

# UNION COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## Annual Picnic

The Society's annual picnic was held on September 7th at the Hanson House. It was well attended by guests and members. With Chef Les Sargent in charge of the hot dogs and hamburgers. There was a great variety of picnic type food provided by many members, with the hot food and ice cold soda by the Society.

A surprise feature of the afternoon was the presence of two antique automobiles, brought by Herb Singe and Bob Abbot, his museum curator. One was a 1915 Ford Model T, and the other was a 1935 Ford convertible sedan touring car. Both attracted a

great deal of attention.

Our president, Charles Shallcross, re-enacted his former life as a school teacher by holding a question and answering session, of historical trivia, all of which produced some interesting comments, and a few laughs from his "student body" of picnickers.

A special "thank you" was extended to Herb Singe, of Hillside, for his invitation to meet last June and his wonderful museum of early automobiles and other Americana.

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## Four Centuries in a Weekend

On the weekend of 18/19

October, the 21st presentation of the Four Centuries in a Weekend program was held throughout Union County, with more than twenty-five historic sites and museums open free to all visitors.

Sponsored and coordinated by the county's Office of Cultrual and Heritage Affairs, this program has been copied by other counties within the state. Although our society has no such site, many of its members are also members of other historical groups, and take an active part in those sites as docents.

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## Holiday Meeting and Party

On December 14 we will hold our regularly scheduled





meeting and holiday party, which will take place at the conclusion of the meeting, in the Hanson House. Friends and members are invited to attend and enjoy a pleasant afternoon. Also, an interesting program has been arranged for the occasion.

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### October Meeting

The regular meeting of the Society was held in the Hanson House on October 5. An election was held for the officers of the coming year, although there was little change from those of the current year. As president, Charles Shallcross continues his two year term, and the vice-president, secretary, and treasurer were re-elected with no opposition.

Meeting dates for the year of 2015 were announced, as they have been confirmed by Cranford for the use of the Hanson House.

An interesting program had been arranged for the meeting and was presented by Mr. Bruce Tucker, who has studied the life of Admiral David Glasgow Farragut, and presented himself as the admiral in person.



In his talk he gave a complete account of the Battle of Mobile Bay during the Civil War, in which he was in command of a Union fleet of thirty vessels. It was in this Battle that he gave orders to ignore the floating torpedoes

and proceed ahead. The battle was won after hours of intense fighting.

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### Pictures From Our Files

Here's the old Central Railroad Elizabethport station area back in 1923, long before the tracks were raised. The station itself is just a wee bit to the right of the main line at the intersection of the tracks. Oddly enough, the station,



built near the close of the Civil War, could not be reached without walking over some portion of the tracks. The main line ran from Jersey City through Union County and points west, while the crossing rails could take a train north to Newark or south along the Shore Line of the railroad. Switches and curved rail connections allowed a train to be diverted to any of the other tracks.

Most of the area of the upper left of the picture is of the maintenance shops of the railroad, where locomotives and cars could be rebuilt. A turntable could allow a locomotive to enter any one of the many bays surrounding it.

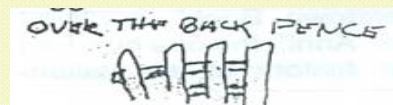
To the upper right of the picture are the many buildings of the Singer Company, maker of sewing machines, and also visible are some of the private

homes nearby.

By 1937 the danger of the many grade crossings to local traffic caused the elevation of the entire trackage and the erection of a new improved station. When the old station was razed, the workers found many old coins that had fallen through the cracks of the old wooden platforms. Some of the coins pre-dated the Civil War.

The group of houses to the lower left in the picture are on Schiller Street. This street once crossed the tracks at grade, but no bridge was built in its place. Instead, this isolated community was made accessible through the station by means of Dowd Avenue, once a paper street known as Humbolt Street.

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Pat Pagnetti says that records indicate that a dead horse found on Faitoute Avenue was once dragged around the corner to Clay Avenue because the officer investigating the incident could not spell "Faitoute". Apparently there was no sign on a pole at the corner of the intersection for him to copy.