

# *Inside* THE BRICK ACADEMY



The Historical Society of the Somerset Hills

February 2021



## SHANNON LODGE SANATORIUM



The front cover of the small-scale Art Deco brochure describes Shannon Lodge Sanatorium as "A delightful place for the care of those who are not actually ill nor requiring hospitalization, yet are in need of rest and treatment away from their home environment."

Secluded on Old Army Road in Bernardsville, the grand three-story home of eighteen rooms was originally built about 1890 by Samuel S. Childs, the renowned restaurateur and New Jersey State Senator.

After Childs died in 1925, news articles reported the property serving as a high-class hostelry as well as a European-style health spa with a revolutionary Transkutan bath treatment for arthritis, neuritis, sciatica, and rheumatism.

In 1933, Dr. William H. Lawrence, founder of Overlook Hospital and co-organizer of the Summit Medical Group, purchased the farm property from William Childs, Samuel's younger brother. Dr. Lawrence sold 95 of the original 120 acres and managed the sanatorium for the subsequent four years.

The brochure states: "the definite purpose of Shannon Lodge is to relieve chronic sufferers and to furnish a haven to those who require relief from stress and strain. Our cases are carefully selected and only such individuals as can be helped and will fit into our environment are accepted for treatment."

Weekly rates were advertised as low as \$50 and covered room, "diet control", and a staff of reputable physicians, registered nurses and therapy technicians. Meals were served with local fresh fruit, garden produce, whole milk, farm eggs, and natural spring water.

Recreation at different levels included sports such as golf, archery, tennis and swimming; games of bridge, backgammon, and billiards; and live entertainment of varied sorts presented on weekend evenings.

Guests were also encouraged to take walks through the winding paths; enjoy the landscaped gardens; relax on the sundrenched porches; and venture out on short motor trips in the historical countryside around Bernardsville.

After ten years of operation, Shannon Lodge Sanatorium experienced significant financial challenges, was dissolved by the Court of Chancery of New Jersey on January 13, 1943, and had its assets liquidated and distributed among creditors.

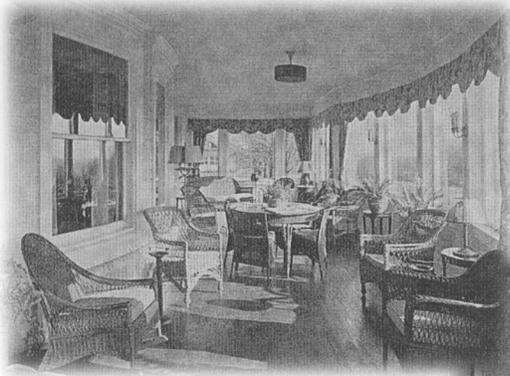
In 1946, the property became the site of the Fellowship Deaconry Nursing Home before it moved to Liberty Corner fifty years later. The historic estate of Samuel Shannon Childs has since been subdivided for private residences.

*Thank you to William Barry Thomson  
for his valuable research contributions*



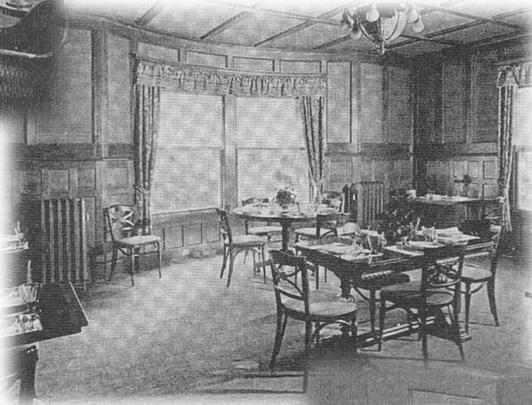
Interior photographs on Page 2

## SHANNON LODGE SANATORIUM



*“A Cheery Sun Parlor: During the day and night, nature in her most beautiful robes encompass this rare old home with an irresistible spell, bringing complete relaxation of mind and body”*

*“A Delightful Cuisine: Scientifically prepared meals are appetizingly served at your table in this charming, home-like dining room”*



*“Airy, Sunny Sleeping Rooms: The peace of the woods and the hush of the country side quickly bring sleep. Fresh, bracing and clear air keeps it sound”*




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### ***Elizabeth “Jean” Pellicane Appointed Archivist***



The Board of Trustees is pleased to announce the recent appointment of Elizabeth “Jean” Pellicane as the Historical Society's new Archivist.

As a key member of the organization, Jean will work collaboratively with trustees to develop, implement and maintain policies and procedures in order to acquire, interpret, organize and preserve collections in support of the Society's role as the local history archives of the Somerset Hills. She will similarly administer research requests and supervise the external use of THSSH collections.

Jean completed Boston University's Genealogical Research Certificate Program, ProGen Study Group, and attended several genealogy institutes. She is a part-time professional genealogist with twenty-five years of experience including work on the third season of NBC's “*Who Do You Think You Are?*”.

Jean is a founding member of the New Jersey Chapter of the Association for Professional Genealogists and has volunteer library and archive experience with the Hunterdon Historical Society, Glen Gardner Historic Committee, and currently serves as a Trustee of The Genealogical Society of New Jersey.

Jean's genealogy/local history blog can be found at <https://once-removed.com/blog/>

## THSSH GIFT PROGRAM

The Board of Trustees extends its sincere gratitude to THSSH members and community friends who contributed with donations and bequests during the past challenging year. Despite unprecedented setbacks with a diminished volunteer workforce and operating budget, as a nonprofit organization the Historical Society was able to operate remotely, in part through your generous gifts!

The Historical Society's Gift Program includes donation levels to highlight some of the historical figures from the Brick Academy (Basking Ridge Classical School). To learn about their remarkable lives, please visit our website at [www.tshhs.org](http://www.tshhs.org).

**William Dayton - Up to \$100**

**Robert Stockton - Up to \$200**

**Samuel Southard - Up to \$300**

**Theodore Frelinghuysen - Up to \$400**

**Reverend Robert Finley - Up to \$500**

**Reverend Samuel Kennedy - Above \$500**

**William Dayton** - Eric and Diane Alber, Robert and Rosalie Baker, Gil Barno, Carolyn English-Black, John and June Campbell, Diane Cantono, Peter and Margaret Carhart, Jim Chan, Susan Melizan Conway, William and Margaret Cronin, Cynthia Crosson, George and Karen Decker, Michael and Marilyn Dee, Christine Ellis, Craig and Elda Feldman, Janice Fields, Tom and Karen Fitzsimons, Kevin Fox, Sylvia Gambony, Edmund Gould, Janice Gursky, Florence Hallgring, Michael Johnston, Kevin Kesby, John and Carolyn Koch, Edwin and Frances Landis, Patricia Lorenz, Jay and Janet Petrillo, Greg and Molly Romano, Kenneth and Margaret Trinter, Jim and Linda Wooldridge

**Robert Stockton** - Dominick and Nancy Alfano, George Applegate, Michael and Patricia Bankowski, Arthur and Wilma Gelfand, Monique Rubens Krohn, Ernie Larini, Richard and Ruth Lufkin, Shawn and Jennifer Lynch, Lou and Elizabeth Matlack, Jerry and Marcella Miccolis, Matthew and Joanne Suriano

**Samuel Southard** - William Engel, Joseph Metelski, William Barry Thomson

**Theodore Frelinghuysen** - Richard and Linda Macksoud, Robin Marion

**Reverend Robert Finley** - Ron and Sue Zibelli



*How well do you know  
Somerset Hills  
history?*

*Watch for a  
rewarding way  
to test your skills  
in the  
May newsletter...*

*Welcome  
New Members!*

**Bernardsville Print Center**  
*Bernardsville*

**Janice Fields**  
*Basking Ridge*

**Michael and Jaimie Morais**  
*Far Hills*

## 2020 Annual Report

The Historical Society of the Somerset Hills

*By Sue Zibelli, Chairman*

### Executive Summary

The primary objective of The Historical Society of the Somerset Hills (THSSH) in 2020 was to create cultural opportunities and enrichment for the local community by providing programs and initiatives that inform, educate and foster interest in local history.

#### **Education Programs** – *Bernards Township and Madison area*

Because of the COVID restrictions, Bernards Township Elementary Schools and the Museum of Early Trades and Crafts (METC) did not visit the Brick Academy to participate in early education programs.

#### **Research** – *Nationwide*

Because of the COVID restrictions the Research Library at the Brick Academy was not open throughout 2020.

#### **Museum** – *Somerset Hills*

Because of the COVID restrictions, the Brick Academy Museum was not open to the public first Sunday of each month.

#### **Boudinot/Southard/Ross** – *Somerset County Parks Commission*

Kitchenware and farming equipment from the Historical Society's collections remain on long-term loan to the Ross Farm.

#### **New Jersey Digital Highway (NJDH)** – *Rutgers University*

THSSH museum and archives collections were catalogued, digitized and entered into Rutgers' New Jersey Digital Highway (NJDH), a digital repository that preserves the state's cultural resources and artifacts for use by current and future generations of citizens, educators, researchers and students. Resources are available 24/7 and maintained in perpetuity. THSSH joins 50 other historical organizations participating in NJDH.

#### **Communications** – *Nationwide (Membership)*

Historical Society members received two issues of 'Inside the Brick Academy' newsletters, along with the 2019 Annual Report.

#### **Website and Social Media** – *Nationwide*

THSSH continued to communicate news and information through our website [www.tshhs.org](http://www.tshhs.org).

#### **Historic Restoration and Preservation**

Exterior painting and minor repairs along the roofline of the Brick Academy were done in 2020.

#### **Membership** – *Nationwide*

THSSH membership totaled 135. We welcomed 9 new members in 2020.

#### **Donations** – *Nationwide*

In addition to membership dues paid in 2020, THSSH received \$3,953 in donations.

## 2020 Annual Report

*Continued from Page 4*

### Education

Print publications available free of charge at the Brick Academy by appointment:

- THSSH Pamphlet – Highlights the history of the Brick Academy, the mission of The Historical Society of the Somerset Hills, ongoing projects, fund raising events, museum hours, and membership information.
- Inside the Brick Academy Newsletter – Published three times a year and mailed to our membership, this newsletter comprises society news, event calendar, and local interest stories
- Volunteer Brochure – Describes the primary THSSH committees, which include Affiliate Organizations; Archives & Research; Bookstore; Building Maintenance; Clerical; Community Outreach; Education; Fund Raisers; Gardens & Grounds; Hospitality; Membership; Museum; Newsletter; Production; Public Relations; Publicity; Speaker Programs; Website/Social Media

On sale at the Brick Academy is the *Around and About Basking Ridge, Liberty Corner and Lyons* picture book, as well as other history related books.

### Archives & Research

THSSH archives is coveted by local and distant researchers who contact THSSH via our website, phone, and mail requesting appointments to conduct local research. The primary information requested is local family and house documents and pictures; historic maps; local historic figures and buildings.

*NOTE: Allowing the use of materials or supplying a “fair use” copy is not an authorization to publish.*

Fees for use normally apply to corporations, partnerships, private businesses, and individuals when images are to be used in books, periodicals, films, video productions, advertising, projection, or for direct sales. This includes the display of images in public areas of commercial buildings, restaurants, galleries, the Internet, and retail spaces.

### Website and Social Media

The Historical Society of the Somerset Hills (THSSH) online:

Website: [www.tshhs.org](http://www.tshhs.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/somersethills.historical.society/>

### Donations

- In addition to membership dues paid in 2020, THSSH received \$3,953 in donations.
- Donations and Bequests are received from current and past members and their families.
- Substantial revenue is generated through paid advertisements in the society’s newsletter, as well as our bi-annual Holiday House Tour program guide.
- Gift items are sold at the Brick Academy and community events, as well as displayed on our website.
- Non-profit organizations that conduct meetings at the Brick Academy provide a contribution.
- Schoolchildren visitation, area residents, and out-of-town visitors to our museum leave donations in the donation box at the Brick Academy.

## **2020 Annual Report**

*Continued from Page 5*

### **Museum**

The Brick Academy serves as a museum of local artifacts and historical information about the towns in the Somerset Hills – Bedminster, Peapack-Gladstone, Far Hills, Bernardsville, and Bernards Township/Basking Ridge, the only one of its kind in the Somerset Hills.

The top floor, restored to an 1890s period schoolroom with an authentic potbelly stove, period schoolroom furniture, and classroom objects, is used for education programs. Along with the 1890s schoolroom display, the top floor displays a timeline of the building; poster images and biographies of important people who had once attended the Classical School of Basking Ridge, the precursor to the Brick Academy; a schoolwork display case that showcases students' work from the early 1900s; and a bobsled used in the township in the early 1900s.

The lower floor, which is mainly used for research and meetings, has on display late 1800/early 1900 maps of the Somerset Hills towns, artifacts from local post offices, and other notable artifacts.

The main floor displays a permanent exhibit: 'What Put Somerset Hills on the Map.' Included in the exhibit are 8" x 10" color photographs of many of the magnificent homes on the Bernardsville Mountain. THSSH has been given the rights to many of the photos for this exhibit by the Turpin Real Estate Agency. In addition to building our library with these important photos, the Museum Committee has been building relationships with many organizations in the Somerset Hills, including Hamilton Farm, Trump National Golf Club, Natirar, Matheny, Meadowbrook Inventions, the USGA, the Jacobus Vanderveer House and Museum, the Farmstead Arts Center, and the Boudinot-Southard-Ross Estate, to name a few.

In the interest of collaborating with other history organizations, the Museum Committee has provided on long-term loan to the Boudinot-Southard-Ross Estate a collection of tools and kitchen utensils.

### **Brick Academy Utilization**

In addition to our museum, research room, education programs, speaker programs, and community events, the Brick Academy is normally utilized by outside groups for their meetings and programs. Because of COVID restrictions, the building was not utilized by these groups in 2020.

### **Advocacy & Affiliations**

The Historical Society is a member of The Somerset County Historical Society, League of Historical Societies of New Jersey, Small Museum Association, and National Trust for Historic Preservation.

### **2021 Outlook**

The Historical Society of the Somerset Hills will continue to pursue its mission to acquire, conserve and share artifacts and information on matters of local historic interest; cultivate interest in local history; partake in community events; encourage the preservation of local historic resources; facilitate historic research; and preserve, operate and interpret the Brick Academy.

- To strengthen and grow the organizational structure of THSSH's Board of Trustees.
- Trustees will be actively engaging current members to volunteer on THSSH committees, as well as for programs and events.
- THSSH will maintain its image as a premier historical society through committee work.
- Programs will be offered that appeal to our members and to the community.
- Our website and social media strategy will continue to share information regarding local events and history in the Somerset Hills.
- THSSH will work toward participating in local and county grant projects, as well as growing sources of income to achieve financial independence.
- The Holiday House Tour is expected to be offered, as are historical walking tours.

## MUSEUM ACQUISITIONS

- A hinged earring size box from Diehl's Jewelers in Bernardsville. *Gift of Lynne Ranieri, Millburn-Short Hills Historical Society*
- Six postcards of St. Joseph's Villa (former Blairsdon Estate) from the collection of Madeline Maraziti. *Gift of Frances Drew, Chatham NJ*
- A binder of The Daily Home News (New Brunswick, NJ newspaper) dated 1913-1914. *Gift of Michael Delgado, Basking Ridge NJ*
- A large, mounted photograph of the Olcott Building in Bernardsville, along with a book published by the Somerset Hills Military Service Commission - *In Service '41-'44* presented at Christmas as a tribute to members of WWII armed forces. *Gift of Amy J. Maitland, Doylestown PA*
- THE TENNIS HOUSE at Crab Tree Farm. Private Tennis Houses Designed by James W. O'Connor and Others. *Gift of Tom Gleason, Lake Bluff IL.* Note: William Barry Thomson, local Architectural Historian, assisted in identifying Somerset Hills tennis houses that were included in the appendix of the book – Froh Heim in Far Hills; Hamilton Farms in Gladstone; and Dunwalke in Bedminster.

*Thank you to our donors and sponsors!*

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***Inside the Brick Academy***  
is a membership benefit

Newsletters are posted online  
and printed copies mailed in  
February, May and October

**The Historical Society  
of the Somerset Hills**

*A 501c3 nonprofit organization  
founded in 1928*

**Board of Trustees:**

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