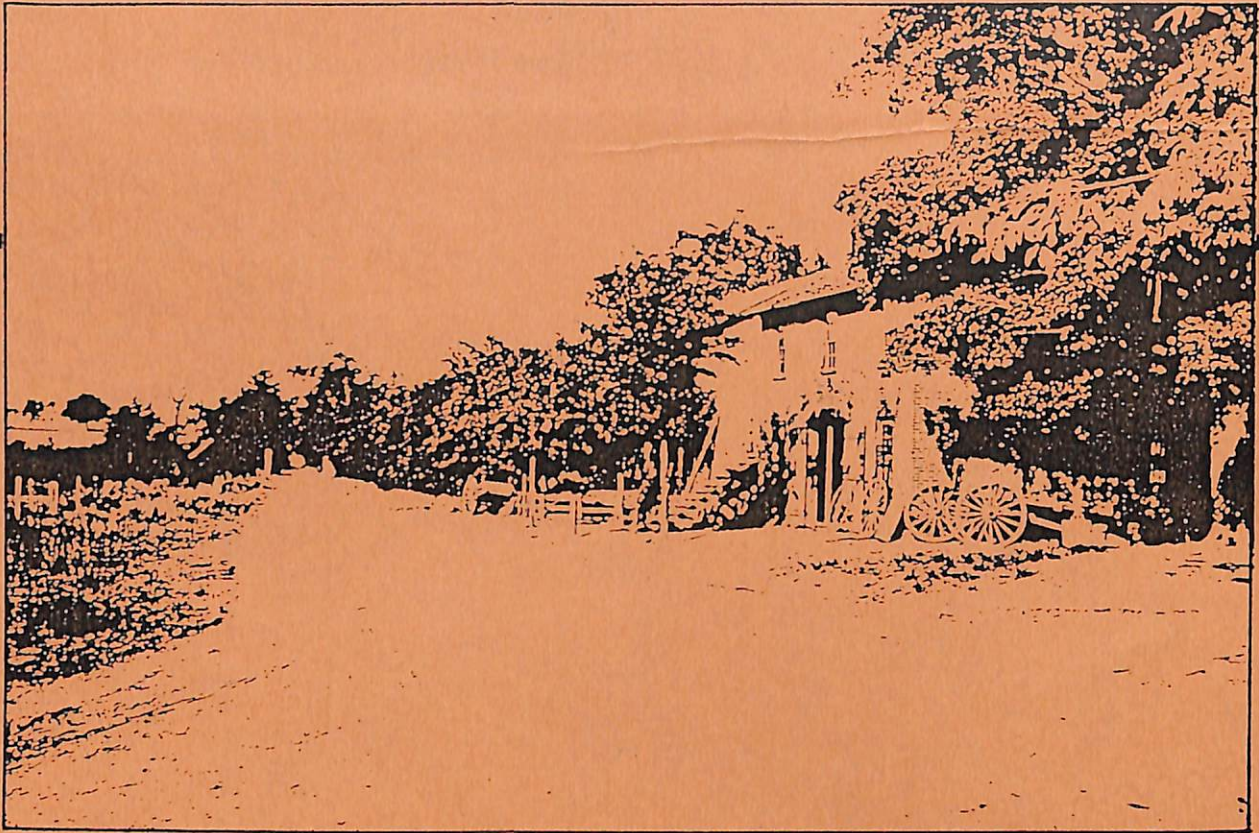
MRS. ROBINSON'S HOUSE STILL THERE FARMER OLD BARN NOW GONE

HOUSE STILL THERE LOUISE & ESTHER LIVED THERE UNTIL ABOUT 9/11 YES

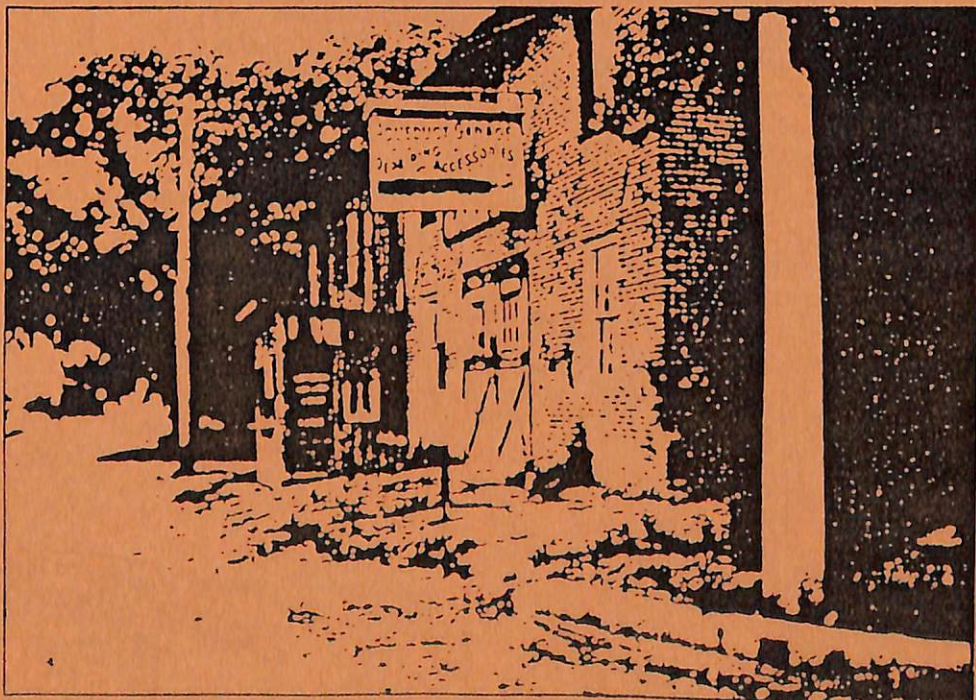
BLACKSMITH SHOP FOR IRON WORK HOUSES & WHEELRIGHT SHOP WHERE CARRIAGES WERE MADE

ROAD IN 1800'S

Esther Engelke



THE PHOTOGRAPHS ABOVE AND BELOW THIS CAPTION SHOW THE WILLIAMSON SHOPS ON ROUTE 1 AND PLAINSBORO ROADS, OPPOSITE THE FORMER WALKER GORDON DAIRY GATE HOUSE, AS THEY LOOKED BEFORE 1900. PHOTO ABOVE FACES THE WOODEN BRIDGE OVER THE MILLSTONE RIVER JUST TO THE NORTH OF HARRISON STREET.



1834. All the stone along both of its banks was dug and laid in place by hand. In 1832 an epidemic of Asiatic cholera developed among the workman. Many of these were immigrants from Ireland. A mass grave, like a trench, was dug along the canal bank near to Washington Road. Others were buried on the Old Philips farm near Port Mercer. At least one is said to have been interred in the cemetery at Penns Neck.

When the locks on the canal were built, a question arose about whether to use wood or stone and whether or not to put the sections together with quick lime mortar. Cement would have to be brought from Europe at much expense. Mr. White, the engineer who was responsible for deciding, found near Chittenango, N.Y. a stone that could be used to make hydraulic cement as good as any Europe had to offer. This began cement work in America.

The canal, forty-four miles in length, came from New Brunswick and followed the Millstone and Raritan Rivers. It cut across the state and joined the Delaware River at Trenton. Barges drawn by mules brought lime, gravel and coal from steamships carrying freight. When the turnpike from Trenton to New Brunswick was macadamized, the stone came up the canal on barges and was transferred to wagons which carted it to whatever part of the road was being built. Business boomed. People liked the canal. It provided good swimming in the summer and good skating in the winter. Skating parties were formed and fires lighted on the banks so that skaters could warm their hands and feet.

There were always interesting things to see when the canal was open and free of ice. At night the bells on the mules that pulled the barges tinkled as the animals plodded along the tow path.

Expensive yachts used the canal as part of the waterway on their journey to Florida. Bridges over the canal were turned by hand. Each was operated by a man who lived with his family in one of the tow path houses along the banks and listened for the loud whistle which indicated that the bridge must be turned. The canal stopped operating in 1934. The State of New Jersey took it over for use in water conservation.

In 1839 the Camden and Amboy railroad was built. Tracks ran parallel to the canal from Trenton to Kingston. In 1867 the tracks were moved two miles southward to Princeton Junction. From there a branch ran to Princeton. The Pennsylvania Railroad leased the Camden and Amboy line in 1871.

My father's sisters have told me that during Civil War years trains carrying soldiers on their way to the fighting passed over the railroad. My aunts said that they used to stand on their porch and watch the soldiers wave handkerchiefs as they rode along. Two of the young men who helped my grandfather in his blacksmith shop went to war and wrote letters home. A few of them are still in my possession. Both young men were killed.

Business was good during that period. About 1905-1906 Carnegie Lake was built and the little village of Aqueduct was never the same again.

(Continued in our next issue)

Join Us Today!

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

Please check the appropriate box:

- FAMILY MEMBERSHIP—\$12. per year
- SINGLE MEMBERSHIP—\$8. per year
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- ORGANIZATION MEMBERSHIP (One Vote/One Representative)—\$25. per year

NAME (INCLUDE ALL NAMES IF FAMILY MEMBERSHIP)

MAILING ADDRESS

TELEPHONE NUMBER

Additional Donation—\$ _____

Amount Enclosed—\$ _____

Meeting Dates for 1987

To help members plan ahead, the Society's bi-monthly meetings will be held on the following dates:

Monday, January 12

Monday, March 9

Monday, May 11

Monday, July 13

Monday, September 14

Monday, November 9

All meetings will take place at 7:30 p.m. at the Twin "W" Squad House on Everett Road behind the Municipal Building.

We plan special programs for as many of these meetings as possible. Mark your calendar now and plan to join us.

Acquisitions

We continue to receive wonderful donations for our exhibitions and historic research:

- Thirty-eight articles of clothing and linens (c1900) were donated by Elsie W. Goodrich, including the wedding ensemble worn by her mother, Edna Hurst Wilkinson, in 1904.
- Black velvet bag (reticule?) c1900 donated by Mary Schenck. Mrs. Schenck also donated a cotton and lace petticoat from the same period.
- An Invitation to a "Select Social" dating from December 23, 1881, which asks that "Ladies please furnish refreshments," donated by Martin Winar.
- Mr. Winar also donated a post card showing Route 1 which shows the portion of the highway between Meadow Road and Quaker Bridge Road. (Some of you may remember the Prime Rib restaurant located on the spot portrayed.)

Election

At the November 1986 meeting the following officers and trustees were elected:

President: Joan Parry

Vice President: Carol Silvester

Treasurer: Kay Reed

Recording Secretary: Shirlee Bleacher

Corresponding Secretary: Carol Kehoe

Trustees: Marilyn Silvester, Mary Schenck, Jeanette Flickinger.

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

Designed and edited by Ruth Strohl Palmer.

Contributors to this issue: Michael Corio, Carol Kehoe, Joan Parry, and Jill Rednor.

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

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