



# TAVERN NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE MERCHANTS AND  
DROVERS TAVERN MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

SUMMER 2009

## BOARD OF

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- **Alex Shipley**  
*Director of Museum  
Operations  
Newsletter Editor*
- **David M. Walker**  
*Program Manager  
Webmaster*

## Summer Camps in Full Swing

The Archaeology History Day Camp is now in full swing! This year there are 30 students, aged 9-14 attending the camp, and many of the children are returning campers. Keri Sansevere returns this year as the archaeology camp director to supervise the archaeological dig and provide valuable insights into the artifacts discovered by our campers. The children will be visiting the Monmouth Battlefield this year, where archaeology has been utilized to help historians and researchers understand the battle more accurately.

Our second week, Revolutionary War Camp, campers will learn about the events of the war in the Union County area, and will be visited by guest speakers. Our field trip will be to historic Philadelphia, where they will walk in the footsteps of America's founding fathers!

## Officers Elected at Annual Meeting

At the annual membership meeting and luncheon held on Saturday, May 30, officers of the Board of Trustees and Trustee members were elected to lead the association through the next fiscal year.

Annette Satkowski was elected President of the Board, Ted Nevins, our Treasurer over the past few years, was elected Vice President, Betty Makarucha was reelected Secretary, and Past President William Rack was voted into the Treasurer's position.

Annette is a marketing and advertising professional with over thirty years experience for various ad agencies and corporations in the New York Metro area. She has a MA in Media Studies from the New School, NYC.

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## Officers Elected (continued from page 1)

A member and volunteer of MDTMA since 1988, she was elected to the Board in 2002, and has served as Vice President. She has been responsible for the majority of the Association’s marketing activities.

Ted has worked as a production engineer in different capacities with the Bway Corporation since 1984. He attended Middlesex County College and has attended many management training classes during this time. Ted was President from 1996 to 2004 during our time of the building restoration. He presided over our development from a local historical society to a regional museum. Ted brings many skills as carpenter, painter and most importantly, a true understanding of modern technological advances to his service on the board.

Betty has a Bachelor’s degree in Sociology and a Masters degree in teaching. She has been an elementary school teacher for the past ten years. She also has experience as a professional secretary working in the area of development for a major New York hospital and has also worked in the legal field and insurance industry. She has volunteered at MDTMA for many years, serving on many committees.

Bill is a graduate of Rutgers University with a B.S. in accounting. He was employed by PSE&G for thirty five years. He is very involved in community service. Bill served as a commissioner on the Board of Adjustment, Planning Board, was Director of Rahway Parking Authority and presently sits on the Rahway Redevelopment Commission and the Rahway Library Board. His service to MDTMA began shortly after his retirement in 1993 where his accounting skills have served us well as our treasurer for many years through our redevelopment time. Bill finishes two terms as president.

Joe Carpenter, Pat Paszek and Linda Slinski were reelected to the Board of Trustees and Derron Palmer was elected to his first term as a Trustee.

## Remaining Events in 2009

<p><b>Antiques Auction</b> September 12</p> <p><b>Holiday Portraits at the Tavern</b> September 26 &amp; 27</p> <p><b>Ghosts of the Past Cemetery Tours</b> October 3 &amp; 4</p> <p><b>Four Centuries in a Weekend</b> October 17 &amp; 18</p> <p><b>TAVERN NEWS</b></p>	<p><b>Rahway History Lecture Series</b> November 14</p> <p><b>Holiday at the Tavern with Linda Russell</b> December 5 &amp; 12</p> <p><b>Annual Membership Dinner Meeting</b> January 9, 2010</p>
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## Tag Sale A Success

From the time the gate was opened at 9:00 until it closed at 3:00 our yard behind the Merchants and Drovers was busy with shoppers hunting for bargains at our Annual Tag Sale on Saturday, June 13.

Much of the credit for the success of the activity goes to the many member volunteers who arrived at 7:00 to carry all of the boxes and items from inside the building to the respective tables where they would be on display. Thirty members were on site during the day to take care of all aspects of the sale. Several members had also worked for two weeks prior to the event sorting and pricing items. Carol Reminger, chairperson of the sale, directed an organized operation from start to finish.

Reminger also gives thanks to the many people who donated items. Said the chairperson, "It always amazes me how in just two weeks we can accumulate so much. It only happens because of the generosity of our friends from Rahway and the surrounding communities. Thanks so much!"

The sale brought in over \$1,500 which will help in the expense of restoring the exterior of the Merchants and Drovers Tavern.

## Antiques Appraisal - A Fun and Entertaining Afternoon

A sampler from the 1800's valued at more than \$1,500 and a book published in Cambridge, England in 1554 whose value was incalculable were two of the most exciting items shown at the museum during the Antiques Appraisal Program, held on Saturday, June 27.

During the three hour program Robert Smith of Westfield Antiques looked over a total of 107 personal treasures brought in by forty-two guests explaining their history and estimated value.

Other interesting items included a set of silver candlesticks (circa 1870), an oak high chair from the 1880's, campaign buttons from the 1888 and 1890, original associated press photos of Major League Baseball action from the 1920's, 30's, and 40's, a Morris chair, an 1852 edition of Uncle Tom's Cabin, a complete set of Reed and Barton sterling silverware (circa 1920), and a dictionary printed in 1795.

## M & D Membership Extends Far Beyond City/County Boundaries

Although the majority of our 272 members live in and around Rahway and the two counties of Union and Middlesex, our members also come from more than two dozen cities outside of the area. Members come from cities as far north as Mahwah, Sussex and Hamburg and as far south as Ocean Grove, Little Silver and Manahawkin.

Our membership list also shows members from fifteen states and Washington D.C. Supporters of our tavern and museum can be found around the country in states such as Ohio, Washington, California, Arizona, Florida and Maine. Contact the Museum Office at (732) 381-0441 for membership information. Membership forms may also be downloaded from our web site.

## Meet the Staff

**Alexander Shipley – Director of Museum Operations:** As director, Alex is responsible for the day to day operation of the museum, including group and school tours, event preparation, historical research to enhance program and educational presentations, among many other activities. He taught high school English for 33 years before his retirement. He is the author of three books on Rahway history: *Rediscovery of Rahway* (1975), *Images of the Past* (1997), and *Images of the Past II* (2005). *Images of the Past II* was awarded “the outstanding historical publication in the state of NJ in 2005. He has been Rahway City Historian since the year 2000 and is a research consultant for the Rahway Public Library since February 2005. He was a member of a County team that recorded information on every home in Rahway built prior to 1920; the survey done in 1982. He has been a member of MDTMA (formerly the Rahway Historical Society) since 1971 and served as President in 1980 and more recently as a trustee.



**David Walker – Program Manager:** David manages tavern programs such as the day camps, the history clubs, and the lecture series. He will develop and manage other selected programs during the year. Dave joined the MDTMA staff in 2005 as a program assistant and continued as operations manager in 2006. He is a 2007 graduate of Rutgers University having majored in History/Africana studies. This past school year was his first as a Social Studies teacher at Linden High School. He is responsible for program planning and coordination, educational outreach and initiatives, conducting tours of the historic site and maintaining the official website. His research has resulted in one publication – *The Civil War: On the Battlefield and the Home Front, Based on Burials and Memorials in Rahway Cemetery* – and two lecture presentations.

## Nebraska 4-H Club Visits Tavern

On June 11<sup>th</sup>, the Merchants and Drovers Tavern Museum was visited by a 4-H club from the Cornhusker State, Nebraska. The tavern was part of the club’s east coast bus trip to see various Revolutionary and early American historical sites. The group had a wonderful time, as they were treated to a nighttime candlelight tour of the museum. A leader of the group mentioned, “living in Nebraska my whole life, it was wonderful to see the actual places where early American history was made, instead of just reading about it in history books.”

## An Unusual Quest by Al Shipley

Just before noon on Tuesday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, a young man from Rhode Island (his name was Brad) arrived at the Merchants and Drovers to carry out his prearranged visit to the Rahway Cemetery. Brad had called the museum the week before inquiring if Abraham Clark was actually buried in the Rahway Cemetery. I informed him that not only was Clark's grave really there, but a twenty-two foot obelisk, erected in his honor in 1848, stood some fifty yards from the grave. Brad sounded pleased and asked if he could meet with me so I might lead him to the plot. My curiosity was piqued and I asked him the reason for his interest in Clark. He told me it was his plan to visit and have his picture taken by the gravesite of every signer of the Declaration of Independence. I agreed to meet with him on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, now anxious to meet this young man who had set out on such a daunting task. There were fifty-six signers. Since Thomas Lynch of South Carolina was lost at sea, it left fifty-five signers to find in thirteen states plus one in D.C.

Before ending our conversation we made plans to meet at the Merchants and Drovers on Tuesday between 11:00 and noon. Brad would be arriving by train so I told him to take a cab to the museum, enter through the back door, come to the bottom of the stairway and call up to me as I would be working in the second floor office.

It was after 11:30 when a voice shouted my name. I got up from my desk and went to the door to greet my visitor. Brad was waiting at the bottom of the stairs. To my surprise, he was seated in a wheelchair. I went down and after introducing myself to the young man who appeared to be in his late twenties, I asked if he had any trouble finding the museum. He said his only difficulty was crossing busy St. Georges Avenue. Brad had wheeled himself from Rahway Station, a distance of more than a mile!

When we got outside he refused my offer to push him and I led him to the gravesite. Seated in front of the granite memorial he produced a camera from one of the two large book bags he had strapped to the back of his chair and asked me to take his picture. I took two shots from different angles. We then went to the Clark obelisk where Brad took a picture of the monument.

During our walk I asked him about his strange project. It turned out it wasn't a college assignment or a monetary venture. Brad became interested in the signers after visiting the gravesite of John Adams in Massachusetts. He first considered going to the graves of the signers buried in the New England states (there are thirteen) but later decided to go after all fifty-six signers. Clark was number fourteen in his quest. His next destination was going to be Princeton where he would stop by the graves of Richard Stockton and John Witherspoon.

I drove Brad back to the train station to catch the 1:44 westbound local. As he rolled himself into the elevator I wished him luck and asked him to keep in contact.

Right now I figure he's working his way through Pennsylvania, perhaps looking for the grave of George Taylor...

## Annual School Tours

During the months of April and May all Rahway Public School 5<sup>th</sup> graders visited the Merchants and Drovers for a tour of the museum and adjacent cemetery.

While in the museum students learned about early American hotel and tavern life as well as the history of early modes of transportation. Along with going through the tavern room, parlor rooms, kitchen and six finished bedrooms, students got to spend time in the permanent exhibit room – “For the Entertainment of Strangers: The New Jersey Tavern.” The display features period art and maps, documents, artifacts, antiques and interactive displays.

In the cemetery, our outdoor museum, students learn about the history of Rahway by visiting the gravesites of famous and interesting people. Abraham Clark, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, is just one featured stop.

The Advanced Placement History class from Rahway High and a class of 5<sup>th</sup> graders from Hillside also toured the building and graveyard.

## Ambo Gets Grave Marker

On the rain-soaked Saturday of June 20, a group of dedicated participants and spectators gathered under umbrellas in the Rahway Cemetery at the grave of Ambo, a slave woman, for the unveiling of a historic marker.

The ceremony included the reading of prayers, and the unveiling and reading of the marker.

Ambo’s grave has been a point of interest for visitors to the cemetery for a number of reasons. Ambo worked for the family of Abraham Terrill from the time she was a teen until her death at an age judged to be 100 years. She is buried in the Terrill family plot with all the Terrill relations, a practice most unusual in the mid-1800’s. The fact a headstone was erected to mark her final resting place is also a rarity for that period.

It has long been discussed to have a historic marker placed by the grave and the idea was finally realized through the efforts of the United Youth of New Jersey Restoration Committee, a group based in Elizabeth.

## Elliot Bequest

The Merchants and Drovers Tavern Museum Association would like to thank the family of Richard Elliot for his generous gift to the museum. Richard, who passed away in April, had been a member of long standing in the Association. We are extremely grateful he remembered us.

## Message From The President

As many of you already know, the MDTMA has been doing very well these last few years in successfully fulfilling the mission of the museum and making it a value to the community. Even during this time of deep, economic recession we steadily receive support and resources beyond just the financial requirements of keeping this historical icon preserved. I would like to start our new fiscal year by demonstrating in a small way how grateful we are for all the help we receive in whatever form it comes. The list is long but this space is short therefore, I will focus our attention to our primary benefactors as a way of saying “thanks for our success”.

We owe a lot to the untiring dedication of our very recent past board president, Bill Rack. Bill has served on the board and as President of the MDTMA for a total of 12 years and during that time has seen the association through its evolution from historical society to bona fide museum. He was there every step of the way, ensuring that this local, historical icon was not only fully restored, but provided great value to all the museum’s visitors now and for many, many years to come. We are very grateful that Bill remains on the board in the role of Treasurer and will continue to provide his invaluable skills and counsel.

Additional contributions come from the unwavering commitment of the MDTMA board and the enthusiasm and hard work of our staff and volunteers. Without their wholehearted efforts day after day, most events and fundraising efforts would never have taken place. Last but most important in this short list is the ever-loyal support of our members, many of you who not only contribute financially, but regularly attend events and even serve as volunteers. I can honestly say while my passion for preserving our nation’s history was my primary motive in becoming involved with the museum many years ago, it is these very people, board, staff, volunteers and members, that make it an enjoyable experience every time. It is great to work and socialize among people who not only share that passion, but are also warm, decent and giving individuals. We have another exciting and challenging year ahead of us, however, I truly believe that the combined devotion of all mentioned here will allow us to continue on our mission and provide historical context to our growing Rahway community by preserving and interpreting a portion of its past. Again, thank you and we truly look forward to seeing many of you at our upcoming events.

Annette Satkowski

President, MDTMA Board of Trustees

## Holiday Portraits at the Tavern

Consider a unique holiday card this year. Have your family pose in a historical setting—a 210 year old stagecoach tavern and inn right here in Rahway. We’ll supply the backdrop and decorations.

Saturday and Sunday—September 26 & 27, 2009

11:00am-6:00pm both days

Professional Photographer: Steve Cuttler

Sitting Fee: \$15.00

Reservations Required

Call the museum at (732) 381-0441

\*Non-refundable sitting fee of \$15 includes up to 5 people at one location in the museum, plus a 4X6 photo. Photo packages for holiday cards and other photo items will also be made available for an additional charge based on quantity and sizes ordered. The museum photo locations/backdrops will be in circa 1800 period holiday decorations to enhance the portrait.



### Contact Information

The Merchants & Drovers Tavern Museum Association  
P.O. Box 1842  
Rahway, NJ 07065  
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E-mail: [mdtavernmuseum@aol.com](mailto:mdtavernmuseum@aol.com)  
Website URL: <http://www.merchantsanddrovers.org>

#### Museum Tours Available:

Tues: By Appointment

Thurs: 10-4

Fri: 10-4

1st & 3rd Saturdays: 10-4

2nd & 4th Sundays: 1-4

The Merchants and Drovers Tavern Museum Association is the recipient of a General Operating Support Grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, New Jersey Department of State. The New Jersey Tavern exhibit was funded primarily by a generous grant from the New Jersey Department of Transportation as well as a grant from the New Jersey Historical Trust. Other major corporate and private sponsors include Merck & Co., Rahway Savings Institution and the Rahway Junior Service League. The Museum also relies on the generosity of individual donations from friends and patrons concerned with the preservation of our country's early history.

### Mission & Location

The Merchants & Drovers Tavern Museum Association is dedicated to preserving the Merchants and Drovers Tavern (1795/1820) and to interpreting early tavern life. The museum, located at the corner of St. Georges Avenue (Route 27) and Westfield Avenue, is recorded in the Historic American Buildings Survey and listed in the National and New Jersey Registers of Historic Places. The Association also own and operates the Abraham Terrill Tavern as the Museum Gift Shop.

Merchants and Drovers Tavern  
Museum Association  
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