



CROSSROADS

Newsletter – Fall 2024

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Historical Association of Woodbridge Township celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2024. We began our program year with “Frightful Conditions: An Italian Immigrant Shanty Town and the Fight for Fair Living and Working Conditions” presented by Mark Nonestied from the Middlesex County Division of History and Historic Preservation. Mark discussed Rev. Colombino Galassi’s battle in 1913 for better living and working conditions at the Port Reading Coal Docks ... and the program drew our largest crowd to date with over 100 attendees! *(Photo right: HAWT President Daniel D’Arcy, guest speaker Mark Nonestied, and HAWT program director Donald J. Peck.)*



After the presentation, we received an email advising us that Father Galassi was buried at Most Holy Rosary Cemetery in Fords. Two of our members, Laura Bradshaw and Karen Keithler, visited the cemetery and found the grave overrun with weeds and difficult to read after 90 years of weathering. Upon receiving permission from Father Krystian Burdzy, cemetery administrator, they spent several hours cleaning the grave and pavers. Thank you, Laura and Karen, for your diligent work and for remembering Father Galassi and his efforts on behalf of America’s immigrants. *(Photos below taken at Father Galassi’s grave before and after cleaning.)*



In October we welcomed Joe Pompeo, author of the book “*Blood & Ink: The Scandalous Jazz Age Double Murder That Hooked America on True Crime,*” and E. Kim Adams, archivist at New Brunswick Free Public Library who served as moderator, to discuss the 1922 Hall-Mills murder case that became a media obsession. In addition to providing an overview of the murder and characters involved, it was fascinating to learn of all the research material pertaining to the case and the unusual ways these materials arrived in New Brunswick. Joe’s book is available at Amazon.com to find out more about this local news story sensation. *(Photo left: Guest speakers Joe Pompeo and E. K. Adams.)*

Artifact Spotlight



Woodbridge sits on a rich clay belt which runs from Raritan Bay to Trenton. Very early on, the clay mining industry became the main economic engine for the township and Woodbridge became world famous for brick and clay products during the 19th century. By the 1860s, it was said that Woodbridge was producing nearly 80 million fire bricks per year! The museum has a nice selection of these bricks with much more information about the clay industry.

A Visit from the Marquis de Lafayette

To commemorate the 200th anniversary of Lafayette's Farewell Tour of America, the Bicentennial Committee of the American Friends of Lafayette planned hundreds of events to trace his footsteps on the exact days and in the exact order he followed as "Guest of the Nation" between 1824 and 1825. Lafayette passed through Woodbridge on September 24, 1824 where he received a welcoming reception. We were honored to have Lafayette "revisit" us and give a speech at the Woodbridge History Museum on this historic occasion.



Local Events

Representatives from HAWT joined with members of the Independent Club of Colonia and Woodbridge Police Department to honor the memory of Patrolman Alvin Williams on the 45th anniversary of his passing. Officer Williams made the ultimate sacrifice on September 6, 1979 when he heroically attempted to rescue two youngsters in a rain-swollen Colonia creek.

Our association participated in the St. James Street Fair on September 21st with an information table stocked with photos, flyers, and membership forms. Passersby were then encouraged to take a walk down School Street to visit the new museum at 86 Green Street which was open for special hours that day.

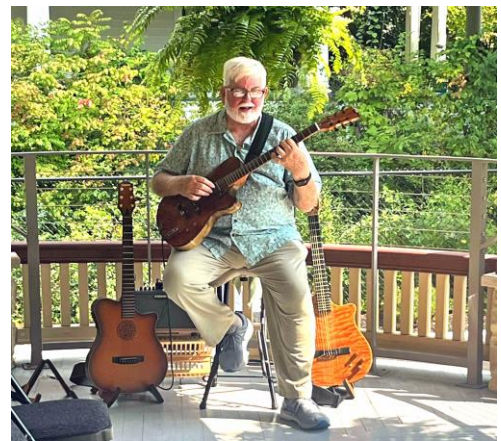
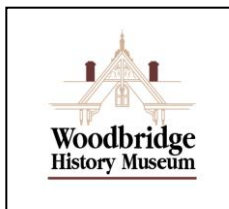


Board of Directors Update

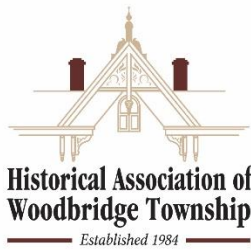
Director Brenda Velasco has stepped down from her position on the board effective October 31, 2024 but remains a valued member of the association. Thank you, Brenda, for your many years of service on the HAWT board and to the Woodbridge community at large. ~ Our newest board member, Debbie M. Cocco, joined us in September. Debbie is already actively involved with our museum committee where her research skills are proving to be invaluable assets to our organization. Welcome, Debbie!

Grand Opening of the Woodbridge History Museum

The grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony for the new **Woodbridge History Museum** took place on September 14, 2024. Almost 400 visitors came by to join the celebration and tour the museum.



Woodbridge History Museum is open on Sundays from 1-4pm through December. Special arrangements can be made for private and group tours. If you haven't already visited the museum, please stop by ... we look forward to seeing you!



PO Box 83
Woodbridge NJ 07095

Historical Association of Woodbridge Township
Board of Directors

Daniel D'Arcy, *President*
Audrey LaPenta, *Vice President*
Howard Weber, *Treasurer*
Tracy Billings, *Recording Secretary*

Donald J. Peck, Tara Dubay,
Irv Hyatt, Laura Bradshaw, Michelle
O'Rourke, Jessica Florek, Debbie Cocco

Email: hawt1669@gmail.com

Phone: 732-634-1669

Website:

www.woodbridgetownshiphistory.org



Woodbridge History Museum
86 Green Street, Woodbridge

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

November 25, 2024 – Monthly Program

THE LINDBERGH KIDNAPPING – OPEN OR CLOSED CASE?

(This program covers adult themes of kidnapping and child endangerment. It is not intended for children.)

On March 1, 1932, Charles Lindbergh Jr., the 20-month-old son of aviator Charles Lindbergh and his wife Anne Morrow Lindbergh, was murdered after being abducted from his crib on the upper floor of the Lindbergh home in Hopewell, New Jersey. Learn the facts about what was called “The Crime of the Century” – from the kidnapping of Charles Jr. to the arrest of Bruno Richard Hauptman and his electrocution for the heinous crime.

Presented by Patrick Bamburak - recording artist, producer, and great-grand-nephew of former New Jersey Governor Harold Hoffman who was in office from 1935-1938 during the final months of the Lindbergh Kidnapping Trial.

Program begins at 7pm at Acacia Youth Center, 95 Port Reading Avenue, Woodbridge. *(Note location change for this presentation.)*

December 9, 2024 – Holiday Celebration

Our annual membership holiday party will begin at 6:30pm in Fellowship Hall of First Presbyterian Church of Woodbridge. Join us for a festive time of food, music, and conversation. If you are able, please bring a dish or dessert to share. Hope to see you there!

Historical Association of Woodbridge Township is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit tax-exempt charitable organization.