



Union Landing Historical Society

Quarterly Newsletter
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Available at Brielle Borough Hall,
the Curtis House and mailed to U.L.H.S.
members each Feb/May/Aug/Nov

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www.briellehistory.org

Editor: Suzanne J. Shea

The story of "Boxwood Cottage" is fairly unique. You know where the dwelling is located on Union Lane, and also that it has been marked with an "Historic Site" sign by the Borough Historian. Were you aware that at one time there was a significant growth of boxwood hedge at this place hence the name, and later a real significant growth of bamboo in the front yard which has been eliminated except in the far rear of the property which pleases the present owner. However, the colorful legend of this dwelling rather compromised the actual historic truth.

To learn the genesis of this rather significant old house the Union Landing Historical Society commissioned a Monmouth County Hall of Records property records search which put to rest a number of legendary accounts. A considerable amount of acreage along and near Union Lane, itself an ancient roadway, was farmland owned by the Longstreet family. Over the years the property was divided mostly among Longstreet heirs. A sizeable portion consisting of 25 acres was set off in the Will of Dirck Longstreet and bequeathed to his widow in 1835. On a portion of those 25 acres, a small farm cottage had been built circa 1822. That small cottage is what we today refer to as Boxwood Cottage. The two legends it lays to rest are that it was the only house in Union Landing not burned when the British troops raided the Union Salt Works during the Revolutionary War. The troops and the Tories were reputed to have burned all other homes in the area with the exception of Dirck Longstreet's house. They could not have spared that house as it was not even built till well after the war. We know this as we engaged the architectural historian from Monmouth County, Gail Hunton, to research the construction of the dwelling. From her knowledge of period construction methods and procedures and by the assessment of the physical evidence observed here she determined a date of construction. She indicated the style of construction was quite familiar in Monmouth County at the beginning of the 19th Century. This cottage is unique today because very little in the way of fenestration changes have happened over the years to mask the original dwelling unlike so many other similar small farm dwellings in the county. (Local example of additions to early homes: note the back section of the Squan Village Museum on South Street Manasquan and the mid-section of Ron Ernish's house on South Street, Brielle.) Secondly, Dirck's widow was Deborah Longstreet, known as "Debbie" after which Longstreet creek was known locally. The legend claims she drowned herself after being pregnant with her 12th, 18, 24th, or whatever number of babies. The truth is she long outlived her husband as noted when the will was probated. It is not known whether she actually ever dwelled in this cottage. The will indicated there were four dwellings on his property any one of which may have been his principal dwelling and therefor the dwelling of Deborah. This dwelling retains considerable preservation value however because of its association with the early settlement history of our area.

Boxwood Cottage



Holiday Splendor at Boxwood Cottage.
article written by John Belding

Society News

by Ray Shea

The second booklet in the society's Mini Booklet Series is ready for printing. This booklet contains a record of the ULHS Brielle Day exhibit from 2010 entitled "The History of Brielle in Maps". In this exhibit, we used maps of the local area to relate the story of the development of Brielle from backwater portion of Shrewsbury Township to the suburban gem that it is today. As many of the maps displayed were larger format prints and surveyor's bound sets of drawings they are difficult to reproduce clearly in a small format. For this reason, the booklet can be considered a guide or bibliography of the collection of maps available hanging in Borough Hall and at the Borough Historian's office. Anyone wishing to review the maps in detail can contact Borough Historian John Belding at 732-528-6600 x 17 to make an appointment.

Next on the publishing horizon is a guidebook to historic houses and buildings in Brielle. According to a list compiled by the Borough Historian there are some 35 historically notable houses and structures within the boundaries of present-day Brielle. In this booklet we will briefly explore the history of each structure and perhaps an anecdote or two about each one. Although some of the structures are no longer standing we are fortunate to have photographs of all of them which will be incorporated in the booklet. You will be able to essentially drive in a circle around town and have a guided tour! We appreciate the work of John Belding and Dr. Wilson in making this happen!

2012 SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY The Union Landing Historical Society is happy to offer one \$100 scholarship to a 2012 graduating senior who is a Brielle resident (proof of residency may be required). Award will be presented at our Decoration Day program, May 27th at 2pm. To enter, please submit an essay - minimum 250 words on the subject "why should local landmarks be preserved?". Form available through local high school guidance departments, at Brielle Borough Hall, or online at <http://www.briellehistory.org/scholar.htm> - any questions info@briellehistory.org Entry must be typed, mailed to ULHS, PO Box 473, Brielle, NJ 08730 and postmarked by May 12th, 2012. Good Luck!

YOUR HISTORY QUESTION ANSWERED U.L.H.S. 2012 CALENDAR

Your History Question Answered
by John Belding, Borough Historian

Have your question answered! E-mail to info@briellehistory.org and watch for your answer in an upcoming U.L.H.S. Newsletter!

Q Concerning "old" structures, what is a Sears Roebuck or Montgomery Ward house and are there any in Brielle?

A Back in the late 19th and first half of the 20th Century, one could buy a complete house from either of those well-known mail order firms. They issued catalogues showing various home styles. A landowner would make a choice and order a kit which included lumber, plumbing, wiring, and all other necessary materials plus complete set of plans. The lumber all precut to size needed. A good example of a Dutch Colonial was located on Wainwright Place on the corner of Union Lane. This has since been replaced by a condo. Another example is the Sears Roebuck house at 806 Riverview Drive built by a member of the Underhill family. Not in Brielle, but another good example is the "cute" little Dutch colonial on Atlantic Avenue, Wall just east of the Manasquan Circle, on the left side.

Borough Historian's "It Was Only Yesterday" collection of historical vignettes:
<http://www.briellehistory.org/archive.htm>

Monday, January 9, 2012 - Borough Historian's Office, nominations for 2012 officers and Annual Organization Meeting, 7:30 pm

Tuesday, January 24 - Borough Historian's Office, Boro Hall, confirm 2012 officers, and "mini-book" series meeting, 10 am
Sunday, March 18th - "Mystery History Tour", meet 2pm at the Curtis House

Saturday, April 14th - Annual Road Show, 2pm Curtis House
Sunday, May 27th - 7th Annual Decoration Day Program, Civil

War, Osborn Graveyard, Holly Hill Drive
Thursday, June 14th - 5th Annual Flag Day Ceremony, Riverview Drive & Dutch Treat Breakfast

Monday, August 27th - Borough Historians Office 7:30 pm - Brielle Day Organizational Meeting

Saturday, September 8th - Brielle Day Annual Sarsaparilla Sale & One Day Brielle Museum, Curtis House

September, date TBD - 9-11 Memorial program

Wednesday, September 12th - SVHS Covered Dish Barn Dinner

Saturday, October 13th - Archives Day, Monmouth Co. Library

Sunday, November 18th - Annual Program / Fall Luncheon

A December Sunday Afternoon - a History Holiday outing TBD

Keep up-to-date: <http://www.briellehistory.org>

Historical Osborn Graveyard

By John E. Belding, Project Coordinator

Do you wonder just who actually owns the Osborn Family Burial Ground? The property was originally located on a farm of considerable acreage owned by Col. James Osborn whose house still stands on Riverview Drive. In the division of his estate as laid out in his Will dated December 19, 1872 he divides his property among his heirs, primarily his children. However he specifically states "excepting and reserving out of the same the burying ground on the said property containing about half an acre forever for a burying ground for my family and their descendants forever." Thus the burial ground belongs to Osborn descendants. We have received communications from a number of the descendants thanking us for our restoration.

Available now in our Booklet Series....

The Union Saltworks, by the Holmquists \$3/donation
AND

MAPS - the 2010 Brielle Day Exhibit \$5/donation

Upcoming publications....Historic Sites of Brielle - A Guided Tour, Osborn Family Graveyard, and the Southern Monmouth County 9/11 Memorial

2012 Scholarship to Brielle Resident Graduation Senior
Details: <http://www.briellehistory.org/scholar.html>

Keep up with ULHS on facebook!
<http://www.facebook.com/briellehistory>

9-11 Memorial Garden

By E. David DuPre, Project Coordinator

Many people driving up Riverview and passing the South Monmouth 9/11 Memorial Site are wondering why a section of the site has been closed off for a considerable amount of time.

Well, to get some understanding of what's happening (or better still of what's not happening) we need to do some historical research.

About fifty years ago, before the development of the Birch Drive section of the Brielle Hills, that triangular area at the abrupt right hand curve in the highway was nothing but a massive hole in the ground. Its natural function was to collect the water that drained the swamps in that lowland area as well as excess waters from the old adjacent Indian lake site.

The County of Monmouth found it necessary to install a more suitable culvert to carry drainage under the highway to a natural drainage ditch and then into the Manasquan River. Part of the engineering plan was to fill in the drainage basin up to road level. To accomplish this, large concrete sections of the highway curbing as well as stumps, fencing and posts and other road waste were bulldozed into the basin. Huge amounts of fill dirt were required and then it had to be finished off with a layer of soil to create a usable plot.

Things were fine for fifty years that is until Hurricane Irene came along. On her departure a four-foot deep wash-out undermined a section of the roadway and numerous sink-holes were discovered. It is now regarded as a major project requiring further study and scheduling. For something of this magnitude, along with the county's regular road maintenance schedule, patience will be required.

Thanks to this issue's contributors:
Mr. Belding, Mr. DuPre & Mr. Shea