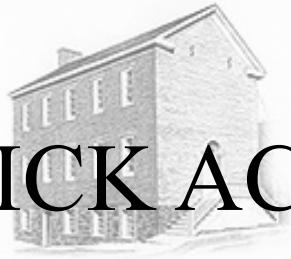


Inside THE BRICK ACADEMY



The Historical Society of the Somerset Hills

October 2025

PROHIBITION 2025



Date: November 13, 2025

Time: 7 - 9 PM

Place: Gladstone Tavern
273 Main Street, Gladstone NJ

Event Fee: \$50*

Enjoy forbidden cocktails and sweet dessert treats as we join guest speaker Michael Dixon who will discuss the nation's centuries long effort to regulate alcohol consumption with a spotlight on New Jersey. During the presentation the audience will hear colorful stories of rum runners, moonshiners, bathtub gin, intriguing personalities, complicated politics, organized crime, outgunned lawmen, and the temperance movement.

Michael Dixon is a historian and writer whose research and teaching focus on social history and community studies. For over four decades, he has worked to encourage public interest and participation in the preservation of the past while creating understanding between earlier eras and the present. As an adjunct professor, he teaches history courses at several area universities and colleges. Addressing his areas of scholarship, Michael Dixon has appeared on the Today Show, Maryland Public Television, the BBC, National Geographic Channel, and National Public Radio shows.

The signature event at the Gladstone Tavern (*right image*) is the perfect opportunity to socialize with other Historical Society members and learn about our community's rich distilling past.

** Event fee includes one specialty cocktail and an array of desserts.
Additional alcoholic beverages can be purchased.*

**Space is limited, so register soon to reserve your place:
www.somersetillshistoricalsociety.org/programs-events/**





Saturday, October 11
10 AM - 5 PM
Sunday, October 12
12 PM - 4 PM

Thirty-four unique historic sites will participate in Somerset County’s twentieth annual event of special exhibits, interactive demonstrations, guided tours, and music concerts...*all open and free to the public!*

Explore the area’s quaint villages, learn about prominent residents, witness early colonial life, and discover Revolutionary War sites.

Participate in the new Passport Program. Visit sites, collect stamps, take a survey, and win prizes! To celebrate next year’s 250th Anniversary of the Nation, the first 250 people to visit at least five sites will win a commemorative coin.

The Brick Academy, THSSH headquarters, will feature “*What Put Somerset Hills on the Map*”- a permanent display of the five communities, a rotating exhibit titled “The Natirar Estate and Kate Macy Ladd Convalescent Home”, William Annin 1766 stone house model, and locally excavated Lenni Lenape artifacts. The upstairs school room, designed for education programs, has a pot belly stove, 1800s period furniture, and early student classwork.

For more information visit
www.schistoryweekend.com



Afternoon Tea
at Blairsdén

On September 14, the Historical Society held a signature event at the illustrious Blairsdén Mansion in Peapack. Attending guests discovered elegant boutiques that lined the grand hallway, strolled through the manicured grounds offering stunning vistas of the Somerset Hills, and enjoyed an array of delectable desserts served with aromatic pots of tea.

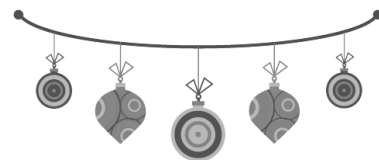
Please visit ‘NEWS’ on our website at www.thssh.org to view a recap video of the Afternoon Tea!

Welcome New Members!

Clelia Biamonti	Far Hills
Michelle Boland	South Plainfield
Marie Crenshaw	Bridgewater
Ian Dempsey	Califon
Susan Dodge	Bridgewater
Elizabeth Eagan	Martinsville
Kevin Fox	Basking Ridge
Grace Froehlich	Peapack
Linda Julien	Gladstone
Andrea Kaufmann	Bridgewater
Martin Kendall	Basking Ridge
Yvonne Kloehn	Mendham
Stephen Kowalski	Basking Ridge
John Kunna	Liberty Corner
Michele Logan	Far Hills
Arlene McMahon Family	Basking Ridge
Denise Meyer	Basking Ridge
JoAnn Murphy	Basking Ridge
John Samtak	Bedminster
Susan Steuber	Basking Ridge
Megan Tokash	Buffalo NY
Anya & Brian Tomko	Basking Ridge
Erika Tooman	Basking Ridge
John Vopal	Basking Ridge
Nancy Williams	Chester

Mark your calendar!

Holiday Party



Sunday, December 7
The Brick Academy

Details to follow...



GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN — THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR HOUSES OF PLUCKEMIN, NJ

Part 4: Eoff's Tavern

By Cynthia Crosson

It is hard to imagine in 2025 what travel and communication were like during the Revolutionary War. Rumbling and jostling over rough dirt roads in a horse-drawn wagon or stage coach for days or weeks on end. No pavement or shock absorbers. And, of course, no phones or internet. Hand-written communication, even urgent war plans, were carried by horseback and could take weeks. But that was the reality in 1770s New Jersey.

Against this backdrop, the importance of colonial taverns comes into sharp focus. These were not simply places to go for a drink at the end of the day. They were essential stops offering weary travelers meals, rest and overnight stays. In addition, "These taverns were the nerve centers of their communities. They were the internet portals of the 18th century and the seedbeds of the American Revolution. Militias formed there. Votes were cast and communities came together."¹ By the end of the Revolutionary War, New Jersey had over 400 taverns.¹ Most are gone now but we can still hear their echoes as America's 250th birthday approaches.

Eoff's Tavern was that special place for the tiny village of Pluckemin. "The Story of An Old Farm", published in 1889, describes the arrival in Pluckemin in 1752 of Johannes Moelich, a German farmer and founding father of Bedminster, during a trip south from his Old Stone House in Bedminster. He was on his way to Perth Amboy to pick up mail. There were three post offices in New Jersey at the time.

"On reaching Pluckemin, Johannes found there about a dozen small houses and a tavern. The inn was the first place of entertainment established in the township. It was built in 1750 by Jacob Eoff, who was one of the pioneers of the village. He was a native of Holland ... {who had} purchased 500 acres of land of the heirs of John Johnstone, which included the site of Pluckemin. The tavern remained standing for 64 years, its location being the corner now occupied by the house of Joseph D. Nevius. During the Revolution, it was the meeting place for the Committee of Safety, and when Washington's army was quartered in this and adjoining counties, its boniface dispensed hospitality to many of the leading men of the country."²

"It is fair to presume that Johannes dismounted at Eoff's tavern to wish Jacob 'guten morgen' and discuss with him the quality of some of his best Jamaica. It will be seen, as we proceed with the telling of our story, that the Moelichs, both father and son, were intimately associated with the early citizens of this vicinity."²

In 1999 when her book was published, Prich Matthews, former Bedminster Township historian, described Jacob Eoff's original tavern as being located on the corner where the A&P shopping center "is now located."³ Today, it is the Fresh Market shopping center. Matthews also notes that Jacob Eoff lived in a separate house, which became part of an expanded Compton Farmhouse (above photograph from the Clarence Dillion Library Collection) near where Kings Market now stands. The Compton farmhouse was planned for demolition and then destroyed by a suspicious fire in the 1970s.³

There was also a strong link between Pluckemin's first tavern and its first church. Eoff donated the land where St. Paul's Lutheran Church was built in 1756. He remained a leader in that church for many years. "As St. Paul's was a collegiate church with the Zion Lutheran Church of New Germantown, the records of the associated officers were kept at New Germantown and still exist, and from it we learn that Jacob became a vestryman of St. Paul's May 13, 1767, and probably so continued until 1773, at which time he may have retired from old age. In the same first-mentioned year (1767), when a joint charter was given by King George III to these two churches, Jacob's name appears as a charter member."⁴

¹ "Inns and taverns were yesteryear's community centers. NJ still has some you can visit," by David M. Zimmer, Bergen Record/NorthJersey.com, June 25, 2025, online article reviewing book "Colonial Taverns of New Jersey: Libations, Liberty & Revolution", by Michael C. Gabriele, 2023.

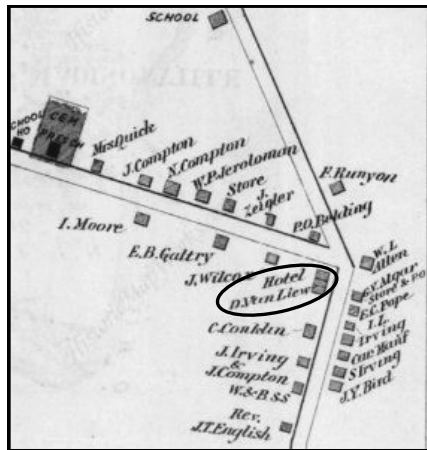
² "The Story of An Old Farm, or Life In New Jersey in the Eighteenth Century", by Andrew D. Mellick, 1889, p. 162-164.

³ "Bedminster Township, 250 Years-1749-1999" by Prich Matthews, 1999, p. 24 and 83.

⁴ "Somerset County Historical Quarterly," Vol. VII, p. 287.

The Liberty Corner Hotel

The picture postcard (*right image*) shows Allen's Hotel in Liberty Corner, NJ, which, based on the sign, was also known as the Liberty Corner Hotel. The card's undivided back dates the photo to 1907 or before. The hotel occupied the corner where the Exxon station now stands and faced Valley Road.



According to the 1850 Somerset County map by Lloyd Van Derveer, James P. Goltra owned the building. On the census that year, Dennis Van Liew is listed as “landlord” of a hotel. Van Liew married Goltra’s daughter, Elizabeth, and in 1859 purchased the “tavern lot” from Goltra. The 1873 Beers Atlas of Somerset County (*left image*) shows the building as D. Van Liew’s Hotel.

Van Liew died in 1881 and in 1890, his heirs sold the hotel to William O. Allen, who also maintained a bar there. His occupation in 1910 was “saloon keeper.” When Allen died in 1913, his widow Harriet continued the business. On the 1915 state census she is shown as a hotel proprietor.

This article originally appeared on June 13, 2025 on the THSSH Blog. For similar articles, go to <https://somersethillshistoricalsociety.org/blog/> and subscribe using the ‘Sign Up’ button in the right side column.

MUSEUM ACQUISITIONS

The Board of Trustees extends its sincere gratitude to the following patrons for their generous gifts to the Brick Academy Museum:

- *The Somerset Hills* (1900) by Ludwig Schumacher
Karen O’Brien, Basking Ridge NJ
- *Story of An Old Farm* (1889) by Andrew D. Mellick
Deborah Melick, Manalapan NJ
- Bernards High Class Photo (1909)
Dorna Hamer
- Tiger family papers and photos
John E. Tiger, Basking Ridge NJ
- Aerial view of AT&T Basking Ridge complex (1970s)
Fred Backer, Annandale NJ

SAVE THE FLAG DRIVE!



The Historical Society of the Somerset Hills (THSSH) is on a mission to raise \$8,000 to restore a rare and precious 38-star American flag – an irreplaceable emblem of our nation’s past. The flag recognizes Colorado as the 38th state to join the Union in 1876. The year 1876 being an important one in that the country celebrated its first centennial, honoring 100 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

This fragile banner once hung proudly in the Brick Academy Museum. Now too delicate to display, it needs expert conservation to survive for future generations. We hope to have the flag rehung in the museum for the America 250 celebration in 2026.

Every donation, large or small, is tax-deductible and greatly appreciated.

Please scan the QR code or visit us at:

https://somersehillshistoricalsociety.org/news_items/thssh-launches-save-the-flag-drive/



Thank You!



THSSH Headquarters:

15 West Oak Street, Basking Ridge, NJ 07920
908.221.1770 · www.thssh.org

Museum Hours:

First Sunday of the Month
2 - 4 PM

Inside the Brick Academy

is a membership benefit posted online and printed editions mailed in Winter, Spring & Fall

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Website: www.thssh.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/historicalsocietynj>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/historicalsocietynj/>

The Historical Society of the Somerset Hills

*A 501c3 nonprofit organization
founded in 1928*

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www.thssh.org

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** Membership Dues and Donations are tax deductible **