

# INDIAN MILLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FOUNDED FEBRUARY, 1973

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF SHAMONG TOWNSHIP HERITAGE

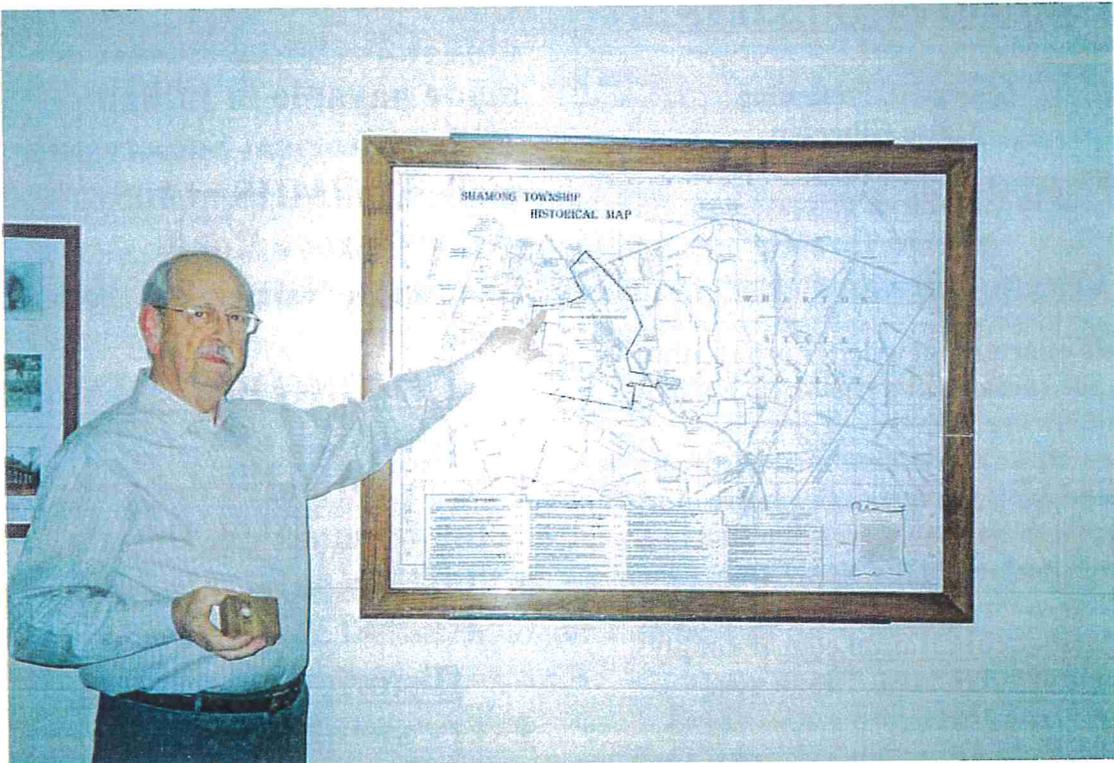
## NEWSLETTER

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[www.shamong.net](http://www.shamong.net)

Winter 2010

### SHAMONG TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL MAP



*A proclamation was awarded to Donald Catts by Mayor Sean Gray of Shamong at the township meeting in December, 2009. Don had previously been awarded by the Burlington County Freeholders in 2009 for his creation of this historical map. Don is pointing to the location of a walnut tree that he had used to make the frame for the map. He holds a block of wood from this same tree containing a rifle shot. The map is now proudly displayed in the courtroom of the Shamong Township Municipal building for all to see and admire. Congratulations Don!!*

## CURRENT OFFICERS

President.....Joseph Reinhart  
V. Pres.....Janice Woytowich  
Rec. Secretary.....Ruth Boice  
Treasurer.....Don Catts  
Corr. Secty.....Gail Currier  
Historian.....George Flemming  
Railroad Historian.....Daniel Tavani

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

George D. Flemming  
Marie Giberson  
Leon King  
Kathryn Ritter  
Daniel Tavani

This quarterly newsletter is published by the Indian Mills Historical Society. Articles are always welcome and needed. Any news that members feel would be of interest to the entire membership should be submitted in a timely fashion to the Newsletter Editor-George D. Flemming. E-Mail-[gdchum1@aol.com](mailto:gdchum1@aol.com) or simply phone 609-859-1198. Thank you.

Join us at our monthly meetings. They are held at the Shamong Township Municipal building located at 105 Willow Grove Road at 7:30 P.M. The meetings are normally held the third Thursday of every month. There are no meetings scheduled in January, February, July, and August.

**DUES ARE DUE!!!**

Please be reminded that the dues for the year 2010 are due January 1<sup>st</sup>. A timely response will insure your society continues to operate smoothly. A RENEWAL FORM IS LOCATED ON THE BACK PAGE OF THE NEWSLETTER. Please take note that checks should be made payable to Indian Mills Historical Society and mailed to IMHS at 105 Willow Grove Road, Shamong, N.J. 08088

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Programs for meetings to be held in 2010 are currently being formulated. Details will follow at a later date.

## Historic Preservation

Every member of the society can participate by lending old photos to be copied, or anything of historic interest you may wish to display in the showcases that pertain to Shamong Township.

## GLIMPSES OF THE PAST

BY

**GEORGE D. FLEMMING**

In colonial days and right up to the present time local taverns were the mainstay of the community. They provided sustenance for the local residents and traveling strangers as well as at times providing a meeting place where politics of the day could be discussed. The very revolution that sparked our independence from Great Britain, had its roots in the local taverns. The following article was written by Lillian (Bonnie) Russell Halfmann who just recently passed away. Thank you Bonnie.

### HISTORY of the PIC-A-LILLI INN

It all began back in the early 1920's when Thomas Snyder, a chemist at the Evans Soap Co. in Camden, lived outside in a tent while erecting this building. He was a man of character, also known back then as the Justice of the Peace. What we now know as Route 206, was a dirt road formerly State Highway 39, which is where "Snyder's Luncheonette" opened in 1927. Snyder moved out of the tent and into one of the six rooms upstairs, while he rented out the other five. He not only used the upstairs as a hotel, but as a place to hold court meetings. Once the luncheonette business picked up, Snyder needed help operating the business. He sent word to Arkansas that he would need his only daughter Lillian, her husband Pickett Russell, Sr., and their two sons, Tom & Pickett, Jr. to join him here in New Jersey.

The family joined together to sell ice cream, sandwiches, and soda pop. This took place in what is now our main dining room. In 1933, after Prohibition, Pickett Russell, Sr. decided to add the barroom and acquired the first liquor license in Shamong Township. The luncheonette was renamed, "Snyder's Tavern".

In 1937, Snyder passed away, leaving the business to his daughter Lillian. To show new ownership, Pickett, Sr. and Lillian felt a new name was needed. While doing her normal duties, employee Alma Hall, came across a jar of Pic-A-Lilli relish. It was her recommendation for the name, and all agreed fondly, since it included both of their names! Hence, the Pic-A-Lilli Inn".

During the 1940's, Pickett, Sr. was an avid rodeo enthusiast and various riders would stop in for a little R & R. Gene Autry, a famous rider, movie star, and personal friend of Pickett's would often visit. A picture of the two is hanging in the barroom to this day. Another famous patron of the time was Will Rogers, who had stopped in specifically to see the resemblance Pickett, Sr. had to himself.

About this time, Pickett, Jr., began courting Florence Hall, daughter of employee Alma Hall. Eventually Pickett, Jr., 16, married Florence, 17, and they immediately began their family of six children. Their children are Pickett III (Butch), Lillian Alma (Bonnie), Wallace, Bruce, Donald, and John Henry (Buddy).

In 1953, Pickett, Sr. passed away and his last wishes were to hold his funeral right here at the Pic-A-Lilli. Later, during the 1970's, the children decided to build another addition to be used as a package goods store. Presently this room displays Pickett, Jr.'s extensive bottle collection. In those days, the most famous patron was the Russell's pet goat, Billy, often seen living it up at the bar! Check out the newspaper article in the main dining room, showcasing the antics of the goat. In 1974, Lillian Snyder Russell Bozearth passed away, and Pickett, Jr. and his wife Florence took over.

For many years the business flourished and many, many friends were made. The whole family was involved in operating the business. Pickett and Florence poured their love and devotion into the food and drink, while Donnie worked in the kitchen, Bonnie and all of the boys' wives worked in the dining room, and the comic duo of Bruce and Wallace managed the bar. Sadly Florence passed away in 1980, and Pickett, Jr. continued to run the business until his dying day in the year 2000.

When Pickett, Jr. passed on, he left "The Original" Pic-A-Lilli Inn to his remaining five children. Our family is now in its fifth generation, and the business continues to grow. Thanks to the original liquor license, still in use, the good-time barroom and cozy dining room allows for all the locals, and those friends just passing through, to enjoy our delicious menu. Remember this building was not only a hotel, courtroom, hospital room, wedding hall, and funeral parlor, but also a great place to meet up with your own family and friends. We do our best to cater to all occasions.

Editors Note: I was saddened to read the obituary of Lillian "Bonnie" Halfmann (nee Russell) age 66 passed away Dec. 4, 2009 at Virtua Hospital in Mt. Holly. Born in Shamong, she was an area resident her entire life.

Bonnie was a 1961 graduate of Lenape High School and a graduate of Goldey-Beacom College in Delaware. She was a member of the Red Hats Club and N.J.E.A.

Surviving are her husband Whilldin "Bill" Halfmann of Shamong, her daughters Bonnie Lynn, and her husband Alex Schneider of Shamong, Billie Jean, and her husband Mike Carlin of Shamong, her step-daughters Sherri and her husband Charles Reed of Lindenwold and Diana and her husband Scott Hansen of Washington Twp. Bonnie is also survived by her brothers Pickett III (Sandy), Wallace (Ginny), Bruce (Sandy) and Donald (Barbara). Loving grandmother of 5 grandchildren and 4 step-grandchildren.

Relatives and friends are invited to attend her viewing Thurs. eve 5:00-7:00 pm with services at 7:00 pm at the Marinella Funeral Home, 102 N. Third St., Hammonton. Burial will be at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers the family requests donations to The Heart Truth online (www.goredforwomen.org).

Thus ends another chapter in the history of the Russell Family of Shamong. In reading the history the pride of family and the sense of warmth toward all family members can't be escaped. May she rest in peace as a treasured memory.

Many years ago I wrote an article for the former Batsto Citizens Gazette, dated Fall and Winter 1979. It was entitled.....

### ***INDIANS' ATSION ROLE DISPUTED BY WRITER***

**By George D. Flemming**

The following is a direct quote from Charles S. Boyer's book "Early Forges and Furnaces in New Jersey".

"During the early days of operation many of the Indians living at the Edgepillock Reservation(now Indian Mills), three miles away, found steady employment in and around the Atsion Works. These Indians were supplied with their food, tobacco, and rum from the company store, but unlike the other workmen a receipt was always taken from them for their purchases. Being unable to write they would make their "mark" and the transaction would be witnessed by some bystander."

There is no disrespect intended in refuting Boyer's conjecture, however I can find no documented evidence to support these statements in any contemporary writings during the period of which he speaks. Certainly there is substantial proof that the Indian Reservation was co-existent with the Atsion Iron Works, but I seriously doubt the Indians ever worked there as laborers or dealt with any Atsion storekeeper.

From descriptions of reservation life recalled in Rev. Brainerd's journals and letters, as well as excerpts from John Hunt's diary it can be stated the Indians were in no way desirous of employment, steady or otherwise, in a laboring capacity some three miles from their homes. It was difficult enough merely attempting to accustom the natives to support themselves with meager farming pursuits. Their lot was one of extreme hardship attempting to survive in a White Mans domain and culture.

John Hunt, the charitable Quaker preacher from Moorestown, had collected donations of blankets and clothing to keep the natives from succumbing to the elements. Rev. Brainerd, following the Revolution, spent less and less time with the Indians, instead responding to needs elsewhere. One cannot help but feel he had given up trying to convert them to the ways of Christianity. Though sympathetic with their plight and circumstance his call took him to the Presbyterian Church in Deerfield, Cumberland County where his last days were spent taking care of his congregation there.

In the period following the War for Independence, life at the Brotherton Reservation began a steady decline. The Indians became so extremely disenchanted with their way of life and the lack of any support by the new state government that they elected to join relatives among the Oneida tribe in New York State. By 1802 the last remnants of the reservation Indians had left the area with the exception of one or two families that preferred to remain behind.

The Atsion Store Books and other ledgers referred to by so many historians actually commenced with the beginning of the Richards regime at Atsion in 1825. This would naturally be many years after the Indians had vacated the reservation. No documented evidence of any Indian purchases of goods at the Atsion Company Store is existent to my knowledge. More than likely the statements concerning the Indians at Atsion were fanciful supposition on the part of Mr. Boyer and not any part of recorded history.

Editor's Note: In December 1930 Nathaniel Ewan, well known Burlington County historian wrote: The original account books of Atsion Furnace and the "Companies Store" books are preserved in the old Raleigh mansion at Atsion and show many transactions with the Indians from the reservation at Edgepillock (Indian Mills) in the early 1800's. This appears in his scrapbooks Volume 3, page 30. In March 1954 he wrote: The old account books of Atsion store, given the writer several years ago, are now in the file of the Burlington County Historical Society. The business entries are often accompanied by notations of every day happenings in the village, and from the pages, the story of Atsion could be well written. A number of semi-civilized Indians from Indian Mills reservations were employed at the furnace and much of their wages were credited to goods purchased in the store.

Evidently Charles Boyer was quoting from Nathaniel Ewan about the Indians working at Atsion. I have personally reviewed the Atsion Furnace and Store books and can find no evidence of any Brotherton Indians working there or making purchases in the company store. Possibly there were other books examined by Nat Ewan that no longer exist. It is hard to believe that Nat Ewan would fabricate comments about the Indians, but the surviving Atsion journals began long after the Indians had departed. If anyone knows of any documentation to support Ewan's comments please contact the writer.

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Make checks payable to: Indian Mills Historical Society  
Mail to: IMHS, 105 Willow Grove Road, Shamong, N.J. 08088

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual \$ 7.00    \_\_\_\_\_ Family \$12.00    \_\_\_\_\_ Senior (62 & over) \$5.00

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual Life \$50.00    \_\_\_\_\_ Honorary Member(no dues) Student under 18

Optional Tax Deductible Donation \_\_\_\_\_  
I would like to dedicate this donation in memory/honor of :

Name of person(s), event, and date of memory/honor.

Example: John and Jane Doe, 20<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary February 14, 200