

CRANBURY HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Volume 39, Issue One, March 2022

1713 East Jersey Cottage History of a House

By **Karen Kelly**

1713 East Jersey Cottage Committee, Museum Curator

On October 26, 1693, a 550 acre tract in Cranbury was sold by the Proprietors of East Jersey to a pair of Scottish investor brothers, Thomas and Robert Fullerton. Built decades before the American Revolution, a one and a half story, heavy timber-framed building was erected next to the Millstone River on the Fullerton land. 1713 is provided by the State of New Jersey's Tax Parcel Database as the year this early settlement house was built. The historic structure's original materials and the post and beam assembling techniques date to the early to mid-1700s.

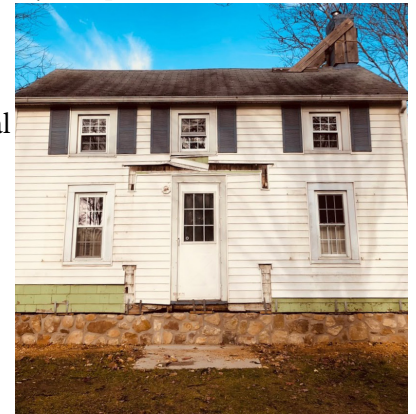
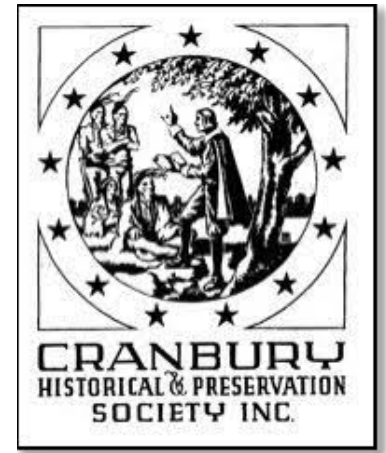
The property was sold in 1752 by the heirs of Robert Fullerton to a group of investors that included the wealthy Philipse Family of New York. Tenants probably resided in the small cottage when owned by these wealthy investors. In 1760 the Philipse Family sold a 150 acre parcel "with the appurtenances" to Vincent Bodine. At that time, Vincent was married to Ann Dey of Cranbury and had two children, James and Lydia.

The following year on April 14, 1761, Vincent bought another fifty acres located on the Windsor side of the Millstone River. Vincent, yeoman, paid John Hight, founder of Hightstown, 100 pounds. Vincent's father-in-law, Lawrence Dey was a witness to this purchase.

James Bodine was five years old when his father, Vincent, bought the 1713 East Jersey Cottage and farm. Along with his seven brothers and sisters, James spent his childhood and teenage years at this small cottage. During the American Revolution James was a Private in the Third Regiment of the Middlesex County Militia from 1776-1781. He served under John Platt, David Chambers and Peter Perrine, all Cranbury neighbors. James had active service through bi-monthly tours in 1776-78, three month tours in 1779 and 1781 and two months of service in 1780. Private James Bodine participated in the Battle of Springfield and possibly the Battle of Connecticut Farms, served at Bennett's Island, followed the British from Black Horse as they advanced to Monmouth Courthouse in June 1778 and witnessed the Revolt of the Pennsylvania A Line.

Years later in 1897, Mrs. Ann Eliza (Bodine) Dey, granddaughter of Vincent Bodine, shared that her father, James Bodine, frequently reminisced about General Lafayette visiting the Vincent Bodine Family during the Revolutionary War. A detachment of Lafayette's troops was quartered at the Bodine farm. Original letters found in the Washington Papers reveal that Lafayette and his advanced troops marched into Cranbury on June 25, 1778 and quartered his troops. Lafayette established his headquarters at Dr. Stites house on Main Street, approximately 1.5 miles from the Bodine's house. Vincent Bodine, a French Huguenot and descendant of the famous sixteenth century French philosopher and political theorist Jean Bodin, could have entertained Lafayette at his house or welcomed Lafayette's troops on his farm.

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Refurbished stone and sill plate work

Co-Presidents' Message

Throughout history people have looked to each other for hope and strength in the darkest of times. In the winter, we light candles at our windows sending light out into the world. And, we celebrate, "ringing out the old and ringing in the new year," to remind ourselves that hope springs eternal and there is always the promise of a new day.

Traditions like these, and the ones your family may keep are a way to preserve history, be it family, town, country, or worldwide. Passed down from one generation to another, traditions become the threads that bind us all together. Over the years, The Cranbury Historical & Preservation Society has established a number traditions and celebrations in our town, which, due to the pandemic, had to be cancelled.

Our wonderful Intergenerational Christmas Tea has been on hold now for two years. The Cranbury Holiday Wassail and The Historic House Tour were also cancelled. But... if our volunteers have learned anything in researching the last 325 years of Cranbury's history, it is that our town has a resilient and pro-active spirit, which has never been dimmed by challenging times. If anything, Cranbury's town spirit becomes stronger.

During the pandemic, our volunteers continued to give outdoor Walking Tours in the spring,

summer, and fall months. And, once our volunteers were vaccinated they also began working in small groups on Acquisitions and Genealogy Reports at the History Center. The Museum Curators decided since the Museum had to be closed, this would be a good time to do some much needed restoration work on the ceilings at the Museum as well. The foundation work at The 1713 East Jersey Cottage was also completed this fall as our volunteers continued to do the research and paperwork necessary to apply for the 1713 East Jersey Cottage to be put on the National Register of Historic places. Recently, the cottage received a certificate of eligibility to be listed on the New Jersey and National Registers. While another application process needs to be completed for the Register, our eligibility status allows us to apply for grants now. It has been a long process and a nine month wait, but thanks to the research team and the support of the steering committee, we succeeded!

As many of you may know, this year marks the 325th Anniversary of Cranbury, N.J. and our town will certainly celebrate! CHPS has planned an exhibit at the Gourgard Gallery in Town Hall in September, honoring those who are no longer living who have made great contributions to Cranbury.

We hope to be able to hold Cranbury Wassail in December and will be waving our banners high at the Memorial Day Parade and on Cranbury Day!

For those of you who are members of our Society, we thank you for your contributions and continued support over the years. If you know of anyone who is new in town, please tell them about our volunteer work and invite them to become CHPS members. We are always grateful for volunteer and member support!

May your lives be filled with health and happiness. We hope to see you in the coming months.

With Gratitude,
Jo D. Andrews and Audrey Smith
Co-Presidents

Further Information -

CHPS Website:
www.cranburyhistory.org

Email:
historycenter@comcast.net

Tel: 609-655-2611 to hear a recorded message

Facebook: *Cranbury Historical and Preservation Society*

Twitter: @cranburyhistory

Landmark Anniversaries in 2022

325th Anniversary of Cranbury

125th Anniversary
of Cranbury School
(The Old School Building, now the Town Hall)

55th Anniversary
of
CHPS

100th Anniversary
of
Woman's Club

50th Anniversary
of
Cranbury Museum

The Vincent Bodine family owned the 1713 East Jersey Cottage and farmed the 200 acre property for nearly fifty years. On June 10th, 1774, Vincent Bodine's property line was used to define the boundary of a nearby property sold by John and Mary Hight. In 1785, the Bodine property was used as a marker in John Perrine's deed, referring to the Bodine farm as Bodine's Corner.

In 1808, Joseph Story bought the 1713 East Jersey Cottage and farm from Vincent Bodine's two sons, James and Vincent. Joseph Story served as a Private & Corporal in the Second Regiment of the Middlesex County Militia under Richard Lott, John Waglum, John Dey and Peter Perrine of Cranbury. He also was a Private in the First and Third Regiments, serving monthly tours from 1776 through June, 1780.

In 1813, Joseph Story sold the 1713 East Jersey Cottage and property to John. P. Bergen, who served as a Wagoner in the American Revolution.

In addition to the Fullertons, Philipses, Bodines, Storys and Bergens, nearly twenty families owned the 1713 East Jersey Cottage during its three hundred year history. Samuel Nixon, who provided the mortgage for the AME Church in Cranbury, owned the cottage during the 1880s. William Everett, a Ruling Elder of the Cranbury Presbyterian Church owned the cottage in 1869.

The Peter Camamis Family purchased the cottage and the remaining one acre in July 2018. Planning to build a new house on the property, the 1713 East Jersey Cottage was scheduled to be demolished in October, 2018. The Cranbury Historical & Preservation Society intervened and the Camamis Family offered the house, if moved, to the Society. Through the hard work of volunteers, arrangements were made for a new location with its accompanying permits and approvals. The Cranbury Historical & Preservation Society funded the hiring of a professional moving company and the services of several utility and cable companies to lower their cables.

The 1713 East Jersey Cottage was saved from demolition!

On October 1, 2019, the house was moved across the street to Millstone Park, which is located on the original 1693 Fullerton tract, the 1752 Philipse property and the 1760 Bodine farm property. A new foundation and basement were built and the house was lowered onto the original sill plate. The river rocks from the original basement were moved to the new location.

The cottage retains an intact hand-hewn post and beam structure with pegged mortise and tenon joints and rubble nogging, typical of 18th century construction. Animal hair was found in the mortar and witness marks are scribed in the exposed beams. The historic integrity of the house endured with minor alterations in the 1830s, 1930s and 1960s/1970s. Most alterations have been removed without cultural loss to the original building. Two exterior additions from the 1930s were dismantled, revealing the original 18th century footprint.

In the Fall of 2021, a stone mason placed the original river rocks on the exterior, exposed wall of the new foundation. The sill plate was repaired. The original Jersey Winder basement stairs will be reassembled and used in the new basement, which exposes the original rough-hewn beams supporting the first floor.

The cottage will be further restored to its 18th century origins, furnished and used as a museum, telling its story about the early village settlement, the families of the 1713 East Jersey Cottage, the neighboring Lenni Lenape, the American Revolution and the Marquis de Lafayette. The park setting provides space to schedule outdoor activities to enhance the telling of its story.

Follow the journey on Instagram: [Cranbury_1700s_house](#)

To view the house move and article citations, please visit our CHPS website: cranburyhistory.org

Donations and volunteers are always welcomed!

TO VOLUNTEER, PLEASE SEND AN EMAIL TO: historycenter@comcast.net

What's in a Name? Research, research and more research!

By **Karen Kelly**

1713 East Jersey Cottage Committee

For nearly eighteen months, the CHPS research team (Dr. John Chambers, Karen Kelley and Steve Golisano) studied the 1700s House. They searched deeds, wills, pension applications, county, state and university documents, books, church records, maps, etc. to determine the origin and type of construction, as well as the history of the property, building and its owners. The team consulted with historians, architectural historians, architects, (local, out of state and internationally) and specialists at the county and state. The extensive research led to a new name for the 1700s House.

In April 2021, the name of the 1700s House was changed to the 1713 East Jersey Cottage, reflecting the building's early date and style of construction- a 1 and 1/2 story East Jersey Cottage style, unique to the Province of East Jersey.

The East Jersey Cottage is an important vernacular house type from the 18th century, found mostly in the New Jersey counties of Essex, Union, Middlesex, Monmouth, and Morris. The East Jersey Cottage was an early settlement house "for the middling and lower parts of the population, wealth wise".

Interested in a CHPS Historic Plaque?

To qualify for the Society's historic marker, your house needs to be at least 75 years old. Basic historical data, such as a copy of the early deeds, a historical architect's evaluation, photographs, etc. must be submitted as evidence of the date of the house.

Contact the Elizabeth M. Wagner History Center (historycenter@comcast.net) for information and guidance in the process.

Refurbish Your Plaque!

As a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, CHPS relies on YOU to preserve the rich and unique history of Cranbury. Donate a minimum of \$100 to CHPS to get your plaque repainted!

After a donation is received, CHPS will confirm the donation via email. Then, a volunteer with professional experience will arrive at your house or place of business to remove the plaque and paint it off-site. We will then visit again to remount it after it has been repainted. No action is required by you! All visits will be conducted during the daytime. To maintain social distancing, we will not be interacting with homeowners when we visit.

CHPS is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization and all donations are tax deductible. All donations from this volunteer effort will go 100% towards CHPS's efforts to preserve and protect Cranbury's unique history.



I would like to have my plaque removed, repainted, and remounted by the Cranbury Historical & Preservation Society.

Address _____

Email _____

Name (Print) _____

Signature _____

Date _____ Donation Amount \$ _____

Make checks payable to CHPS.

Mailing Address:

Historic Plaque Painting

6 South Main St,

Cranbury, NJ 08512

The Birth of a Historical Society

By **Katherine Jani, Anupurba Lahiri**
Newsletter Editors

The birth of the Cranbury Historical Society was announced in June 1967 and incorporated in November 1970. Today, after 55 years, we are thankful for the insight of the founders to form a Historical Society committed to work for the preservation and beautification of Old Cranbury, its land and historic buildings and to promote its history through research and publication.

Richard Tolbert, the first president of CHPS, recalled going door to door in 1967 soliciting hundreds of villagers for a \$2 membership fee. The major themes contributing to the successful response to the membership drive were Cranbury's Master Plan and Preservation. All residents were invited to submit materials on their homes and families to the society, including deeds, pictures, history of their homes and genealogies.

As a result of the extensive research and documentation of Cranbury's historic buildings all through the 1970's by CHPS members, Cranbury was included in the New Jersey Register of Historic Places in 1979 and a year later, in 1980 placed on the National Register of Historic Places. CHPS is also a member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and of the league of Historical Societies of New Jersey.

Today CHPS owns the Cranbury Museum and the 1713 East Jersey Cottage and manages the History Center as well as the Parsonage Barn, which are owned by the town. The Cranbury Museum, celebrating its 50th year, is home to the historical artifacts gathered over the years. The Elizabeth M. Wagner History Center houses the visual, oral and written historical records, artifacts, the society's textile collections, and the gift shop. The Parsonage Barn, a treasured historical example of life long ago and finally, the newest property, the 1713 East Jersey Cottage, one of the oldest homes in New Jersey. All of this has been possible because Cranbury residents cherish the historical aspect of our town and have been willing to volunteer and share their time, talents, and resources.

Happy Birthday CHPS and many, many more!

To learn more about Cranbury Historical & Preservation Society, to become a member or to renew your membership, please visit the Society's website, www.cranburyhistory.org

Mrs. John Frisch (right), president of the Woman's Club of Cranbury, presented a check of \$790.69 to CHPS. The money was raised in 1964 during the club's celebration of the New Jersey Tercentenary with the intent of giving it to a Cranbury Historical Society when it was formed



Officers and Trustees elected in 1967 (left to right): Walter Johnson, Richard Torbest, Ellen Hoke, Norman Wright

In Memoriam

The Society notes with sadness the passing of the following members

Carol Vandercher Jan 6, 2021

Salvatoree Golisano May 11, 2021

Thomas Weidner May 31, 2021

Arthur Danser June 6, 2021

Fank J. Brennan, Jr. June 24, 2021

Walter Wright September 15, 2021

Mahon Thompson October 16, 2021

Sally Giovanos October 23, 2021

Betty Fenity December 5, 2021

Sara's Garden

By Louise Palagyi
Gardens Committee

In early 2019, Eagle Scout Jack Liggio approached the CHPS board members with a proposal to renovate and replant the original Sara's Garden at the Cranbury Museum. The Cranbury Historical and Preservation Society is happy to announce that in the spring of 2021 the project was completed after over 40 hours of Jack's careful planning and hard labor. The bricks have been re-laid and the old beds have been replanted with a lovely selection of culinary, medicinal and aromatic herbs much like the original garden was when it was planted in the early 1970s. Kitchen gardens were a necessity in the colonial period as many of the household needs were met by home gardeners. Dyes, medicines, balms, spices, and scents were all carefully prepared and the harvested herbs and their oils were used throughout the year. Sara Hoffman, whom the garden was dedicated to, helped establish the Cranbury Museum and she and her husband Bill planted the original beds. In 1986 the garden was enlarged and planted with herbs. CHPS is so pleased to be able to share this beautiful spot with Cranbury, especially the local neighborhood cats which have enjoyed the Catnip and the resident groundhog which has taken a liking to the Calendula and Lungwort. Please come and sit a while and enjoy the scents and beauty of the historical Sara's Garden.



The newly renovated and replanted garden

Happy Anniversary, Cranbury Museum!

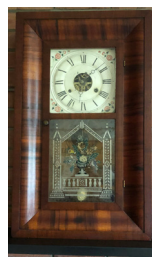
The Cranbury Museum building was purchased by the Cranbury Historical & Preservation Society on May 30, 1972. Restored and furnished by many volunteers and donors, the Cranbury Museum opened in September, 1972. We eagerly await the reopening of the museum as we anticipate the 50th anniversary of our museum!

Many thanks to our inspectors, Anna Drago, George Smith, Art Ryba, George Andrews, Joe Manzo, Ken Gordon, and Rees Powell for watching over the museum!

Donations and Acquisitions

The Acquisitions Committee has been busy processing items that have been donated during 2021. The following items have been added to the CHPS Collection and the committee thanks the donors for their generosity.

1. Circa 1872 Seth Thomas Mantel Clock (pictured) and early 20th c. Milk Can-Fritz Hager



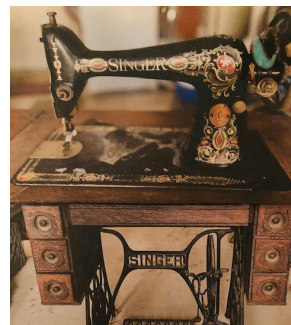
Mantel Clock

2. L.D. Cicchini Shadow Box in memory of Melvina C. Clayton Lynch (1903-1961)-Mahbubeh Stave



Shadow Box

3. Early 20th c. Singer Sewing Machine (pictured), cobbler shoe molds and tin cookie cutters owned by the LaBaw & Hagerty Families-Monty & Peg Hagerty



Early 20th c. Singer Sewing Machine

4. 19th c. Hand-crafted wooden cradle with attached bonnet-Nancy Meyers



Hand-crafted Wooden Cradle

5. House research on 10 Bunker Hill Rd. and assorted reference books- Dr. John Chambers

Volunteering - The Heart of CHPS

Since the beginning of CHPS volunteers have contributed their time, talents, and resources. We greatly appreciate all past and present volunteers and we continue to ask for your help.

Volunteering Opportunities

- Museum Docent
- Museum Inspectors
- Museum Garden
- History Center
- Educational Programs
- Memorial Day Parade
- Drug Free Fair
- Fall Plant Sale
- House Tour
- Wassail Tour
- Walking Tours
- Fundraing Projects
- Membership
- Other



Mark Berkowsky, left, and Greg Overstreet confer while working on the restoration of the historic Girstmiller House, renamed the Elizabeth M. Wagner History Center, undertaken by CHPS.

Source: Cranbury Press, December 11, 1991



The Elizabeth M. Wagner History Center today

Cranbury Historical and Preservation Society 2022 Board of Executives and Trustees

Officers

Co-Presidents | Audrey Smith & JoD Andrews
Vice President/Program Chairperson | Linda Morgan
Recording Secretary | Jennifer Suttmeier
Corresponding Secretary | Eileen McGillan
Treasurer | Bob Dreyling
Legal Counsel/Parliamentarian | Bill Bunting
Museum Curator | Karen Kelley

Trustees

2020-2022 | Kathy Jani, Michael Kehrt,
Linda Schilling, George Smith,
Bonnie Wagman
2021-2023 | Gale Scott, Eileen McGillan,
Tim Brennan, Jay Taylor,
Heather Keltz Scott
2022-2024 | Steven Golisano, Karen Kelley,
Bobbie Marlowe, Cheryl Clarke,
Joan Weidner

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Bill Bunting, Norma Swale,
Jan Wagner, Jerry Pevahouse,
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Michael Kehrt, Susan Saravelli,
Linda Schilling
Buildings and Ground | *Museum:* Ed Kelley
History Center: Linda Schilling
1713 EJ Cottage: Committee
Parsonage Barn: Audrey Smith

Docents | Sue Saravelli
Education | Committee
Exhibits | Karen Kelley
Finance | Bob Dreyling, Bill Bunting,
Kathy Jani, Jay Taylor,
George Smith, JoD Andrews,
Brian Barry, Audrey Smith,
Linda Schilling, Karen Kelley

Fundraising | Committee
Gardens | Louise Palagyi
History Center Director | Linda Schilling
Historic Preservation | Mark Berkowsky
Membership | Audrey Smith, Michael Kehrt
Museum Inspectors Chair | George Smith
Nominating Committee Chair | Karen Kelley
Publicity/Media | Gale Scott
Newsletter Editors | Kathy Jani, Anupurba Lahiri
Website/Social Media | Heather Keltz Scott

Upcoming CHPS Events

April 21st

- Mayor's Walk to School - Identify Cranbury artifacts at the History Center porch

April 3rd

- Art in the Park: 1pm to 3pm

May:

- Cranbury Museum reopening (1st May)
- Participating in Memorial Day Parade

September:

- Gourgard Gallery exhibition in Town Hall commemorating those who have made great contributions to Cranbury.
- Participating in Cranbury Day

December:

- History Center Gift Shop
- Return of Cranbury Wassail
- Chirstmas Tea at Canbury Museum

More to Come:

- Annual Meeting
- Continuation of 1713 East Jersey Cottage restoration
- Public access to historical records in new library
- Cranbury Walking Tours
- Concert at the Parsonage Barn
- Participating in the Health & Wellness Fair

VOLUNTEER DOCENTS FOR THE CRANBURY MUSEUM

Share your love of History and Cranbury! Volunteer docents are needed at the Cranbury Museum located at 4 Park Place, Cranbury, New Jersey. The Museum was established in 1972 to highlight local history and it is in need of enthusiastic and dedicated individuals to help it come alive for the residents and visitors to the museum.

The Cranbury Museum is open on Sundays from 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM. Docents lead tours through the museum and focus on cultural highlights in the exhibit room. This is a perfect opportunity for adults and high school students who are passionate about their town and can commit to one Sunday a month. Training and museum policies will be provided.

To learn more, please contact Dr. Sue Saravalli, Docent Coordinator, at ssarsavalli@comcast.net or (609) 5289-1767

Cranbury Historical & Preservation Society

6 South Main St.

Cranbury, NJ, 08512

Cranbury Museum

4 Park Place East

Open Sundays 1PM to 4PM & by appt.

Tel: 609/655-2611

Cranbury History Center

6 South Main Street

Open Thursdays 10:00 AM to 12:30PM & by appt.

Tel: 609/860-1889

Email: historycenter@comcast.net

Website: www.cranburyhistory.org