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FROM THE FRONT PORCH

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF MOORESTOWN



View From the Porch

About 240 summers ago, the British found themselves forced to evacuate Philadelphia after controlling the capitol city of the American colonies the entire winter. The French had agreed to join the colonists in the American War for Independence, and the British now had to recalibrate their military forces to balance their defenses against French attacks. The British and their Hessian mercenaries left Philadelphia and fanned out across various parts of South Jersey. Some of those Hessians marched down Moorestown's Main Street that summer of 1778. They ransacked farms, commandeered homes, and made a general nuisance of themselves. The Smith-Cadbury home on High Street (today the home of the historical society) was one of the places under siege during the Hessians' noisy stay in Moorestown. Sometimes I find myself in the home imagining mud on the floors, food scraps flung about tables, and a collection of soldiers shouting "huzzah" late into the night. Nearly two and a half centuries separate me from these men, but when I sit in the very place that was their temporary encampment, I feel a powerful connection to this transitional moment in history. Indeed, in the days that would follow, Washington would meet the Hessians and British at the Battle of Monmouth, a battle that is considered a major turning point in the war.

Overshadowed by Philadelphia, we may not think of Moorestown as a crossroads to history. However, our town's story is full of interesting passes with historical figures and critical moments that changed the course of business, science, sports, and politics. Inventors such as Samuel Leeds Allen (flexible flyer sled) and Eldridge Johnson (Victor Talking Machine) called Moorestown home. Heads of major companies such as Edward Strawbridge, a next generation leader of the Strawbridge and Clothier

department stores, left behind a lasting legacy. Stoic Olympic medal winners like sprinter Alfred LeConey honed his stamina in Moorestown while bombastic professional athletes such as former Eagles wide receiver Terrell Owens displayed his push-up prowess on his front lawn here in town.

Moorestown scientist Edward Harris, who was personal friends with famed ornithologist John James Audubon, has a few birds named after him: the Harris Hawk and the Harris sparrow. Harris also introduced the first Percheron horse into the United States. Moorestown also has left a mark on literature as the town serves as the inspiration for Thornton Wilder's Pulitzer prize winning play *Our Town*.

There are countless people and events of significance tied to Moorestown. The people saw many of the same buildings you see today, and the events occurred in many of the same places that you drive by every day. The Historical Society of Moorestown is proud to say that for the last fifty years we have maintained the historical artifacts that help us prove that history happens here. Our library and archives brim with the letters people wrote, the clothing people wore, and tools people used in each of the eras of Moorestown's existence. As our all-volunteer group prepares to begin another fifty years of service to our town's important history, please consider renewing your annual membership or becoming a new member. Your generous donations help us breath life back into the names that adorn our street signs and landmarks, so both long-time and new residents can feel a connection to a town with a story over three centuries long.

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

Address

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Smith-Cadbury Mansion
12 High St.
Moorestown, NJ 08057

Phone

856-235-0353

Web Site

moorestownhistory.org

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*Published by
The Historical Society
of Moorestown*

June 2019

For the Work of a Day, We Want Something to Say

"For the Work of a Day, We Want Something to Say" was the subject of a talk presented by the Alice Paul Institute at Paulsdale in March 2019. For more information about the Suffrage Speak series, please see <https://www.alicepaul.org/newsevents/>

2019 marks the centennial of American women's achievement of a right that so many take for granted: the right to vote. To commemorate this milestone in human history, the Alice Paul Institute is presenting a series of lectures as part of the "Suffrage Speak: Honoring the 100th Anniversary of Women's Right to Vote" program. This past Women's History Month, Dr. Lara Vapnek delivered a talk entitled "For the

Work of a Day, We Want Something to Say: Social Change and Suffrage." The event occurred at Paulsdale in Mount Laurel on March 9th.

According to her biography on amazon.com: Dr. Vapnek teaches history at St. John's University in Queens, NY. She earned her PhD at Columbia. She specializes in the history of gender and labor in the nineteenth and twentieth century United States. The professor based her comments on her 2009 book *Breadwinners: Working Women and Economic Independence 1865 – 1920*.

Dr. Vapnek structured her comments along three themes. The working women during the time period considered themselves "breadwinners." They worked out of necessity to financially support either their families or themselves. Because of these conditions, these women didn't feel that they were being either represented by or protected by men. Their inability to vote inhibited them from achieving full political equality with men. Lacking that parity affected their ability to achieve their goals within the labor movement.

Stereotypes inhibited the efforts of early reformers. Society viewed women's proper role as that of homemaker. The "male breadwinner ideal" mythos permeated

contemporary thinking. So did the "middle class ideal" of women belonging at home. Through a series of statistics Dr. Vapnek showed this chauvinistic belief as just that: a fantasy. In 1870, 15 % of women participated in the work force. By 1920 that percentage jumped to 25%. In urban areas the figure reached one third.

The professor included some brief biographies of leaders in the women's rights movement in her discussion. She described the contributions of individuals such as Jennie Collins, Leonora O'Reilly and Leonora Barry among others. As many of these figures gave excellent speeches, Dr. Vapnek added excellent quotations to her talk. Some of the best included an 1866 line from Frances Harper: "You white women speak here of rights. I speak of wrongs." While testifying before the US Congress in 1912, Leonora O'Reilly stated, "We women have dreamed of democracy but we have never enjoyed it." The most prescient also came from Ms. O'Reilly. In 1899 she observed: ***Women, whether you wish it or not, your first step must be to gain equal political rights with men. The next step after that must be equal pay for equal work.***

A shorter work day was another goal for which these reformers fought. During the nineteenth century people typically worked 12 to 14 hour days. Jennie Collins pushed for a 10-hour day. Years later Leonora Barry advocated an 8-hour one.

These advocates proved adept at organizing. They established groups such as the Women's Trade Union League (in 1903) and the Wage Earners Suffrage League (in 1911). During the fall of 1909, the "Uprising of the 20,000" occurred. These women's garment workers initiated a walk out to protest conditions in the industry. It lasted until February of 1910. The media at the time portrayed this as the "girls strike." In a crass attempt to send a message, the authorities tried many of those arrested in night court along with prostitutes. Some 700 received sentences of hard labor.

(continued on page 7)

The Historical Society
of Moorestown

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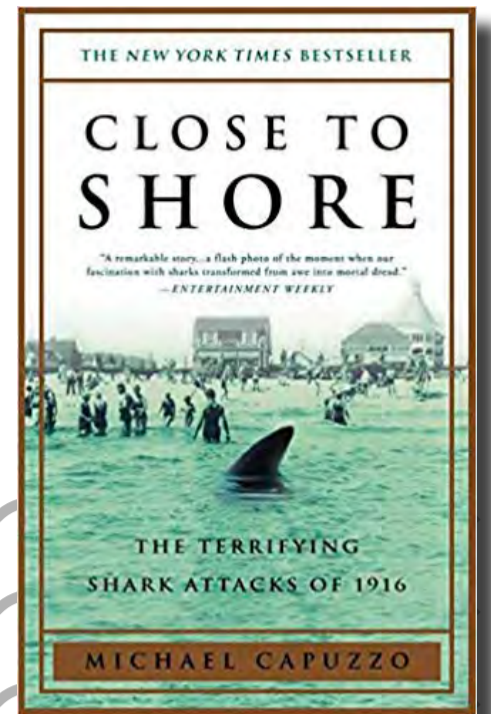
Lisa Knell

Library

Stephanie Herz



Acclaimed Author Closes 2018/2019 NJ History Speaks Lecture Series



"Close to Shore" was the subject of a NJ History Speaks lecture at the Moorestown Library May 8, 2019.

Over the past year the Historical Society has sponsored historical talks about a wide range of topics including:

baseball ("The Rise and Fall of the Negro Leagues" by Dr. Jonathan Mercantini);

historic trials (a 3-part series about the Salem Witch trials by Mickey DiCamillo presented under October skies); **an**

historic epidemic ("In Flew Enza: the 1918 Flu Epidemic in Philadelphia & NJ" by Mickey DiCamillo); **a famous**

Moorestown resident ("Just for the Record: the Life of Eldridge Reeves Johnson" by Christopher Andrew Maier);

crime ("Ellis H. Parker: the 'Sherlock Homes of America' & Burlington County's 1st Chief of Detectives" by Marisa Bozarth); **trains** ("The Wreck of

the Broker: the Story of New Jersey's Deadliest Train Wreck by Gordon Bond); **romance** ("American Women & Royal Marriages: New Jersey's Real-Life 'Lady Coras'" by Melissa Ziobro);

History has something for everyone!

Thanks to everyone who came out to support our programs.

A packed house at the Moorestown Library heard from Michael Capuzzo author of the critically acclaimed New York Times nonfiction bestsellers *Close to Shore* and *The Murder Room* in the finale of the Historical Society's 2018-2019 NJ History Speaks Lecture Series. His topics were the events featured in *Close to Shore*, a thriller about the 1916 New Jersey Great White shark attacks that inspired the book and movie *JAWS*. *Close to Shore* was a *People* magazine Top Ten book of the year and has recently been optioned by SONY Pictures Television for a proposed mini-series.

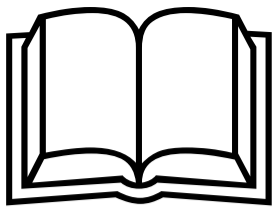
The book is part history of the Jersey Shore in the early days of the 20th Century and part heart pounding thriller. On July 1, 1916, Charles Vansant, the son of a prominent Philadelphia doctor and a recent graduate of the University of Pennsylvania became the first known victim of a shark attack when he was killed while swimming in the waters off of Beach Haven. Five days later, Charles Bruder, a bell captain in Spring Lake, 30 miles north of Beach Haven, bled to death after a shark bit off one of his legs. On July 12th six boys were splashing in a swimming hole in Matawan Creek, when twelve-year-old Lester Stilwell was pulled under by the shark as was a young man named Stanley Fisher who attempted to rescue Lester.

Those in attendance were kept on the edge of their seats as Capuzzo relayed this tale and also spoke about his current project, examining the rash of Great White Shark sightings on Cape Cod. All just in time for Memorial Day.

Capuzzo is a former staff writer for *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and *The Miami Herald*. He has written for *Sports Illustrated*, *Esquire*, and *The Washington Post*. He has been nominated six times for the Pulitzer Prize for his books and newspaper stories and twice for the National Book Award.

He finished the evening by signing copies of the book. Anyone interested in purchasing a copy of *Close to Shore*, signed by the author, can do so in our gift shop.

— Lenny Wagner



LIBRARY NEWS

The Historical Society Library staff is always busy – archiving, indexing, filing and aiding in Moorestown research for people near and far. Over the years, our 50-year-old file cabinets have become full to overflowing and were sagging and malfunctioning under all the weight. The acquisition of a set of new, larger and much improved file cabinets this month will ensure that we have room to grow for the next 50 years! Welcome to our newest volunteer, Alexandra Calabrese, who is helping to arrange and reorganize the library’s extensive files on people, places, and all things Moorestown. Thanks, Alex!!

— Stephanie Herz

Who were the Smiths in the Smith-Cadbury Mansion?

We’ve all heard the story of the early years of the Smith-Cadbury Mansion. The 179-acre property was purchased from Nehemiah and Ann Haines on March 28, 1738 by Joshua and Increase Humphries. Humphries built or added on to the oldest portion of the house, possibly on the foundation of an even older home. In 1766, 160 acres of the “farm plantation and tract of land” (currently much of the Valley Stream neighborhood) and an unrelated 17-acre “cedar swamp” on the Mullica River were sold by Humphries to Samuel Smith for 963 pounds. Richard Smith inherited the property when his father Samuel died in 1776, but probably lived there before then.

There is often confusion about the Smiths who owned the house in the 18th century. This probably stems from the fact that the names of Samuel and Richard repeat quite frequently in the genealogy of the Burlington Smith family at that time.

Our Samuel Smith (1720-1776) as a young man worked as a Philadelphia merchant with his father (also Richard Smith, who was involved with the West India Company as a shipbuilder and merchant and sat on the New Jersey State Assembly). Like his father, Samuel was also involved with service to his state holding positions as New Jersey Provincial Assemblyman, Secretary of

the King’s Council, and Treasurer of the Province of West Jersey. He and a group of fellow Quakers were responsible for the establishment in 1758 of the Brotherton Reservation for displaced Native Americans in Burlington County. He is perhaps most well-known for his 1765 book, *The History of the Colony of Nova-Caesaria, or New-Jersey: Containing an Account of its first Settlement, Progressive Improvements, The Original and Present Constitution, and Other Events, to the Year 1721*, the first comprehensive history of the state.

Samuel Smith was a long-time Burlington resident and divided his time between his townhouse on High St. in Burlington City and the family plantation estate, “Hickory Grove” on the outskirts of Burlington city. He never lived at the house in Moorestown and is believed to have purchased it for his son Richard, who lived there for most of his short adult life.

Richard S. Smith (1752-1796), like his father, was also a merchant and involved in government. He served as a Chester Township Freeholder six times between the years 1777 and 1795; as a Township Committee member in 1782, 1785, 1787-91; and NJ State Assemblyman in 1784, 1785, and 1787. In addition to his work as a merchant, probably in the family business, Smith also actively farmed his

BUSINESS CORNER

BUSINESS MEMBERSHIPS

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

BENEFACTOR

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Passariello's Pizzeria
& Italian Kitchen

D P Lawn Care

Lewis Funeral Home

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/>

land in Moorestown. In 1792, he wrote an article published in *The American Museum or Universal Magazine*, on “the preparation of a wheat fallow by a crop of potatoes,” detailing an experiment he carried out to increase wheat yields by planting in fields formerly used for growing potatoes.

Richard Smith and his wife Hannah Burling, raised a family of five children at their Moorestown home – Jane, Mary, Amelia, Hannah and Joseph. The house was considered to be one of the largest and finest homes in the area. The Smith Mansion was host to the enemy Hessian General von Knyphausen and his officers as they were retreating from Philadelphia on June 20 - 21, 1778* and according to oral tradition, to General Lafayette on more than one occasion during and after the Revolutionary War.

In 1793, He was appointed at a Chester Township town meeting to collect funds for the Philadelphia committee “for the relief of the poor of that city laboring under the dreadful Malady called the Yellow Fever.” Sadly and ironically, according to the book, *Recollections of John Jay Smith*, Richard Smith died three years of later of yellow fever contracted in Philadelphia. After his death, Smith’s family sold the Moorestown house to Edward Harris, Sr. in 1798, and it would remain in the Harris family until 1851.

— Stephanie Herz

Sources:

The Documentary History of the First Federal Elections, 1788-1790 edited by Merrill Jensen, Robert A. Becker, Gordon DenBoer, Charles D. Hagermann.

Recollections of John Jay Smith written by himself privately printed press of J.B. Lippincott Co, Philadelphia 1892.

The American Museum or Universal Magazine for January 1792 on [google.com/books](https://books.google.com).

The History of the Colony of Nova-Caesaria, or New-Jersey: Containing an Account of the its first Settlement, Progressive Improvements, The Original and Present Constitution, and Other Events, to the Year 1721 by Samuel Smith.

The Journal and Essays of John Woolman by John Woolman.



* These troop movements are described in a letter from Major Richard Howell to Benedict Arnold, dated June 20, 1778 at Haddonfield, which is included in a letter from Arnold to George Washington:

“The Enemy march’d in 3 Columns—the first approach’d Ayre’s Town yesterday the 2d arriv’d at foster town & the 3d did not remove. this day the 1st arrivd at Mt Holly, 2d at Ayre’s town, (perhaps at Holly) & the 3d Marchd to Morr’s Town. Genl Leslie commands the advanc’d Column of perhaps, 2000 men, Gen. Clinton the 2d perhaps of 5000 men & Gen. Kniphauzen the Last, of 2000 also. Each of these devisions has a great many Waggon, artillery & pontoons: They have many Desertions, & move with great Caution & Slowly—I believe they will halt at Holly until the rear arrives. Their March has been obstructed as much as possible & their flank harrass’d by our parties. The General is now posted at Black Horse, where he will contend every advantageous post. The Militia are Collected & collecting, resolv’d to do great Things ... P.S. The Inhabitants are villianously plundered & some Houses burnt”

“To George Washington from Major General Benedict Arnold, 21 June 1778,” Founders Online, National Archives, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-15-02-0506>. [Original source: *The Papers of George Washington*, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 15, May–June 1778, ed. Edward G. Lengel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006, pp. 485–486.]

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Thank you to all who have renewed their membership! It's wonderful to have your support year after year! A special thank you goes out to **Michelle & Steve Juliana** for their recent generous donation! Remember: if you're traveling this summer we hope you take advantage of your automatic membership in *Time Travelers* which, as a paid up member, entitles you to all sorts of perks when visiting over 300 historical museums, sites, and societies in more than 40 states across the country. Members receive a variety of exclusive benefits and privileges, such as free admission and gift shop discounts. For more information, including a list of participating sites go to <http://timetravelers.mohistory.org/> The front of this newsletter—where your name/address label is located—serves as a membership card: just cut along the dotted line and use when traveling to identify you as a Historical Society member in good standing. If you'd rather not cut the newsletter page, feel free to make a copy and use that. The date following your name indicates your membership expiration, for example, 04/20 means you're paid-up until May 1st, 2020.

Are you a local business owner? Local businesses play an important role in supporting the Society's ongoing work in preserving and sharing Moorestown's history! New this year: to show our appreciation, we'll feature your company's name or logo on our website with a link to your website, and in our newsletter which is also published online. Say *Happy 50th* to the Historical Society with a business sponsorship! Visit our website for details at <https://moorestownhistory.org/membership/become-a-business-partner/> call us at 856-235-0353, send us an email moorestownhistory@comcast.net or use the form below.

A reminder that our website is a great resource for our membership and our town. Visit us at moorestownhistory.org and take a look! 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 via PayPal through our website or send us an email with their snail mail details and we'll send them membership information through the mail.

Looking forward to sharing history with you soon,
Jill Weiss, Membership Chair moorestownhistory@comcast.net

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 FORM 2019-2020

RENEWAL
NEW

BASIC MEMBERSHIP:

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

DONOR LEVELS:

- Say "Happy 50th" to the Historical Society! (\$50)
 Pathway to History (\$100)
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CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

JUNE 2019

ONGOING EXHIBIT: *Moorestown and the Great War*

- 1 *Moorestown Day* visit our booth on Main St.
- 4 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4
- 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
- 23 *Smith-Cadbury* tours & gift shop, 1-3
- 25 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4

JULY 2019

ONGOING EXHIBIT: *Moorestown and the Great War*

- 2 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4
- 9 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4
- 14 *Smith-Cadbury* tours & gift shop, 1-3
- 23 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4
- 30 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4

AUGUST 2019

ONGOING EXHIBIT: *Moorestown and the Great War*

- 6 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4
- 11 *Smith-Cadbury* tours & gift shop, 1-3
- 13 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4
- 20 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4
- 27 *Smith-Cadbury* library, gift shop & tours, 1-4

(continued from page 2)

Labor conditions from the Reconstruction through the First World War were harsh. People worked long hours in cramped and dangerous conditions. Events like the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire of 1911 made the modern expression “workplace safety” seem like an oxymoron. In that light, the lack of political rights for the “breadwinners” became a more egregious offense than taxation without representation.

The efforts of these labor reformers facilitated the movement for women’s suffrage. They showed that a person couldn’t have economic rights without corresponding political ones. The power to elect those who make the laws provides a strong incentive for politicians to govern wisely.

— Kevin Stephany

Seeking Business Sponsors!

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- Friends (\$100)**
Your company’s name on our website and in our quarterly newsletter!
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Your company’s name on our website and in our quarterly newsletter! & a box of 6 Historical Society 50 Years 1969-2019 Commemorative Pens!
- Event Sponsor (\$500)**
Your company’s logo on our website (with link to your website!), in our quarterly newsletter (1/8th page) and on our 50th Birthday Celebration Sponsor poster
- Benefactor (\$1000)**
Your company’s logo on our website (with link to your website!), in our quarterly newsletter (1/4th page) and on our 50th Birthday Celebration Sponsor poster



The Tradition Continues as 3rd Graders Tour Smith-Cadbury

This spring has brought throngs of third graders to the Smith-Cadbury Mansion for the annual spring school tours. We are fortunate to have such a great group of docent volunteers who make this a fun and meaningful experience for all. Many thanks to organizer/docent Cathy Ruff and docents Bill & Eileen Archer, Mary Berardi, Lynne Brill, Nancy Chumney, Diane Matisoff, Joyce Peacock, and Liz Rosenthal.

**Historical Society of
Moorestown**

Smith-Cadbury Mansion
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1969-2019



• Historical Society of Moorestown Membership Year
April 30, 2019—May 1, 2020 / Time Travelers Member •

JUNE 2019



The first meeting of
the Historical Society
of Moorestown
was held at the
Community House

in January of 1970 (the society
was officially incorporated
November 19th, 1969). Over
300 people attended the
meeting on a Friday night.

Agnes Bakley gave a slide
presentation about the history of
the town that included information
about the old town hall (built
in 1812 on East Main street for
\$1,500) and the trolley that ran
down Main street (from Camden
to Moorestown) and she closed
her talk with the news that what
had been known as the "Smith
Mansion" was being purchased by
the society for its headquarters.