



UNION COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



March 3 Meeting

The meeting of March 3, will be held at 2pm in the Hanson House, with our guest speaker, Aimee Fernandez-Puente, Supervisor of the Local History and Special Collections Department of the Elizabeth Public Library

She will describe and explain the scope and content of the library's collection and its availability to researchers of Elizabeth and Union County. Her program is entitled, "History Lives at the Elizabeth Public Library."

Annual Dinner

Our annual anniversary dinner will be held April 7, 2019 at 2 pm in the Garden Restaurant on Magie Avenue in Elizabeth near the Union town line. This will be the 150th anniversary of the birth of the Society.

The program for the afternoon will be given by our vice-president and author Joanne Rajoppi, who will tell us about life in Elizabethtown during the years of American Revolution. With the British occupying Staten Island only five hundred feet across the water of the Arthur Kill, armed raids in both directions took place frequently with rarely a dull moment for the town.

Some of those raids included the burning of the Presbyterian Church and the nearby Court House.

The price for the dinner will be \$35., payable in advance to our treasurer, with a check made to the Union County

Historical Society. We hope to have at least thirty people attend, members and guests. Please get your order in early, to relieve the minds of the committee.

Rajoppi Verifies Elections

On January 2, 2019 the



County Clerk, Joanne Rajoppi who is also the Society's vice-president, attended Roselle's re-organizing meeting and verified the election of the two new council-people who were sworn in to office shortly after. The meeting room was well crowded with relatives, friends and well-wishers from the general public.

The next day Joanne did the same thing at the Roselle Park re-organization meeting.

"Remember the Maine"

Thus was the battle-cry on February 15, 1898 only one hundred twenty one years

ago, after the battleship USS Maine exploded and sank in Havana harbor in Cuba. With blame for the disaster falling on the Spaniards, this act soon brought on the Spanish-American War, resulting in the defeat of Spain and the many heroes of the United States armed forces.

A monument honoring a victim from Elizabeth of the explosion stands in a park in the port section of that city just across the street from St. Patrick's Cathedral. The



monument features a rusted ten-inch cannon projectile salvaged from the wreck of the sunken battle-ship. Cleaned and restored, it

stands atop a tall base.



deal where Edison would build a generating station, install the poles, wires and bulbs to any building permitted by its owners and also provide street lighting.

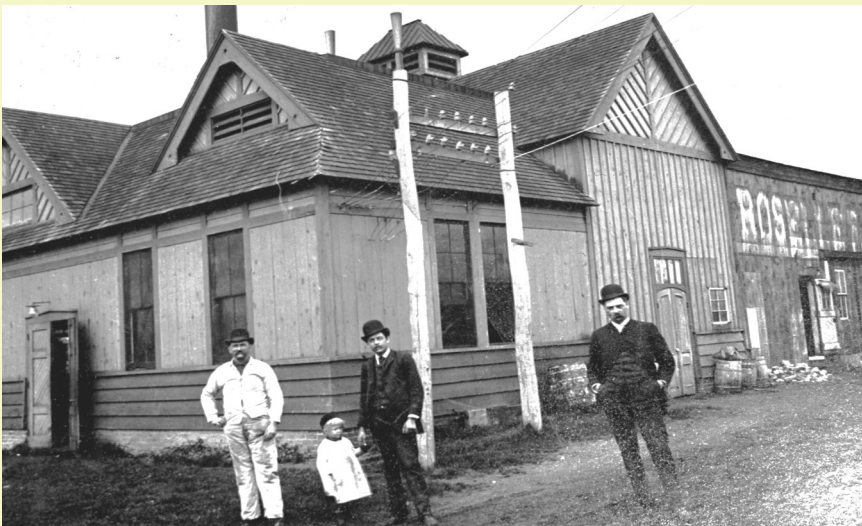
Edison would assume the entire expense for this project for one year. The cost to the village was a single dollar.

The work was begun, and

broken off and his father was holding his finger over the hole to keep the "juice" from running out.

A woman working in her kitchen accidentally brushed a wire with her dishpan and a flash and a hole appeared in the pan.

When Edison's year was up, he ended his experiment



Pictures From Our Files

Shown here is a picture of Thomas Edison's First Village Generating Plant for Isolated Light, where it all began January 19, 1883. The station was a part of an experiment by Edison to prove that he could light an entire village with electricity from a single source.

Having invented a practical incandescent electrically powered light bulb, Edison needed a means to show it to the world. He sought a town that did not have gas and the Village of Roselle, New Jersey was the answer.

In 1882 the village of Roselle was still a residential section of Linden Township, operated by the Roselle Land Improvement Company and Miller Fox Moore, who worked with Edison in Menlo Park, was a resident on East Fourth Avenue in Roselle.

He arranged a meeting between Edison and the town officials, and the result was a

when, on January 19, 1883, the steam-driven generator was turned on, electricity flowed to and illuminated 150 street lamps and forty buildings, including houses, Stone's store on Westfield Avenue in what became Roselle Park and the railroad station. A few months later, the First Presbyterian Church was so lighted, and thus the village and church became the first in the world to be lighted with Thomas Edison's light bulb.

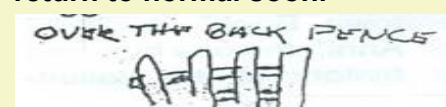
By today's standards the light system was primitive. There were no switches. When the generator ran, all of the bulbs were lit, and when the engineer shut down and went home, all of the lights went out. However, this experiment was successful, and led to the world-wide use of electricity.

This new electricity was not without its incidents. A boy ran to the engineer for information, because the tip of a light bulb had been

and went on to other work, but the people of Roselle assumed the work of the generator for another nine years. Finally meters were installed in the buildings, but by town ordinance, they had to be in the top floor of the building where the wires were connected, and the meter reader had to travel through the houses to read them.

Winter Weather

The sloppy weather and the threat of severe storms interrupted the work of the office staff at the Hanson House and caused delays in answering mail, but we are now catching up, and hope to return to normal soon.



Bill Frolich wonders if anyone else remembers the toboggan chutes that the county set up on the Galloping Hill Golf Course about 1940, when it was covered with snow.