



VINELAND

Historical and Antiquarian Society

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2019

The oldest local historical society in New Jersey, founded in 1864.

A Good Time Was Had By All

A crowd of about 130 local residents turned out on November 10 to join "A Celebration of Women" gala, hosted by the Vineland Historical and Antiquarian Society at Merighi's Savoy Inn. The event marked the 150th anniversary of the suffrage protest staged in 1868 by 172 local women at the Union Hall. During the evening, Vineland native Louise Bertacchi was honored for her many contributions not just to Vineland but to Cumberland County, as a whole. The local businesswoman, who has been active on the boards of many charities and in county politics, is also the founder of the Cumberland County Women's Hall of Fame.

Sandra K. Hearing, president of the Society's board, said that Bertacchi was selected because she reflected the spirit of those early activists.

"We appreciated the chance to thank Louise not just for what she has done for us but for what she has done for the region," Hearing said.

Following a brief ceremony, during which Bertacchi was presented with an award from the Society, the evening was spent enjoying good company, good food and dancing to music provided by DJ Bob Morgan.



Clockwise from upper left: VHAS board president Sandra K. Hearing introduces Louise Bertacchi; Louise and her husband, Larry; guests enjoying the evening; Ruth Shropshire visits with Louise in a quiet moment; Judy and John Carr dancing.

Photos by Arjorie C. Ingraham

From the Curator...

Well, we're ringing in the New Year with some major changes at the museum. The Civil War room has been converted into storage but there's no cause for alarm! The exhibits have been moved into the Native American room and those artifacts have been transferred into the former music room. It's not really as confusing as it sounds and we hope you will stop by in 2019 to take a look at the changes.

It's important to periodically remove objects from exhibit to properly clean them and inspect them for any potential damage. In addition, it's important to change the exhibits to give visitors a new perspective on a subject. In this current instance, we're adding more information about the Union Army veterans who later settled in Vineland and giving more context to the lives of the Lenni Lenape who once lived in this region. The work will keep us busy for the next several months although we plan to re-open to public, as always, on February 1.

Otherwise, after all of the excitement of our November gala, we're going to use 2019 as a planning year for 2020, the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th amendment. Anything that we plan for that year will be a lot quieter than 2018 but we're hoping to partner with two other local organizations for at least one program. We're not going to go into more detail at this time but stay tuned to our website for further information!

Tick...tick...tick...



We're holding our collective breath with regard to the fate of Oak and Main School, one of the few early schoolhouses still standing in Vineland. Now that it's up for auction again, will it be torn down, like so many others, so that the corner it's on can be used for business? We would have liked to see it turned into a schoolhouse museum, where visitors could have learned more about early education in Vineland.

Society hosts "Meet and Greet"

On October 4, the Society hosted a "Meet and Greet" at the museum for the Greater Vineland Chamber of Commerce, attended by representatives from about forty local businesses. They enjoyed an opportunity to tour the museum and learn more about Vineland's past. The event was catered by Eric's Restaurant and featured a variety of Mediterranean appetizers. Later that month, about thirty students from Stockton University visited the museum as part of their class on the history of the Pine Barrens, taught by Mark Demitroff. The students toured the museum and heard a presentation on women's history by curator Patricia A. Martinelli.

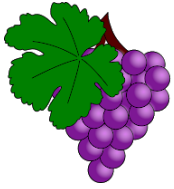
VOLUNTEER AT VHAS!

You'll be glad you did!



Hours & Information

The Museum Office is open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 1 to 4 p.m. from February through December by appointment. The Museum exhibits are open to the public every Saturday during those months, except when a presentation is scheduled; tours are offered at 1, 2 and 3 p.m. There is a \$1 admission charge for visitors over 12 years of age. Please remember: Assistance with library and research facilities is available by appointment only. Call the Museum at **856.691.1111**; e-mail: **vinelandhistory@gmail.com**; Group and school tours are welcomed and encouraged to visit.



VHAS 2019 Calendar of Events

February 9: Nancy Steelman, Quilt Trunk Show featuring the history of crazy quilts and more.

March 16: Walter Lafty, "Walt Whitman: The Civil War's Poet Patriot."

April 13: Brittney Ingersoll, "The Story of Vineland's Brothels."

May 18: Bob Russo, "Arlington National Cemetery:
The Garden of Stone."

August 3: Annual Family Fun Fest, free to all, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.

*We may add at least one other program to the schedule
but wanted to share this so that you can plan to visit in 2019!*

Society takes part in Middle School Cultural Fest

In January, staff and volunteers from the Society will be part of a multicultural festival at Veterans Memorial Intermediate School, focusing on the community's richly diverse cultural heritage. The Society's exhibit will illustrate how many different ethnic groups have moved—and continue to move—to Vineland over the years, bringing with them the traditions of their homelands.

"We are happy to participate because we are currently working on the museum's exhibits to showcase cultural diversity in Vineland," said curator Patricia A. Martinelli. "We want to tell as many stories as we can about the town's growth and development over the years."

Many people are not aware that African-Americans and German immigrants were already living in the region when Charles K. Landis founded Vineland in 1861. They became his first workforce, opening new roads and constructing many of the buildings that once stood on Landis Avenue. In the years that followed, immigrants from many different countries, including Italy, Greece and Russia, flocked to the community that Landis advertised throughout the United States and Europe.

Society Magazine now on sale

The 2018 issue of the Vineland Historical Magazine is now on sale for \$8 at the museum. The issue is dedicated to "A Celebration of Women" but includes a variety of interesting stories about local life throughout South Jersey. In addition to reviewing the special events held in 2018, the magazine includes an account of a sordid murder that rocked the region in the 1920s, the story of the "Tom Thumb" wedding tradition and more. The magazine was started in 1916 by Society Secretary Frank D. Andrews and has been published almost every year since then.



A "Tom Thumb" wedding held in Vineland.

Exhibit on Violence to open in 2019

The next exhibit to be featured at the Society's museum will be titled "Murder, They Wrote" and will examine some of the most significant crimes to occur in Vineland's past. The topic was selected to underline the rise in crimes that have occurred in recent years.



"We hope to partner with Jennifer Webb McRae, the Cumberland County prosecutor, to offer a guest speaker or panel discussion on this subject," said Patricia A. Martinelli, Society curator. "The county has started a pilot program on guns and gang violence and we want to provide the prosecutor with a local forum to address these issues."

Although Vineland was a fairly bucolic settlement in its early days, its past has always been scarred by violence. The most famous case, of course, was the murder trial of Vineland founder, Charles K. Landis, who shot newspaper editor Uri Carruth in 1875. Landis later became the second person in America to be found not guilty by virtue of temporary insanity.

Although he initially survived the shooting, newspaper editor Uri Carruth died a few months later of his head wound and Charles K. Landis was forced to stand trial.

More Changes Ahead for First House

In October, the First House built in Vineland in 1862, which graces the north lawn of the museum grounds, received a preliminary "face lift" in preparation for more work in 2019. Thanks to former board member Greg Henderson, the small house was given two coats of fresh paint, the green trim was removed and the shutters and doors were painted a flat gray to better resemble natural wood. The trim was eliminated because it was not historically accurate; in the 19th century, such homes were white-washed with a solution that would help keep away insects.

When the weather permits, the Society plans to do more work on the structure's Jersey stone base and address small cracks on the inside of the House. Although the stone base is not historically correct (according to records of the construction that were discovered in 2015), it was established when the House was moved to the museum grounds in 1962. Originally, the House was built on a brick base, probably using bricks that were made at a Vineland factory.

VHAS Education Program Seeks Volunteers

The Society's education program annually welcomes about 800 fourth grade students, who visit the museum each spring as part of their curriculum on New Jersey and American history. If you would like to volunteer even just three hours a month to assist with the tours, you will very likely make a difference in the life of a child who will remember you and the enthusiasm you shared while on tour. Vineland's rich, culturally-diverse past is filled with artists, inventors and business owners, who tackled a variety of social issues when they moved to the town. Don't worry if you're not that familiar with Vineland's history! You will receive training and plenty of materials to guide you on this adventure. Training is painless and you will always be working with an experienced volunteer. Join Education Coordinator Ruth Shropshire and her team of dedicated volunteers as they teach students to better appreciate the past, present and future of their hometown. For further information, contact Shropshire at vhasedprogram@gmail.com or 856-691-2925. Or call the Society at 856-691-1111 and leave your name and contact information .