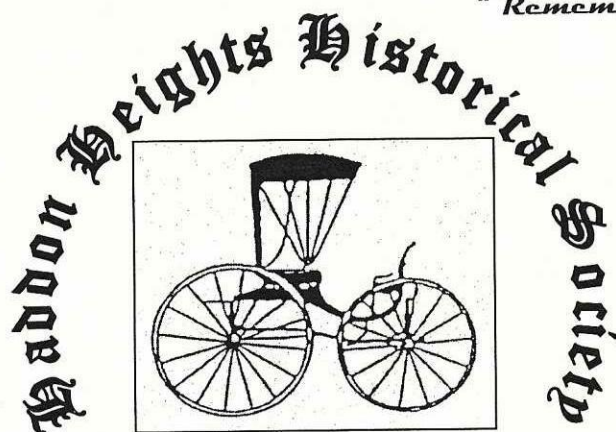


" Remembering Yesterday For The People Of Tomorrow "



Bulletin

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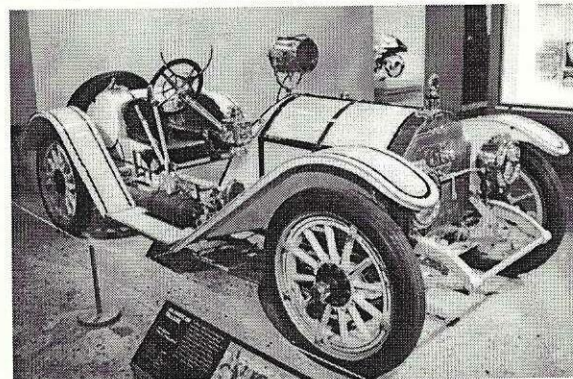
July 2017

We meet on the third Monday of January, April, July, and October - at 7:00pm in the Library

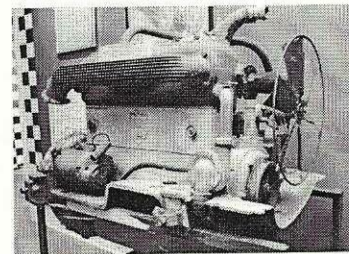
MERCER MAGIC: FROM SUSPENSION BRIDGES TO SPORTS CARS- Our next General Membership meeting will be held on Monday July 17th at 7:00pm in the Haddon Heights Library. Our presenter will be Mr. Clifford Zink, a New Jersey historic preservation consultant and award-winning author of six books, including "Mercer Magic- Roeblings, Kusers, the Mercer Automobile Company and America's First Sports Car". Mr. Zink is also an historian, specializing in architectural, industrial, engineering, and landscape history. He has served as a consulting curator at the Roebling Museum, and wrote & directed its orientation film, *Roebling Stories*.



Trenton, N.J., industrialists Ferdinand and Charles Roebling and Anthony and John Kuser founded the Mercer Automobile Company in 1909 to build "a car in a class by itself," and that's just what they did. Finley Porter designed the light, agile, and fast Mercer Raceabout in 1910 for pleasure driving and for racing, or as he noted, "We sold race cars to the public."



Many an amateur sportsman racing his own Raceabout helped build its reputation as America's first successful sports car. Champion drivers Hughie Hughes, Ralph DePalma, and Eddie Pullen won numerous regional and national races for Mercer, including the acclaimed American Grand Prize in Santa Monica in 1914.



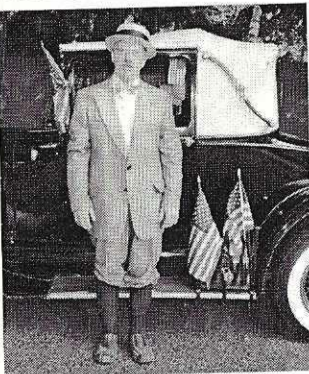
Mercer introduced "streamline" models in 1915 and built a total of about 5,500 cars before the factory closed in 1924. As a former employee noted, "Those cars sold as fast as we could make them." Today about 120 Raceabouts and other Mercers are amongst the most highly prized antique automobiles in private and museum collections. Please come out and join us to hear the interesting and little-known story of the Mercer.

Editor's Note: Please obey all traffic laws on your way to the meeting.... No speeding in your Mercer Raceabout !!!

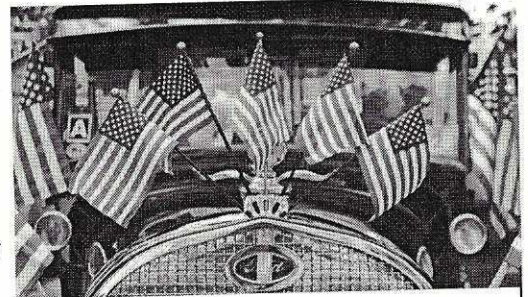
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE- Here we are in the midst of summer. It seems like only yesterday we were complaining about the cold! I want to make a special note about our Programs and Publicity Chairman, Doug Michell, who has been battling some pretty rough medical issues the past few months. Doug- On behalf of the full Board of

Trustees...We are glad to have you back! This month's presentation should make us think twice as we use our remote car door opener, push the ignition button, check the rear view camera, crank up the air and the music in our modern day cookie cutter cars. Mr. Zink will be sharing information about the birth, exciting life, and death of a very special automobile, The Mercer. I look forward to seeing you on Monday at the air conditioned library.- *Elena*

MEMORIES OF JULY 4th- Every year on the 4th of July, I have a unique opportunity to "check-in" on small town America. Think of the many traditional activities associated with Independence Day celebrations. We have cookouts, fireworks and parades among other cultural and family ways to mark the holiday. I have my own tradition..... While most people walk to the center of their town to claim a space along the curb to see the fire trucks, marching and string bands as well as the old cars, I get to drive right down the middle of the street!!! Yes, if you don't know it by now, after my 23rd year of July 4th parades as Editor of this Newsletter, I get to drive my antique car, a 1929 Ford Model A Rumble Seat



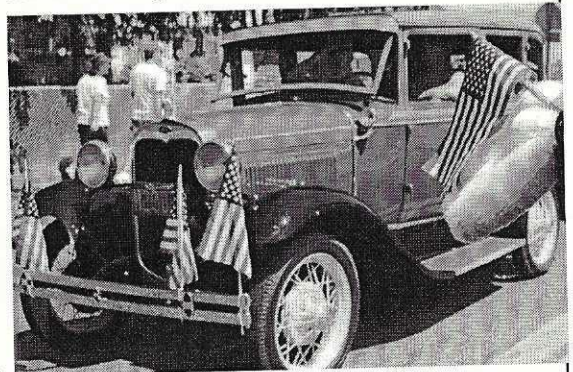
Sport Coupe (a.k.a. "Florence") in as many parades as I can fit into my schedule. That usually means four parades within 24 hours.



Now you may wonder....Why????? Well, I love to drive my car, get dressed up in my period clothes: Straw Boater Hat, long sleeves, bow tie, heavy tweed suit, and decorate my car with as many flags as I can find places to fit them (34 flags this year- My grandkids and I counted them). Believe it or not, while you are looking at the parade, the parade is looking back at you. I see the older folks remembering their childhood riding in the



rumble seat of their father's Model A. I see the families, and especially the kids. This year, for some reason, I noticed the children along the parade routes more than in the past. There they were, all shapes, sizes, ages and cultural backgrounds, all smiling and wearing the best examples of patriotic Red White and Blue their parents could find. These



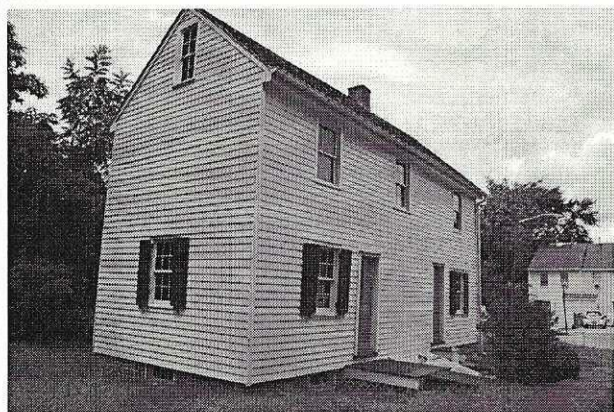
kids weren't Democrats or Republicans, Liberals or Conservatives, or any other label you hear being thrown around these days. They were all just Americans.

So, as I slowly drove those four parade routes on July 3rd and 4th, I looked closely and waved. I forgot the newscasts, political bullying, and the differences between us that some are so intent to point out. It was an honor to display the flag of our country as I drove past thousands and thousands of people. I got in my Parade "Zone" and checked-in again with small town America, where we are ALL just Americans.. (PS- Thanks to Mark Zimmerman for driving his 1930 Model A Four door again this year!!)

HARK! I THINK I HEARD A CANNON SHOT... Actually, there was no cannon shot, at least none recently; but there IS a cannon ball. Yes, the Historical Society is in possession of a cannon ball. It was found in the 1930's by a WPA (Works Progress Administration) crew working on the corduroy road (yes, that is a real thing) near Kings Highway. If you are not old enough to remember the term, please look it up. There are various explanations for the origin of the cannon ball: from falling off a Hessian artillery wagon, to being fired in battle in the area. At any rate, you can see the cannon ball on display in the Historical Society Room in the lower level of the Library. You can direct inquiries to Joan Rossler- Collection Custodian.

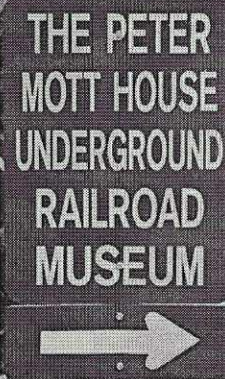
ANOTHER HISTORICAL SOCIETY INTERPRETIVE SIGN DAMAGED! The Historical Society's interpretive sign located at the railroad station has been damaged by area kids (presumed) and may need to be replaced. The Board is looking into options for repair or replacement. Any required work will have to be completed at Historical Society expense. Please be mindful of our signs and report any suspicious activity to the police.

WHEN IS AN UNDERGROUND RAILROAD NOT A SUBWAY? *When it is part of the elaborate network of homes and buildings used to harbor runaway slaves as they made their way from the South to freedom in the North! Running away as a form of protest by slaves against their bondage is as old as African enslavement itself on American soil. In fact, the first European settlement on land that would ultimately become part of the United States of America, a Spanish colony established in 1526 in the area of present-day South Carolina, witnessed the flight of its slaves; it is said they fled to neighboring Indians. The presence of African slaves in the British colonies of North America, whose history begins in 1607 with the founding of Jamestown, Virginia, was also marked by flight as an expression of resistance.



Down to the outbreak of the Civil War, New Jersey continued to bear witness to the presence of runaway slaves. However, with the passage in 1804 in New Jersey of *An Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery*, these fugitives came increasingly from the South. This legislation indeed made New Jersey part of the "Promised Land."

The Peter Mott house was part of the Underground Railroad (UGRR), a secret network of persons and places- that helped southern runaway slaves reach safety in their northern states and Canada. This house in Lawnside (formerly known as Snow



Hill and Free Haven), built around 1844, is an extremely precious Underground Railroad site. Not only is it one of the few extant UGRR stations that was owned and operated by an African American, but it is probably the only site of its kind in the nation: a black-owned and operated UGRR station in an all-black town. Peter Mott (1807? - 1888) was a free black farmer, possibly a fugitive slave from Delaware, who served as the pastor of Lawnside's historic MT. Pisgah AME Church.

The site offers tours to the public for a small donation. Check the website for hours. Contact information: Peter Mott House- 26 Kings Court, Lawnside. 856-546-8850. www.petermotthouse.org

*Portions excerpted from the NJ Historical Commission publication "Steal Away, Steal Away", available from the Commission at 609-292-6062, or www.history.nj.gov . Reprinted by permission

2017 Membership Application / Renewal- Haddon Heights Historical Society

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (H) _____ (W) _____ E-Mail _____

Type of Membership: _____ Single- \$10.00 _____ Household- \$15.00

I would like to make a tax deductible donation to Haddon Heights Historical Society, in the amount of \$ _____

Coming Events

7/17/17- HH Historical Society Gen. Membership Meeting- Library: History of the Mercer Auto

10/16/17- HH Historical Society Gen. Membership Meeting- Library: 19th Century NJ Photographers

Fall 2017- League of Historical Societies of NJ mtg- Summit Historical Society hosts- Union County

Winter 2018- League of Hist. Societies of NJ mtg- Ocean County Hist. Society hosts- Ocean County

June 2018- League of Hist. Societies of NJ mtg- Somerset County Hist. Society hosts- Somerset

*Contact Peter Hill for more information about LHSNJ Meetings

MEMBERSHIP DUES- Your "Paid Through YEAR" is printed on your Newsletter label. Your dues help keep history alive. Only paid-up members will continue to receive the HHHS Newsletter!

Provide us your e-mail address, and we will also send you an electronic full color copy of each edition of the newsletter.

HEIGHTS BOOK- The Society's book "Haddon Heights-The Ideal Suburb" is available at the Library. Only \$20.00

The Haddon Heights Historical Society is a 501(c)3 organization. Please keep us in mind as you plan your charitable donations. Make us part of Your Legacy...

Can you hear me now????? That now familiar phrase rang true to me as I prepared the piece about celebrating the 4th of July. Please take time to share some of YOUR history with the younger ones, like I try to do with my grandkids (see July 4th photos on page 2). I have been surprised many times by what they remember and how they put history in context!

Ken Funkhouser, Editor (23 yrs)

2017 Historical Society Board

<u>President-(2016-2018)</u>	Elena Hill
<u>Vice-President-(2016-2018)</u>	Bob Hunter
<u>Past President-</u>	Margaret Westfield
<u>Treasurer-(Ends 2018)</u>	Art Ritter
<u>Secretary- (Ends 2020)</u>	Carolyn Finegar
<u>Trustees-(2016-2019)</u>	Ken Funkhouser
	Anne McAdams
	Peter Hill

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<u>Membership Chair-</u>	Joan Rossler
<u>Web Master-</u>	Dan Alexander
<u>Nominating Comm.-</u>	Bob Hunter/ Peter Hill
<u>Borough Council Liaison</u>	Vacant
<u>Affairs-</u>	Vacant
<u>Merch/Fund Raising-</u>	Joan Rossler
<u>Programs/Publicity-</u>	Doug Michell/ Dan Alexander
<u>Programs/Publicity- Asst.</u>	Vacant
<u>Digital Photographer</u>	Vacant

Contact the Board : WWW.HHHISTORICAL.ORG

Mail correspondence- P.O. Box 118 Haddon Heights, NJ 08035

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