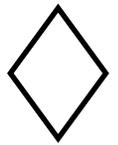


The General Store



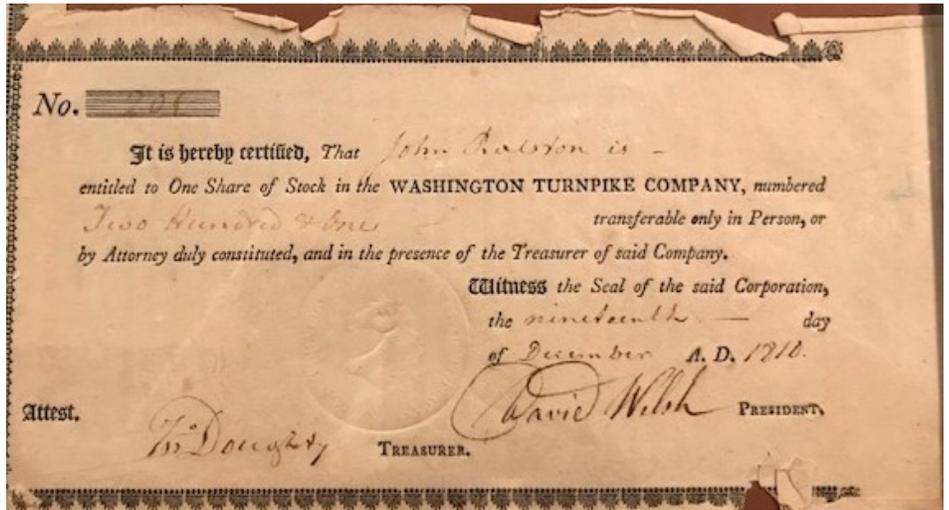
Which Way to the Washington Turnpike?

Reprinted from a previous newsletter written by Tracy Kinsel

Directions to the Ralston General Store from Morristown: At the Morristown courthouse, take the Washington Turnpike west to Mendham, continue through Mendham past Ebenezer Byram’s Black Horse Tavern, go thence another mile to John Ralston and Hugh Nesbitt’s General Store, located at the crossroads near mile marker 8 from Morristown, but before you travel the bridge over the North Branch of the Raritan River.

In the first decade of the nineteenth century these were clear directions you might follow to get to the Ralston General Store. Lest you get lost, today we refer to the Washington Turnpike by several other common names depending on the town and location, all – visible on a current day map: State Route 24, Morris County 510, Washington Street and Mendham Road. The names are now different, but the fact is the main road we travel every day east to west in Mendham and the road that still passes the Ralston General Store was built and operated at one time as a toll road.

According to Munsell’s “History of Morris County,” in the early nineteenth century both the population and industry in Morris County were growing, and better roads were in demand. Many new business ventures were formed to accommodate this growing need. One of them was the Washington Turnpike Company, chartered by an act of the New Jersey Legislature on March 3, 1806 to build a turnpike from Morristown to Phillipsburg, with a branch to Schooley’s Mountain passing by the popular mineral springs on the way to Hackettstown. Dave Welsh, as president, along with several other incorporators, issued subscriptions of 12,000 shares at \$25.00 each to the public to fund the project. The turnpike began by the courthouse or possibly farther west where the current Egbert Avenue intersects Washington Street



Washington Turnpike Company Share owned by John Ralston and recently donated to the RHA by Margery Dixon. 12,000 shares were issued at \$25.00 per share.

opposite Burnham Park in Morristown, and took the following path:

“It (the Washington Turnpike company) built the road which leaving Morristown by the courthouse, is still the principal road to Mendham; running thence through Chester, by the late General Cooper’s Mills (Cooper Grist Mill) to German Valley (Long Valley), and so up Schooley’s Mountain, through Springtown to the Mountain hotels, where it branched, the “spur going north to Hackettstown and main line continuing through Pleasant Grove toward Phillipsburg.”

As the name implies, travelers on the Washington Turnpike should bring money, since this is a toll road. According to Harold J. Nunn’s “The Story of Hackettstown, New Jersey – 1754 to 1955”, which quotes a copy of the original charter kept in Washington, NJ, a printed list of rates was required to be posted at all times as follows:

“Per each mile traveled: for every carriage,

sleigh or sled drawn by beast, ONE CENT. For each additional beast, ONE CENT. For each beast exceeding four, TWO CENTS. For every horse and rider or lead horse or mule, ONE CENT. For every dozen calves, sheep or hogs, FIVE MILLS. For every dozen of horses, mules, or cattle, ONE CENT.”

The charter continues on to cover other important conditions of travel and tries not to restrict business, or inconvenience some aspects of public travel.

The company shall not demand any toll from persons passing to or from public worship on the Sabbath day, or to or from any mill to which he may resort for the grinding of grain for his family’s use. Or for horses, carriages, sleighs or sleds conveying a person to or from a funeral, or any person passing to or from any business on the farm, or any militiaman passing to or from any training on a muster

President's Message

2021 MARKS the 80th ANNIVERSARY OF THE RALSTON HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Throughout the summer, the small group of trustees have been very busy preparing the General Store Museum for our new season of visitors. We began the weekend before the Fourth of July holiday by opening, cleaning, and organizing the Museum after having been closed for a year. We even had a couple of visitors stop in while we were preparing for our grand reopening on the following weekend.

We exhibited at the Brookside Parade on July 3rd and handed out postcards, posters, and information about the General Store Museum, our "local treasure" as so many people have referred to it. We encouraged individuals who stopped by to join with us in keeping history alive here in Ralston and support our efforts through monetary donations, by joining the Ralston Historical Association, and/or by helping occasionally with special activities sponsored by the group. We need all of you to make this happen!

We held the grand reopening of the Museum on the Fourth of July weekend. The Museum was opened on Sunday and Monday from 2-5 PM. We welcomed 42 visitors during the weekend, most of whom had never visited the General Store Museum. Refreshments were served and free postcards, posters, and flags were given to our visitors. We the Trustees, though small in number, are very excited about sharing our local history with others. We have been very encouraged by the positive responses we had from many of the individuals we met at the parade and at the opening days of this season. Many expressed an interest in helping in some way to keep history alive in Ralston for the generations to come.

We have also worked for the past month organizing and preparing scrapbooks and photo albums containing news articles (covering the last 300 years), old postcards, and old photos. We are now working on a

scrapbook highlighting special events in the history of the Ralston Historical Association, as we celebrate our 80th Anniversary as an association. We are in the process of setting up a new display, "Crafting, Clothing, Cooking" Early American Life in the Home. Plans are being made to republish the book by Ella Mockridge entitled Our Mendham. The book will be on sale in the General Store Museum on a future date. Planning and designing a float for the Mendham Labor Day Parade is also on our agenda.

Now if I might just share some of our history with you! Eighty years ago, in order to save the General Store/Post Office from collapse and possibly even demolition, in September 1941, a group of concerned citizens then known as the "Ralstonites" from the Ralston area of Mendham Township, composed a document proposing the following:

*"The undersigned propose to form a corporation for the purpose of taking title to the property, repairing it and managing it."**

Thus, the beginning of the Ralston Historical Association. They collected contributions to purchase the General Store and Post Office property for \$400.

*"The terms of the proposed purchase will require that the building be repaired and used as a post office or as a historical site under penalty of reversion to the then owners of the De-Mott property. It is expected that the purchase price, legal fees, and cost renovation will not exceed approximately \$1,500."**

In addition to collecting donations, this group also encouraged those who were unable to make a monetary donation at this time, to contribute in other ways.

*"It has also been suggested that arrangements be made so that those who cannot make cash contributions may contribute labor or materials."**

History repeats itself! Today we are again asking you to join us in preserving our local history through donations of money and as importantly your time. As stated in one of our previous newsletters, "When you volunteer, you give back to the community by helping to preserve the Ralston General Store Museum, a local national treasure. What you may not realize is that volunteering also benefits you! You can make new friends, enrich your knowledge of our local history, and feel good that you've made a difference."

Please join us as we celebrate our 80th year as a community organization striving to keep history alive for this generation and those generations to come.

We would love for you to complete the survey at the back of this newsletter and let us know how you can help. Please join us at our Annual Meeting at 2:00 PM on October 10th at the General Store Museum.

Anne Marie Hornyak

President-Ralston Historical Association

*These quotations were taken from the original document signed by the Ralstonites in 1941. You may view this important document in its entirety in the scrapbook found in the General Store Museum.



"Rock-a-Bye Baby," but not the Railroad.

Ralston Historical Association Through the Years 1941-2021



Municipal enterprise. John H. N. Potter and Mary Langford pass shingles up to Mrs. Margaretta Potter (left) and Mrs. Florence C. Page, who fix new roof. Residents have organized Ralston Historical Association to restore the post office as a landmark.



Opening of the General Store Museum in 1964



Wilma Sagurton
Special Display Horns
O'Plenty (1990)



1992 First House Tour

RHA Members at the General Store
Ed Clauss, Rose Carlin, Marge Davidson,
Kate Emmons, Wilma Sagurton



2003

Tracy Kinsel, President of the RHA, presents Catherine Emmons with a resolution of thanks for her 39 years of service.



Second House Tour (2005)
Bank House on Ironia Road



Pat Rhodes and Jeff Purcell work together to organize and clean the Museum for the new season (2014)



50th Anniversary Celebration of the opening of the General Store Museum (2014)



Colonial Crafts and Stories at the General Store Museum (2017)
Cornhusk dolls, needlepoint, whirligigs



AnneMarie Hornyak and Cathy Nodoro review the newly designed scrapbook covering almost 250 years of The General Store History (2021)

FROM THE COLLECTION

Sugar Nipper



Until Victorian inventors figured out a way to get sugar to the grocer's shop in ready-to-use granulated form, it was always transported in large cone-shaped sugar loaves. Households could buy a whole sugar loaf or a lump broken off and sold by weight. But then what? How did people prepare it for kitchen and dining table? Sugar nippers were an important part of the answer.

Sugar nippers were basic household tools, but before using them you would probably cut the hard whitish cone into smaller chunks with a hammer and chisel. The nippers were sometimes on a stand so you could put all your strength into forcing the cutting blades through the pieces of sugar-loaf. If they had no stand, the better ones had a piece that stuck out at right angles and was used to steady the sugar nippers against the edge of the kitchen table, while you gripped and squeezed.

This was heavy work, producing lumps and crumbs that could be used in the kitchen. For the dining-room and tea table you needed to nip the sugar into neat lumps. This was sometimes seen as a job for the mistress of the house, especially before 1800 when refined sugar was expensive and often kept in locked boxes, like precious tea leaves in lockable tea caddies.

RHA—Annual Meeting

October 10, 2021

2:00 PM

Ralston General Store

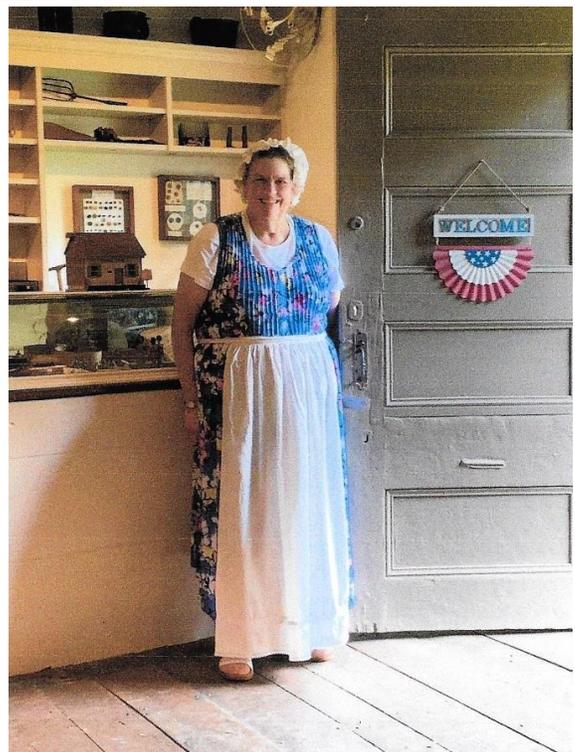
Turnpike—continued

day appointed by law.”

All-important exceptions considering John Ralston owned a Grist-mill across the street from the General Store.

According to the book, “The Mendhams,” John Ralston had a reputation for investing generously in local property and business ventures, in addition to his share in the General Store, he also owned several shares in the Washington Turnpike Company. Shares No. 214 and 215 were purchased by John Ralston in 1810 and were recently donated to the Ralston Historical Association by Margaret Dixon, a descendant of the Nesbitt family. One can notice the raised seal of the Washington Turnpike company on this share containing the bust of a horse.

It is not known if John Ralston ever profited from this investment; however in 1823 the property of the Washington Turnpike Company was sold at sheriff sale to James Wood, indicating the company had its share of financial problems and not unlike current day turnpikes. According to Wheaton J. Lane’s “From Indian Trail to Iron Horse,” by the 1830s, the days of turnpike construction were over due to competition from railroads, canals and the public’s resistance to paying tolls, as indicated by the creation of several shunpikes along the main road. It is not known exactly when the Washington Turnpike ceased to be a toll road, but by 1897 the New Jersey Legislature passed an act that allowed the buyout of many of the turnpike companies in New Jersey, thus making the roads free to the public.



RHA President AnneMarie Hornyak welcomes visitors to the General Store Museum in period costume.

RALSTON HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERS—2020—2021

JOHN RALSTON SOCIETY

1772 Foundation
John Paul and Jacelyn Botti
Beirne Donaldson and Wood
Huntley
Sara Dean Link
**Ralph and Pat Rhodes
**Dr. Michael Stewart and
Victoria Chanliecco

LIFE MEMBERS

Scott Adams
Debbi and Ed Appel
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Appleby
Robert and Carla Barone
James and Patricia Barry
Michael and Denise Brandes
Ernest and Debra Brito
Mrs. Wilson Britten
**Van Buchanan
William and Laurie Burke
Jane Carotenuto
Robert and Frances Cavallero
Edward Claus
Judy and John Craig
Tom and Kathy Day
**Anne Delaney and Chip Carver
Augie and Diane Corsico
Mr. and Mrs. J. Devine
Mr. and Mrs. John Drzik
**John Eade and Deborah
Schmerier
**Don Eberhart
Isabelle and Algernon Ellien
Mr. B. Danforth Ely
Mr. Louis Farrelly
April Fey

Matthew and Teresa Finlay
Phyllis and Ken Florek
Mr. Sam Fornaro
Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Fox
Steven and Elizabeth Freeman
Mrs. Robert Gates
*Mark Goggin
Joan and Gerald Gorman
Leslie Goryeb
Mr. and Mrs. Sorer Haagensen
**Anne Marie Hornyak
Celia C. Ilacqua
Jane Jenkins
George and Linda Johnson
James and Theresa Julian
Jonathan and Kori Kalafer
*Mr. Alan L. Kenwood
**Tracy and Jamie Kinsel
Mrs. David Knoop
Joseph and Christine Laird
*Kristine Lamb
William and Karen Linden
Sarah Dean Link
**Gloria and Patrick Lonergan
Dominick and Heather
Lovecchio
Ms. Valerie D. Lyle
Elisabeth H. MacDonald
Jane MacNeil
James and Kathleen McAnally
Robert Meyer
Michael and Hilary Merritt
Joan Shearer Miller
Linda and William Moran
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Mulcahy
Raymond and Nancy
Nadaskay

Cathy Nodoro
John J. Nosta
Wenda Oddsen Monger
Laurence Orloff and Deanne
Wilson
Margaret Parker
Mrs. Robert Pierson
Mr. and Mrs. Mark Porto
Thomas and Carol Pugsley
Mr. Robert J. Purcell
Edward and Rhoda Radke
Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Rainis
Bierce Riley
Donald and Mary Robertson
Roxiticus Fund
Julie A. Rubinfeld
JoEllen Rubolotta
Celia Rulle
Inge Schnee
Glenn Schulte
Janet M. Schurter
Diane and Eugene Scolamiero
Darby Anne Scott
Mark and Linda Sharland
Charles A. Shiolen
Valerie Sinclair
Hugh and Joy Smith
Kevin and Dawn Smith
Klaus and Ella Steiner
Michael S. Stewart
Richard and Alison Stewart
Al and Peggy Storer
Brian and Mary Ann Storms
Ms. Henrietta S. Thomas
Mr. and Mrs. John Thompson
William F. Thompson
*Sam and Diane Tolley

Connie Vanacore
Carolyn Nesbitt Wagenseller
Benjamin R. Weber
Mr. Alan Willemsen
**Mr. and Mrs. H. Wilmerding
John and Nancy Wilson
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Yamashita
Mary K. Young
James Zemaitis
Faith Zimmer
*Patricia Zimmerman

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

Brian Boden
Amalia Duarte
*J. Allan Phillips

FAMILY/INSTITUTIONS

Bailey Funeral Home
John P. Drzik and Ann L Thorsell
Mr. Stephen Fogle
Mr. and Mrs. David Hinkley
William and Karen Linden

SENIOR CITIZEN MEMBERS

Alice Dannenbaum
Sante D'Emidio
Jean Gruntals
William Maurer
Mr. and Mrs. J. Szoke

* Building Fund Contributor
** Sustaining Member

Please take a few minutes and respond to the survey below.

Have you or your family visited the museum in the past four years?	YES	NO
Would you like to receive the newsletter annually?	YES	NO
Is Sundays from 2:00-5:00 PM a good time for visiting the Museum?	YES	NO
Have you attended any of the tours sponsored by the RHA?	YES	NO
Do you own an historic house in Ralston?	YES	NO
Would you be willing to open your home to a Ralston House Tour?	YES	NO
Would you be interested in serving as a trustee of the RHA?	YES	NO
Would you be interested in helping on occasion with special activities conducted by the RHA?	YES	NO

Please add your comments below:



Niddy Noddy—How was the above device used in the Early American Home?

Ralston Historical Association
313 Mendham Road West
Mendham, NJ 07945



Ralston Historical Association

Established in 1941

President—AnneMarie Hornyak
Vice President/Treasurer—Jeff Purcell
Secretary—Cathy Nodoro

Trustees

Janice Backer
Kris Lamb
Pat Rhodes

Visit our website: www.ralstonmuseum.org

2021—2022 Membership Renewal Form

Please indicate your membership information

New Member ___ Renewal ___ 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 Address _____

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@verizon.net.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

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

Please include your email address if you would like a receipt.