

CRANBURY HISTORICAL & PRESERVATION SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Volume 39, Issue Two, October 2022



1713 East Jersey Cottage Search for a Scottish Connection

By **John Whiteclay Chambers II, Steven J. Golisano and Karen M. Kelley**

CHPS researchers on Cranbury's 1713 East Jersey Cottage

What is the Scottish connection to the 1713 East Jersey Cottage on Old Trenton Road that the CHPS saved from demolition, moved across the street to Millstone Park in October 2019 and is currently restoring to serve as a seasonal museum? The CHPS historical and architectural research team set out in 2019 to answer that question.

Recognizing that merchants and landed gentry primarily from northeast Scotland had tried to establish a Scottish colony in the central part of British East New Jersey in the 1680s, and that in 1693, Thomas and Robert Fullerton from Angus, Scotland obtained a large tract of land upon which the cottage was built, the CHPS research team has been pursuing the Scottish connection.

Almost a thousand Scots immigrated in organized voyages in the 1680s. They immediately built a seaport, closer to the Atlantic than New York City, which they called "Perth Town" (today's Perth Amboy), with a plan to manage only Scottish commerce. Soon some Scots moved farther inland searching for fertile land. Findings showed that Robert Barclay championed the Scottish colony. He was the famous Quaker theologian and younger brother of the Laird of Ury and was named the first governor of East Jersey. A distant relative of the Barclays of Cranbury, he did not immigrate to central East Jersey, but his nephew and grandnephew did. The grandnephew, John Barclay, became a Cranbury property owner.

A Scottish-brought indentured carpenter, Anthony Ashmore from England, was the first European in Cranbury in 1697. In 1702, George Rescarrick, originally from Aberdeenshire, built a tavern-inn at the crossroads by the creek. Scottish immigrant Thomas Grubb built the first grist mill in Cranbury in 1737. Cranbury was crossroads to Lawrie's or the Scot's Road from Perth Amboy and George's Road from New Brunswick. Part of what is now Old Trenton Road, extending by the 1713 cottage, was then called the "Edinburg [sic]" Road, an Americanized spelling of Edinburgh. Scots helped establish the Cranbury Presbyterian Church. Members of many Scottish families, the Andersons, Campbells, Clarkes, Davisons, Duncans, McDowells, McChesneys, Symmes and more are buried in its graveyard.



The 1713 East Jersey Cottage being moved and placed in its new location in Millstone Park, October 2019.



Bill Bunting's tractors were used by volunteers to spread topsoil before planting grass seed. Pictured from Left to Right: Kevin Golisano (on 1948 Ford 8N), Bill Bunting, Jr. (1950 Ford 8N), and Bill Bunting III (New Holland backhoe loader)

Photo by Steven Golisano



Restoration of the 1713 East Jersey Cottage is ongoing. As of October 2022, the sill plate, stone work, and exterior painting have been completed. The cottage is dark brown with a red door.

Co-Presidents' Message

CHPS has had a busy few months! In April, we provided a table with objects for students to identify on the Mayor's Walk to School and participated in the Townwide Yard Sale. In May, we reopened the Museum, participated in the Health & Wellness Fair, notified members about the NJ Civil War History Association's Memorial Day ceremonies at Brainerd Cemetery and in Memorial Park and were in the Memorial Day Parade. We held the very well attended 1977 Time Capsule opening in front of Town Hall on the 4th of July. On July 16th, we had a successful fundraiser at one of Cranbury's oldest houses and invited those attending to visit the nearby Parsonage Barn. During the summer, restoration work and painting was completed on the exterior of the 1713 East Jersey Cottage in Millstone Park, and a rain garden will be going in soon. In September, CHPS was at Cranbury Day with a sales and membership table. The exhibit, *Not To Be Forgotten: Some of the People Who Helped to Make Cranbury What It Is Today*, was at the Gourgaud Gallery in Town Hall during the month of September, and CHPS participated in Art In the Park on September 18. We look forward to our event, *Celebrating Cranbury, Past and Present*, at the Cranbury Inn on October 29, the CHPS membership meeting (date and time to be announced later) and the Christmas Tea at the Museum on the first Sunday in December.

Please tell your friends about CHPS and invite them to be members. A membership form is included in this newsletter.

Thanks so much for your support!

Audrey Smith and Jo D. Andrews, Co-Presidents

The Cranbury Historical & Preservation Society **Mission Statement**

The Cranbury Historical & Preservation Society was incorporated on November 17, 1970 in order to further interest and knowledge in the history of the township Cranbury, in Middlesex County, New Jersey.

The Society's mission is:

1. To promote and maintain an educational program of exhibits, workshops, lectures, symposiums and other similar activities in order to support, encourage and maintain the historic relevance of Cranbury, N.J.
2. To support and encourage the preservation of the township's farmland, the restoration of Cranbury's old and historic buildings and sites, and to preserve the relics from the township of Cranbury, in Middlesex County, New Jersey.
3. To acquire, preserve and exhibit Cranbury's historic relics, and to acquire and maintain housing and sites in the township for preservation and exhibit by purchase lease or otherwise.
4. To be aware of any pending Township issues that are not in keeping with the Society's mission; especially those that could affect the Historic District of the township of Cranbury, N.J., thereby threatening Cranbury's landmarks and its historic district status on the National Register of Historic Districts.

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

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 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 sssaravalli@comcast.net or (609) 5289-1767

To our readers: CHPS Newsletter welcomes articles, stories or news about Cranbury's history and its people. Please send your submissions to the editors for consideration in upcoming editions to historycenter@comcast.net

Our 1713 East Jersey cottage has almost the same dimensions and floor plans as another farm cottage built in 1684 near Perth Amboy by Thomas Gordon, brother of the Laird of Straloch, Aberdeenshire and half a dozen of his indentured servants. So too did the houses prescribed for artisans in Perth Amboy by settlement planners. The one-and-one-half-story cottage—two rooms on the ground floor, a sleeping area above—was common throughout Britain and its North American colonies for more than a century.

The architecture of our cottage mixes modified colonial British and Dutch vernacular construction techniques. The basic timber-framing concept was British, a series of interlocking boxes formed by wooden studs and beams, except that the builder also used a Dutch technique, the “H-bent,” named because of its shape. Here, a series of cross-sectional timber frames extend beyond the height of the loft, creating a knee wall, and with tie beams wrapping around the entire perimeter and diagonal bracing connected to larger corner posts. Most unusual is the orientation of these H-bents, which run perpendicular, rather than parallel to the rafters, and extend the full length of the cottage. Common practice is to use shorter beams running widthwise across the structure and parallel to the rafters, which would have created a stronger structure.

Another curious feature is that in framing the ground floor, the “summer beam,” a main load-bearing piece, and made of heavy timber, extends along the shorter, cross-width section, instead of lengthwise. Presumably, that was done to provide extra support for the longer H-bent spans above.

Incredibly, ninety-two to ninety-five percent of the original hand-hewn, timber framing of both British and Dutch styles remains intact. So do the semi-round logs, with only the bark and branches cut off, that still support the ground floor and are clearly visible in the basement. The cottage was built without nails. Nails were handmade, expensive, and rare at the time. Most of the original pegged mortise and tenons joints still exist. The hand-hewn timbers show the use of adzes and broad axes, and the carpenter’s marks helping ensure proper assembly then, are today indications of its early construction. It is the construction materials and building techniques that led architectural historians from today’s Richard Grubb & Associates cultural resource consulting firm, to conclude that the date of construction of the cottage was indeed sometime in the first half of the 1700s.

The current kitchen dates from the 1960s or 1970s. Much is still covered with modern materials and faux brick, but there are a few unique aspects suggesting an original hearth. The lack of original stone or brick foundation support suggests the current fireplace and chimney were added later. So does the minimal brick corbeling extending from the stone foundation. The ground floor beams nearby provide most of the support for the chimney and brick side wall. An additional cross member under the flooring in front of the fireplace accommodates support for where a hearth, possibly a hooded one, would have been originally.

Recognizing the organized Scottish immigration of the 1680s and the subsequent widespread settlement of Scots in central, East New Jersey, including Cranbury, Professor Chambers reached out to historical architects in Edinburgh and Glasgow, primarily the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland and the Scottish Vernacular Buildings Working Group. The president of the latter, asked the CHPS research team to give a 20-minute, illustrated presentation at SVWG’s Annual Conference in 2021.

On November 9, 2021, Karen, John, and Steve made their Zoom presentation to an international audience. The question-and-answer period afterwards focused primarily on the Cranbury cottage. The major suggestion was that further deconstruction might reveal the use of a smoky, open hooded hearth, the kind evident in early eighteenth-century Europe, Dutch colonies, and in Scotland, called a “hangin’ lum,” a hanging chimney. An article written by the research team, at the SVWG president’s request, will appear as the lead article in the association’s scholarly journal, Vernacular Building, Volume 45, in fall 2022. A large photo of the CHPS cottage being moved across the street is planned for the cover illustration, since such house moving is unusual in Scotland.

In conclusion, *we do not know* yet if a Scot built our 1713 cottage. But *we do know* that its size and arrangement are almost the same as a Scotsman’s cottage in the woods and the prescribed workers’ Scottish cottages in Perth Amboy, all built because of Scottish immigration in the 1680s. *We do know* that Scots owned the land upon which our 1713 cottage was built, and that Scots were many of the *earliest settlers in Cranbury*. *We know all of that* was because of the colonial settlement instigated by those perceptive Scots who launched their colony and began the eminent influence of Scottish life and culture in New Jersey and America that continues to the present day.

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

1977 Time Capsule Opened

At 11 AM on July 4, 2022, over a hundred residents watched while members of the Cranbury Historical & Preservation Society opened the time capsule in front of Town Hall. The time capsule was placed in the cornerstone of the Midlantic National Bank on July 4, 1977 until 2009, and later moved to the Town Hall to be opened on July 4, 2022, to coincide with Cranbury's 325th Anniversary. It contained items from Cranbury Township, the Bicentennial Committee, Cranbury churches, businesses, Cranbury School and many Cranbury organizations. Within it were also documents including speeches from the Dedication Ceremony on July 4, 1977, speeches from Bicentennial Co-Chairman, Betty Wagner, Gerald F. Metzheiser who was President of the Cranbury Midlantic National Bank and others. Also included were a letter from Mayor Patricia Scott to the Cranbury 2022 Mayor and greetings to Cranbury citizens of 2022 from Cranbury citizens of 1977 on scrolls with signatures of Cranbury residents. Many residents who attended the time capsule opening were interested in seeing the names on the scrolls.



Gerald F. Metzheiser, President of the Cranbury Midlantic National Bank in 1977, speaking at the Time Capsule opening.



Photo by Robert Diamond



The long awaited moment arrives as the Time capsule is opened. From L to R: Jo D. Andrews, Audrey Smith, Steven Golisano.

Photo by Andrea Kane

BECOME A MEMBER!

CRANBURY HISTORICAL AND PRESERVATION SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

___ Individual - \$25

___ Patron - \$50

___ Other - \$ _____

___ Family - \$30

___ Benefactor - \$100

___ Sponsor - \$40

___ Corporate - \$150

Volunteer Opportunities

___ Museum Docent

___ Museum Inspectors

___ Walking Tours

___ Wassail Tour

___ Educational Programs

___ Memorial Day Parade

___ Health and Wellness Fair

___ History Center

___ Museum Garden

___ House Tour

___ Membership

___ Fundraising Projects

___ Other _____

Checks made payable to Cranbury Historical & Preservation Society,

Mail completed form with check to: CHPS Membership, 6 South Main Street, Cranbury, NJ 08512

Or, become a member and pay online at cranburyhistory.org

CHPS is a non-profit, self supporting organization. Contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law. Matching gifts are a significant source of support for the Society. If you work for, or have retired from a company that matches employee donations, please ask your personnel office for a matching gift form.

Carlson Family Diaries Farm Life as a Teenager in 1898

By **Linda Schilling**

I started volunteering at the History Center in July 2021 and it has been a fascinating journey for me. I started helping catalog Society acquisitions of artifacts, books, and historical information. We had quite a backlog since the History Center was closed for much of 2020 and early 2021 due to the pandemic. We were particularly excited to come across a thumb drive which contained transcribed diaries and digital pictures of the Carlson Family. We also have the original handwritten diaries. Ellen (Ella) Carlson was born on November 14, 1882 and started writing the diaries in 1898 when she was 15 years old. Her parents Charles and Augusta Carlson came to the United States from Sweden in 1880 and settled on Brickyard Road in Cranbury. Ella was the second of six children. Although her entries and comments are brief, they are a good illustration of farm life in Cranbury during the late 1800's and early 1900's.

The following are some excerpts from Ella's Diary written in January 1898:

3. Papa had his half holiday this forenoon and bought a new pair of shoes for me. Commenced to rain about ten o'clock. Helped get celery ready this afternoon. John (Ella's 11-year-old brother) and I went to Hightstown this forenoon. When we were coming home, Dick (their horse) became frightened at the work train and almost ran away from me. Took papa to the mill this morning and went after him this evening. A lovely day.

Sun. 5. When I got up this morning it was snowing and it has been snowing almost all day. Of course we didn't go to church or S.S. Proceeded to snow again this afternoon. I made bread for the first time today.

7. Took papa to the mill this morning. Went to Hightstown this forenoon to Mr. Forman's to pay him on a note and to have it renewed. Papa had written his name on the back of the note instead of the right place so I had to drive to the mill this afternoon so papa could sign his name again and then go to Hightstown and then back to the mill again. I saw lots of sleighs in town. It commenced to snow again before I got back to the mill and it has kept on all the evening.

8. Snowed all night and almost all day today. Wrote letter to Aunt Clara.

9. Very cold today and the wind has been blowing hard. Papa came home early.

10. 12 degrees below zero this morning. Wind is blowing still. Went to the store this forenoon.

11. Still cold. John and I went to Hightstown this afternoon and then we drove from H. to the mill and took Mrs. Norton's oil can into town and got it filled and I bought a lot of groceries and did a few other errands for her. John walked straight home and I drove on to Mrs. Norton and papa went home with me. Mrs. Norton gave me 50 cents and I gave John ten of them. Too cold for celery.



Carlson Family. Left to right Augusta wife of Charles J. Carlson, Charles J. Carlson, David on lap, Mary, John, Martha, Ellen (Ella), Taken at Cranbury Station, 1893 Summer



Charles Carlson Farm, BrickYard Road

Donations and Acquisitions

The Cranbury Museum has acquired a new item for display in the basement with the farming items. It is called a bag printer and has been donated by Cranbury resident Eileen Griggs McGillan and her sister Catherine Griggs McCarroll. It was used by Eastview Orchards for the brown bags when apples were sold retail in the side yard of the orchard property at 102 N Main St in Cranbury.

The Bag Printer and Eastview Orchards

By Eileen Griggs McGillan

I was very young at the time so I don't remember where the printer was made or who did the im-
printing of the orchard name on the bags. I do know they were printed in red ink and done off site.

The Eastview Orchards were planted in 1912 and purchased by my grandfather Raymond Snedeker Griggs in 1925. My dad, Stanley Griggs, was running the orchard with my grandfather. The orchard had a total of 860 trees bordered by Main St, Plainsboro Road and Maplewood Avenue. 11 different varieties of apples were grown there. Our home was at 102 N Main St on the corner at Plainsboro Road and the apples were sold retail in the side yard. There was an apple stand as well on the north-bound side of Rt 130 where the Dunkin Donuts is today. This was before the Turnpike was built and Rt 130 was very heavily traveled.

Migrant workers came every year from Leesburg, Florida to work in the orchard and the packing house on the property. Apples were sold wholesale and shipped to the trade merchants in Newark and NYC by our own trucks. The migrant workers helped with the spraying, pruning, and picking of the apples. Apples were sorted on a conveyor belt in the packinghouse by variety. There were apples that were best for baking, applesauce, eating by hand and for cider. Cider apples were taken to Freehold to the cider mill for processing and bottled where our Eastview Orchard labels were attached to gallon and half gallon jugs, then sold at retail in the side yard and the stand on the highway.



The Bag Printer

The farm was sold to a developer in 1951 due to my grandfather's age. It would be too much for my dad to run the orchard by himself. It took many years to get approval from the planning board and the zoning board in Cranbury but finally construction was started in the spring of 1957. The apple trees came down, and the streets were put in, and Eastview orchards became Griggs Estates also known as Cranbury Estates. A street, Griggs Road, was named after my grandfather.

The bag printer had been at my sister's home in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. We both felt it belonged with Cranbury history and are glad it has found its way back home to Cranbury and is safe among the museum exhibits.



Eileen, 9 years old



The Eastview Orchards



Packing House at Eastview Orchards

In Memoriam

The Society notes with sadness the passing of the following members

George Giovanos April 23, 2022

Robert Chido May 20, 2022

Anna Drago May 25, 2022

Other Events This Year...



Linda Schilling manning the table at the history Center porch during the Mayor's walk, April 22, 2022



The children's *What is It?* Table at the Cranbury Museum at the Open House and Scout visits. The antique items displayed for identification included: a wooden butter churn, button hooks, flower frogs, iron shoe molds, a wash board and a metal soap saver. Highlighting these old artifacts lead to lively discussion about their use in earlier times.

Symmes Court Event

On Saturday July 16, 2022, the Cranbury Historical and Preservation Society held a fundraising event at "The Old Manse" located at 10 Symmes Court in Cranbury. We had a wonderful turnout for this event. This historical home is one of the oldest in Cranbury and visitors were thrilled to have an opportunity to learn about the history of this important residence while touring the entire house. They also enjoyed music, refreshments and a silent auction and were invited to visit the Parsonage Barn, which is only a short walk from the home.

Gourgaud Gallery Exhibit

The CHPS exhibit, *Not To Be Forgotten: Some of the People Who Helped to Make Cranbury What it is Today*, was at the Gourgaud Gallery in Town Hall from September 1 through September 27. Researched by Jo D. Andrews, Karen Kelley, Eileen McGillan, Audrey Smith, Jay Taylor and Bonnie Wagman, it featured information about and photos of Jacqueline "Jackie" Bencze, William Cox, Arthur "Bub" Danser, William "Bill" Dennison, Sara Hoffman, Samuel Nixon, John Owens, Janet Reece, John "Jack" Trowbridge, Barbara "Babs" Thomsen, Clyde Sechler, Don Jo Swanagan, Enid Walker, Elizabeth M. "Betty" Wagner, Ruth Walsh, Thomas "Tom" Weidner and Agnes Wilson. The exhibit was well received, and several suggestions were given for those to include in a future exhibit. An album has been created with the exhibit information and photos and will be available at the History Center and at Cranbury Public Library after it opens.

CHPS 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, Michaela 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

Honorary Trustees

Bill Bunting, Norma Swale, Jan Wagner,
Jerry Pevahouse, Ginny Swanagan, John Chambers

Committees & Chairpersons

Acquisitions | Karen Kelley, Eileen McGillan,
Michaela Kehrt, Susan Saravelli,
Linda Schilling
Buildings and Ground | *Museum*: Ed Kelley
History Center: Linda Schilling
1713 EJ Cottage: Steve Golisano,
Karen Kelley, John Chambers,
Bob Dreyling, Bobbie Marlowe,
Audrey Smith
Parsonage Barn: Audrey Smith
Docents | Sue Saravelli
Exhibits | Karen Kelley
Finance | Bob Dreyling, Bill Bunting, Kathy Jani,
Jay Taylor, George Smith, JoD Andrews,
Brian Barry, Audrey Smith, Linda Schilling,
Karen Kelley, Steve Silverman
Fundraising | Committee
Gardens | Louise Palagyi
History Center Director | Linda Schilling
Historic Preservation | Mark Berkowsky
Membership | Audrey Smith, Michaela 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

October 29

Saturday, 7PM to 9:30PM
Cranbury Inn
21 South Main St.

Celebrating Cranbury: Past and Present
Wine tasting, appetizers, and silent auction.

December


Saturday, Dec 3 and 10, 10AM to 2PM
Sunday, Dec 4, 1PM to 4PM
6 South Main St.

History Center Gift Shop open

December 4

Sunday, 1PM to 4PM
Cranbury Museum
4 Park Place

Christmas Tea (tea and cookies served)
Take a museum tour. See Holiday decorations
and the special exhibit:
A Collection of Antique Holiday Postcards



Proceeds help preserve and maintain the Cranbury Museum, the Elizabeth M. Wagner History Center, the Parsonage Barn, and the 1713 East Jersey Cottage.

Celebrating Cranbury: Past & Present

Cranbury's 325th Anniversary

Meet old and new friends for hot & cold hors d'oeuvres, wine tasting, dessert, coffee and tea. A wonderful silent auction will be included!

Hosted by the Cranbury Historical and Preservation Society

Join us!
Saturday, October 29, 2022
7:00 - 9:30 pm
The Cranbury Inn

Tickets: \$50/person at cranburyhistory.org



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 10AM to 12:30PM & by appt.
Tel: 609/860-1889
Email: historycenter@comcast.net
Website: www.cranburyhistory.org