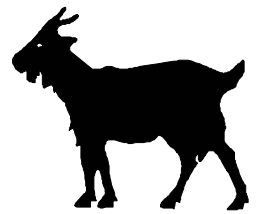


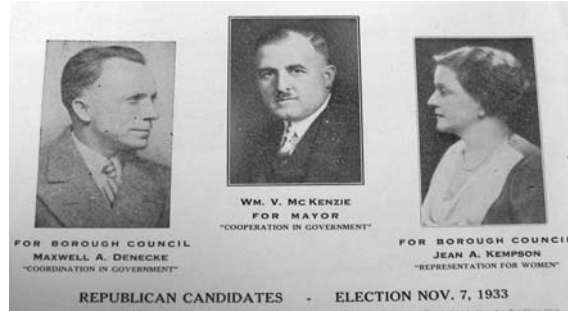
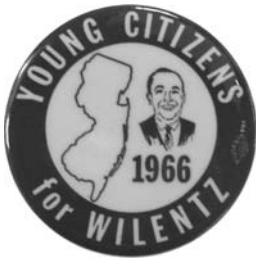
Nannygoats



Vol. 6, Issue 1

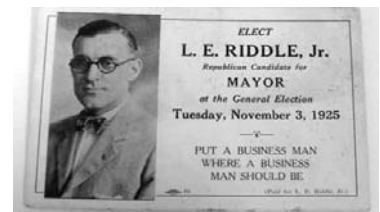
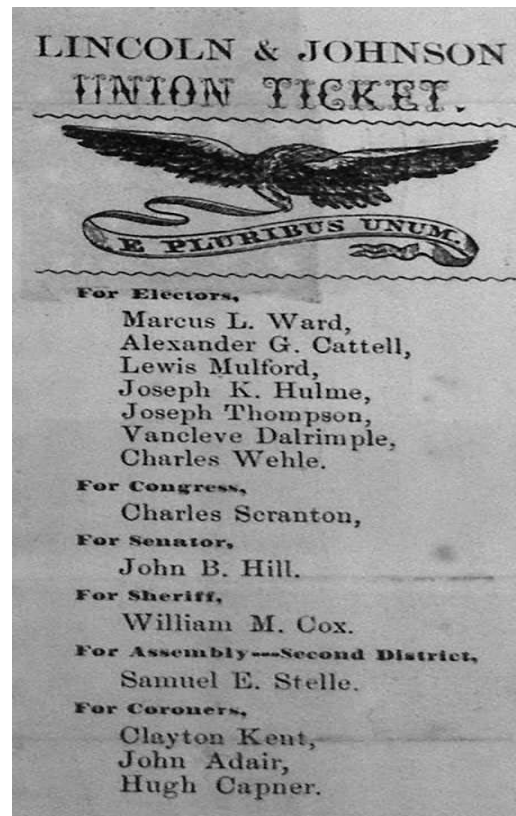
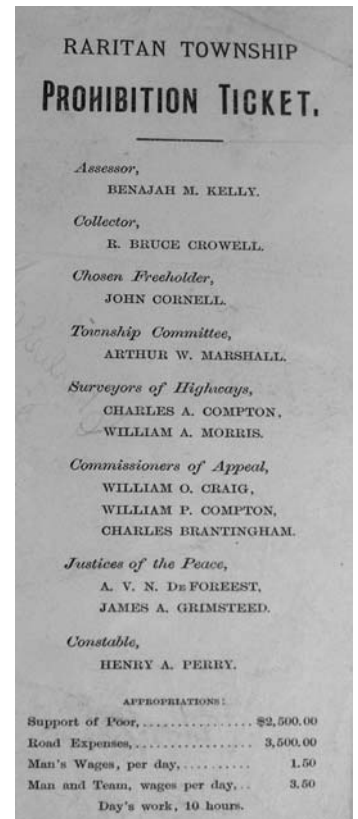
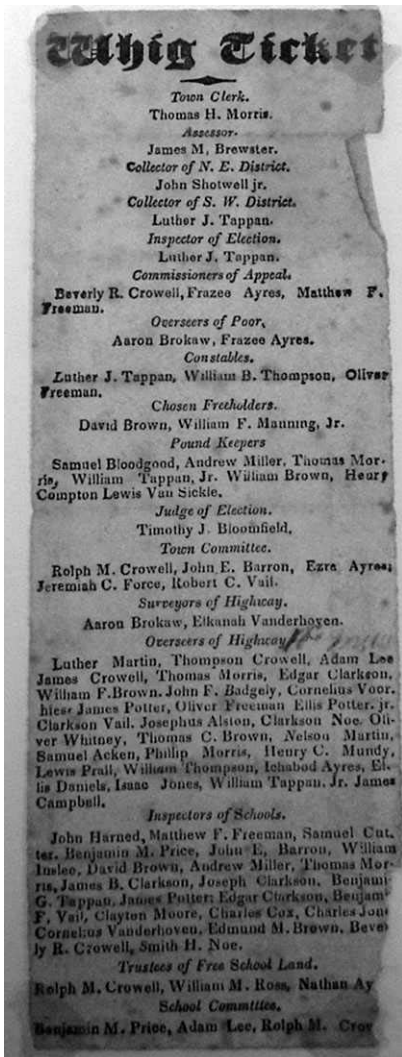
Newsletter of the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society

Winter/Spring 2008



Bygone Ballots

2008 is a major election year in New Jersey, so we went through our files and pulled out some memorabilia from our local voting history. From ballots to banners, pins to potholders, the Society has a wide range of electoral collectibles. Many of these items were on display in January at the Metuchen Public Library, and also at our annual Local History Day in February. Those interested in our political past should also look at the recently acquired Frankel Collection, which highlights Edison's elected history through news clippings and correspondence.



Continued on Pages 4 and 5

The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society was founded in 1974 with the primary purpose of promoting an interest in and appreciation of the history of the Borough of Metuchen and of Edison Township.

The Society regrettably announces that two of its valued members have recently passed away.

Audrey Drake Dana, 84, a long-time local resident and member of the Society, died Thursday, November 29, 2007, at JFK Medical Center in Edison. Mrs. Dana at one time lived at the 23-room estate known as "Roselawn" on Park Avenue, and donated many of her husband's photographs to the Society.

Elinor Blanche McCann, 81, died at her home in Yakima, Washington, on Sunday, December 16, 2007. Mrs. McCann was a past president of the Society and she and her husband Wayne were devoted members for many years before moving away to be closer to family members.

FALL 2007 PROGRAMS A SUCCESS

By Walter R. Stochel, Jr.

On October 28, 2007, Society members & their guests got a look at the newly donated Frey Sen Photograph Collection, dating from the 1940s through the 1960s. Using a power point projector, dozens of photos were shown, including many unidentified sites which members helped to identify. One unidentified photo of a hardware store resulted in a particularly spirited discussion with at least five different opinions of what store it was! The Society has archived three binders of the photographs from the collection, which will be available for viewing on Local History Day and during Grimstead Room hours.

As part of our efforts to learn more about the history of our community, the Society held a joint program at the Fugle Hummer Post 65 American Legion on November 4, 2007. Walter Zjawin of the Post talked about the history of the American Legion, the Fugle Hummer Post itself, and displayed some of their WWI and WWII rifles. The Post also donated their files from 1919 to the 1960s for the Society to copy and add to our collection. Did you know that the current Fugle Hummer Post was originally an annex to the Metuchen High School, and was moved to it's current location on Lake Avenue?

Society Seeking Qualified Staff Assistant

The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society is searching for an assistant to organize and manage the Society's Grimstead Room archives and collections. Responsibilities would include organizing materials in the archives, enhancing the existing information captured in the current database (e.g., expanding keywords), cataloging new materials in the electronic database, filing materials, and coordinating with the Metuchen Library regarding origin and ownership of items in the room. As part of managing the collections, this person would acknowledge donations and obtain releases wherever possible, enhance the database and assist with migrating to a more sophisticated system, create electronic files of photographs and other images, and scan (for use in later duplication) the current Grimstead Photographs. On an as-needed basis, this person would also assist with displays by creating new legends/captions for materials in the archives, assisting with the selection, preparation, and display of materials, and re-filing materials after use.

The position requires 8 hours per week (on a flexible schedule), with an hourly rate based on experience and skills. Excellent computer skills are required, and an interest in history and previous archives experience are a plus. For more information or to apply, please contact Walter Stochel at 732-906-0529 or via email at wstochel@earthlink.net.



New in the Collection...

Thanks are again due to former Metuchen resident William Molineux for his recent donation of photographs of Main Street and the old Borough Hall. The nighttime images were taken at Christmas in 1948, and show off the town's festive holiday decorations.



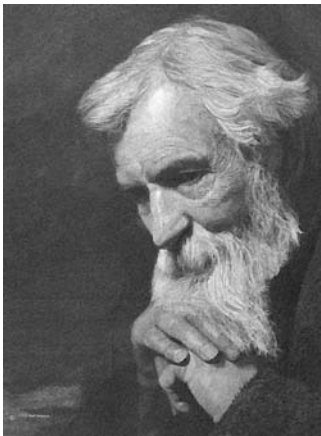
Class of 1931 History

The following text is continued from the Class of 1931's *History of Metuchen*, which is being reprinted in *Nannygoats* serially (beginning with Volume 5, Issue 2, Summer 2007). Please note that there are known factual and grammatical errors, but the document is reproduced exactly as written.

PROMINENT PEOPLE

One of the most absorbing chapters in the story of Metuchen lies in the lives of the prominent people who have, at some time been connected with Metuchen. Some twenty-five or thirty individuals make up a group of versatile talented people whose work placed them in the spotlight. Seventeen of those have been listed in Who's Who. Some are prominent morely [sic], locally, others throughout the state, and several throughout the country. All have made names for themselves one way or another.

Probably one of the outstanding features of Metuchen has been the literary atmosphere that has crept in, and given the town some fine old traditions. In that respect it bears a good deal resemblance to the old New England villages which produced many brilliant writers throughout the course of American history. Metuchen has been represented by quite a number of writers and newspaper men, and from the work of these people has sprung the



Henry M. Alden, in an illustration from *Harper's Monthly*, December, 1919.

background that gives our town a strong flavor of literary culture. The very foundation of this background is an outstanding literary man of his time, Henry M. Alden, who for many years was editor of *Harpers Magazine*. In his capacity as editor he naturally came into contact with many writers and his magnetic personality drew them to Metuchen. He lived on Chestnut Avenue in the long, rambling red house near Plainfield Avenue where the Stevens brothers, artists, now reside. There he gave parties

for the various members of the literary clan who dropped in on him from time to time. Much of Metuchen's literary background sprang from this.

The start of Henry Alden's career took place in 1863 when he became Managing Editor of *Harpers Magazine*. It did not take him long to become acclimated and soon his hospitality and fine personality made him prominent in literary circles and gradually he became one of a famous little literary group. Particularly associated with him both in his work, and socially, was William Dean Howells, famous American realist. Several distinctive collections of short stories were edited by these two men.

For fifty years Mr. Alden remained as editor of *Harper's Magazine*. During that time much of American Literature passed before him and he regarded with keenly interested eyes all youthful writers. His peculiar knack of developing unknowns was well known and that class of writers always found him a sympathetic aid in their troubles. Two of those whom he brought into prominence were Mary Wilkins

Freeman, brilliant New England realist, and Owen Wister, American novelist.

Mr. Alden remained in comparative obscurity during many of his years as editor. Not until 1890 did he make any of his own contributions to literature. In that year he published "God in His World," which became very popular and which brought him much belated fame. Five years later he revealed his power in "A Study of Death," an essay of extraordinary depth. It dealt with the subject of mysticism and was closely connected with the subject of metaphysics in which he was deeply interested. Mr. Alden produced two other books but they never received as much attention as those other two.

Due to his friendliness and personality many people of literary prominence came to Metuchen to visit him at various times. Among those who were his guests on one occasion or another were Mark Twain, famous humorist whose books are classics, and whose name is a household word thorough the civilized world, William Dean Howells, probably the greatest of all American realistic writers, Owen Wister, popular American novelist of the present day, Princess Trumbetski, Mrs. William Lanthrop, Lafcadio Hearn, strange personality, who is noted for his works on Japan, and others.

Another famous guest of Henry Alden's was Miss Mary E. Wilkins of Randolph, Massachusetts, who came to visit him about thirty years ago. Miss Wilkins had been discovered by Henry Alden and for a number of years she had been writing stories about New England which had made her famous.

In Metuchen she met Dr. Charles Manning Freeman, whom she married on January 1, 1902. Her first home here was the residence now occupied by the Von Hartz family.

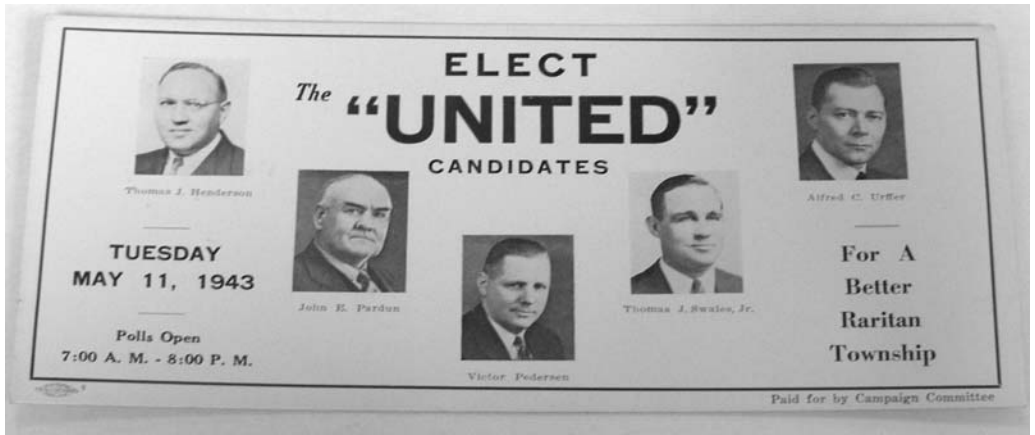
Mrs. Freeman brought her work with her. A few years after she had come to Metuchen she was one of two participants in a contest to decide the best author in America and England. Stories were written and published serially in a magazine. At the end of the contest a popular vote was taken among readers throughout the country and Mrs. Freeman's story won by a large majority.

Mrs. Freeman's manner of writing was a bit different from many of her contemporaries in that she rarely revised or rewrote anything, once finished. Rather she paid close attention to the construction as she went along, and spent much time in making each part fit smoothly into the whole.

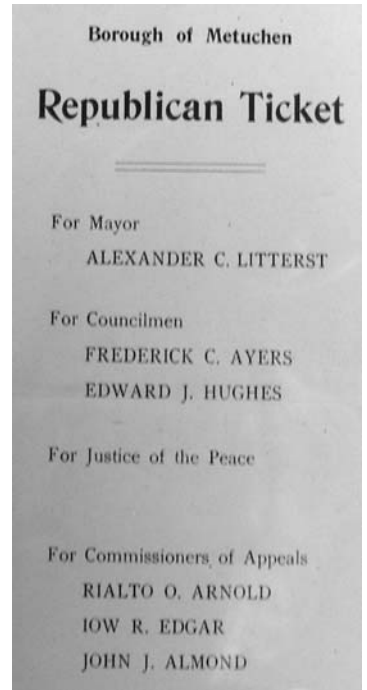


Mary E. Wilkins, from the frontispiece of her 1892 novel *Jane Field*.

Continued on Page 6



The Society's 'election collection' contains items from the second half of the nineteenth century through to the present, including original primary return tallies, news clippings, and a wealth of political handbill and profiles. The unusual round pin below promoted Costa, Phillips, Warren, Patton, and Jamison for various Middlesex County offices, ca. 1961.



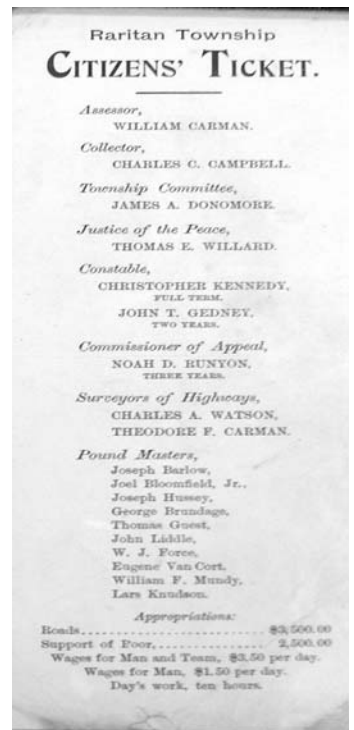
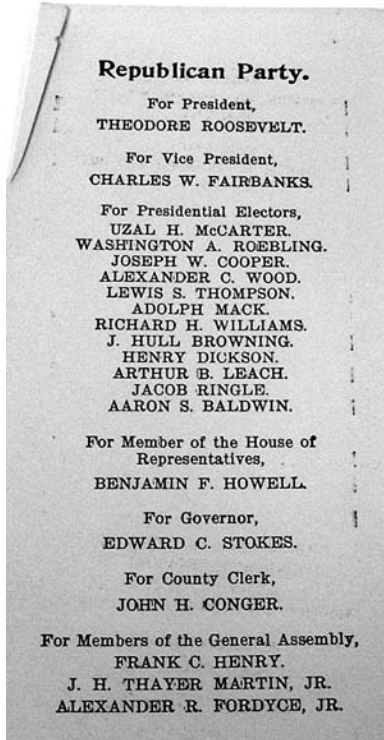
DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY RETURNS
CITY - BOROUGH - TOWNSHIP

This Statement must be made in duplicate and one copy filed in the office of the COUNTY CLERK and the other in the office of the CLERK IN THE MUNICIPALITY WHEREIN THE ELECTION IS HELD.

A Statement of the result of a Primary Election held in the Brendon School District 1st of the Borough of Metuchen in the County of Middlesex, on the 19th day of September, in the year of our Lord, one thousand nine hundred and 39 for the following named officers:

Total Number of Votes Registered 485
The Total Number of Democratic Ballots cast was 143
The Total Number of Democratic Ballots rejected was None

For	Received	Votes
STATE SENATOR JOHN E. TOOKAN	Thirty-nine	39
MEMBERS OF THE GEN. ASSEMBLY		
FRED W. DEVSE	Thirty-seven	37
AMBROSE J. MUDRAK	Thirty-nine	39
BERNARD W. VOGL	Thirty-seven	37
COUNTY CLERK		
EDWARD PATTEN	Twenty-nine	29
PATRICK J. MORAN	Five	5
CORNER		
WILLIAM H. JAQUI	Twenty-four	24
ROBERT H. JAMISON	Fourteen	14





Original campaign posters for George Silzer and Ed Edwards are shown here. Edwards was Governor of New Jersey prior to Silzer, then later ran for U.S. Senate on Silzer's Governor ticket, and both won. Silzer served as New Jersey's Governor from 1923 to 1926, and is shown in the oval photo above with his wife and adult son on the porch of their elegant Metuchen home at 79 Graham Avenue.

Some of the more creative campaign ephemera in our collections include a 1972 potholder, a 1974 poker chip promoting a casino gambling referendum, and a 1957 rotary phone dialer.

RARITAN TOWNSHIP
REPUBLICAN TICKET.
 FIRST POLLING DISTRICT.
 Judge of Election,
 FRANCIS GEIMSTEAD.
 Inspector of Election,
 BENJAMIN C. VOORHEES.
 Poll Clerk,
 WALTER C. CAMPBELL.
 Town Clerk,
 JOHN C. BADGLEY.
 Assessor,
 RIALTO O. ARNOLD.
 Collector,
 CHARLES H. ANDRUS.
 Chosen Freeholder,
 WILLIAM H. BRUNDAGE.
 Township Committee,
 CHARLES S. EDGAR.
 Surveyors of Highways,
 CHARLES A. WATSON,
 AUGUSTUS BLACKFORD.
 Commissioners of Appeal,
FRANK RUNYON—2 years.
 WILLIAM BURNS,
 THOMAS S. A. SMITH.
 Overseer of the Poor,
 JOHN V. TEN EYCK.
 Justice of the Peace,
 ISAAC LYDALL.
 Constable,
 WILLIAM WEST.
 Appropriations for Support of Poor. \$2500.00
 Appropriations for Roads. \$3,000.00
 Wages per day for Man. \$1.50
 Wages per day for Man and Team. . . . \$3.50
 Days' work. 10 hours.



Continued from Page 3

Subject matter was chiefly a product of her imagination as were her characters although on rare occasion she might use a person from real life. At one time great excitement was aroused in Metuchen when it was thought she had chosen some of her characters from Metuchen people. Her New England backgrounds were drawn from the memories of childhood.

Mrs. Freeman was a prolific writer of fiction and throughout her life she produced much work. Her stories, simple in style and plot, were realistic tales of New England folk. 1886 saw the start of her career, and in 1887 *A Humble Romance* made her widely known. The most important of her works include, *A New England Nun and Other Stories*, *Pembroke*, *People of Our Neighborhood*, *By the Light of the Soul*, *Silence and Other Stories*, *The Jamesons*, and *The Portion of Labor*. Besides these and numerous other novels and short stories she wrote poetry and one play.

Mrs. Freeman spent the last few years of life quietly, at her home on Lake Avenue. She died March 14, 1930.

Future issues of *Nannygoats* will continue reprinting the Class of 1931's *History of Metuchen*, including more from *Prominent People*, and several successive chapters.



Mary Wilkins Freeman, on the porch of her home on Lake Avenue, shown in a postcard view below.



Interested in New Jersey History?

New Jersey history lovers are encouraged to subscribe to the New Jersey History List Serve, also known as "H-New-Jersey." The subject of this H-Net discussion group is everything concerned with the study of New Jersey history, and is open to anyone with an interest in the subject, including (but not limited to) academic researchers, teachers, students, archivists, historic site staff, volunteers, genealogists, archaeologists, and historic preservationists. Subscription to the service is **FREE**, and you can unsubscribe at any time. H-New Jersey is sponsored by the New Jersey Historical Commission as a service to the state's history community. To subscribe, go to the following website: www.h-net.org. Select "discussion networks" at the top of the screen, then scroll down and click on "H-New-Jersey" to reach the list serve's homepage. Select "subscribe" on the left side of the screen, and you will be prompted on how to enter your email address into the subscriber's list. For more information, please contact Dr. Marc Mappen, Executive Director of the New Jersey Historical Commission, at 609-984-0902 or mmappen@admin.sos.state.nj.us.

Interested in Becoming a *Nannygoats* Contributor?

Do you have an interesting story, fact, or image that you think would make a good addition to a future issue of *Nannygoats*? If so, please contact the Editor... If your submission is published, we'll send you a complimentary copy of the 1888 "Crumbs of Comfort" history and cookbook! The submission deadline for the Summer 2008 issue is **May 31, 2008**.

Nannygoats Editor
Metuchen-Edison Historical Society
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Metuchen, NJ 08840

ayersallenhouse@msn.com
732-452-1381

Rutgers University Libraries Exhibition

"Garden State Harvest: New Jersey's Agricultural Heritage"

Remigio U. Pane Room, 1st floor
Archibald S. Alexander Library
College Avenue Campus, New Brunswick

New Jersey's dynamic agricultural heritage from pre-colonial times to the present will be highlighted in this exhibition of diaries, letters, journals, broadsides, trade catalogs, photographs, and museum objects illustrating agriculture's broad impact on our state's history and culture. The guest speaker at the exhibition opening on Wednesday, February 13, 2008 at 5:00 pm will be Charles Hampton Harrison, author of *Tending the Garden State: Preserving New Jersey's Farming Legacy* (Rivergate Books, 2006).

The exhibition is co-sponsored by the Office of the Executive Dean of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the New Jersey Museum of Agriculture, and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station.

While the opening reception is on Wednesday, February 13, 2008, the exhibition will run from February 5 to April 30, 2008. To RSVP to the opening reception, call 732-932-7505, or send email to events@rci.rutgers.edu.



Image from *Iron Age Farm, Garden and Orchard Tools* catalogue, published by Bateman Manufacturing Company, Grenloch, New Jersey, 1914.

For on-line access to the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society's newsletters, membership information, program announcements, historic photographs, merchandise, and more, please visit our website at www.metuchen-edisonhistsoc.org.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK ...

Dear Members & Friends,

As we start a new year at the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society, I would like to thank outgoing Treasurer Jim Halsey and outgoing Vice President Bob Takash for their excellent work these past few years.

Following the elections at the Annual Meeting and program on January 6, 2008, I am pleased to welcome new Board member Fred Wolke, and current board members serving as officers: Andy Kupersmit as Treasurer and Russell Gehrum as Vice President. I look forward to working with all our officers and directors during the year ahead.

We will continue to provide great programs to the public, and special events for our members. Be sure to attend Local History day to see some of our new acquisitions, and I hope to see you at our upcoming programs.

*Sincerely,
Walter R. Stochel, Jr.*

**Interested in reading previous issues of *Nannygoats*?
All of our back issues are available online at the Society's website at www.metuchen-edisonhistsoc.org**

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Marilyn Langhoff	
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Frederick Wolke	

The name of the newsletter, "Nannygoats," is taken from the title of a collection of anecdotes, articles, reminiscences, and letters compiled by photographer J. Lloyd Grimstead. He took more than 2,800 photographs of the Metuchen-Edison area, mostly during the 1930s, which make up 80 percent of the Historical Society's photographic collection. The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society dedicates this publication to Lloyd Grimstead, as a way of honoring him for collecting and recording so much of our local history.

The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

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President

Applied Research CORPORATION

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Upcoming Programs & Events

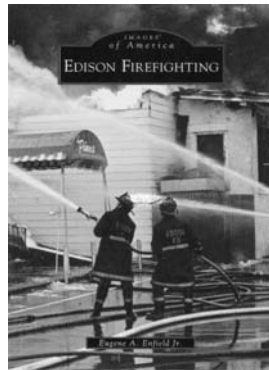
“FAITHFUL TO THE OBLIGATIONS OF HONOR” MARCH 2, 2008

In a program hosted and co-sponsored by the Metuchen Public Library, James B. Smith, a practicing lawyer in Metuchen, will discuss his new Civil War book, *Faithful To The Obligations Of Honor*, which tells the story of three southern Military Academies whose cadets earned their respective schools the distinction of being the only American Military Academies in history whose student bodies served as tactical units in actual combat. Light refreshments will be served following the 2:00 p.m. presentation.

*The Metuchen Public Library is located at 480 Middlesex Avenue in Metuchen.
For more information about these programs, please call Steve at 732-452-1381.*

EDISON FIREFIGHTING APRIL 6, 2008

Edison Fire Fighter Eugene A. Enfield, Jr., will present images and stories from his recently published book, *Edison Firefighting*, (Arcadia, 2007) at 2:00 p.m. at the Metuchen Public Library. Autographed copies of Mr. Enfield's book will be available for sale, with all proceeds benefiting a non-profit burn unit. Light refreshments will be served following the presentation.



Grimstead Room Hours

The Society's Grimstead Room archives, containing thousands of local history images and documents, are located at the Metuchen Public Library and guided access to the collections is available from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on the following upcoming Saturdays: March 1, April 5, and May 5. For more information, contact Tyreen Reuter at 732-452-1381 or aversallenhouse@msn.com.



Metuchen-Edison Historical Society
P.O. Box 61
Metuchen, NJ 08840

Interested in becoming a member? Need to renew for 2008? Members will receive program announcements, invitations to special events, a subscription to this newsletter, and the satisfaction that their support helps to preserve our local history by “Saving the Past for the Future.”