



# UNION COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## September Meeting

The Union County Historical Society joined with Kean University History Department and the Union County Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs on September 22nd to host Dr. Christopher M. Bellitto's presentation of a lecture entitled "Ancient Greece and Rome Meet Revolutionary New Jersey". The talk was held on the Liberty Hall campus in Union.

The free lecture, attended by approximately 40 people, is the first in a series being offered by the three groups to encourage and foster historical research and the study of history pertaining to the Elizabethtown area.

"Dr. Bellitto's talk," UCHS President Joanne Rajoppi said, "explored Liberty Hall archives to discover how John Kean, the first cashier of the US Bank and William Livingston, the first and longest serving NJ Governor, employed classical Greece and Rome for inspiration. This fascinating talk captured the audience's imagination on how a new nation used the ancient past to chart its Revolutionary course toward establishing a new nation."

Ms. Rajoppi said that the next lecture is currently scheduled for spring 2022 and will be announced in the early new year.



Charles Shallcross, UCHS President Joanne Rajoppi, Dr. Christopher Bellitto, and John Prescott UC Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs



### Sad News for UCHS

It is with deep regret that we announce the passing of the Society's longtime Treasurer Bill Frolich of Roselle on September 30th after a short illness. Mr. Frolich was 101 years old. He also served as a Trustee for the Hillside Historical Society and as Treasurer for the Roselle Park Historical Society.

Mr. Frolich was a 45 year member of the Society becoming active when the

society was revitalized for the Bicentennial celebration in 1976. "His breath of knowledge of Union County history was extraordinary," President Rajoppi said, "and he will be sorely missed. He served as a dedicated and committed Treasurer, a fine steward of the Society's funds as well as editor of this newsletter."

Our sympathy and condolences are extended to the Frolich family. May he rest in peace.

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### UCHS New Treasurer Appointed

Society member Lauren Socha has been appointed the new Treasurer of the Society at a recent meeting of the Board of Trustees. A Mayflower descendant and former math major in college, we welcome Lauren to this post and have every confidence that she will perform admirably as the steward of the society's funds

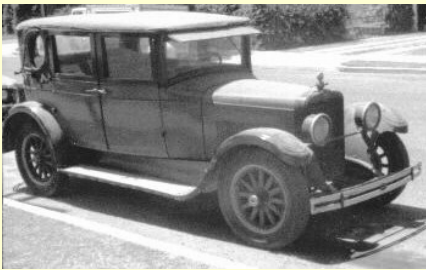
**Thoughts About the Last 100  
Years by Bill Frolich  
Part 1**

We have been asked to record the changes in our lives caused by the deadly virus called COVID-19 in 2020. I shall record the changes in my life in the last one hundred years, for I am slightly more than one hundred years of age. The deadly influenza epidemic caused little change, because my life had just begun, but I can tell about life in the 1920s. We lived at the edge of Elizabeth on Morris Avenue, with the city line with Union only about two hundred feet away.

Although we had city water in our house, we still had and occasionally used the pitcher pump to draw water from the well in the backyard. Passing wagon drivers also used it to get water for their horses. Apple trees and cherry trees provided fresh fruit for eating and canning for future use. An old grape arbor gave us both white and purple grapes for immediate consumption and for cooking, squeezing, and bottling as grape juice. A vegetable garden gave us an assortment of vegetables in season, while flower gardens dotted the backyard here and there.

Alongside of the house was a cinder driveway that led to an old, three bay barn, once used by horse and carriage, but now used by two gentlemen as garages for their automobiles. Every Saturday they appeared and cleaned and washed their cars. At that time we had no car.

In 1925 the family decided that it was time to get and learn to drive a motor vehicle. My father, mother, and her sister obtained driver licenses, and a cousin, a used car salesman, sold us a well-used Franklin Touring Car



This was a black, open, four door, canvassed-roofed vehicle that was difficult to drive, and two weeks later it was traded in for a 1924 four door Rickenbacher sedan, which we drove for eleven years. My mother was the principle driver, and I learned how to drive by sitting next to her and watching her steer, shift gears, and brake. However it was many years before I could use this knowledge.

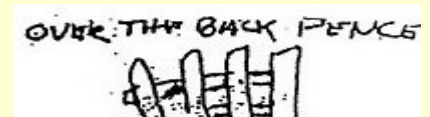
In the first years of the twentieth century ice was still cut from frozen rivers and lakes and stored in ice houses, to be used later in home ice-boxes. These boxes were usually sheet-metal-lined, quarter-sawn oak chests with nickel-plated hinges and handles. Divided into two parts, the upper portion contained the block of ice, while food was kept in the lower compartment. As the ice melted, its water was drained by a tube into a large pan resting on the floor below. This pan had to be emptied about every



other day, or it might overflow onto the floor. We cured this problem by drilling a hole through the floor and connecting the tube to a drain in the cellar.

School started when you were five years old. One of its first requirements was vaccination to prevent all sorts of disease. As this inoculation always left a visible, permanent scar it was usually done on an arm near the shoulder, but some girls had it done on a thigh where it might not be seen. (It says here.) Almost everyone walked to school, including the teachers. Most of the grammar schools were within only a few blocks of a home, and there was no large fleet of school busses available. However, if you lived more than two miles from your school you did qualify for a bus ride to school. Some commercial bus and trolley companies did offer discounted fares for students.

Schooling started with Kindergarten, but if you already knew your ABCs and could count and understood numbers you soon found yourself in First Grade. All the schools' walls were covered with slate blackboards with chalk trays at the bottom. Here you learned to write your name and a few other words in cursive handwriting, and how to use chalk and not make an ear-piercing screech.



**We miss you Bill.**