



UNION COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Annual Picnic

As scheduled, our annual picnic was held September 11, 2016, in the rear yard of the Hanson House. About thirty or more guests and members attended and were treated to an enjoyable time. Even the weather cooperated with a bright, sunny day.

There was plenty of food on hand and Steve Yeats was our chef, cooking hamburgers and hot dogs. A feature of the afternoon was the presence of two antique cars from the Herb Singe Museum.

Charles Shallcross handled the small amount of business by introducing a slate of officers' names for the annual election in October and also presented a certificate of life membership to Tom Beisler. He conducted a quiz program of actual test questions asked of immigrants applying for citizenship. (Most of us passed.)

Our thanks to those who brought food, and to the set-up and clean-up volunteers. There was no trace of a picnic left on the grounds after we left for the day.

Missing Sounds

In this day and age we are no longer hearing the sounds which used to be quite familiar to us. They have been replaced by the roar of jet engines overhead and the sound of heavy automobile traffic in the streets.

Gone are all of those early

morning sounds of the milkman's horse and wagon and the klink of his bottles as he exchanged empty ones for full ones on the porches of our houses.

No longer heard are the cries of the junkman as he traveled through the streets asking for scrap metal or old rags, for which he might buy for a few cents.

When was last heard the

Distinctive horn of the chain driven Mack Truck, or the fancy "aiuga" horn of a few bragging automobile drivers?

Gone also is the sound of the steam locomotive in the night as it began to move a train of a hundred freight cars from the Elizabethport yards as the engineer cautiously advanced his throttle. A bit too much and the slow "chug" became a rapid series of



“chugs” as the drive wheels lost traction on the rails and spun uselessly. After closing the throttle the engineer tried again, and again, until the train was finally rolling along smoothly toward its westward destination.

The trolley car has also vanished from the scene, with its quiet “hiss” of the trolley pole as it glided along the overhead electric wires from where it drew its power.

Gone also is the “clang, clang of its bell as the annoyed motorman tried to clear an obstructing vehicle from his path along the steel rails embedded in the street.

Radio has ended the whistle-blowing form of communication between ships plying the waters of the Arthur Kill, as they moved into berths or headed out to sea. Instead of using their deep-toned whistles their pilots simply explain by radio their intended movements to other ships and to the dockworkers on the piers.

Pictures From Our Files

Here is a scene familiar to many students of old School # 10 in Elizabeth. It is the entrance gate to the Irvington Avenue Reservoir. Back in the good old days water from the nearby Elizabeth River was stored here after having been treated at the upstream Ursino Lake filtration and pumping station. From there an underground pipe fed the water into the reservoir and then into the distribution system. Small fish lived in the reservoir, tempting the skills of trespassing fishermen.

By 1929, the river water had become contaminated and no longer drinkable, and shortly after the reservoir was drained and lay idle for years. However, while it was empty,



the high embankment and the deep hole created a good ramp for sleds and skis when it was covered with the snows of several winters. It attracted most of the children of the neighboring area, who enjoyed hours of pleasure on its slopes.

Several years later, luxury apartments, known as Pierce Manor, were built in the empty reservoir bed, with garages in the basement floor. All went well for a few years, but then a severe summer storm blew in, causing flooding in many areas.

Upstream, Ursino Lake overflowed, and the forgotten underground pipe carried that water into the former Irvington Avenue Reservoir, filling it to a depth of about four feet. Many cars in the garages were badly damaged by the flooding water.

That underground pipe was soon plugged up!

Next Meeting Date

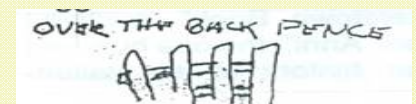
Our next meeting date is scheduled for December 11, 2016, starting at 2 pm. This will be our holiday party and will be held in Herb Singe’s amazing Antique Museum.

Herb has brought some of his old automobiles to our picnics, but he has many more in his museum, all in mint

condition. Don’t miss a chance to see them, as well as other items.



We regret to announce that the Society has lost another long-time member, with the death of Mrs. Barbara Bogard, widow of Edward, Jr. on October 9, 2016. Born on October 5, 1924, she was 92 years old.



Our newsletter has received compliments on doing a great job from Dr. Walter Boright, a long-time member. Thank you, Walter.

Our fame is spreading and the Society has just acquired a new member who lives in Florida. We welcome all persons who are interested in history.