
◇ The General Store ◇

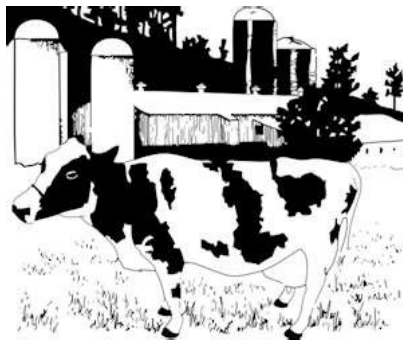
WORKING FARM TOUR PLANNED FOR FALL

The following information is taken directly from the book *1739 History of Morris County New Jersey 1882*. "Mendham is strictly an agricultural township. The population has not increased, because under the present system of farming all the tillable lands are fully occupied. The value of farming lands in the township has really increased, as also their productiveness. The annual report of the controller of the State for 1880 gives the acreage of Mendham Township at 13,525 acres, valued on the assessors' books at \$837,665. The cost of the average acre is \$61 per acre. Mendham compares favorable for farming lands with any portion of the Union, east or west: and for beauty of scenery, health and comfort cannot be surpassed in the United States."

Mendham's agricultural tradition continues to this day

The Ralston Historical Association is honored to host a tour of working farms in the Mendham area. This tour will take place on September 30, 2012. The farmers have graciously accepted our invitation to celebrate the history and agriculture in our community.

Currently we have six local farms on our tour. Each farm is unique and has a variety of services and or products to offer. The farms



are:

BACKER FARM

<http://backerhorsefarm.com/>

Backer Farm on Ironia Road began in 1927 and was a dairy farm. In 1971 the farm began to transition the dairy business into a horse boarding facility.

HIDDEN POND FARM

<http://www.hiddenpondtreefarm.com/>

Hidden Pond Farm on West Field Road in the Borough has over 3,000 Christmas trees 5 feet and taller. You can cut your own tree or they will cut it for you.

MIDDLE VALLEY FARM

<http://middlevalleyfarms.com/>

Middle Valley Farm on Pleasant Valley Road offers "pick your own pumpkins" and a five acre corn maze.

MILLER HILL FARM

Miller Hill Farm on Coombs Avenue in Randolph has been a family owned and operated farm since 1924 and became farmland preserved in 2003. They grow a variety of vegetables.

PLEASANT VALLEY FARM

Pleasant Valley Farm on Roxiticus Road was established in 1906. They raise sheep, pigs and chickens. You can also buy fresh eggs. They run a summer camp program as well.

RALSTON FARM

<http://ralstonfarm.com>

Ralston farm on Mendham Road West in Ralston is a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture), where the farmer offers shares to the public. This consists of fresh produce and also a tree farm.

As you can see Mendham is helping to keep New Jersey "The Garden State." Come out and learn more about each of these local farms. Look for more information about our Working Farm Tour this fall. See you all on the Farms!

Farmer Fred Backer's Roots are in Mendham

Fred Backer has had a full and long life on his family farm on Ironia Road in Mendham. Today at 83 years old, he sleeps in the same room he was born in. "My mother insisted Dr. George deGroot deliver me." Fred recalls. Dr. deGroot was retired at the time with failing vision, but Fred became his last delivery. Jesse Teets Backer insisted her last child be delivered by the doctor who delivered her other five children.

Fred grew up working long hours on

the farm from a very young age. He went to the Ralston School House (now owned by his daughter) from 1933 to 1937. He has fond memories of his time in the one room schoolhouse in grades one to four as his brother's wife was his teacher and he had two other students in his grade. He then went to Hilltop School in Mendham Borough and on to graduate from Morristown High School.

Despite his love of history and some consideration of being a teacher, Fred decided to stay on the farm and become a full time dairy farmer. He raised eight children with his wife Barbara. Until 1970, Backer Farm bottled its own milk, grew crops and delivered eggs and milk. In 1973, Fred converted the farm to a horse boarding stable which it remains today.

Featured Ralston Historic Home



This circa 1760 Colonial with four bedrooms and two full bathrooms mixes historic design and modern comfort. It sits perpendicular to Ironia Road on three acres in the Ralston section of Mendham Township. An abundance of windows throughout the home make for a sun-filled abode. Outside, the property presents lots of space in which to live and explore.

Many of the distinct stylistic touches throughout the home are period original, including wide-plank wooden floors, three stone and brick fireplaces and antique glass windows. You can feel the history and charm of this home when observing the subtle, one-of-kind characteristics such as the bark on the attic rafters, the anonymous signature in the upstairs hallway, the cooking cranes in the fireplaces, and

the remains of the old staircase.

According to records found in the house, the current owners are only the fifth owners since the Wills family owned it prior to the Revolutionary War. Also in the attic, a box of treasures has been passed down -- the treasures include hand-written letters and checks from the 1800s.

The home's first floor features an eat-in, country-style kitchen with the original fireplace with built-in bread oven. The living room includes an additional fireplace.

Sunlight pours into the hallway that leads to the home's second floor. There can be found the master bedroom and two additional bedrooms, one sporting triangular walls that meet at the ceiling. A full bathroom with tub and shower serves the second floor.

As one sits outside, it is easy to relax and imagine oneself in another time. Neighboring homes are barely noticeable, especially when vegetation is in full bloom. It can be experienced from the home's large outdoor patio, constructed with blue stone, and a center "rug" made of brick on which a table and chairs could be placed. Stone walls and a working outdoor fireplace, con-

structed of fieldstone primarily found on the property, position the patio as a center for entertaining.

There is an additional outdoor dining room, remote and ingeniously built inside the stone wall foundations of what used to be the property's original barn. Along the patio is a small, stone storage shed that houses the property's original 30-foot, hand-dug well, still accessible if desired. Another way to enjoy the natural setting is the organic kitchen garden that includes a rain-collection set-up and a pine post-and-beam shed for storage.

RHA ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Ralston Historical Association will be held at 1 PM on June 24, 2012 at the General Store Museum, 313 Mendham Road West (Rt. 24) at the intersection of Roxiticus Road. Trustees and officers will be elected, last year's accomplishments will be reviewed and plans for this year's Working Farm Tour will be discussed.

RALSTON HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION 2011-2012

J RALSTON SOCIETY

John Paul and Jacelyn Botti
1772 Foundation
Drs. Michael and Victoria
Stewart

LIFE MEMBERS

Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Adams
Scott Adams
Sheri and Steve Alexander
Thomas and Suzanne Andruskevich
* Debora and Edward Appel
Robert and Carla Barone
James and Patricia Barry
* Fred Bartenstein
Mr. Carl H. Bergelt
Thomas and Karen Berry
Mr. and Mrs. James Bigham
John and Kirsten Brady
Ernest and Debra Brito
Mrs. Wilson Britten
Sally and Gordon Brummer
Russell Buchanan
Van Buchanan
Elsa Buchner
* Rose and Owen Carlin
Frank and Jane Carotenuto
Robert and Frances Cavalerio
Edward Clauss
Kyle and Casey Conti
Mr. and Mrs. Laurence Cutler
Judy and John Craig
Tom and Kathy Day
Anne Delaney and Chip Carver
Mr. and Mrs. J. Devine
Katherine DeVore
Mrs. Margery P. Dixon
* Beirne Donaldson and Wood Huntley
Dr. Robert Dorian
Mr. and Mrs. John Drzik
John Eade & Deborah Schemerler
Don Eberhart
Isabelle and Algernon Ellien
B. Danforth Ely
Mr. Louis Farrelly
Matthew and Teresa Finlay
Phyllis & Ken Florek
Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Forgatch
Mr. Sam Fornaro
Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Fox
* Steven and Elizabeth Free-

man
Charles and Barbara Frost
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Gates
Mariben Glasscock
Mark Goggin
* Jean and Gerald Gorman
Leslie Goryeb
Mr. and Mrs. Thor Gustafson
Mr. and Mrs. Sorer Haagen-
sen
Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Harun
Dr. and Mrs. Vilas R. Here-
kar
Clelia C. Ilacqua
Jane Jenkins
George and Linda Johnson
James and Theresa Julian
Jonathan and Kori Kalafer
Mr. and Mrs. J. Neil Kazan
Mrs. Patricia F. Kellog
Mr. Alan L. Kenwood
Tracy and Jamie Kinsel
A. P. Kirby, Jr.
Dr. and Mrs. David Knoop
Anne and Steve Koehler
Kristine Lamb
Sarah Dean Link
Gloria and Patrick Lonergan
Agi and Charles Louria
Dominick and Heather
Lovecchio
Ms. Valerie D. Lyle
Jane MacNeil
Gene and Pat Maynard
Bud and Sudy Mayo
James and Kathleen McAnally
Mr. and Mrs. Albert Merck
* Michael and Hilary Merritt
Joan Shearer Miller
Robert and Linda Montgomery
Linda and William Moran
Morgan and Joanne Morton
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Mulcahy
* Raymond and Nancy
Nadaskay
Mr. and Mrs. Raoul H. Nehr
John J. Nosta
Wenda Oddsen
Laurence Orloff and Deanne
Wilson
Margaret Parker
Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Patten
Robert and Virginia Pierson

Dr. Rene Pingeon
Mrs. Duncan Pitney
Mr. and Mrs. James Porter
Mr. and Mrs. Mark Porto
Thomas and Carol Pugsley
* Mr. Robert J. Purcell
Mr. Fenn Putnam
Edward and Rhoda Radke
Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Rainis
* Ralph and Pat Rhodes
Maria and John Rice
Bierce Riley
Donald and Mary Robertson
Desmond and Marnie Robin-
son
Roxiticus Fund
Julie A. Rubinfeld
JoEllen Rubolotta
Celia Rulle
Robert and Elaine Santos
John Eade & Deborah
Schemerler
Leslie and Karen Schles-
singer
Inge Schnee
Glenn Schulte
Janet M. Schurter
Darby Anne Scott
Charles A. Shioleno
Valerie Sinclair
Hugh and Joy Smith
Kevin and Dawn Smith
Mary H. Smith
Klaus and Ella Steiner
Richard and Alison Stewart
Al and Peggy Storer
Brian and Mary Ann Storms
Carlyn Taylor
Ms. Henrietta S. Thomas
Mr. and Mrs. John Thomp-
son
William F. Thompson
Thomas and Robin Timpson
Sam and Diane Tolley
Fred and Connie Vanacore
Christian and Laurie Van
Pelt
Roxanna Wagner
Stephen and Janet Westaway
Richard and Rosemarie
Whiting
Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Wilk
* Mr. Alan Willemsen
Mr. and Mrs. H. Wilmerding
John and Nancy Wilson

Mr. Robert D. Worley
Charlotte S. Wyman
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Yama-
shita
Mary K. Young
Faith Zimmer
Patricia Zimmerman
SUSTAINING MEMBERS
Chris and Patricia Eskeland
John and Mary Hem-
mendinger
Nadune and Christian Pech-
mann

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

Jean Grunals
Janet Koch
Gail Lingerman
Joseph Manfredi
Maureen Walker
FAMILY/INSTITUTIONS
Allen County Public Library
Kathy and Joseph Arvay
David and Nancy Bailin
* The Bury Family
Michael Catania and Jan
Rosenfeld
James and Aretta Muir
John and Lynne Rathgeber
* Richard Watson
* Ruth and Robert Willis
Mr. and Mrs. S. Zierau
**SENIOR CITIZEN MEM-
BERS**
Robert Anderson
Barbara Barth
John Bauer
Celeste Bianco
Glen and Ellie Coutts
Irene Daley
Frank DiPrimo
Sarah Flaherty
Anne and Vernon Holt
Phil Jaeger
Arnhard Kuhk
Anne and Frank Nicastro
Joseph Ollenshaw
Margaret Patton
* Mrs. Barbara Westergaard

* Building Fund Contributor

Ralston Historical Association
313 Mendham Road – West
Mendham, NJ 07945



Ralston Historical Association
Established in 1941

President – Margaret Hogan
Vice President – Tracy Kinsel
Secretary – Kris Lamb
Treasurer – Pat Rhodes

Trustees
Janice Backer
Judy Craig
Greg Duer
Paula Duer
Margaret Hogan
Anne Marie Hornyak
Tracy Kinsel
Kris Lamb

RHA Annual Meeting – Sunday, June 24, 2012
1 PM at the Ralston General Store
Visit our website: www.ralstonmuseum.org

2012-2013 Membership Renewal Form

Please indicate your membership information

New Member _____ Renewal _____ Corporate /Matching Gift _____

John Ralston Society (\$1,000.00 one time)
Life Member (\$250.00 one time)
Sustaining Member (\$100.00 per year)
Family/Institution Member (\$40.00 per year)
Individual Member (\$25.00 per year)
Senior citizen (\$15.00 per year)
Building/Collections Fund \$ _____

Name _____
Mailing Address _____
City/State/Zip _____
Email _____

The Ralston Historical Association is always looking for volunteers to help in a variety of ways. If interested, please include your name and phone number below or send an email to: rjp543@comcast.net

Name: _____
Phone: _____

RHA is a 501(C)3 organization.
Please make your tax deductible check payable to:

Ralston Historical Association
313 Mendham Road – West
Mendham, NJ 07945