

# Pilesgrove – Woodstown Historical Society Newsletter

Number 05-3

September 2005

On Thursday, September 8, 2005 the Historical Society will hold its fall quarterly meeting at the Reliance Fire Company Hall at 7:30 PM. The program is being presented by the Society in conjunction with the New Jersey Council for the Humanities. The program is entitled “New Jersey in the American Revolution” and will be presented by Arthur S. Lefkowitz. This 50 minute slide presentation is based on Mr. Lefkowitz’s book “The Long Retreat”. This program focuses on the British invasion of New Jersey in late 1776, which ended with Washington’s famous Christmas night raid on Trenton.

## **The West Jersey Fairgrounds**

There is a map of Woodstown from 1886 in the library of the Historical Society which identifies an area near West Avenue and what is now Bailey Street as the Fairgrounds. I know that there are copies of this map in houses all over the area so I thought it would be interesting to find out about the history of the fairgrounds in Woodstown.

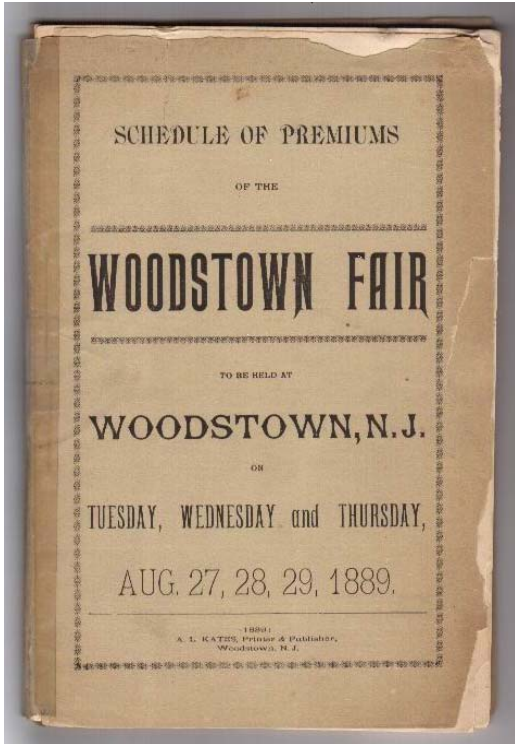
The fairgrounds of the West Jersey Agricultural and Horticultural Association were located at the intersection of US Route 40 and NJ Route 45 in Pilesgrove Township on land now occupied by the Wawa convenience store and the new Branch of the First National Bank of Elmer.



The fairs were conducted each year during the last week in August and early September. Special events were also held at the fairgrounds that included horse racing on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Fairs were held there from 1870 until about 1905 or 1906.



The fair was well organized and conducted exhibitions of livestock, fruits and vegetables, manufactured goods, building construction, equipment maintenance and farming technologies. There were many events at the fair and included horse racing, livestock auctions and exhibitions of baked goods, canned fruits and vegetables.



Exhibitors at the fair were eligible for cash prizes that ranged from \$3.00 to \$5.00. Special prizes were offered by local merchants and included free hats for the heaviest watermelon to a free \$15.00 suit of clothing from the Wanamaker store in Philadelphia for the best basket of potatoes.

The programs for the fair included advertisements for local businesses such as the Borton and Andrews, Druggists and Apothecaries Store, The Woodstown Academy (a boarding school) and the Pilesgrove Dairy Association. The fair also attracted advertisements from businesses from Philadelphia and New Jersey. The program from the fair held in 1889 included ads for the Strong and Green Bicycle Co. of Philadelphia, the Shanley and Van Brunt Company; distributors of horse manure, from New York and the Taylor Brothers from Vineland; who were dealers of wheat, corn and oats.

People attending the fair could purchase medicine from vendors to treat various ailments that include acute or chronic Catarrh (a disease of the mucus membrane, I thought you might want to know), headaches, consumption, dyspepsia, hay fever, neuralgia, rheumatism and other chronic nervous disorders.

In addition to the exhibitions, horse races were held on a half-mile long, dirt track. Races were held for three and four year old horses for either trotting or speed trials. Prizes ranged from \$125.00 for first place to \$25.00 for fourth place. The entrance fee for each horse was ten percent of the purse for each race. The horse racing attracted competition from around the state.

Admission to the fair was fifty cents for an adult and fifteen cents for children under 12 years of age. Three day tickets were one dollar and anyone owning five shares of stock in the Association were entitled to a free pass.

After the association ceased its operations in around 1906, the buildings were sold to Howard Harris in 1910 and were moved to his property on North Main Street in Woodstown. Mr. Harris conducted weekly livestock auctions at his property, Harris Acres, until 1940. The business, now known as Cowtown, was moved to its current location in Pilesgrove in November 1940.

The photographs used in this article are from the Humphrey's collection of the Pilesgrove - Woodstown Historical Society.



AT LAWSON & CLAYTON'S  
 THE FAIR GET  
**WINDOW SHADES**  
 of every color, pattern, and price, ready-made and made to order.  
 Our Carpet Sales Have Doubled the Past Year.  
 We sell every variety of the best Carpets, and  
 have them laid out for you.  
 100-110 BRIDGE STREET - WOODSTOWN, N. J.

## Calendar of Society Programs

**Thursday, September 8, 2005**

**Business Meeting at Reliance Fire Company Hall at 7:30 PM**

**Program at 8:00 PM**

New Jersey in the American Revolution. Presented by Arthur S. Lefkowitz. This 50 minute slide presentation is based on Mr. Lefkowitz's book "The Long Retreat". This program focuses on the British invasion of New Jersey in late 1776, which ended with Washington's famous Christmas night raid on Trenton.

Hosts and Hostesses: Cheryl Valente, Libby Myers and Frank Stubbins

**Tuesday, November 8, 2005**

**Business Meeting at the Woodstown**

**Presbyterian Church Hall**

**46 Auburn Road, Woodstown**

**Program at 8:00 PM**

The parishioners will present tonight's program on the history of the Presbyterian Church in Woodstown.

Hosts and Hostesses: Ann Tatnall, Sue Allen and Chick Harrison



## Museum

Persons or families who may have antiques or interesting articles they might be willing to have on display, either as a loan or gift, may call Elizabeth Myers at 856-358-7853. The Society is also interested in any historical records or books pertaining to Pilesgrove or Woodstown.

## Acquisitions and Donations

Gift from Doris Williams

1944, program from 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduation Pilesgrove Twp, South Jersey Farmer's Exchange, 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – 1909 to 1934, Junior Journal – 1944, newspaper article

Gift from Sherada Rampe

2 NJ Tercentenary Bottles – 1964, Cast iron skillet and frying pan, 3 books for the library

Gift from Vivian Estes

Baby crib with decorative cut wooden slats

Gift from Betty Powell

Oil painting of the old Township Hall located at East Lake Rd and East Millbrooke Ave.

Gift from Betty Gardner

A black Cape and Jacket, and a copy of a first grade reader – circa 1895

Gift from Fred Brink Jr

Copy of photograph of members and equipment of Reliance Fire Department (1920 - 1930)

**Pilesgrove – Woodstown Historical Society**

42 North Main Street  
Woodstown, New Jersey 08098  
Phone 856-769-4588

Museum Hours: Saturday 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM

**Officers for 2005**

President	William Aldrich
Vice President	Frank Stubbins
Recording Secretary	Janet Turin
Corresponding Secretary	Marie Haaf
Membership	Sue Allen
Treasurer	Deb Tierno

**Trustees**

Marian Aldrich	2005
Connie Rosenberger	2005
Ann Tatnall	2005
Howard Riegel	2006
Robert Brooks	2006
Charles Harrison	2006
Elizabeth Myers	2007
Cheryl Valente	2007

**Membership**

Annual Dues	\$20.00
Family Membership	\$25.00
Individual Life Membership	\$200.00
Sponsor	\$50.00

Please call Mrs. Susan Allen at 769-1147 for membership applications, cards and membership information.

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201 North Main Street  
Woodstown, New Jersey 08098