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FROM THE FRONT PORCH

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF MOORESTOWN



House Tours and Gift Shop Hours:

2nd & 4th Sunday 1-3 PM
Tuesdays 1-3 PM

Research Library Hours:

Tuesday 1-4 PM
Second Sunday of
each Month 1-3 PM

Address

Historical Society of
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Smith-Cadbury Mansion
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societyofmoorestown](https://www.facebook.com/historical-societyofmoorestown)

Published by

*The Historical Society
of Moorestown*

View From the Porch

Few things serve as a reminder of how quickly time passes than writing this piece for our newsletter four times a year. It is especially true of the first edition of a new year. For the Historical Society, 2016 will mark our *forty-seventh* year of operation and the enthusiasm and commitment from our members and trustees has never been stronger. Everyone is anxious to build on the momentum from last year and there are already signs, early in the New Year, that we are accomplishing that goal.

On January 5th, we set up our *Sports Legends of Moorestown* exhibit at Moorestown High School's Athletic Center as part of a special night which saw the school receive a gold football from the National Football League in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Super Bowl (see photos on page 5). A presentation was made to each school nationally who produced an athlete who went on to play in one of the fifty Super Bowl games. For Moorestown, that person was Dave Robinson MHS '59, who is also a member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Robinson played in the first two Super Bowl games as a member of the Green Bay Packers. The Historical Society's exhibit acted as a nice backdrop for the evening's festivities and was also available for student viewing throughout the day.

The New Jersey History Lecture Series, under the leadership of Vice-President Mickey DiCamillo also picked up where it left off in 2015. On January 28th, an overflow crowd heard Dr. Richard Veit discuss his book, *New Jersey Cemeteries and Tombstones: History in the Landscape*. Dr. Veit presented a culturally diverse account of New Jersey's historic burial places from High Point to Cape May and from the

banks of the Delaware to the Jersey shore, to explain what cemeteries tell us about people and the communities in which they lived. Keep an eye on our website and Facebook page for our next speaker in the series.

A group of trustees and volunteers also visited the New Jersey State Museum on January 8th, to do further research for our upcoming exhibit based on the pre-historic artifacts discovered in the spring of 2012 near Oldershaw Road. It had been our hope to have the items already on exhibit but as we have learned more about the significance of the items in our possession, we have had to alter our approach to the exhibit to be able to give it the full treatment it deserves. We have learned that the items are likely from Native American Societies from the Early Woodland period (1000 to 200 BC). We have also learned from conversations with Dr. Richard Veit, who is an Associate Professor in the Department of History and Anthropology at Monmouth University, that there is a great deal of excitement within the archeological community regarding these items, so we need to be sure to get this exhibit right. Keep an eye on our website for updates on our progress.

I would also like to welcome our newest Trustee Elizabeth Rosenthal. Liz graduated from Rutgers Law School in 1985 and also has a degree in Journalism from Syracuse University. She is the author of two books including *Birdwatcher: The Life of Roger Tory Peterson*.

Last, but not least, please mark your calendars for our Annual Membership Meeting scheduled for April 7th starting at 7:30 at the Community House. I hope to see everyone there.

Lenny Wagner, President

MARCH 2016

The Old Friends High School at Second Street

The early picture here, from the archives of Moorestown Friends School, shows what was known as *Friends High School* at the northwest corner of Second Street and Chester Avenue as it looked prior to 1920, viewed from the Second Street side, from a point near the corner.

Notice that the picture of the Friends High School 1916-17 basketball team (see page 5 in this issue) was taken on the steps of the nearest porch.

The original school building at this site was a small white frame schoolhouse erected by the Hicksite Friends in 1829 when their group split from the Orthodox Friends. It was erected before Second Street itself existed and

when Second Street was laid out, the schoolhouse was found to be in the way and was moved a short distance to its eventual place on the corner.

The brick High School, first part built in 1880, replaced the little frame schoolhouse and grew in size through several additions. It offered elementary grades through high school.

In the picture, the nearby section of the school was the original part, built as one story and increased to two stories in 1883. Other additions to the right came afterward.

With the reunification of Moorestown's Friends schools in 1920, it became the actual High School until 1929 when the current High School was completed on the main campus across Main Street. The pictured school was razed in 1933.

“Before & After”



The recent picture of the same corner shows today's Moorestown Post Office building largely occupying the space that was once the school's front lawn.

Notice that the curved sycamore tree seen near the school has survived into modern times and appears in the recent picture. Using this tree as a point of reference, note that the school extended into what is now the post office parking lot. Behind the school, where the present day apartments are, was the field where the boys played baseball.

— John Watson

The Historical Society of Moorestown

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It was standing room only at the Smith-Cadbury mansion

on Thursday night, January 28, when author and university professor Dr. Richard Veit (pictured below, center, with Lenny Wagner and Mickey DiCamillo) gave an hour-long, humor-laced historical overview of graveyards, cemeteries, and notable graves in New Jersey.

The appreciative audience learned about tombstone architecture going back to the 17th century, as well as materials used (granite, clay, tiles, ceramics, concrete – even plastic).



Highlights of Dr. Veit's talk included his numerous examples of grave markers, headstones, footstones, and mausoleums that told stories about the people buried there. Some were funny: "I told you I was sick," read one tombstone. Another was somewhat humorous but sad: a tombstone for two brothers who died in 1693 noted they had both succumbed to mushroom poisoning despite repeated warnings by their elders to avoid the mushrooms. Typical juveniles! Yet another was simply tragic: one grave marker contained an epitaph to a woman who, in 1772, fell from a carriage and onto a blade she had been using to peel an apple.

Just as interesting were the personalities illuminated by their graves. There was the immodest head stone inscription informing visitors that the grave's occupant had been "The World's Greatest Electrician." A Roma cemetery featured a head stone paying tribute to a Roma couple who were community stalwarts, "Big G and Loveable Rose." Some notable celebrities are buried in New Jersey: the infamous Aaron Burr, who killed Alexander Hamilton in a duel; and Dudley Moore, the famed actor, comic, and pianist. Dr. Veit discussed African-American burial grounds and the cemeteries of different immigrant groups, such as Italians and Jews.

Poignantly, he concluded by warning of the challenges that many cemeteries and grave sites face: acid rain erosion, neglect, even vandalism.

Dr. Veit, an Associate Professor in the Department of History and Anthropology at Monmouth University, based the presentation on his book, *New Jersey Cemeteries and Tombstones: History in the Landscape* (Rivergate Books, 2008).

— Liz Rosenthal

Stranger Stop & Cast an Eye:

400 Years of New Jersey Cemetery Evolution & Gravestone Design

Dr. Richard Veit is an atypical historian. While most would discourage societies from "burying the past", he wants them to do a lot of it. The professor is an anthropologist with a unique field of expertise. Dr. Veit studies the history of cemetery evolution and gravestone design. He unearthed this topic at the Historical Society of Moorestown on January 28, 2016.

This lecture was part of the Historical Society's New Jersey History Speaker Series. While many history talks

take place in lecture halls or library conference rooms, this one occurred in the living room of an historic home.

I enjoyed the cozy environment at Smith-Cadbury Mansion. As I arrived early the Society's President, Lenny Wagner, provided guests with a brief history of the home, itself. In a sense, the organization treated me to two informative discussions in one evening. (Full Disclosure: I've been a member of the Historical Society of Moorestown since 2006.)

Dr. Veit is currently Professor of Anthropology and Chair of the Department of History and Anthropology at Monmouth University. His knowledge of New Jersey cemeteries and gravestones proved these aren't ceremonial positions. He entertained the group with an enlightening disquisition on the subject. It may seem strange to use a word such as *entertained* to describe an historical lecture on a topic so close to death, but that's the right one. The professor presented material that could have been dry and dreary, in a witty and affable fashion.

The breadth of the lecture impressed me. Aside from elucidating 400 years of history, Dr. Veit's comments covered the entire state. He explained that different parts of New Jersey had gravestone designs endemic to their areas. Of interest to residents of South Jersey he discussed the "Philadelphia influence" during the Colonial Era. This entailed the importing of marble from Pennsylvania for tombstones. In northern parts of the state, slate imported from New England became vogue.

I knew that grave markers benefited genealogists. My Great-Grandfather Mike Stephany's showed me which unit he served in during the First World War.

Dr. Veit displayed photos of some that contained much more detail than that. He jokingly referred to a few of them as a "resume." Irish markers tended to describe where the deceased grew up in Ireland, when they arrived in the United States, when they married, how many children they had, etc. That would be a monumental source of information for anyone researching their family history.

I learned something I never would've imagined. Tombstones served as early sources of advertising. Carvers would inscribe their names on the markers they chiseled. This may seem disturbing to modern sensibilities, but with the absence of photography and mass marketing, people did what they could to ensure name recognition.

In the midst of all these entertaining facts, the professor slyly snuck in some serious historical lessons. He explained how graveyards are a reflection of their historical times. During the Colonial Era, few markers contained crosses. People living in that time viewed them as a "Catholic" influence. While ubiquitous today, some 250 years ago crosses only appeared on some French graves.

The part of the talk that amused me the most concerned the mausoleums. They became very fashionable resting places for captains of industry around the dawn of the 20th Century; predominantly in urban areas. Dr. Veit displayed pictures of one he visited. He described it as having room for the deceased "and about thirty of his closest friends." As the professor visited during the Holiday Season, the tomb contained multiple Christmas Trees and wreaths inside. To my eyes the ambiance and marble floors made it appear more like a mall than a burial place.

Dr. Veit began his remarks by calling cemeteries, "great sources of information." Just how much information one can discover there amazed me. The amount of information the speaker possessed impressed me even more. I enjoyed the professor's engaging jocular and erudition. I'd welcome the opportunity to see him again. I just hope that time comes before he's studying my tombstone.

— Kevin Stephany

Library News

The Historical Society would gratefully like to acknowledge the Elizabeth Tuttle Fund for the generous grant of \$2500 to sustain the popular NJ History Speaks Lecture Series throughout this year. The series will present authors and area professors who will shed light on a variety of interesting topics related to the state's interesting past. Watch for e-mails and Facebook postings for upcoming speakers as well as information on dates and times. These events are free and open to the public.

— Stephanie Herz

We would like to acknowledge our 2015-2016 Library Sponsors who now have a library shelf with their name on it!



Who Should Play Edward Harris?

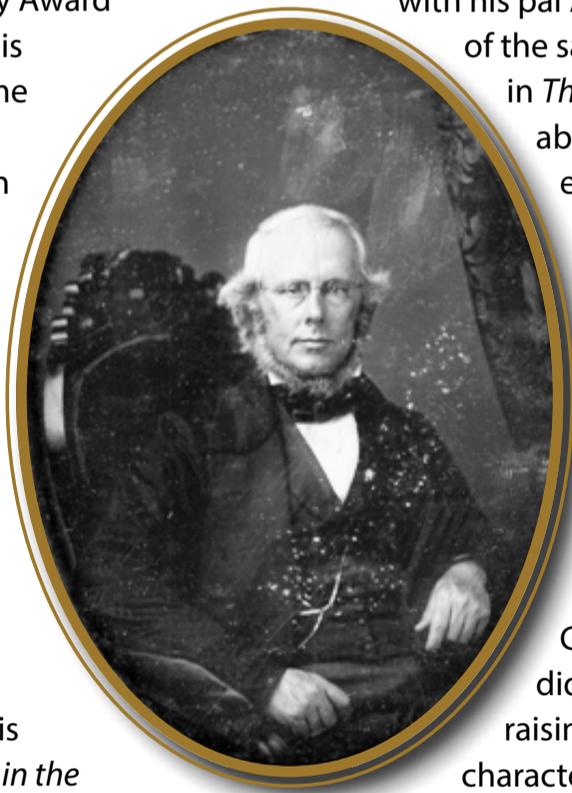
Based on the acclaim that the film has gotten from critics and audiences alike, including 12 Academy Award nominations, *The Revenant* is one of the best films to come along in years. Leonardo DiCaprio plays frontiersman and fur trapper Hugh Glass in 1823 Montana and South Dakota. The film is remarkable for the tremendous performance by DiCaprio and mind-blowing cinematography. *The Revenant* was not the first film based on the experiences of Hugh Glass. In 1971, Richard Harris starred in a film called *Man in the Wilderness* which was loosely based on a Glass expedition up the Missouri River.

But for members of the Historical Society of Moorestown familiar with the story of our own Edward Harris, there is an added dimension at work. In the summer of 1843 Harris accompanied John James Audubon

on his expedition up the Missouri River to the Yellowstone. While the Harris adventure with his pal Audubon — over some of the same territory depicted in *The Revenant* — took place about twenty years later, the experience is remarkably similar. Harris kept a diary of his trip which reads like an adventure novel. From the trappers, to the buffalo, the wolves, and hostile Native Americans, Edward Harris certainly had some of the same experiences as Hugh Glass. Granted, Harris' experience did not reach the hair-raising heights that DiCaprio's character does, but the locations depicted in the film cover some of the same areas traversed by Harris and Audubon.

Copies of the Harris' journal (*Up the Missouri with Audubon: The Journal of Edward Harris*) can be purchased at bookstores.

— Lenny Wagner



BUSINESS CORNER

BUSINESS MEMBERSHIPS (NEW!)

Local businesses play an important role when they support the preservation of Moorestown's history. We welcome and thank our inaugural business members!

BENEFACTOR

Tait Co./Tait Roofing Inc.

EVENT SPONSOR

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Whitesell Construction

LIBRARY SPONSOR

Roger Wilco Wine & Spirits—

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& Kranjac, P.C.

Richard DePasquale—

Moorestown Tailors

BAYADA Home Health Care

Parkeon

Leonberg Nursery

Your generous support helps to sustain the Society's commitment to preserving Moorestown's heritage for generations to come.

Again, thank you!

Additional business memberships are always welcome.

Please call The Historical Society at 856-235-0353 for membership details.



MHS received a gold football from the NFL because the school produced an athlete who played in a Super Bowl game (Dave Robinson '59; at left). We brought our *Sports Legends of Moorestown* exhibit to the H.S. for students and visitors to view.



SHOOTING REBOUNDING PASSING DRIBBLING
BLOCKING RUNNING JUMPING SCORING

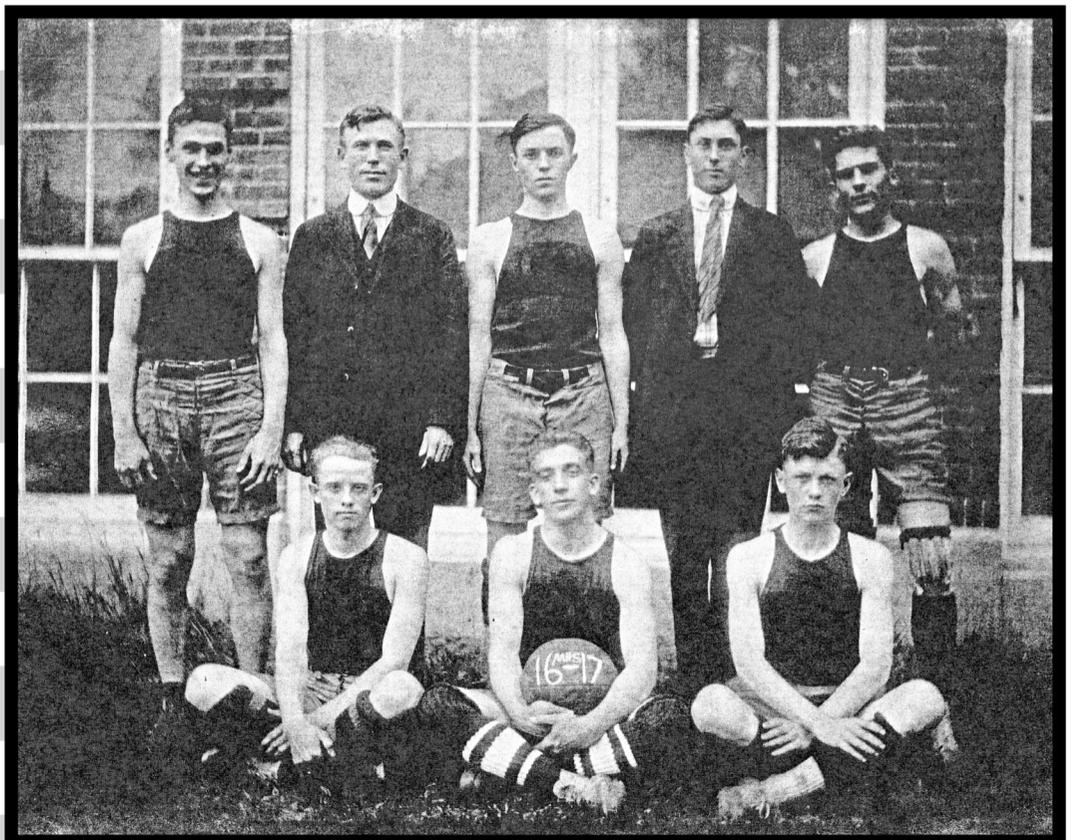
One Town. One Season. Two Basketball Teams.

They probably played each other. Notice the brick to the left of the door in the picture of the Friends High School team; it says *1916*; each year they would replace the "brick" from the previous year with a new one.



Moorestown Friends High School (Second Street and Chester Avenue) 1916 –1917 Basketball Team

Left to right: *Leon Collins, Harry Boureau, Charles Coles, Robert Evans, Walter L. Jessup*



Moorestown High School 1916–1917 Basketball Team

Holding the basketball: *Walter French*; back row, 2nd from right: *Al LeConey*. We aren't able to identify any of the other players — can any of our readers help us out?

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Arriving with the forsythia this Spring will be your membership renewal form for 2016-2017. As an all-volunteer non-profit organization, we depend on your continued support! New this year, beginning in early April, you'll have the option to renew your membership using PayPal online at our new website moorestownhistory.org. Also new this year is an exciting benefit at the \$100 member level: an engraved brick to be placed in our soon to be constructed Pathway to History. This is a great way to commemorate a special occasion or a special person. Become a part of Moorestown's future through the preservation of its past! All of us here at the Historical Society say thank you to our loyal membership for supporting our efforts to preserve and learn from the history of the wonderful town we share!

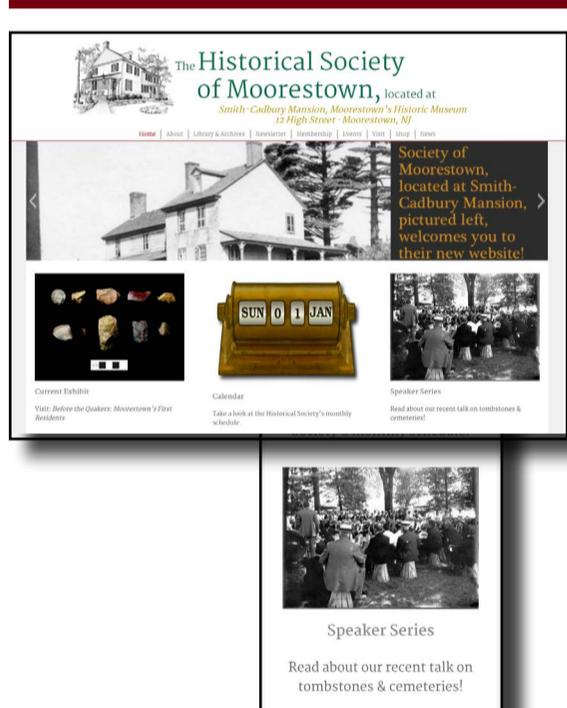
The Historical Society extends a warm welcome to our new members:

Linda Kemple • Jonnene Dunne • Susan & Thomas Mannion

New members are always welcome! If you have a friend or neighbor who might be interested in supporting the Historical Society by joining us, they can become a member through our website at moorestownhistory.org or subscribe to our email list and receive membership information through the mail.

Looking forward to Spring with you!

Jill Weiss, Membership Chair; jill@thewio.com



Historical Society Meets the 21st Century!

After 47 years, the Historical Society meets the 21st Century with its brand new website! Our new web address is moorestownhistory.org. Take a look! We hope you find it easy to navigate. You'll find information on the Historical Society, Smith-Cadbury Mansion, our Library & Archives, membership information, upcoming and past events, exhibitions, new acquisitions, our Speaker Series, house plaques and more. The construction of the website was a fun project for Trustee Jill Weiss and her son Matthew Weiss. We hope it successfully captures the feel of Smith-Cadbury Mansion and serves as a useful resource for our membership as well as the wider Moorestown community. Eventually we hope to put some of our archival collections online as well as host online-only exhibitions. We hope you like our new virtual home and will visit it often to see what's new at the Historical Society!

Are you good at fundraising? If so, we need your help!

We are seeking individuals with energy and ideas to help us in our fundraising efforts.

Interested?

Contact Jill Weiss via email: jill@thewio.com

Jobs — big and small — that we need help with:

Activities/Events: Helps plan, organize and hold Society events.

Docents: Museum and special exhibit guides.

Exhibits: Helps create interesting displays.

Fund Raising: Helps plan and hold income-generating events.

Museum: Helps with maintaining collection.

Oral History: Collects oral histories and oversees written work.

Photography: Attends events and take digital photos for our archives and publicity.

Programs: Helps select programs and speakers, coordinates meetings.

Publicity/News/Web: Helps get Society information to the members and public.

If you can help out, call the Society at 856-235-0353 or email Jill Weiss

jill@thewio.com



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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BASIC MEMBERSHIP:

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CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH 2016

- 8 *Smith-Cadbury Library & Tours, 1-4*
- 13 *Smith-Cadbury Tours & Research Library, 1-3*
- 15 *Smith-Cadbury Library & Tours, 1-4*
- 22 *Smith-Cadbury Library & Tours, 1-4*
- 27 *Smith-Cadbury Closed for Easter*
- 29 *Smith-Cadbury Library & Tours, 1-4*

APRIL 2016

- 5 *Smith-Cadbury Library & Tours, 1-4*
- 7 **Annual Meeting** at 7:30 PM
Community House
- 10 *Smith-Cadbury Tours & Research Library, 1-3*
- 12 *Smith-Cadbury Library & Tours, 1-4*
- 19 *Smith-Cadbury Library & Tours, 1-4*
- 24 *Smith-Cadbury Tours, 1-3*
- 26 *Smith-Cadbury Library & Tours, 1-4*

MAY 2016

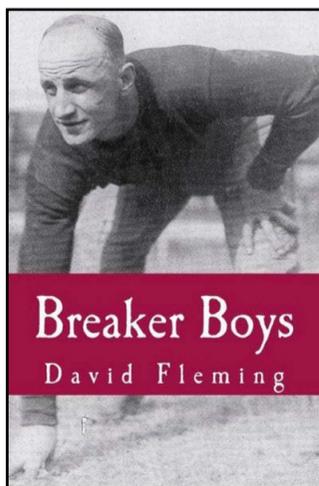
- 3 *Smith-Cadbury Library & Tours, 1-4*
- 8 *Smith-Cadbury closed for Mother's Day*
- 10 *Smith-Cadbury Library & Tours, 1-4*
- 17 *Smith-Cadbury Library & Tours, 1-4*
- 22 *Smith-Cadbury Tours, 1-3*
- 24 *Smith-Cadbury Library & Tours, 1-4*
- 31 *Smith-Cadbury Library & Tours, 1-4*

Moorestown's Walter French & the Pottsville Maroons

December 6, 2015 marked the 90th anniversary of the Pottsville Maroons victory in what amounted to the NFL Championship game of 1925. The Maroons easily defeated the Chicago Cardinals on a frozen Soldier's Field, by a score of 21-7. The star of the game for the Maroons was Moorestown's own Walter French, who put on a dazzling display in a dominant performance that the Chicago Tribune headline summed up perfectly with three simple words: **French Runs Wild.**

One week later the Maroons played an exhibition game against the Notre Dame All Stars, a team made up of some of the greatest *Fighting Irish* players of that time including the legendary "four horsemen." It is hard to imagine today, but at the time, the college ball was thought to be vastly superior to that being played by the professionals of the fledgling NFL, especially this particular college team. The game was scheduled to be played at Shibe Park in Philadelphia. The Frankford Yellow Jackets protested to the league that the game was being played within their geographic territory/market and should not be allowed to take place. The league sided with the Yellow Jackets' owner and told the Maroons that they would be suspended if they went ahead and played the game. The game went on and the Maroons

defeated the heavily favored Notre Dame team, 9-7. The victory was a watershed moment for the NFL and proved, for the first time, that a professional team could compete with — and even defeat — the best college team ever. However, the league made good on its promise and suspended the Maroons and stripped them of their title.



Walter French went on to have a successful Major League Baseball career as an outfielder with the Philadelphia Athletics and in 1929 was on the team when they won the World Series in five games over the Chicago Cubs. The World Series ring made Walter one of only two men in history to win a World Series and an NFL title.

Recently, Walter's daughter Ann, who was born in Moorestown in 1928, paid the town a visit. She spent the day touring the community and stopped by Smith-Cadbury to see her father's display from the *Sports Legends of Moorestown* exhibit, and to read up on the history of the French family in Moorestown. Ann is a direct descendant of Thomas French, one of the town's first settlers.

Also available for sale in our gift shop on a limited basis are copies of *Breaker Boys: the NFL's Greatest Team and the Stolen 1925 Championship* by Dave Fleming of ESPN. Fleming donated the books to the Historical Society. The books are signed by the author and on sale for \$15.00.

— Lenny Wagner



Walter French's daughter Ann viewing the display about her father from our *Sports Legends of Moorestown* exhibit

Historical Society of Moorestown

Smith-Cadbury Mansion
12 High Street, Box 477
Moorestown, NJ 08057



MARCH 2016

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VICTOR TALKING MACHINE C^o
CAMDEN, N.J.

Annual Meeting Special Guest Speaker: Graham Alexander

[owner of The
Victor Talking
Machine Co.,
Victrola,
His Master's
Voice, and the
Nipper Dog]

JOIN US ON
APRIL 7th

In the early decades of the 20th Century, the *Victor Talking Machine Company* and *Victor Records* were among the most prominent companies in the music and electronics industries. Its Camden headquarters helped the city thrive, and the company's founder, Eldridge Johnson, made his home here in Moorestown. (Johnson lived on Main Street in the home that today is the Lutheran Home.) Johnson's legacy in Moorestown is palpable. He donated large sums of money to support the town's activities, and in 1923 he donated \$250,000 for the purpose of constructing the Moorestown Community House. Since the Little Nipper dog was the iconic symbol of Johnson's iconic company, Moorestown has commemorated Johnson's legacy with the many Little Nipper statues that are scattered along Main Street and other parts of town.

Like many companies in the latter part of the 20th Century, a series of mergers and acquisitions eventually moved

Remembering & Reviving South Jersey's Connection to the Music Biz

Johnson's companies out of South Jersey. However, over the last few years, one person has been working to bring Johnson's companies back home. **Join us on April 7th @ 7:30 PM inside the Moorestown Community House when Graham Alexander, the current owner of The Victor Talking Machine Co., Victrola, His Master's Voice, and the Nipper Dog speaks to us about the history of these significant South Jersey brands, how he acquired the brands, and his plans for restoring the musical legacy of South Jersey.**

This is a free event open to all who are interested!

— Mickey DiCamillo