



# UNION COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



As 2024 begins and we usher in a brand new year I wish you and your family the best of health and happiness in the coming months.

UCHS has a full schedule of great events planned this year beginning with an entertaining session with “Eleanor Roosevelt” in March followed by historian Dr. Richard Veit at our spring luncheon. A complete schedule of the year’s event is posted on the website.

All are welcome at our meetings and we look forward to your input and participation. In the meantime, best wishes for the New Year.

## 2024 Meeting Dates

**March 3**-Linda Kenyon as “Eleanor Roosevelt”

**April 14**-Spring Luncheon Garden Restaurant - Dr. Richard Veit

**May 19**-Student Scholarship Awards

**August 18**-Executive Board Meeting

**September 8**-Picnic

**October 6**-To be announced

**December 8**-Holiday Party

Please remember to renew your UCHS membership.

\$15.00 Regular Membership

\$ 5.00 Student Membership

\$50.00 Patron

\$75.00 Benefactor

\$100. 00 Sponsor

Checks payable to

Union County Historical Society

Mail to Treasurer

Lauren Socha

846 Floral Ave.

Elizabeth, N.J. 07208-1406



L to R Charles Shallcross, Jonny Rosser, Joanne Rajoppi

The Union County Historical Society congratulates member Jonny Rosser for being inducted into the Union Township Historical Society’s Hall of Fame for his outstanding service to the town of Union.

## March 3, 2024 Meeting



The UCHS will host actress Linda Kenyon who will portray Eleanor Roosevelt at their regular meeting on Sunday, March 3, 2024 at 2 p.m. at the Hanson House in Cranford. "In honor of Women's History Month," President Joanne Rajoppi said, "Eleanor Roosevelt represents a strong voice and advocate as well as an

inspiration to millions for her work through the lifetime." The show brings to life one of America’s most beloved First Ladies. We will follow Roosevelt’s evolution from the young wife of FDR to an American woman of strong opinions and inspiring influence. Her life and work within the history of our country is still an inspiration to people all around the world. Ellie Seagraves, granddaughter of Roosevelt, says Kenyon has the “voice, gestures, warmth and engaging personal touches of Eleanor Roosevelt. What Kenyon does with this role is the best I’ve seen or heard.” Join us as we journey with Eleanor Roosevelt, Sunday, March 3, 2024

**It Happened in Union  
County**  
Compiled by Bill Frolich

Union County is the twenty-first county established in New Jersey in 1857. Until then, the area had been part of Essex County and the County Seat was in Newark. Although Union County contains roughly the same land purchased from the Indians in 1664, it contained only six towns and a fraction of a seventh. They were: Elizabeth, which became the County Seat, Plainfield, New Providence, Westfield, Union, Rahway and part of Springfield. Today there are a total of twenty-one cities, townships, and boroughs.

Union County still contains the concrete houses built by Thomas Edison as an experiment to prove the possible use of concrete as a building material. Robert Gordon School in Roselle Park was built using this method.



A familiar structure on Route 22 in Union is the Flagship. It has been a restaurant, night club, with big band radio broadcasting, a clothing store, very briefly an auto showroom, and an appliance store.

First National Bank of Roselle contained the first drive-up banking window in Union County, which was installed about 1947.

Roselle, New Jersey was the first village in the world to be lighted by Thomas Edison as an experiment to prove he could light a town from a single source.

Elizabeth, created in 1664, is the oldest English settlement in New Jersey and for a number of years was the capitol of the colony. What has evolved into Princeton University was begun in Elizabethtown, as it was then known.

The first submarine accepted by the United States Navy was built in the Crescent Shipyard on the eastern shore of Elizabeth at the foot of East Jersey Street.



The world's first automatic pin setting machines for bowlers were installed in the Roselle Lanes.

Dr. William Beebe's Underwater Bathysphere for deep sea exploration was



built in the Watson-Stillman Factory in Roselle around 1930.



In 1831, the Elizabethtown and Somerville Railroad Company was created and its first train traveled on New Year's Day in 1839.

The youngest town in Union County is Winfield Park and its origin is unique. The Federal Government acquired 110 acres of land from Linden and Clark, and built a number of box-like houses to be homes for war workers employed in the Kearny shipyards during World War II. The buildings were intended to be temporary and destroyed after the end of the war. However, by that time, the residents refused to let that happen, and after much negotiations they purchased the entire area from the government. During the negotiations, meetings were held in the Winfield Scott Hotel in Elizabeth and the name "Winfield" was given to the new community.

OVER THE BACK FENCE

Happy 2024