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# FROM THE FRONT PORCH

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OF MOORESTOWN



## View From the Porch

In medieval England, long before Santa Claus started coming to town, Christmas was a boozy, raucous affair. Celebrations did not occur under the family Christmas tree with friends and relatives. Instead, drunken groups of singing wassailers paraded through the streets demanding feasts from anyone who might open their home. And doors did indeed swing open for the revelers. Keeping with tradition, the wealthiest people in the community filled their tables with food and drink, decorated their mansions, and invited the working classes in for grand celebrations that people dreamed about all year long. These celebrations were public affairs among strangers that provided some sense of community in a society that had deep-rooted socio-economic inequality.

This medieval tradition traveled across the ocean to America and continued to be a part of Christmas celebrations well into the 19th century. New York newspapers from the period report on crowds of merrymakers calling on the city's luminaries to provide impromptu parties in the streets. However, by the middle to late 19th century, the population of working class "partiers" swelled to historic highs while there was a shrinking number of people who could call themselves wealthy. The cities' wealthy families found themselves bombarded with Christmas revelers every season; they had to turn away the crowds; and violence became a part of the annual Christmas celebrations.

People of all classes recognized that the old way of celebrating Christmas was no longer sustainable. Luckily, it was around this time that Santa Claus made some of his first

ever visits to the United States. Initially, he showered largesse upon the children of wealthy homes, but as the 19th century came to a close, he began arriving in homes across the classes. His lasting effect was that the season of giving was transformed from a public celebration among strangers to a private celebration among family. Historian Stephen Nissenbaum refers to this transition as the "domestication of Christmas" and he recounts this time period in his book *The Battle for Christmas*, a must read for anyone interested in the cultural and historical roots of our Christmas traditions.

Over a century later, it is hard to imagine Christmas as the public celebration that it used to be. A drunken crew of loud, merrymakers sounds more like Friday night on South Street than Christmas Eve on Main Street. Nevertheless, we can use this old Christmas tradition as a useful reminder that if we want the benefits of community we must find ways to share as a community. This holiday season, as we shop from home on our smart phones to purchase gifts for our children, grandchildren, and spouses, perhaps we can remember those carousing wassailers and provide some generosity to a complete stranger. One act in one holiday season certainly won't resolve growing economic disparity, it won't resolve political gridlock, and it won't end an era of fake news and media shenanigans. However, one act of random kindness to a stranger may be a first step toward a new tradition.

**Mickey DiCamillo, President**  
*mdicam@hotmail.com*



### 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

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Smith-Cadbury Mansion  
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[facebook.com/historical-societyofmoorestown](https://facebook.com/historical-societyofmoorestown)

*Published by  
The Historical Society  
of Moorestown*

# THE 1918 FLU EPIDEMIC

*The 1918 flu epidemic was the subject of the presentation of the Historical Society of Moorestown's very own president, Mickey DiCamillo, at the October 8th Annual Meeting at the Moorestown Library*

## **Mickey kept the crowd**

**spellbound** in explaining the origins of the flu and why it socked the Philadelphia area, in particular, with such a lethal punch. He said that, at first, the belief was that soldiers brought the flu back with them from overseas. Then, a theory gained some currency that German POWs brought the disease with them from England, and that the Germans, in turn, had acquired it from Russian soldiers. Later, during the Cold War, the whole thing was blamed on the Soviets. A popular theory also had the flu emanating from Spain – hence, the name, "Spanish influenza."

Today's prevailing view, said Mickey, is that it started on a Kansas farm in February 1918. Wild birds carrying a version of the flu would have infected domesticated birds, which transmitted it to pigs, and then it was a matter of time before it reached humans. Normally healthy people became infected, developed the flu, which turned into pneumonia, and then died. The flu made its way to Camp Funston, near

**Philadelphians  
deprived of their  
whiskey traveled  
to Camden and  
Gloucester City  
saloons, with  
New Jerseyans  
shocked and  
disturbed by this  
influx of rowdies**

Manhattan, Kansas. People theorize that soldiers sent to France from the Camp brought the disease with them.

In the fall of 1918, the flu appeared at Camp Dix in New Jersey, which led to

the terrible Philadelphia outbreak that culminated in 16,000 deaths in the region. Moorestown's own "Tommy the Barber," stationed at Camp Dix,

witnessed the swift death of many soldiers. It began, he said, with severe head pain and dizziness, with back pain developing as well as the expected sore throat. Then it reached the lungs of the men, which quickly filled up with fluid. They died a death similar to drowning.

When in the fall the disease began showing up in Philadelphia, it ripped through the city and the suburbs within a matter of days. One contributing factor to the disease's spread: 75% of the region's medical personnel was serving in the war effort. A conflict ensued between two priorities: keeping the war going versus shutting everything down.

Mickey said that local authorities permitted a giant Liberty Loan Parade in Willow Grove Park to go on as planned. It attracted a massive audience of 200,000. With so many people packed in a limited space, the disease had no trouble infecting a maximum number of individuals. By the end of September 2018, thousands of people in the area were coming down with the flu, and quickly dying.

Eventually, Philadelphia officials realized that they needed to prevent large groups from gathering, and decreed the indefinite closure of churches, social clubs, lodges, and, before long, bars and saloons. Philadelphians deprived of their whiskey traveled to Camden and Gloucester City saloons, with New Jerseyans shocked and disturbed by this influx of rowdies. New Jersey soon made the controversial decision to shut down saloons statewide.

When the disease finally ran its course, an estimated 50 million people had died across the globe.

— Liz Rosenthal

The Historical Society  
of Moorestown

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*Liz Rosenthal*

*Lenny Wagner*

*John Watson*

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### **Newsletter Editor**

*Lisa Knell*

### **Library**

*Stephanie Herz*





# HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MOORESTOWN'S 2018 ANTIQUE ROADSHOW AT THE EVERGREENS RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

*"This has been in my family  
for a long time..."*

*"Do you know anything about this...?"*

*"This was in my mother's family..."*

**These are only a few of the opening statements** that professional auctioneer, appraiser, and home downsizing expert Mike Ivankovich responded to at the Historical Society's "Moorestown Antique Roadshow" held on November 4th, 2018 at the beautiful Evergreens Retirement Community in Moorestown.

Mr. Ivankovich has been appraising antiques, collectibles and household contents for the past 40+ years. He serves people that are moving, downsizing, settling an estate or just cleaning out "stuff." His service teaches clients how to value their possessions. His professional assessment helps clients be sure that their items aren't being sold too cheaply and that they receive a fair price. He deals in a very extensive list of items from advertising signs to vintage toys and much, much more!

On November 4th, a wide array of attendees came together with their treasures. Some people were seeking monetary values for unique pieces. In one instance, a woman who inexpensively purchased a painting at a thrift store learned that she had a real treasure in hand.

She bought it because she simply liked it. However, Mr. Ivankovich determined that it was likely from the 19th century and was hand-produced. He surmised that the attractive piece was worth much more than the \$24 she paid at the thrift shop.

A few people brought items because they were interested in the historical background of the item. They may have been hoping to better understand why their family held onto the antique for so long. In one instance, a woman had an item that her father had brought home from Asia many years ago. Mr. Ivankovich was able to authenticate that the item was more than just tourist fare trade. Using clues he found through observing the piece, he surmised that the piece was likely 100-200 years old, and he provided further steps that the owner could take to gain a deeper understanding of the antique.

We all enjoyed seeing and learning about the very diverse items brought to the Historical Society of Moorestown's 2018 Antique Roadshow. We all have items in our homes that make us wonder, "What is this worth? Should I trash it, sell it, donate it?"



— Mary Berardi

# House Plaque Research Yields Info on Moorestown Hero

**Back in December of 2016,**

I wrote a story about Moorestown War Hero David Lukens for our newsletter. Apart from his exploits during World War II, we knew little about Lukens. How did it come to be that he was living with his aunt and uncle, William and Maie Grobler, in Moorestown when World War II broke out, or what ever became of him after the war?

While conducting research for the historic house plaque program for a house on Newbold Ave. owned by the Groblers, we discovered Lukens' obituary which shed a great deal of light on his life before and after the war.

David Lukens was born in Moorestown on February 13, 1919 to Henry and Jesse Lukens. He graduated from Red Bank High School in 1936. He moved in with the Groblers in



*"Lt. Lukens' conduct during this period was recognized as he was awarded the Silver Star medal. As is usual, as a medic his name is not included in the roster compiled in 'Dauntless,' the 99th Division's definitive history, since he was a non-combatant." [Richard B. Tobias, M.D.]*

For more info about the 99th Division, see the book: *Dauntless: A History of the 99th Infantry Division* by William C.C. Cavanagh (1994)

1937 while he was briefly attending Moorestown Business School. William Grobler was an undertaker and operated what is now the Lewis Funeral Home.

Eventually he earned a Bachelor's degree in Biology from Earlham College in Richmond Indiana in 1941. He was drafted into the army right after graduation. He was assigned as an Assistant Battalion Surgeon for the 2nd Battalion, 393 Infantry Regiment, 99th Division.

On the morning of December 14, 1944 his unit was involved in a fierce battle with some strong German pillboxes on the outskirts of Krinkelt, Belgium. Due to heavy fire the battalion aid station was ordered to be set up 1,000 yards behind the American line. Because the terrain was so hard on the wounded soldiers they needed to be hand-carried to the aid station, and in many cases they did not survive the trip. "After being warned of the hazardous situation, Lt. Lukens, of his own volition, and with utter disregard for his own safety, moved his aid station to within 200 yards of the enemy" the official report read. To set up the station at the forward location, Lukens and his small group had to hand carry the equipment in the face of murderous fire. Forced to hit the ground numerous times his improvised aid station was virtually unprotected. Lukens crawled from patient to patient because of the intensity of the enemy fire. He kept at it for over two hours before being ordered to pull back. By that time however, 22 men had been treated and evacuated from the area. By the end of the war he had been awarded the Silver Star, a Bronze Star, the Combat Medical Badge, and the Belgian Croix de Guerre.

After the war, Lukens attended the New York Medical college, where he graduated in the top third of his class in 1950. He completed his residency at the Jersey Shore Medical Center and established a private practice in Belmar, NJ in 1952. He was appointed an Attending Physician at the Jersey Shore Medical Center where he ran the Diabetic Outpatient Clinic. He ended private practice in 1973 when he joined the Mutual of Omaha Life Insurance Company as the Senior Medical Director until his retirement in 1983. He and his wife of 50 years, Shirley, moved to Florida upon his retirement, and eventually moved to Atlanta, GA.

On October 10, 2010, Dr. Lukens died at the Trinity Hospital in Augusta, GA. He was 91.

— Lenny Wagner

## BUSINESS CORNER

### BUSINESS MEMBERSHIPS

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

#### BENEFACTOR

Powers Kirn, LLC

#### EVENT SPONSOR

Whitesell Construction  
Fletcher Brothers Roofing and Siding  
BAYADA Home Health Care

#### LIBRARY SPONSOR

Armstrong Pediatric Dental, LLC  
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Esposito Family Dental  
Leonberg Nursery  
Tait Co./Tait Roofing Inc.  
Moorestown Construction

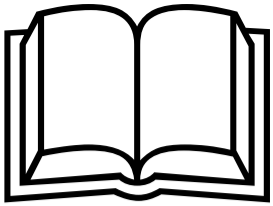
#### FRIENDS

Diane Walker, Colorstone Gardens  
Remember Me Stationery and Gifts  
Moorestown Hardware  
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Your generous support helps to sustain the Society's commitment to preserving Moorestown's heritage for generations to come.  
*Again, thank you!*

**New Business memberships are always welcome; for details, visit us at <http://moorestownhistory.org/membership/become-a-business-partner/>**





## LIBRARY NEWS

### **2018 was another busy year here at the library**

of the Historical Society. In addition to handling scores of research requests from historical society and community members, and random folks from faraway places, we've carried on the business of maintaining our archives, photo collection, map collection, library books and information files, so that they can be easily searched and accessed.

One of the latest new accessions in the library is an interesting 33-page monograph that was shared with us by the Haddonfield Historical Society — *A Barn With Wrought Iron Hinges* by Richard S. Kinsey. In the 1940s and '50s, Mr. Kinsey and his family lived in an early 19th century farm house on a farm known as "Firlane" that was located on the northeast corner of North Church St. and New Albany Road. Unfortunately, the house and farm are no longer there. His detailed description of the adjacent barn and its materials and construction is a valuable reference resource that we are delighted to have. His descriptions of the local area and the farm itself give us rare first hand insight into farming life in this area of Moorestown. In addition to the monograph, two sets of 43-inch long hinges that were attached to the barn doors were also transferred to the Historical Society. Make sure to see them and the monograph the next time you visit Smith-Cadbury.

— Stephanie Herz



## TROLLEY JUMPS THE TRACK

On days when you're stuck in gridlocked traffic on Main St., just be thankful that the trolley is still not running.

The photo, from the William H. Roberts collection shows a snowy day in 1888 when the trolley jumped the tracks.

This article from the column *Under the Old Hat* by Percy Lovell in December 6, 1948 describes the event.

Another interesting incident regarding trolleys was during a heavy snow storm when a car went off the track at Main and Chestnut streets, moved around until it was at right angles with the road, and stood in front of the old mansion there now owned by Dr. and Mrs. Arthur E. Peacock. Mr. and Mrs. Henry C. Perkins resided there at the time of the incident and they sent out steaming plates of food to the motorman and conductor. The passengers had all left the car as at that time the terminus of the trolley was at the Mount Laurel road.

### **FROM OUR WWI EXHIBIT** *Moorestown and the Great War:*

When the United States entered World War 1, the Moorestown Free Library was able to supply book parcels (made up of donated books) to the army camps overseas and at home, particularly to Fort Dix. The Library opened its doors to the ladies of the community when space was needed for Reconstruction Sewing. Sewing machines and materials were moved into the Library so that the work could be carried on there. In more than one way the Trustees and Librarian considered the Library a public Library in spirit if not in fact.

*The Moorestown Free Library, A History 1853-1974* by Christopher Darlington; Moorestown Free Library Association, 1982



# MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Dear Members!

It's the most wonderful time of the year — when the Board of Trustees of the Historical Society hosts its **Annual Member & Volunteer Appreciation Party!** On Friday evening December 7th, come and enjoy Smith-Cadbury Mansion beautifully decorated for the Holidays! We'll be serving delicious sweet and savory treats and sparkling libations. The Historical Society truly appreciates your support and would love to thank you in person!

A warm welcome to our newest members:

- **Brian Armstrong** • **Hollie Hilzinger** • **Harry Mayer** • **Cathy Student** • **Lee Webster** •

A reminder that our website is a great resource for our membership. You'll find information on our current exhibit, upcoming events, articles and photos from past events, membership forms, and a beautiful downloadable color PDF edition of this newsletter. Take a look!

[moorestownhistory.org](http://moorestownhistory.org)

Also: if the date next to your name on the mailing label is 04/18 it's time to renew your membership! Thanks for your support!

Looking forward to sharing history with you in the New Year!

*Jill Weiss, Membership Chair*  
[moorestownhistory@comcast.net](mailto:moorestownhistory@comcast.net)

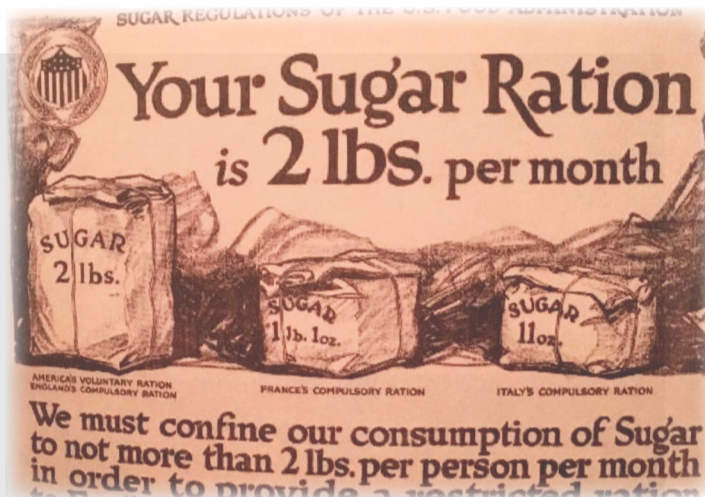
## FROM OUR WWI EXHIBIT *Moorestown and the Great War:*

### Situation is Now Alarming

#### Eat Less, Grow More or Lose the War; Appeal to the People of America

Herbert C. Hoover, the great American success as chairman of the American Commission for Relief in Belgium, did his work so well that the people say he is more efficient than the Germans themselves. President Wilson has called him home to be head of the American Food Board. He is still in London, but he sends a call from there to the American people to get ready for starvation. This call every patriotic American should hear—eater, farmer and college student alike. The man who plants another acre of corn this spring, or the student who helps him cultivate it, is surely a patriot meeting our greatest need.

*Burlington Daily Enterprise; 1 May 1917*



## 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.



### 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



## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

### BASIC MEMBERSHIP:

- Student (\$10)     Individual/Family (\$35)

### DONOR LEVELS:

- Stories From the Past Sponsor (\$50)  
 History Partner (\$100)  
 Library Sponsor (\$250)  
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RENEWAL

NEW

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**Or renew online at:** [moorestownhistory.org/membership](http://moorestownhistory.org/membership)

# CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

## DECEMBER 2018

**EXHIBIT ENDING:** *Moorestown and the Great War*

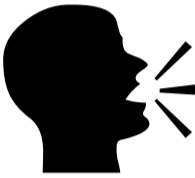
- 4 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4
- 7 **Holiday & Volunteer Appreciation Party**  
*Smith-Cadbury* 5:30 – 8:30 PM
- 9 *Smith-Cadbury* tours, gift shop, research library, 1-3
- 11 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4
- 18 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4
- 19 *Smith-Cadbury* closed for holiday break until January 2, 2019

## JANUARY 2019

- 8 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4
- 13 *Smith-Cadbury* tours, gift shop, research library, 1-3
- 15 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4
- 16 **NJ History Speaks Lecture**  
Moorestown Library at 7:00 PM
- 22 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4
- 27 *Smith-Cadbury* tours & gift shop, 1-3
- 29 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4

## FEBRUARY 2019

- 5 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4
- 10 *Smith-Cadbury* tours, gift shop, research library, 1-3
- 12 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4
- 19 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4
- 20 **NJ History Speaks Lecture**  
Moorestown Library at 7:00 PM
- 24 *Smith-Cadbury* tours & gift shop, 1-3



# NEW JERSEY HISTORY SPEAKS SERIES

**JANUARY**  Wednesday, January 16<sup>th</sup> @ 7:00 PM | The Moorestown Library

### Ellis H. Parker: "Sherlock Holmes of America" & Burlington County's First Chief of Detectives

**SPEAKER:** Marisa Bozarth, Burlington County Museums


In early 1906, Florence Allison of Moorestown was murdered at a home she created for homeless children. To identify the killers and bring them to justice, the county relied upon Ellis H. Parker, Burlington County's first Chief of Detectives. Parker was known across the country as the "Sherlock Holmes of America" and he resolved the Allison case as well as approximately 300 other major crimes from local New Jersey murders to cases that perplexed Scotland Yard. Then, Parker took on the "crime of the century" — the Lindbergh baby kidnapping — and his life was changed forever. Marisa Bozarth, museum curator for Burlington County, takes us through the life and times of a man who for most of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was not only Burlington County's #1 detective but also a sleuth revered around the world.

**FEBRUARY**  Wednesday, February 20<sup>th</sup> @ 7:00 PM | The Moorestown Library

### The Wreck of the Broker: The Story of New Jersey's Deadliest Train Wreck

**SPEAKER:** Gordon Bond, Independent scholar, historian, and author

On the drizzly evening of February 6, 1951, the Pennsylvania Railroad commuter train known as "The Broker" derailed in Woodbridge, New Jersey, killing 85 and injuring hundreds in what remains the deadliest railroad accident in the state's history and among the top five in the United States. Gordon Bond authored the definitive book on this tragedy, and he uses eyewitness accounts, news reports, and investigation transcripts to recount the disaster and explore its impact.

**MARCH**  Wednesday, March 13<sup>th</sup> @ 7:00 PM | The Moorestown Library

### American Women and Royal Marriages: New Jersey's Real-Life "Lady Coras"

**SPEAKER:** Melissa Ziobro, Assistant Professor of History | Monmouth University

Season One of *Downton Abbey* begins in 1912, but a key element of the show's story line occurred decades earlier, off screen, when a wealthy young American heiress named Cora Levinson of Cincinnati met and married Robert Crawley, Viscount Downton, the future Earl of Grantham. As part of their marriage contract, Cora's fortune would be tied to the Grantham family's failing estate to prevent it from going bankrupt. In return, Cora would eventually earn the title of Countess of Grantham. While *Downton Abbey's* Granthams are fictional, wealthy American heiresses marrying impoverished European nobility is not. There were hundreds of these marriages, including several featuring brides with roots in New Jersey.

All lectures are free and open to the public

For ticket information, please e-mail Mickey DiCamillo at mdicam@hotmail.com.

All Events are sponsored by the Elizabeth Tuttle Foundation



**Historical Society of  
Moorestown**

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

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• Historical Society of Moorestown Membership Year  
April 30, 2018—May 1, 2019 / Time Travelers Member •

**DECEMBER 2018**

**How the Barn Was Situated**

The barn stood about 600' in from North Church Street (the related farmhouse being in about 400') in the northeast quadrant of the junction of North Church Street and New Albany Road, Moorestown, Burlington County, New Jersey. It was on the farm that my father, Edwin Marshall Kinsey (1881-1955) bought in 1940. The farmhouse was built c. 1800. My father added, i.e., the brick veneer and the stone chimney.

**The Frame**

The main structural members of the barn were handhewn timbers with a square cross-section of about six or eight

**A BARN WITH  
WROUGHT-IRON  
HINGES**

Richard Saltonstall Kinsey

**Richard Kinsey writes about his barn and its frame in a recently-acquired monograph (see Library News on page 5):**

*"The main structural members of the barn were handhewn timbers with a square cross-section of about six or eight inches on an edge. But it is an idealization to speak of a 'square cross-section', for, unless squareness were important to the physical construction, there was, apparently, no effort by the carpenter to achieve it. Nor were the timbers as straight as they would have been, had they been sawed either by hand or in a mill. A timber can be both strong and beautiful without being rectilinear all along its length. ..."*