



# UNION COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## Meeting of May 21, 2017

The meeting of May 21 was held in the Hanson House as scheduled. This was our annual Student Award meeting, where four senior high school students from Union County were presented with a financial gift as well as two books of local history, published by the Society. These books should add to their knowledge of the early days of Union County.

McGovern, of Kent Place School, Catherine Figueiredo, of Elizabeth High School, and Cameron Scalera of Westfield High School.

Once the presentations had been concluded there was an opportunity to meet and visit with family members of the recipients. There was also a photo session for the many cameras that were on hand.

Refreshments were served after the meeting.

Society will be on September 10, at the Hanson House. This will be our annual Picnic Meeting, which will be held in the rear yard of the house, at 2 pm.

The Society will provide the soda, hamburgers, and hot dogs,, while the members are asked to bring any sort of picnic food. All members are invited to attend, and bring a guest, if desired.

Although the September meeting is primarily a social event, a small amount of Society business must be accomplished, which includes the presentation of a slate of officers to be elected at the annual meeting in October. At that time nominations can be made from the floor, should anyone else wish to run for any open office.

## LNJHS Meeting

On Saturday, June 10, the League of New Jersey



These awards are of a competitive nature, with brief essays written and submitted to the award committee by any student interested in the history of this area. From these essays the committee selects the four winners, and its judgment is final.

The four awards were presented by the chairman, Mike Yesenko, with the assistance of our president Charles Shallcross,

After brief interviews with the recipients, the awards went to Rabia Brown, of Union High School, Caitlyn



**Next Meeting Date**  
The next meeting of the

Historical Societies, of which our society is a member, met for the Spring Meeting at the

Liberty Hall Museum in Union N.J. Some of our members attended and enjoyed the program.

The League business was taken care of in the morning, and it included Publication Awards to various member societies for new books, newsletters, and similar items produced in the past year.

This was followed by a presentation by Bill Schroh, the Director of Operations for Liberty Hall Museum, who explained how an eighteenth century house stayed up with a twenty-first century world.

He did this with a number of placards and a video slide show, with the images projected directly onto the white wall of the meeting room.

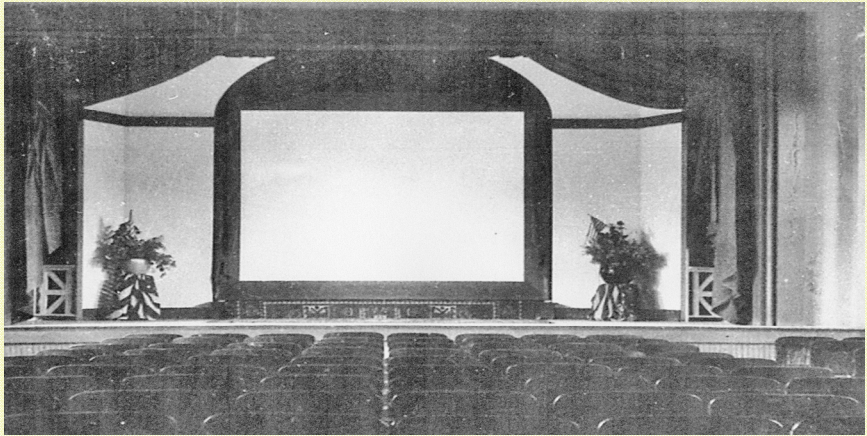
After that program was concluded, many members of the meeting had an opportunity to announce and discuss the varied activities of their societies.

Because the projector was still set up, we were given a chance to show our own slide show, about things that originated first in Union County.

At noon lunch was served, and we had an opportunity to explore the gardens and the Firehouse Museum, as well as the Blue House Gift Shop.

The afternoon sessions included any other business and a tour of an exhibit about the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Great War, featuring United States entry into that war in April of 1917. There was an opportunity to explore the main floor of the Liberty Hall Museum, the home of William Livingston, the first governor of the State of New Jersey. The house was built in 1772, and has been enlarged through the years to a mansion of fifty rooms. At least three United States Presidents have been visitors to Liberty Hall.

Martha Washington was also a guest in April of 1789, during her husband George's inauguration as the first President of the United States. Her room there is still preserved as it was at that time.



Pictures From our Files

Back in the very early days of motion pictures many of them were shown in storefront "theaters" usually called Nickelodians because of the five cent price of admission. The first films just depicted moments of action, but as the interest of moving pictures developed, so did the idea of telling complete stories. It was not long before existing stage theaters were adapted to be able to show this new form of entertainment.

Things were different in Roselle, New Jersey. There was no theater, but the new Borough Hall had just opened for business on November 11, 1911, and it had a large room on the second floor to be used for borough business.

It also could easily be used as a movie theater. At one end was a stage, and at the other end was a balcony. A screen was set up at the back of the stage and the projectors were placed on the balcony. Harrison Gardiner, of Roselle, was the operator.

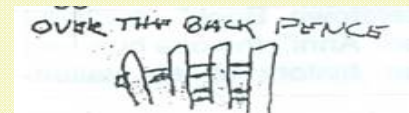
A company, "Borough Hall

Movies" was set up and on weekends first-rate movies were presented, with the price of admission as much as ten or twenty five cents, afternoon or evening.

Our photograph below is of the auditorium of the Roselle

Borough Hall set up for movies. Oddly enough, the screen was retained long after the end of the Borough Hall Movies. It was still there when the building was torn down and replaced by the present Borough Hall, back in 1977.

Among the films shown were "The Flaming Sword", with John Barrymore and Jane Grey, and other pictures from D. W. Griffith, starring Mae Marsh, Lillian Gish, Mabel Norman and Henry Walthall. William S. Hart was also a very popular attraction.



Our thanks to Barbara Sokol for her indispensable computer work in the office. She is our expert in that area.

Bill Frolich asks if they can build a self-driving truck or automobile, when will they build a self-driving lawn mower? Some mowers are already self-propelled, so why not add this feature?