



Spring Lake Historical Society, Inc.

Newsletter

May 2023

Vol. 45, No 1

42nd Annual

SPRING LAKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY HOUSE TOUR

Thursday, June 8, 2023 • 10:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.



House Tour Ticket Donation: \$50.00

For Tickets on Tour Day

Spring Lake Railroad Station ~ Warren Avenue

(\$45 if tickets purchased prior to June 8, 2023)

For Tickets Prior to Tour Day

Kate & Co. ~ 1100 Third Avenue

Bain's SL Hardware ~ 1301 Third Avenue

J. McLaughlin ~ 1306 Third Avenue

For further information please call Spring Lake Historical Society
(732) 449-0772

Find us on Facebook and www.springlakehistoricalsociety.org

42nd HOUSE TOUR

The Spring Lake Historical Society will hold its annual House Tour on Thursday, June 8th, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The House Tour, is now in its 42nd year.

It promises to delight those who appreciate charming, historic, unique styled homes as they date from the end of the 19th century up to 1920. Several century old homes are among the six home sites to be toured. The more public sites to visit include Saint Catharine's Church on Essex Avenue, the Spring Lake Memorial Community House and the Sundae Times on Atlantic Avenue, an ice cream shop treasured by Summer visitors. Along the ocean front, please visit the newly rebuilt South End Pavilion Pools & Lockers area. The Historical Society's Museum will be open for viewing with its Main Gallery's permanent collection and its Changing Gallery featuring a history of the Spring Lake Memorial Community House.

Tickets are \$45.00 if purchased prior to Tour Day. On Tour Day, they will be \$50. They are available for purchase at the following shops in downtown Spring Lake: Kate & Company at 1100 Third Avenue, J. McLaughlin at 1306 Third Avenue and Bain's Spring Lake Hardware at 1301 Third Avenue.

Reservations for the tour can be made by calling the Museum at 732-449-0772, emailing us at slhs703@optimum.net or Eventbrite on our website, springlakehistoricalsociety.org Tickets will also be available on the day of the tour at the Spring Lake Train Station, Warren Avenue, where coffee/refreshments will be served starting at 10:00 a.m.

The Historical Society looks forward to seeing many tour goers at the House Tour and it is strongly suggested that you start your day early so that you have time to see everything.



Two of this year's House Tour Homes

SPRING LAKE MEMORIAL COMMUNITY HOUSE

July 4, 1923 – July 4, 2023

- THE WOMAN'S CLUB of Spring Lake saw a need for a community building
- In 1919, philanthropist, OLIVER H. BROWN, donated land, money, and designed it to be a memorial to the 58 soldiers and sailors in Spring Lake who served in World War 1



The Community House Circa 1940



The Community House Circa 1960



The Community House Today

- Mayor Brown's gift was \$40,000 for the plot of land and \$100,000 for the construction, later adding monies to his original gift (Brown moved and relocated three homes off the property at Madison and Third Avenues)
- Frank Newman of New York City aided in the design – English Tudor style with contrasting brown timber, weathered red bricks, with gray plaster and featuring many chimneys and gables
- One wing of the first floor is a complete THEATRE seating about 480 people
- The Borough's public LIBRARY is a second wing of the main floor
- A large reception room on that same level is paneled in dark oak, and known as the OLIVER H. BROWN ROOM
- The second floor contains two similar rooms: the WOMAN'S CLUB ROOM and the WILLIAM H. POTTER ROOM
- A spacious RECREATION HALL is below street level and has been utilized for a wide variety of community activities (currently it is home to the Spring Lake School of Dance)

SPRING LAKE COMMUNITY HOUSE THEATRE HISTORY

- O.H. Brown donated more monies to furnish the Community House – THEATRE seats being the largest purchase
- Initially, small production groups performed some plays sporadically; musical recitals; and Christmas programs - Community House Director, Thomas Lantz
- 1930's – Theatre was a prominent MOVIE venue – "Connecticut Yankee" starring Will Rogers and "Smart Money" starring E.G. Robinson were popular ones
- July & August, 1933, THE SHORE PLAYERS opened at the Community House in "Forsaking All Others" – followed by: "Goodbye Again". "The Party's Over", "The Late Christopher Bean", "When Ladies Meet", & "The Vinegar Tree"

Continued on page 4

SPRING LAKE COMMUNITY HOUSE THEATRE HISTORY

Continued from page 3

- July 11, 1934, The Shore Players under the direction of Mrs. Albert produced "The Curtain Rises" which ran all week in the evenings
- July 11, 1934, Remo Bufano's "Marionettes" special matinee show was held – tickets were 55 cents
- In August, 1934, the SHORE PLAYERS performed "Such Men Are Dangerous", a comedy
- After August, 1934, the SHORE PLAYERS discontinued the plays because of poor theatre attendance – "It seems that summer folk (especially the men) just don't want to have to do anything special of an evening, they get that all winter long."
- The MONMOUTH COMMUNITY PLAYERS: February & March, 1934, "This Thing Called Love", "The Jade Necklace" – director Florence H. Kofal
- 1940's – THE COMMUNITY PLAYHOUSE presented plays: "Wind In The Sails"; "Tonight or Never"
- 1940's – Musical recitals and Minstrel Shows were performed
- Late 1940's and the 1950's -THE IVY TOWER PLAYHOUSE became a prominent part of the Community House
- 1958 – THE PINE TREE PLAYERS was a theatre group performing at the Community House offering a production in the Spring and Fall; the Players were dissolved in 1994
- THE SPRING LAKE COMMUNITY THEATRE ASSOCIATION alternated with THE PINE TREE PLAYERS for the Spring and Fall offerings
- 1976 – THE SPRING LAKE THEATRE DANCE SCHOOL was formed – presently students are accepted ages 3 to high school seniors "...the furtherance and appreciation of music and art"....
- 1978 – THE SPRING LAKE COMMUNITY THEATRE COMPANY was formed and continues to the present
- 1994 – Financial reasons required THE SPRING LAKE COMMUNITY THEATRE, the "house" company, to assume all productions offering a merger of the other two groups
- Executive Director & Producer, Pat Barry heads The Spring Lake Theatre Company and brings outstanding Broadway hits as well as other cultural enrichments to the theatre
- "Scrooge" is an annual December tradition that has been performed by the SLTC for more than 40 years

OLIVER H. BROWN 1852 - 1924 COMMUNITY HOUSE DONOR

- Businessman – O.H. Brown Fine Furnishings store at 3rd and Jersey Avenues in Spring Lake – business extensions in Asbury Park & Lakewood (Horatio Alger story)
- Many real estate holdings including other furniture stores, hotels, land, and houses
- President of Spring Lake and Lakewood banks
- Mayor of North Spring Lake in 1894 when Brighton, North Brighton, and Como incorporated as North Spring Lake
- Mayor of Spring Lake when it consolidated with Spring Lake Beach in 1904 - serving as Mayor for over 30 years
- A state assemblyman in 1896 for one term
- A state senator (1902 – 1910)
- A philanthropist
- A staunch Methodist (Trustee of St. Andrew's Methodist Church)
- A bachelor all his life (the tragic loss of his intended bride brought about his continued bachelorhood - a family tale)
- Close friend, William Potter (established a dry goods store on Third Avenue at the encouragement of O.H. Brown)
- Gifted a \$40,000 plot of land and \$100,000 for the construction of a community center as a memorial to townsmen who served in World War I.

DEDICATION SPEECH BY OLIVER H. BROWN

JULY 4, 1923

Mr. Chairman, invited guests, and citizens of Spring Lake:

I have looked forward to the completion of this building. Therefore this is a day of much satisfaction to me.

Having spent more than 40 years of my life in your midst, and served more than 30 years as your mayor, I have found you always ready to support every worthy movement that had for its object the betterment and prosperity of the borough. There is perhaps no other municipality on the Jersey coast where the cooperation and community spirit is stronger than in this vicinity.

My earnest prayer is that the religious, educational, and social interest of Spring Lake will be strengthened by being all combined under this roof; which is dedicated as a memorial to the brave boys who served in the World War, and this is to be hoped that the Young Men's Christian Association, the splendid library, and all other kindred associations will find a prosperous and happy home in this building.

I delight to think in the ages to come perhaps 100 years or more from now, when this building, covered with ivy, surrounded by beautiful trees, flowers, and shrubbery, all within sound of old ocean's roar, a great city will exist as in my opinion this whole Jersey Coast will be one vast city populated in winter as well as summer with Spring Lake, perhaps as the garden spot of it all.

Nature has endowed it with unusual favor: the Old Mill with its fine water power and beautiful location which could be made by the expenditure of a few thousand dollars, one of the most attractive situations of our neighborhood with the highlands of Spring Lake to the west, Wreck Pond on the south, Lake Como on the north, and the Atlantic Ocean on the east; the churches, superb hotels, new homes, splendid public buildings make it an ideal spot in which to live, but it largely depends on the best possible government and the highest ideals of the people. May this be our vision.

I want to say in closing a word of commendation to Frank Newman, the architect, and H.H. Moore, the builder, who have done such excellent work and who have really completed the building far beyond my early expectations.

I also want to express my gratitude to the trustees, especially Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Heilner for their untiring zeal in completing this building in every possible detail.

This building is a gift to the citizens of Spring Lake. May it be a source of blessing and happiness to them for all time to come!



Oliver H. Brown at the groundbreaking for the Spring Lake Memorial Community House.

SPRING LAKE LIBRARY HISTORY

- Mrs. Samuel (Adelaide) Heilner began the book collections and donations in the early fall of 1919
- Woman's Club, founded in 1918, helped with the endeavor and the collections increased
- The Library committee: Mrs. Heilner; Mrs. Height; Mrs. H. Moore; Mrs. C.D. Nesbitt; Mrs. H. Getsinger; Mrs. F.F. Schock; Miss Laura Moses; Mrs. H.B. Tobin; Mrs. Robert W. Steele; and Miss Sara Hillman
- The Library's first temporary home was the Langhorne Cottage, also used by the Woman's Club, and on the site of the to be built Memorial Community House
- The committee was enlarged to include: Mayor O.H. Brown; Mr. Samuel Heilner; Professor H.W. Mountz; Dr. D.H. Hills; Mr. T.H. Bennett; Mr. W. McKeever; and Dr. M.F. Kirkbride
- The Librarian hired was Florence Miller at a salary of 30 cent an hour, paid for by a private citizen; a janitor, Andrew Gazda, was also acquired
- Woman's Club donated bookshelves and tables
- Mrs. Heilner donated the winter's supply of coal
- In a short period of time over 2000 volumes had been collected
- The formal presentation of the Library by the Woman's Club to the Borough took place on November 14, 1919.
- The program for the dedication: "History of the Club" by the president, Mrs. Joseph Height; presentation of the library by Mrs. Samuel Heilner; address of acceptance by Mayor Brown; St. Catharine pastor, Reverend Walter T. Leahy's invocation; prayer of benediction by Reverend B.C. Lippincott of St. Andrew's Methodist Church; vocal solo by Mrs. Stanley Height; and an address by Mrs. Sara Askew of the State Library Commission
- In the spring of 1920, the Library was moved temporarily to the Council Room in the old Municipal Building on Washington Avenue so construction could begin on the Memorial Community House
- The library's architectural design was inspired by a monastery library, discovered by Mrs. Heilner in Normandy, France
- Moving to the new Community House began on June 7, 1923 by hired gentleman, James Saulter - 50 cents/hour using a pushcart
- The books and boxes simply were rolled from one building to the other and placed in their appropriate section
- On June 11, 1923, the library opened to the public in its new and final quarters in the Memorial Community House
- Miss Sarah Askew, librarian at the State of New Jersey Public Library Commission, guided Spring Lake Library in strengthening its collections
- Florence Miller remained as librarian, continuing her education in library skills, until June of 1933
- Martha L. Johnson succeeded her as librarian, followed by Marian Craig and Mrs. L.E. Hardy
- Vera B. Polhemus was assistant librarian from 1937 to 1960 and worked with Miss Johnson, Miss Craig, and Mrs. Hardy
- Mrs. Gallagher succeeded Mrs. Hardy as librarian and Mrs. Polhemus substituted for her as a retired assistant
- Several handsome donations of the 1930's - 40's: the Urie collection of books from the home of Susan E. Urie, owner of the Essex & Sussex Hotel; Mrs. Mary T. Sheldon, sister of Susan Urie, left a bequest of which the proceeds became part of the annual income for the library; a picture collection was donated by Mrs. H.H. Moore; display case donated by the Woman's Club in Mrs. Moore's memory
- The Spring Lake Library instituted many programs over the years and continues to do so: Children's Story Hour; Summer Reading Club; Writer's Read
- Some well-known and liked librarians in more recent times have included Doris Bilmeyers and Katera Quinn
- Present staffing at the Library includes: Janet Boldt, Director; Andrea Craig, Assistant Director; Mary Jane Burke, Part-time librarian; Leslie Skarbek, Part-time librarian
- 2023 Library Board Members: Christine Mawn & Megan Rigney, Co-Presidents; Jim Stokes, Treasurer; Jen Winn, Secretary; Cynthia Baumgartner, Susan Burrus, Patrick Reilly; Joe Erbe, Mayor's Rep



Pictured are Mrs. Adeline Heilner (standing) a founder of both the Woman's Club and the Spring Lake Public Library and Miss Martha Johnson (seated), Librarian, circa late 1930's.

MUSEUM EXHIBIT & HONOREE RECEPTION



President Barbara Kolarsick Harrigan (right) with Patricia Barry, President of the Spring Lake Memorial Community House



President Harrigan discussing the Museum Honorees.

On April 16, 2023 the Spring Lake Historical Society was proud to host, in the Changing Gallery of the Museum, a reception for the opening of its new exhibit, *SPRING LAKE MEMORIAL COMMUNITY HOUSE 1923 - 2023*, commemorating the 100th anniversary of this treasured building in Spring Lake. The presentation was made by Barbara Kolarsick-Harrigan, President and creator of the exhibit. She told of the founder, Oliver H. Brown's generous donation of land and building costs and his dedication of it as a memorial to the servicemen of World War I. Barbara also read the dedication

speech O.H. Brown delivered on July 4, 1923 which emphasized his great love for Spring Lake and his visions for the building's future service to the community. In attendance was a special guest, Pat Barry who is President of the Board of Trustees of the Community House and holds, among other positions, the title of Producer & Director of Theatre productions. Pat has worked tirelessly over the years to revitalize the Community House and has succeeded in making it once again an integral part of the community.

Continued on page 8

MUSEUM EXHIBIT & HONOREE RECEPTION

Continued from page 7

The ceremony's second part consisted of honoring six dedicated and esteemed members of the Spring Lake Historical Society who contributed so much to the success of the organization. Four had served as president and all were very much involved as committee chairs, museum docents, and fundraising like the successful House Tours. All recipients worked tirelessly in many different capacities and all shared a love of Spring Lake's history.

Dorothy Lau was honored for her outstanding contribution as Newsletter publisher and editor as well as her historian endeavors in collecting newspaper articles of events and happenings in town. She was recognized by the Borough as Town Historian. Dot also compiled her own histories of Spring Lake's different eras. Research occupied her time as did publicity, especially for the House Tours. Dot showed her true strength even at the beginning of her move to Spring Lake when she agreed to be Treasurer which was a job that she could do while taking care of her mother at home.

Marie Wingard was one of the original founders of the Historical Society in 1976-77 and also a researcher and advisor for the publication of *AN EARLY HISTORY OF SPRING LAKE*. She was willing to take on many projects including a major one that transformed the museum space into a state of the arts exhibit. Her fortitude as "foreman" was an asset in this particular endeavor. Later, limited in ability to serve the Society, Marie called docents to remind them of their upcoming duty, "This is just a gentle reminder..." she would say, which also demonstrates her character as a leader.

Liz Campanile truly became a great promotional person for the Society and the history of the town. She loved people's experiences of growing up and living in Spring Lake. She, too, had many memories as she moved here at the age of ten, left as an adult to pursue her career, and then moved back upon retirement when she inherited the town's second oldest home her mother owned on Brighton Avenue. When Liz became involved with the SLHS, it became evident she had good leadership skills traceable to her teaching and education administrative background.

Betty and Gil Robinson represented everything that is good about civic minded residents. Betty was born in Spring Lake, the granddaughter of

the first mayor of Spring Lake Beach, Edward V. Patterson, and the daughter of resident doctor E.V. Patterson. Her donations of historical artifacts and papers saved so much history of the town as did her volumes of information she imparted. She was active in the Society by creating and hanging exhibits in the Changing Gallery. Her most extensive one was *POSTCARDS OF SPRING LAKE*. Betty's husband, Gil, whom she met at the Rhode Island Institute of Art, was the humble man behind the scenes in Betty's creative projects as well as other Society undertakings. Gil could be found recording with the video camera, up on a ladder hanging displays, or doing odd jobs that needed to be done. Gil was involved in Little League coaching, gardening and weeding along with Betty at the churches in town, teaching religion to St. Catharine youngsters, and organizing Tai Chi classes for seniors. He also attended most of the Borough Council Meetings. Both Betty and Gil were truly humble "old family" Spring Lake keepers of the history.

Rosemary Rizzi was a history buff who moved to Spring Lake from Princeton where she was active in organizations. She and her husband, Vic, moved into an old historic house with a barn on the property with the original horse stalls intact. She thoroughly promoted the Society and Spring Lake history with her gift of talking to people and telling the stories. It wasn't above her to physically "clean" the Museum as president and to tell a visitor, "Today I'm just the Cleaning Lady." This was part of her ironic sense of humor. A major achievement for the betterment of the town was her founding of the Garden Club in 1989; as well as, the major part she played as Society president in planning and participating in the Centennial activities in 1992 for the 100th anniversary of the founding of the town.

Big "kudos" go to these hardworking pillars of the community and SLHS leaders who enabled this organization to flourish and retain its importance in the town. We can be ever grateful for their wondrous contributions which we acknowledge and memorialize with their names on our Esteemed and Dedicated Members Plaque.

Barbara Kolarsick-Harrigan, President

THE DOCENT

What's a museum without docents? Take the Spring Lake Historical Society Museum, for instance. It's filled with facts, artifacts, exhibits, literature, folklore – truly an invaluable collection, a treasure! But what good would it be without its docents?

Who would open it up, and who would greet visitors as they arrived? Who would show them around and explain the two galleries? Who would invite them to enjoy the Spring Lake video? Who'd answer their questions, or offer to arrange for answers? Who would keep track of the number of visitors that stop in? Who would thank them for their interest in Spring Lake's history and for visiting the Museum?

Indeed, the Museum is a collection of important materials and sources, sitting there atop the Municipal Building on Warren Avenue, until the docents arrive to open it to the public every Sunday and Thursday (Tuesdays and Thursdays during the summer months) Our docents bring it to life and contribute personality. As someone famous once said, "Museum and Docent: perfect together!"

Become a Spring Lake Docent

The Spring Lake Historical Society has a few openings for the position of Docent. The work consists of welcoming visitors to the Museum, showing them what is available and how it is laid out, and offering a friendly, helpful presence as they explore. The Museum is open two hours each on Sunday afternoons and Thursday mornings.* A Docent is usually needed to serve once a month on either of those days. Please consider joining us in promoting and maintaining the history of a great town. Call the Museum at 732-449-0772 for more information.

*Please note: We are following a different schedule for the summer months (June, July, and August, 2023). During these months, the Museum will be open to visitors on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 – 12. Sunday openings will resume in the fall.

Marie Curry

Condolences....

The Spring Lake Historical Society extends condolences to the families of the following:

Robert Griffin Wallace

Florence A. Maclearie (*member*)

Thomas D. Carver (*life member*)

William Francis Garrett (*life member*)

Barbara Bernadette Black (*life member*)

John Mullen

Robert Joseph Dawson (*member*)



Spring Lake Historical Society

Newsletter

P.O. Box. 703

Spring Lake, NJ 07762

(732) 449-0772

Website: springlakehistoricalsociety.org

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

RED BANK, NJ
PERMIT #411

For Current Members: Please update your e-mail address with the Society and send to slhs703@optimum.net

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

General: \$35 _____ Date _____

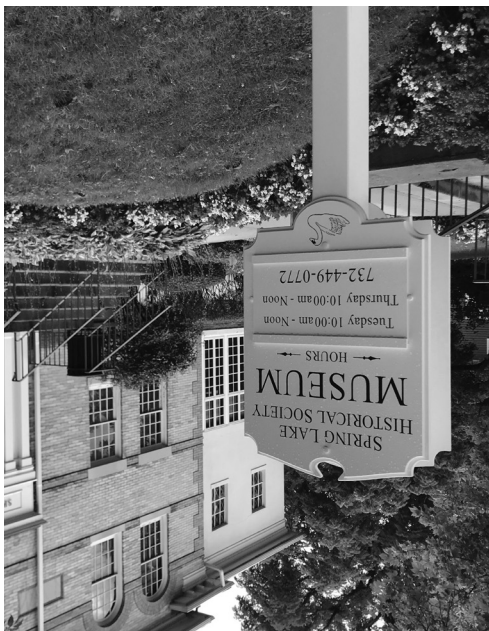
Life: \$1,000 _____

New Renewal

MEMBERSHIP

Spring Lake Historical Society, Inc.
P.O. Box 703, Spring Lake, New Jersey 07762

- OFFICERS**
- President.....Barbara Kolarisick-Harrigan
 - Vice President.....John McGlinchy
 - TreasurerRobert Drashoff
 - Corresponding Secretary.....Stephanie McMurray
 - Recording SecretaryPriscilla Reilly
 - Trustees.....Bonnie Dubois, Carole Morris and Marie Curry
 - Newsletter.....Marie Curry, John McGlinchy, Bonnie Dubois, Barbara Kolarisick-Harrigan, Stephanie McMurray



MUSEUM HOURS

Tuesdays 10 a.m. - 12 Noon

Thursdays 10 a.m. - 12 Noon

423 Warren Ave., Spring Lake, NJ
(Second Floor)