

Local Spotlight: Repository Holdings Chatham Township Historical Society & Museum

by Jody Lutter and Mary-Jo Solomon

The Chatham Township Historical Museum is located in the Red Brick Schoolhouse Building at 24 Southern Boulevard, Chatham Township, New Jersey. The museum is open on the first Sunday from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm and by special appointment.

Admission is free. Telephone 973-635-4911

Website: www.chathamtownshiphistoricalsociety.org

The Library of the Chathams is located at 214 Main Street, Chatham.



On Sunday September 24, 2017 MAGS Special Projects Group members Jody Lutter and Mary-Jo Solomon took the House Tour of the Noe Farmstead. After the tour, Pat Wells, co-president, and Sarah Stanley, vice president, spoke about the historical society and the programs.

The CTHS has an extensive website with information about the museum, programs, meetings, collections and publications. One of their ongoing projects is to make a list of all holdings viewable on the website so that it is a resource for genealogists and historians. The ultimate goal is to make all the databases available online at the website. The Past Perfect software inventory program is used to inventory all the items in the collections. Photographs have been entered and documents and artifacts are currently being added

The group accepts emails inquiries and will research their holdings at no charge, but would accept monetary donations. This group actively builds bridges to other groups in the area.

The CTHS actively seeks to identify and promote historical places. The Historic Marker Project identifies landmark homes, nine to date. The group has researched the history of these houses and the owners' contributions to the community. There is a PDF file available to download on the website for you to do your own drive-by tour of the sites.

The ongoing Oral History Project conducts interviews with long time residents. Many conversations have been recorded and/or transcribed already.

On October 4 Sheila Goggins, the museum director, Sarah Stanley, vice president, and Sally Walker, trustee and library liaison, opened the museum for Mary-Jo to view the collections and exhibits. This two-floor facility has exhibits for all ages. Each second grader in the township tours the museum. There the docents conduct a lively history program for the children. They actively check out the collections including the one of their school's as they work to answer the questions on the scavenger hunt. There are displays from all different time periods - 1800s cooking and cleaning devices and farm tools, a mural of the early homes in the village with a brochure, Indian arrowheads, artifacts from the Revolutionary War to the contributions of Madeline Huebner, a local World War II code breaker. Large poster displays show the history of the local sites including Madame Bey's boxing camp, the Red Schoolhouse, The Chatham Colony Association and other places.

There is a large collection of area history books and a few family stories as well as vertical files about local families and businesses and some area maps. John T. Cunningham, the New Jersey Historian, wrote the *Images of America Book: Chatham Township*. That book as well as other local stories and memoirs are available at the museum.

The Library of the Chatham has a New Jersey History Room. It contains some family histories and genealogies, the *New Jersey Calendar of Wills 1771-1780*, the privately published correspondence, 1868-1874 the letters of George and Benjamin Vanderpoel, Chatham High School Yearbooks and many local items. The 16-volume Fishawack Papers collection can be downloaded.

The Special Projects Group (SPG) members have been visiting local repositories to learn what genealogy related materials might be available for review by our members in researching their ancestors and/or gaining historical context to enhance their stories. In the series of articles we share the main features of our interviews with repository members spotlighting the information, collections and features available for research at each location.

The SPG has completed the inventory of genealogical and historical information in the vertical files, family binders and the map collection at the Denville Historical Society and Museum. It is now up on the MAGS Public website.

If you know of a local repository that the SPG should visit, or one that you wish to cover with us for a future article, please contact the Special Projects Group Committee at maryjosolomon@gmail.com