



March 2023

Ogdensburg Historical Society

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Find us on:

Facebook at facebook.com/oburghhistoricalsocietypage

Borough of Ogdensburg's website: ogdensburgnj.org/committees/historical-society

WINTER 2022-2023



OHS hosted its annual Christmas/Holiday party on December 5th to a full house of members. Before the evening's program started, we announced that regrettably both Candice Horner and William Washer had made the decision to step down from their positions due to

other commitments. It was announced that the officers and trustees had agreed to the following:

Officers:

Jane Krueger - President * Mark McFadden - Vice-President
Christine Dabrowski-Secretary * Meghan MacMullin-Treasurer

Trustees are now John Kibildis, Dion Derkach, Dominic Zampella, Bud Decker and Tom Kuplan. There is still one open trustee seat if anyone wants to join the board.

We broke away from the traditional movie to have read aloud two stories from Christmas' past. Submitted from John Kibildis —

With a winter chill in the air and the thrill of anticipating a snowfall, a ten year old lad in the mid 1950's eagerly awaits the Christmas season in Ogdensburg. Living just about a football field north of the Main Street railroad trestle, our young man anxiously awaits the "stringing" of the Christmas lights across Main Street. In the first week of December the Borough Road Department would hang light bulbs of all colors from the trestle to the elementary school. Main Street became ablaze with color and, in the eyes of our young man, a sight that would rival the best of all Holiday decorations.

To add to this heightened time of childhood excitement, the huge Christmas tree on the front lawn of the Elementary School was also brilliant with color. What a wonderful time of year and what a wonderful way to anticipate the coming of the Christmas Season! It was such a thrill for that lad to run from his home to the trestle and through that ceiling of lights to the Christmas tree. Occasionally, a rest would be required, but that only gave our young man more time to observe, inspect, enjoy. And then there was the ultimate exhilaration—an evening run enhanced by a falling snow. Nothing greater could make such a happening better! - *conclusion*



UPCOMING EVENTS

- May 10—Board of Trustee's meeting at 7pm
- June 3—Annual Picnic at Sterling Hill Mine & Museum
- August 9—Board of Trustee's meeting at 7pm
- September 13—General Membership meeting at 7pm



Revolution 250

The United States of America is turning 250 in 2026 and New Jersey is commemorating this once-in-a-generation moment through it's RevolutionNJ initiative.

RevolutionNJ is New Jersey's commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. Crossroads of the American Revolution is the not-for-profit partner of the New Jersey Historical Commission in planning observances and commemorations, with support from the NJ Division of Travel and Tourism and the NJ Division of Parks and Forestry.

More information will be forthcoming for both the Town and the School. Please visit this link to see all the planning efforts so far into this milestone event.

<https://revolutionarynj.org/revolution-nj/>

Christmas Past

Excerpt from Joe Mora's Memoir

"One year my parents gave my brother and me a pair of skis for Christmas. Joey Phillips also got skis that year. I think our parents must have compared their Christmas list. Since we always received only one or two gifts for Christmas, there must have been some cooperation. These skis did not have quick release safety strapped like today's skis, but had strapped that kept your feet attached to the skis. If we fell, we had to take care not to twist our ankles.

When we got tired of skiing on the sand bank or doing snow jumps, we looked for someplace that was a little more challenging. We found such a place on the Predmores farm. There was a logging road that went up over the mountain and into Sparta. The logging road was behind the farm on the mountain side. The open field below the woods had some apple trees and many fallen trees. The day before we went up this snow-covered mountain, there had been a misty or drizzle of rain. The surface of the snow had a light crust of ice on it; so, that as we walked up the mountain, we broke the ice or we walked side ways to keep from sliding back down. Joey and I discussed with each other whether the ice may make it too hard to control our downward ride and maybe we would go too fast. As twelve or thirteen-year old's, we did not have much common sense. We decided that it would be more thrilling and faster. We climbed to the top of the wood road and prepared to ski down the mountain. We strapped our feet to a steel base on the ski. Like I said there were not quick disconnects. I went first and Joey followed me. We headed down the mountain like a bunch of dummies with the skiing skills of a donkey. We immediately gained tremendous speed and lost all of control of our decent. We flew down the mountain through thick brush, instead of following the curves of the logging road. As I sped through brush and getting slapped in the face and body, I was feeling the pain of the scratches and bruises, I was screaming and I could hear Joe doing the same and cursing like a sailor. When we hit the open field and I had fallen on my butt, I slammed into a fallen apple tree; I hit the icy snow surface and continued sliding down the hill on my sided, back and every which way until I hit some heavy brush. I saw Joey fly past me, screaming on just one ski. He went over the top of the bank and onto the bare road below. Joe came to sudden stop on his butt in the middle of the road. His ski continued across the field and into the swamp. I could see that Joe was hurting. He did not move for a long time. He could not breathe and complained that his butt was sore. I was bruised and scratched up on my face, hands and legs. I went into the swamp to fetch the skis and we headed home, comparing our downhill ride that had us both frightened and sure we were going to die. We promised each other that we would never do that again and then laughed, at how stupid we had been and the thrill of fear. In his adult life, Joey had many health problems with his hip and lower abdomen. He said that his problems were due to his high school football hard knocks. I always felt that it was this fall onto the middle of the road, from way up on the side of the road bank, on to the road at Predmore's farm. The drop to the road from the top of road edge, had to be eight to ten feet, minimum.

Christmas was always an exciting holiday. In our home, we celebrated two Christmas holidays. On the 12th of December, my mother would set up an altar for the Virgin of Guadalupe, the Patron Saint of the Americas. The Virgin Mary of Guadalupe is the most revered religious miracle, in Mexico. The story begins with a poor farmer, Juan Diego, being confronted by a beautiful lady, surrounded by a bright light. She spoke to him gave him a message for the local Bishop. The Bishop did not believe him and asked him to bring him a rose from this mysterious lady. The lady request Juan Diego to hold out his working cape and she placed a bouquet of roses. Now this is mid-winter and in the mountains near Mexico City. When the farmer opened his cape to show the Bishop the roses he had requested, the Bishop, not only saw the roses. On his cape was the image of the beautiful lady he had met

in the hills of Tepiyac. The image of The Virgin of Guadalupe, is in every home, of every Mexican, where ever they may live. In 1961, I visited the Basilica of Mexico, and knelt, within 25 feet, of this sacred, cape and image. I felt the immense faith, my mother had worshiped, all her life. Today the actual image is only viewed while standing on a moving walkway, with the image mounted on the wall, many feet above, behind the new Basilica's alter.

My mother would place her framed painting of the Virgin of Guadalupe on the altar, with a statue of Jesus Christ and the Sacred Heart and votive candles. All the Mexicans in the area, would gather, in our home, in front of the altar during the evening, for a week. They would recite the rosary and other prayers in Spanish. Rosa Ramirez or Lupe De La Torre would lead the group. I would kneel next to my father and my Uncle Galindo. To my surprise, they did not know the prayers by memory, so they just mumbled in cadence with the loud praying by the women. I to mumble in unison with my Dad and uncle. My knees took a beating during those long prayer sessions. They last for about an hour or so it seemed. When the prayers were finished, my mother served the meal, she had prepared, during the day. There were tamales, frijoles, *sopa de fidio*, tortillas, and chili and *pan dulce* with coffee. *Pan dulce* is a sweet bun that is typically Mexican, in appearance and taste. *Sopa de fidio* is a fried angel hair pasta soup, that is very popular with the kids. Mom's friends helped each day, in preparing the Mexican cuisine.

Mom, like all of Mexico, worshiped the Virgin, out of love and adoration for the mother of Jesus. She held this religious worshiping of the Virgin event for many years, until she realized that no one in the group of her friends, offered to volunteer their home, for the annual celebration. I remember when she announced that it was her last year, only because it was so time consuming and the labor. Her friends all understood and Rosie Ramirez volunteered to celebrate the apparitions of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the following year. She did, but only once, and the menu was not as elaborate as mom's. None of Mom's friends would volunteer their home for the adoration. So, ended an event that felt so special to our faith and the atmosphere of an important event and the festive meal with so many friends. My knees did feel the relief of those long minutes, kneeling.

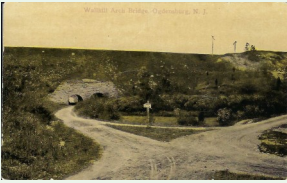
The days before Christmas, we would start decorating the cedar tree, that we had chopped down in the woods, out back, by the high rock or up on the mountain. We placed the sting of colored lights all around the tree and added foil strips of icicles all over the tree, plus glass Christmas balls. We made garland by stringing popcorn on a string, with a needle. The room was decorated with ground pine, we gathered in the mountain. Propping up the tree was done with wooden frames we made from scrap wood. Mom covered the tree stand and floor with a sheet or cloth of some sort. On Christmas morning, we were always surprised by the single gifts, we each received. Our parents sacrificed a lot to provide us with something, she felt we would like and enjoy. Early in life, we received cars and dolls. My sister received dolls that had eyes that stayed open when in an upright position, but then would close their eyes when laid down. Later years, it was a double pair of holstered, six shooters that looked so real. Both my brother Fil and I received the same gifts. My sisters received identical gifts also. One Christmas Fil and I each got a set of tin soldiers. The figures were printed on flat metal and the metal figures had the base metal bent underneath to hold the soldiers upright. The soldiers were in various battle positions. Some were standing at attention; others were in a prone position with the rifles pointed at the enemy. Some figures were positioned behind a machine gun. The figure came in two different uniforms. The enemy were in gray and the good guys were in kaki or OD colors. The figures were easy to store because they were flat and stacked well on each other. We had a lot of fun imagining our own wars and battles. Another Christmas gift Fil and I received was an Erector Set. We spent many hours making all kinds of structures. Another year it was an American Flyer sled, the next year it was a neat scooter, with a foot brake. My first ride down the hill on my new scooter was not a happy event. When I was moving fast, at the base of the hill, I stepped on the break with my heel. The handle turned in my hand and I went flying over the handle bar and onto to the macadam road. The palm of my hands was bloodied, as were my knees and elbow. Another year we received skis. I have already mentioned the fun we had with the skies. One gift that kept me and Fil busy for many evenings were the erector sets. They came with steel pars, screws, & nuts, chains, small battery-operated motors,



We are always looking for volunteers to help curate the museum throughout the year, please feel free to contact us, if you are interested.

OHS will be turning 40 next year!

We are looking for volunteers to help us plan events to celebrate this milestone!



Watch for all different types of articles, topics, celebrations and pictures on our Facebook page—
Ogdensburg NJ Historical Society Page

and all kinds of gears and spokes. A stocking with candy, nuts, and a tangerine were also hung, around the room for each of us. No names were necessary, since we all received the same thing. One Christmas, my brother and I received double six shooters in double holsters. The guns were all silver steel, with engraved things on the side and pearl handles. The guns came with rolls of explosive tapes that fit in the gun handles and gave a load explosion and flames out the sides, with each squeeze of the trigger. A neighbor stole our guns, several months after Christmas. Our beautiful silver pistols were never returned.

Conclusion

The OHS Board and Trustees are working to create new exhibitions at the museum with items to showcase various people and aspects of the town's history.

We are currently looking for donations of:

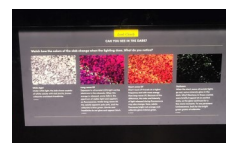
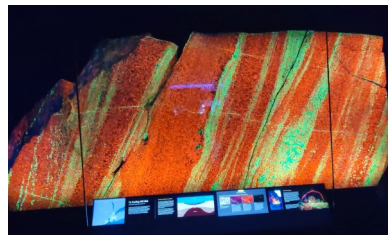
- ◇ Sports memorabilia from local athletes
- ◇ Memorabilia/photos from the local churches
- ◇ Memorabilia/photos regarding the railroad system through Ogdensburg



The First Aid Squad has prepared their display section.

Museum of Natural History Trip

An opportunity presented itself and approximately 20 of our OHS members capitalized on a Lakeland Bus tour to the Museum of Natural History in NYC on January 28th to see "The Sterling Hill Slab" and other contributions to the Gem and Mineral featured display. As amazing that we can go in our own backyard to see these amazing minerals, it was awe inspiring to see it in the display at the museum.



THE STORY OF OGDENSBURG BOOK: A PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVE

In and around 1976 was the last time a commemorative book was published about the history of our beloved town. Since it is over 45 years since that publishing, we are looking into continuing our story with the help of others. There is a lot of history in this small town and many life long residents who know it. Please consider taking some time and sharing the history of Ogdensburg and your family. We will need some historical information as well if you have that we will welcome it.

Photos are always welcomed!

Reach out to us at oburghhistoricalsociety@gmail.com with questions, comments, stories and facts!

The History of Ogdensburg...A People's Perspective

Join us in sharing your memories of Ogdensburg...as a child; as a teen; as an adult

We are looking for stories from you!

How do you think Ogdensburg helped shape you?

How do you impact Ogdensburg?

What was the landscape like when you were growing up? Do you have pictures to share?

Who were your influencers? A special teacher? A neighbor? A leader?

What is your fondest memory?

Could you write 1,000 words to help us show how Ogdensburg was when you were here?

Information we will need included in the perspective -

The street you grew up on and the dates you lived in Ogdensburg

Contact us at oburghhistoricalsociety@gmail.com if you are interested in participating.

OHS Membership

Your membership in the Ogdensburg Historical Society acknowledges your awareness of Ogdensburg's rich and unique history. Join today and with your support help us preserve and promote our history.

Membership Fees:

Annually:

Seniors	\$6.00
Individual	\$12.00
Family	\$18.00

One Time:

Lifetime	\$50.00
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OGDENSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Ogdensburg Historical Society is a non-profit and non-partisan organization formed not only to ascertain and preserve the history of Ogdensburg, NJ, but also to foster the education and enjoyment of its residents and visitors. The OHS obtained grant monies in 1988 and 1989 to refurbish the 1910 school addition/firehouse to be converted into the Old Schoolhouse/Firehouse Museum—the society's headquarters.

The museum's first floor lobby holds a display case (that was originally in the grade school) of minerals from the Ogdensburg Zinc Mine. The fire truck bays contain the Ogdensburg Fire Department's retired 1935 and 1959 American LaFrance Pumper trucks. In June of 2006, the bays were dedicated in the memory of William "Doly" Dolan and Joseph Fitzgibbons, Sr. These men were former students, OFD fire chiefs and OHS charter members and vice presidents—all within the walls of this building.

The second floor serves as a meeting hall for the society's meetings. It contains showcases which hold donated Ogdensburg memorabilia such as postcards of old Ogdensburg, school history and graduation pictures, a display of the zinc mill operations, a scale model of the mine's hoist, and Ogden family history documents. There are also old exhibits of Thomas A. Edison memorabilia to honor the ten years Edison spent mining iron ore at the old Edison Ore Milling Company on Sparta Mountains.

The OHS sponsors two annual dinners. In June, a catered picnic meeting is held at the Sterling Hill Mining Museum. In October, an Ethnic Dinner is held at the school where each family is asked to bring a covered dish that represents their ethnic background.

We look forward to seeing you at our next Ogdensburg Historical Society meeting!

General Membership Meetings

Saturday, June 3, 2023 5:00 pm
3:30 pm for tour
Wednesday, September 13th 7:00 pm

Ogdensburg Historical Society Officers & Board of Trustees

Officers -

President - Jane Krueger
Vice President - Mark McFadden
Secretary - Christine Dabrowski
Treasurer - Megan MacMullin

Trustees -

Dion Derkach
John Kibildis
Dominic Zampella
Tom Kuplan
Bud Decker

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