

TUCKERTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter Jan-Feb-Mar 2023

35 LEITZ BLVD. & WISTERIA LANE
WEST TUCKERTON, LEH, N.J. 08087

Email: tuckertonhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Kathleen Cortese - President
Connie Woolson - Vice President
Sue Zubriski - Administrative Curator
Ursula Catalano - Collection Curator
Joan Exel - Treasurer
Jennifer Etherington - Recording Secretary
Chuck Richmond - Building/Grounds Manager

Pat Johnson - Advertising/Presentations
Donald O. Caselli - Audio Visual Specialist
Ernest Falkinburg - Tuckerton/LEH Historian
Horace Somes - Mullica River Valley Historian
Sean Kinnevy - Quaker Historian
Lisa Stevens - Defense of LEH Historian

Museum open Wednesdays 10AM To 4 PM (All Year)
June thru September 2 To 4 PM

For other times, private tours and
appointments call (609) 294 – 1547

General Meetings are held on the second Monday of each month at 7PM (OPEN TO THE PUBLIC).

A Note From Kathleen Cortese:

I am very honored to have been asked to be President of the Tuckerton Historical Society and I would like to introduce myself to you.

Unfortunately, I was not born (nor did I grow up) in Tuckerton or Little Egg Harbor, and my family and I were for many years what you locals call “shoobies”. However, that all changed five years ago when my husband, Bob, and I decided to retire to our little house near the sea.

Once we were settled, I decided to check out the Giffordtown Schoolhouse Museum and ask a few questions about the town that I had ignored for almost thirty years. I became hooked on my new primary residence from the moment I heard “Tuckers Island was the first summer resort at the Jersey Shore”, and that in the late 18th century Tuckerton,

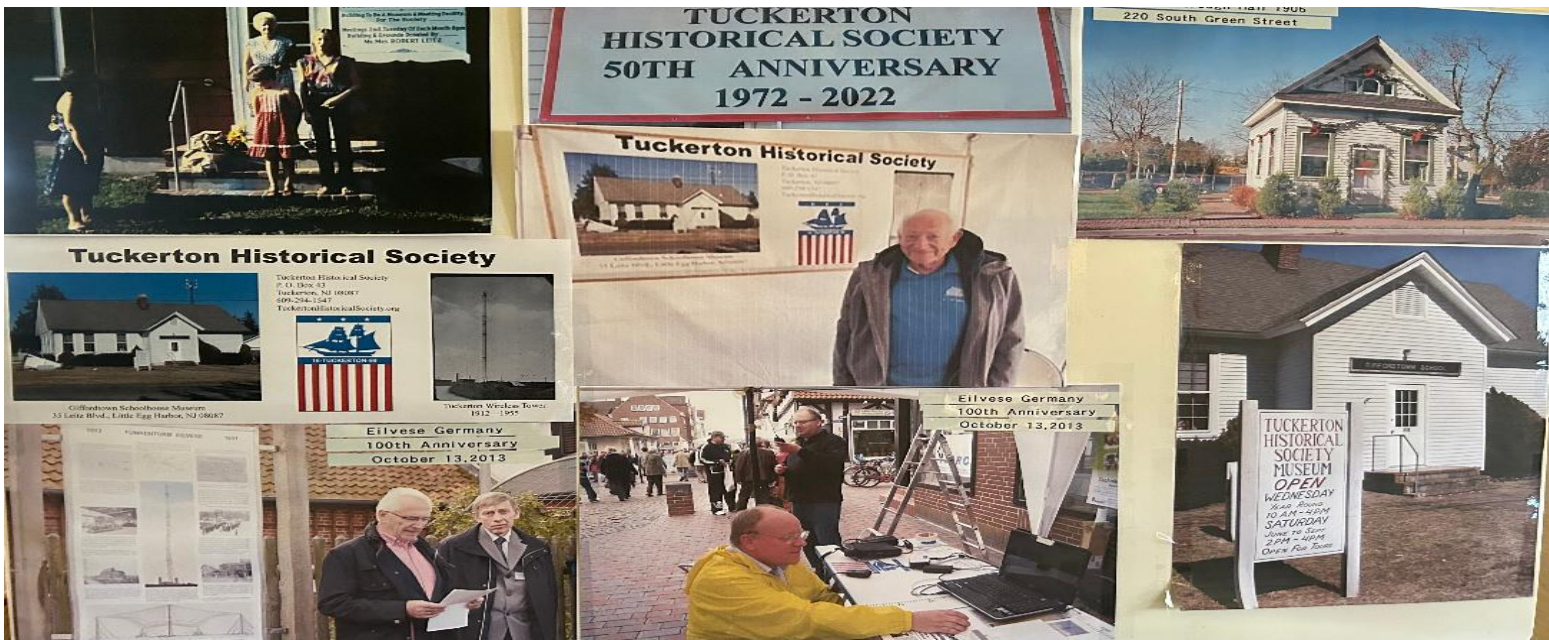
New Jersey was one of the largest ship-building towns in America. . . not to mention how surprised I was to learn about the Revolutionary War massacre that took place out on the “old Island Road” that leads to Osborn Island. But it was not until I heard whispers surrounding the mysterious activities going on at the German-built wireless radio station on Hickory Island that my interest really peaked.

My mission as President is to help the Tuckerton Historical Society continue to preserve artifacts and documents that tell the rich history of the towns of Tuckerton and Little Egg Harbor’s entwined history.

NEW OFFICERS 2023/2024



Sue, Ursula, Kate, Connie



A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO DONALD O. CASELLI

Donald was President in a prior term, but as Vice President (due to unforeseen circumstances) stepped up to the plate as President for the 2021/2022 term. At that time, the Giffordtown Schoolhouse was in dire straits and then forced to close due to Covid. However, instead of locking the doors and walking away, under Donald's tutelage, the THS's active members took advantage of the time and got down to work reorganizing the museum. Because of Donald's leadership, we are proud to say that the Schoolhouse is up and running better and stronger than ever.

Last year, the towns of Tuckerton and Little Egg Harbor declared October 18, 2022 "Tuckerton Historical Society Day" for its fifty years of service to the community, and we were recognized by the Ocean County Board of Commissioners for Tuckerton Historical Society's ongoing efforts to celebrate the history and the heritage of the area.

HONORING JOAN EXEL



The "dollar bill" lei was made and presented to "Treasurer" Joan by Connie Woolson at our 50th Anniversary Dinner at Calloways on Oct. 18, 2022.

As a founding member for fifty years, Joan Exel has been active at the Tuckerton Historical Society and a driving force behind the museum's longevity.

Joan was there in 1972 when a group of childhood friends began discussing how to preserve Tuckerton and Little Egg Harbor's history.

Today she stills serves as the Society's Treasurer and Mentor to those of us who have so much to learn about the area's rich history.

QUOTE: (Joan's Favorite)

*Grief and misery, pains and woes
Debts and taxes, yea, so it goes
I think I'm gettin' a cold in my nose
Life gets tee-jus, don't it?...*

WALK THROUGH HISTORY

BY: Sean Kinnevy, THS Quaker Historian

Often, I have heard comments regarding our Quaker meetinghouse in Tuckerton such as “I never knew it was there!”-even though it is right in the middle of downtown across from Wawa at 21 East Main St.



The original house (above) of the Little Egg Harbor Meeting of the Society of Friends (Quakers) was built in 1709 and the current building was constructed on the same site in 1863.

The first English settlers of the Little Egg Harbor area (the land between West Creek and New Gretna) were all Quakers who followed pioneer Henry Jacobs Falkenburg across the pine forest from the Delaware River area to “the Middle of the Shore.”

The only villages in the area, such as Westeconk and Pohatcong, were inhabited by the Lenape people who were mainly summer residents.

The migrants bought land, started farming, built mills for grain and lumber, and lived peaceably among the Lenape, often intermarrying with them.

Friends still meet every Sunday at the Quaker Meeting House and provide free tours and talks on the property for both groups and individuals upon request. Take a walk-through history very soon! Our contact number is 609-857-1311.

MEMBERSHIP:

Here at the Tuckerton Historical Society, we encourage new membership to keep the dream alive by way of helping us preserve artifacts, documents and stories placed in our care.

- Joan Exel / Ursula Catalano

BOOK SHOP

STEVE DODSON'S BOOK COLLECTION:

1. Tuckerton A Newspaper History 1852-1917
2. The Tuckerton Beacon 1917-1929
3. The Tuckerton Beacon 1929-1941, Part One
4. The Tuckerton Beacon 1929-1941, Part Two
5. The Tuckerton Beacon 1941-1945
6. Here & There by The Observer 1929-1934
7. Long Beach History By J.A. Coole
8. Tuckerton, LBI & Southern Ocean County, Post WWII to the Garden State Parkway, Part One
9. Tuckerton, LBI & Southern Ocean County, Post WWII to the Garden State Parkway, Part Two



STEVE HAD A SUCCESSFUL BOOK SIGNING AT LITTLE BOROUGH HALL ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18TH FEATURING HIS TWO NEW BOOKS:

**Tuckerton, LBI & Southern Ocean County
Post WWII to the Garden State Parkway
Parts One and Two**



Connie Woolson/Kate Cortese
THS Book Shop Mgr./Asst.

SPECIAL EVENTS

“WEDNESDAYS WITH ERNIE”



Ernie and Ursula (Archie)

Ernie Falkinburg, (Tuckerton and LEH Historian) 7X Great Grandson of the areas founding father, Henry Jacob Falkinburg will be having informal chats at the Giffordtown Schoolhouse Museum on Wednesdays from 2-4 to discuss Little Egg Harbor and Tuckerton history. Please join him to share your memories.



Featuring articles and stories by THS in-house writers.

NATIVE AMERICANS “ON-THE-WAY” TO LITTLE EGG HARBOR. By Horace Some

The first Native Americans would have traversed South Jersey from the Delaware River to the ocean – which would have been many miles to the east of the present-day shoreline due to a much lower sea level. Arriving over 10,000 years ago, they would have encountered a vast tundra-like landscape barren of the Pinelands and forests that we see today. With the glacier sheets only then retreating from North Jersey, they also would have encountered the MEGA-FAUNA of the Ice Age – Woolly Mammoths, Steppe Bison, Woolly Rhinoceros and Giant Sloths. Their hunting would have relied upon large, sharp-edged, flaked stones on spears that would have been somewhat effective against the large animals.



David Petriello in his *Military History of New Jersey* (2014) has penned an interesting mythology from that prehistoric era:

Europeans were not the first to bring violence and war to the region. The Lenape, or Delaware, an Algonquin tribe who inhabited the environs of New Jersey and Eastern Pennsylvania before the arrival of Europeans, had numerous tales and legends about battles that were both mythical and historical. One of these involved the Yah-qua-whee, a word that has been translated as either “monster” or “Mastodon”. According to the Delaware, the great spirit placed the Yah-qua-whee on the earth to benefit the natives, but they instead became destructive, making war against both man and other animals. “It was fierce, powerful, and invincible, its skin so strong and hard that the sharpest spears and arrows could scarcely penetrate it.” A fierce battle ensued, in which the other animals, both great and small fought the monsters. The hills, mountains, and forests became devastated, but in the end, thanks to the ferocity of the animals and the lightning bolts of the great spirit, the Yah-qua-whee were defeated. Their own weight drowned them and amid the muck and blood of the battlefield, with their great bones occasionally being discovered by the natives of later years. The great spirit would compensate man by causing cranberries to grow among the marshes and bogs, representing both the muck and blood of the battle and producing life from death.



Centuries later, the Woodland Era of the Native Americans had evolved with a forested landscape within which there were scattered indigenous communities that might be either permanent or seasonal. These were generally associated with the better soils where their crops could be grown, and often associated with rivers and streams that offered drinking water, as well as food resources. The wildlife of the forests had transitioned to many of the animals that we generally see today, such as Deer, Rabbits and other smaller mammals that could be hunted with traps and smaller-arrowed bows and spears. Small projectile points on fishing spears also were used for finfish that could become particularly abundant during spawning runs up the tidal waterways – as a food source that remained common through the Colonial period and into the 19th century. An early Dutch mapping of New Netherland, New England, and parts of Virginia (Nicolaes Visscher – Amsterdam, 1685: *Novi Belgii Novaeque Angliae: nec non partis Virginiae tabula multis in locis emendate*) indicated tribal names scattered across South Jersey, particularly along the Delaware Valley with its better soils. The early coastal surveys also indicated the significant inlets of Barnegat and Little Egg Harbor – both Great and Little. Later mapping into the 18th century would indicate the interior land as “Sandy Barren Deserts” between the shore and the Delaware Valley. The coast offered a rich bounty of wildlife that could be exploited on a seasonal basis, as well as some areas of better soils – compared to the “sugar sands” of the Pine Barrens to the west. Food animals were available both from the tidewaters and marshes, particularly during the seasonal influxes of anadromous fish such as Herring – although the sedentary Oysters and Clams remained throughout the year. To traverse the region, routes became established – one of which was termed the “Manahawkin” Trail (John F. Snyder – 1969: *The Story of NJ Civil Boundaries, 1606 – 1968*), but ended at Little Egg Harbor after crossing the state from the Delaware Valley at what is now Camden but would be the colonial Coopers Ferry to Philadelphia. Small communities were established and focused on the bounties of the land and tidal waterways, as noted in Leah Blackman’s 1880 history of Little Egg Harbor (pp. 234 – 239).³ The first European settlers and colonists took advantage of many of the same resources of the region, including suitable soils for farming and access to waterways – that now offered harbors for European shipping and ports of trade. They also exploited the interior natural resources of the forests for wood, the geologic strata of iron ores and the industrial waterpower that could be harnessed

by damming inland waterways. The output became the products that would in turn be exported through the coastal ports such as Little Egg Harbor and tributary Mullica River. They doubtlessly quickly found that the Native American trails also offered paths of “least resistance” for travel, whether by horse or wagon. This included the Manahawkin Trail, that evolved into the Tuckerton Stage Road – that now connected the Tuckerton port at Little Egg Harbor, across the Pine Barrens of the later Wharton Tract and to the inland Philadelphia port on the Delaware River. An examination of geographic and topographic mapping indicates the route similarities – with river crossings at Atsion, Quaker Bridge, Bodine on the Wading River and the Twin Bridges on the East and West Branches of the Bass River. Further eastward into Little Egg Harbor, travel became a clear upland run from Bass River until arriving in the Tuckerton area. It is noteworthy that this corridor of travel began at its western terminus on the Delaware at Philadelphia and ended at Tuckerton with its access to Little Egg Harbor and its varying inlets to the Atlantic Ocean. Native American settlements and artifacts have been documented from suitable habitation locations, including Osborne Island and the archaeological site on present-day County Club Boulevard into Mystic Islands. The latter location was on an overlook to Little Egg Harbor, Great Bay and the vast tidelands. Before the view became obscured by modern suburban development, a prominent landmark was an unusual island that now can be seen in the marsh to the west of Great Bay Boulevard and north of the first of the Seven Bridges. Now covered with remnant Redcedar Trees that are in decline due to rising sea level, this prehistoric feature represents the culmination of centuries of visitation by Native Americans to Little Egg Harbor. Their harvesting of shellfish from the adjacent waterways and bay, deposited Oysters and Clams that formed the foundation for this shell mound island that had an accumulated depth of a dozen feet.



A contemporary song “On the Way to Cape May” might have had a parallel sonnet “ON THE WAY TO LITTLE EGG HARBOR”. This would have had meaning to the Native Americans who traversed the Manahawkin Trail, as well as to the first colonists, later settlers and modern-day motorists who now use the remnants of the old Tuckerton Stage Road – which no longer connects Little Egg Harbor and Tuckerton in the east, to the Delaware valley and Philadelphia in the west. An alternative “reality” for the region and for Tuckerton in particular, would have been “ON THE WAY TO BRIGANTINE”. Initial development of Great Bay Boulevard in the 1940’s was the initial segment of a proposed State Route 44 as a connector from then-Route 4 (now # 9) in Tuckerton, to Little Beach, then Brigantine and further to Atlantic City. That project stopped during World War II at the inlet channel into the ocean near the former Coast Guard Station – now Rutgers Marine Research Center. However, the Garden State Parkway – which also was under contemplation in the 1940’s, would largely bypass Little Egg Harbor during the 1950’s to the west, and the earlier Seashore rail lines and later White Horse Pike and Atlantic City Expressway would take the Delaware-Atlantic travel and development corridor to the south of the Mullica River and into Atlantic County. Ultimately, the main thrust of regional travel would shift away from the old Manahawkin Trail and later Stage Road and leave the Tuckerton Shell mound as a reminder of ancient history – although it ultimately faces the reality of rising sea-level that has overtopped the now-offshore region that was traversed by the first nomadic Native Americans. They left scant traces of their hunter-gathering across the landscape with its Monstrous Mastodons, which were more than an old Indian myth. However, Cranberries with their blood-red juice continue to thrive in the Pine Barrens at the eastern end of the old trail, and now sustain a major regional agribusiness – although the small cedar-water streams around Tuckerton could not sustain the needs of today’s wet-pick berry cultivation to the west along the Wading River and its tributaries. And further to the west in the Delaware valley, ancient fossils continue to be unearthed and Haddonfield was the location of the first dinosaur unearthed in North America. It remains an interesting speculative myth that these small berries and large bones originated from a long-ago battlefield across the region.

The Evolution of Little Egg Harbor and Tuckerton Continues.....

Follow along with our in-house writers as we tell you the story of how the landscape and events of the area changed overtime.

In our next quarterly issue (April) learn about the first European to live on property in Little Egg Harbor. The man from Holstein (now in Germany) acquired the 800-acre tract from the Leni-Lenape Indians in 1674. This parcel of land included two islands of Monhunk and Minnicunk later known as Wills and Osborn Island.

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE CREW AT THE TUCKERTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



EDITOR: K. Cortese

COPYEDIT/TYPESSETTER: S. Zubriski