



Union Landing Historical Society

Quarterly Newsletter
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the Curtis House and mailed to U.L.H.S.
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www.briellehistory.org

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A MURDER IN BRIELLE



The interior of Granato's DeSoto coupe shows the aftermath of a violent Prohibition-era death.

In the early 1930s, Brielle was still without an organized police department. That did not, however, imply a lack of need for one. Early council minutes relate instances of juvenile mischief, and there were also problems with vandalism at the Brielle train station. This was often a problem in the winter months, when the railroad company would close the station for the season. Years before he was employed as a paid police officer in the borough, John Rogers served under Chief George Legg as an unpaid special policeman.

On December 6, 1931, Rogers and his friend Pete Moore were driving through the woods of the Wing estate. The estate consisted of a large house and several outbuildings on a plot of land that encompassed some forty-four acres. The property covered most of the area of the present-day Holly Hill Drive and Oceanview Road from Riverview Drive to what is today State Route 70. The northeast end of the property backed up to the Manasquan River Golf Club property. The only driveway in and out of the parcel extended through the woods to Riverview Drive. The house was built in the early 1900s by a principal in the New York City based Wing & Sons piano factory. While patrolling the grounds, Rogers and Moore noticed an area where the dirt had been disturbed.

Investigating closer, they stepped on a pile of leaves and saw blood ooze out. Nearby they saw glass bottles labeled "Muriatic Acid." Moore thought that someone had buried a deer, but Rogers disagreed. They left the area to get a shovel and, when they returned, began to dig. They uncovered the end of a shoe and then a foot inside the shoe. They went to get George Legg, who didn't believe the boys' story. By this time, it was late in the afternoon, and when Legg saw the body for himself he told Rogers to stand guard while he and Moore went to call the state police detectives. By the time the troopers arrived it was dark, but they continued to work at exhuming the corpse. Once removed from the shallow grave, they could see that the man's facial features and fingerprints had been burned off with the acid. Rogers recalled that the chief removed a ring from the man's finger and part

Of the weakened flesh came off with it. They searched the body and found a watch and a driver's license loose in the man's pocket. The license identified him as James P. Granato of Keyport, New Jersey. Granato was alleged to be an enforcer for Chicago mob boss Al Capone. Because the man's fingerprints and face had been burned off, a positive identification was never made. If the body was that of James Granato, he was probably in the area because of the illegal bootlegging activities. The following day, reporters and photographers from the New York Daily News arrived on the scene and photographed Rogers and Moore for the newspaper.

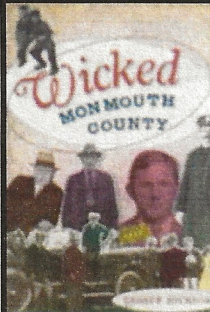
A DeSoto coupe registered to Granato was nearby in Wall Township. A hunter discovered it less than two miles from the Wing estate. The interior of the car was soaked with blood. The crime appears never to have been solved. The limited forensic tools available to the police at the time contributed to this, along with the condition of the body. DNA testing, facial reconstruction and other modern criminal investigative techniques would have gone a long way toward identifying the body had they existed. Add to that the history of corruption in Prohibition enforcement in New Jersey and it's easy to believe that there were those who would rather have not seen the crime investigated further.

Society News by Ray Shea

On October 15, the ULHS again took part in Archives Day, the Monmouth County Library's annual exhibition for history minded organizations. Our exhibit this year included the silent film highlights of early Brielle we showed at our "Brielle Day Museum". The films attracted a lot of attention, particularly the clips about the Morro Castle rescue efforts featuring Brielle's John Bogan.

We also made a number of contacts with other historical groups who have tackled similar film preservation projects. Hopefully with these leads we will be able to further refine and edit these films into a comprehensive video documentary about Brielle.

The story on the left is printed in our 2009 publication, **BRIELLE, Saltworks to Suburb**. Make sure your bookshelf includes a copy. If you need one or wish to purchase a few for friends, family and folks who may have moved away, just give me a call, 732.528.7432 or stop into Boro Hall. Our 2007 photographic history and 2009 book are both available for \$20 each and make wonderful holiday gifts.



Author of two books on Monmouth County murders, George Joynson will be our speaker at our Fall Luncheon Lecture on Sunday, November 20th at 12:30 pm at the Sand Bar restaurant in Brielle. The all inclusive cost is \$18 per person. An invitation is enclosed, kindly respond by November 7th. Mr. Joynson's current book, **Wicked**, is described as follows. During the early twentieth century, Monmouth County saw more than its fair share of crime, conspiracy and corruption. In the Midst of the Prohibition and Great Depression Eras, Detectives Jacob Rue, William Mustoe ("the man who could make a horse talk") and Harry Crook investigated, and sometimes participated in illegal activity. The careers of these fascinating men included investigations of brutal murders, ruthless gangsters, an attempted cyanide poisoning, the kidnapping of the Lindbergh baby and a search for a vicious escaped leopard. From burglaries and bootleggers to speakeasies and swindlers, we will be joining historian George Joynson as he tells about some of our county's seediest stories.

YOUR HISTORY QUESTION ANSWERED

U.L.H.S. 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: Our town is located on the Manasquan River. Can you tell us the meaning of the word "manasquan" and is it of Indian derivation?

A: The name is from the Lenni Lenape tongue, Unamis tribe. There are a number of "meanings" of the word depending on which source you prefer. Some sources claim it means "plenty of fish" while another source indicates it really means "good fishing". Yet another source states it means "many fishes". Go further and one can find it definitely means "beautiful river". If you need more, another source combines 3 Indian words: "manatah" meaning island, "squaw" meaning wife and "hau" meaning stream. The combine word works out to be "manatasquawhau" which was shortened in English to be "Manasquan" or "stream of the island of squaws". Which do you prefer?

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

November 20th at 12:30pm - at the Sand Bar, Our Fall Lecture-Luncheon, invite enclosed - George Joynson will be our speaker, lunch will be served \$18/per person
December 18th at 2pm - Holiday Tour of Boxwood Cottage, 532 Union Lane

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

Tuesday, January 24 - Borough Historian's Office, Boro Hall, confirm 2012 officers, and "mini-book" series meeting, 10 am

Mark your calendar for these annual events!

March - "Mystery History Tour"

April - Annual Road Show, Curtis House

May 27th - 7th Annual Decoration Day Program, Civil War

June 14th - 5th Annual Flag Day Ceremony

September - Brielle Day Sarsaparilla Sale, 9-11 Memorial program, SVHS Covered Dish Barn Dinner

October - Archives Day & Fall Dinner

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

Historical Osborn Graveyard

By John E. Belding, Project Coordinator

Here is a trees-at-the-graveyard follow up. You will recall our continuing concern regarding the small "forest" at the down-hill side of the graveyard. Hurricane Irene refocused our worries. A very tall locust blew down with branches falling on a red maple and a copper beech that we had planted outside the fence a few years ago. Fortunately, we were able to cut away the branches of the fallen tree and determined that only a few small branches of the impacted trees were shorn off. They should recover. The storm also blew two other tall trees into a precarious leaning position and we need to get folks in there to remove them. Incrementally we are removing all the deciduous trees in that small area and intend to eventually leave only the hollies which will make an attractive buffer zone.

Available now in our Booklet Series....

The Union Saltworks, by the Holmquists
\$3.00/donation

Upcoming booklets to be published....

Walking Tour of ULHS Plaques, Osborn Family Graveyard,
Southern Monmouth County 9/11 Memorial, and
MAPS - the 2010 Brielle Day Exhibit

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



ULHS remembers society member
Mrs. Mary Belding

9-11 Memorial Garden

By E. David DuPre, Project Coordinator

Hurricane Irene paid us an unwelcome visit just prior to the Labor Day weekend. In her aftermath she left us with a 9/11 Memorial Site strewn with about seven monstrous trees. Mostly locusts came down, averaging about 50 feet in height, either partially uprooted or completely fallen across half the width of the site, with a variety of broken off branches littering the remaining half. In addition, a large washout occurred along the curbed side of Riverview Drive which left a four foot deep hole extending into the memorial site as well as undermining a section of the highway. Another area adjacent to the damaged area was found to contain multiple sink holes. Accordingly, there was concern as to whether the planned tenth anniversary ceremony could safely be held.

Fortunately, crews for Falkinburg Tree Company of Brielle arrived to clear the downed trees and branches from the entire site. Their performance was excellent, above and beyond what anybody could expect. They left the site looking like a freshly manicured park. The next day the Monmouth County Road Department went into action filling the holes with crushed stone and roping off the sink hold areas. However, it appears that it will require extensive planning before a permanent solution to their problem can be devised.

Be that as it may, the tenth anniversary 9/11 observance came off beautifully, honoring Alfonse Niedermeyer of the Port Authority Police and all of the 9/11 victims.

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