

PASSAIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

LAMBERT

VALLEY ROAD
PATERSON, N.J. 07503

CASTLE

Museum's Fiftieth Anniversary Celebrated with Victorian Soiree

Turn-of-the-century tunes filled the hot, humid air the night of June 9, when the Historical Society celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of Lambert Castle Museum. Despite near record temperatures, more than 230 people spent a relaxing evening experiencing the ambience of a Victorian Soiree.

Small groups of members and guests gathered in the newly refurbished period rooms of the Museum or mingled with friends under the outdoor canopy. Others strolled on the Castle terrace under the night sky.

Guests enjoyed period music by the Garret Mountain Troubadours and soloist Gina Vitale. The instrumental program by the Troubadours included dance tunes, ragtime, early Dixieland jazz and military band two-steps, all popular during the Castle's heyday. Ms. Vitale, now director of the Hawthorne Music Festival, performed a variety of period songs.

When guests were not dancing or touring the Museum's



Society President Ruth Kane Fern and members Judge Arthur and JoAnn Dwyer enjoying the breezes on the Castle terrace. (Photo courtesy of Fred Towne)



Soiree co-Chairs Jo Ann Cotz, Robert Macfarlan and Delight Dodyk discussing final preparations in the Parlour. (Photo courtesy of Fred Towne)

new "Life and Times in Silk City" exhibit, they were feasting on a variety of Victorian victuals. Catered by Proph Tamblin, the tasty repast consisted of canapes, fruits, pastries, wines and coffee.

In the Breakfast room, *Call to Arms*, a silent movie filmed at the Castle in 1910, was shown every half hour. The film is set in the medieval period with knights on their trusty steeds dashing around the Castle grounds to rescue a damsel in distress. Directed by Mack Sennett, the film starred Mary Pickford. The video-tape reproduction of the costume-drama was recently acquired for the Museum by Trustee Flavia Alaya, courtesy of the Library of Congress. Dr. Alaya became aware of the existence of the movie while doing research for her book *Silk and Sandstone*, the Society's fiftieth anniversary publication.

The Soiree, anniversary publication and ad journal raised more than \$16,000. The success of the event can be attributed to the hard work of the planning committee, co-chaired by: Delight Dodyk, JoAnne Cotz and Robert Macfarlan.

Silk City Celebration Weekend

A weekend of festivities preceded the unveiling of the "Life and Times in Silk City" exhibition on April 16. A diplomatic reception for French dignitaries on Friday night, a Gala Benefit on Saturday, and a members preview of the exhibition on Sunday highlighted the three-day Silk City Celebration.

Mayor Frank X. Graves hosted the reception for Raymond Picard, Director of the Economic Development Organization for the Lyonnaise Region, and Madame Lucette Picard, and Bertrand de Lataillate, the French Consul-General, and Madame Odile de Lataillate. Both gentlemen were the personal representatives of the Mayor of Lyons. More than 600 invited guests braved the rain to attend the affair at the historic City Hall building, which architecturally is an adaptation of the Hotel de Ville in Lyon.

Official remarks were made in the City Council Chamber, where speakers commented on the impact of the Silk City Celebration. Raymond Picard captured the spirit of the evening with his remark that, pardoning the pun, there was "a silk tie" between Lyon and her sister city in the production of silk, Paterson. It was a sentiment shared by all who attended the affair.

The same spirit was also present at the Hamilton Club the next night for the black-tie Gala Benefit. Subtitled "A Magical Night of Entertainment," the Gala was planned by a committee of civic-minded area residents and chaired by Arlene Greenbaum and Cipora O. Schwartz.

The 250 guests sat at tables draped in white lace, amidst banks of flowering orchids and lilies. They dined on filet of beef, poached striped bass with dill, and breast of game hen with apple and walnut stuffing, and a great assortment of desserts.

Adding to the magic of the evening was Le Clique, an extravagantly costumed troupe of singers, actors and mimes who performed continually through the night. The 20 member troupe, dressed either as rabbits, duchesses, piccolo-playing dragon-flies, pirates or spacemen, captivated the guests with



Cynthia Siebels serving guests at the members preview. (Photo courtesy of J. Richardson)

their antics and impersonations.

The merriment continued late into the night, with praise and congratulations accompanying the music and dancing. Many guests left in the early morning hours with an enthusiastic rededication to the spirit of Silk City and the preservation of its history.

On Sunday the Historical Society opened its newly refurbished Lambert Castle Museum to more than 500 visitors for a preview of the "Life and Times in Silk City" exhibition. The Castle exhibit is part of a collaborative exhibition interpreting the silk industry of Greater Paterson.

Working in conjunction with the Historical Society are the Paterson Museum and The American Labor Museum-Botto House National Landmark. Each of the three sites interprets one aspect of the industry. The Paterson Museum examines the process of making silk. The American Labor Museum describes the lives of the silk mill workers. The Castle exhibit concentrates on the lives of the silk mill owners, with special emphasis on Catholina Lambert.

The Castle Museum had a face-lift in preparation for the new exhibit. The Music Room, Drawing Room, Breakfast Room and Ballroom were repainted and all the parquet floors were refinished. The Parlour and Dining Room were restored as "period rooms," reflecting the life style and furnishings of Lambert's era. The other rooms of the Museum hold the exhibit and describe the life of Catholina Lambert and his family, the interrelationship of the silk mill owners, and the role of the "Silk Elite" in the industry.

While the strings of the Gregory Gilman Trio provided a musical background, previewers were treated to a traditional Victorian High Tea. Catered by Cynthia Siebels and J. Preston Eskew, the fare included scones with clotted cream or jam, gingerbread and finger sandwiches. Stephanie Zalenski, Beth Zutic and Sandy Lo Russo, members of the Sunbeams 4-H Club of Totowa, helped served the "Tea" to an appreciative gathering.

To enable the Society members and guests to better understand the exhibition in its totality, shuttle busses, courtesy of Gadabout Tours and the Boro of Haledon, carried them to the Paterson Museum and the Botto House, where they viewed presentations of "The Process" and "The Worker" respectively.



Norm Robertson, the Society's new treasurer, and members of Le Clique enjoying the festivities at the Gala. (Photo courtesy of J. Richardson)

Annual Meeting News

Officers and trustees of the Historical Society were chosen at the Annual Meeting on May 16.

Ruth Kane Fern of Wayne will serve a second term as President. Alvin G. Blau of North Haledon will return as Executive Vice President; Delight Dodyk of Ridgewood, Vice President; and William Adshead of North Haledon, Secretary. Norman Robertson, an attorney from Paterson, was elected to his first term as Treasurer.

Trustees Alvin Blau, Delight Dodyk, Russell Frignoca and William O. Storch were all re-elected to three year terms. Stephen Van Cline, a painting conservator from Franklin Lakes, was elected to fill an unexpired term.

Following the business meeting trustee Dr. Flavia Alaya spoke about her research on Catholina Lambert for *Silk and Sandstone*, the Society's special publication commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Lambert Castle Museum.



Virginia Peterson, staff member, giving a personalized tour to members during the preview. (Photo courtesy of J. Richardson)

Floods

(Continued from page five)

If various factors make flood comparisons difficult, at least one striking contrast is evident. The water flow of the Passaic River is now near an all-time low. Wendell Inhoffer, superintendent of the Passaic Valley Water Commission, announced on August 23 that the river flow is less than one-third of normal and less than two percent of the flow following the April floods.

However, whether the river is high or low, most local residents have learned to live with the ebb and flow of the Passaic.

(Special assistance for this article was provided by Jim Ward of the Historical Society; Mike Rybicki, Bob Kurtz, Ray Boch, and Garrad Miller of the US Army Corps of Engineers; and Carmel Goldman of the Passaic River Coalition.)

Folk Finder

The "Folk Finder" column will appear in each issue of *The Castle Lite*. This column is devoted to helping genealogical researchers locate Passaic County ancestors/descendants. The queries are gleaned from the interesting mail that crosses our volunteer genealogists' desks. If you can help any of our submitters, please contact them directly, or call Annita Zalenski at 595-7684.

1. The Totowa Library forwarded this request from **R. Alain Everts, P.O. Box 864, Madison, WI 53701**. Everts is a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin and is working on a research project that concerns the magazine, *Wierd Tales*. The late Roger S. Vreeland of Totowa, was a contributor to this magazine. Everts would like to contact his sons, Roger S. Vreeland, Jr. and Michael A. Vreeland in an effort to obtain additional biographical information.

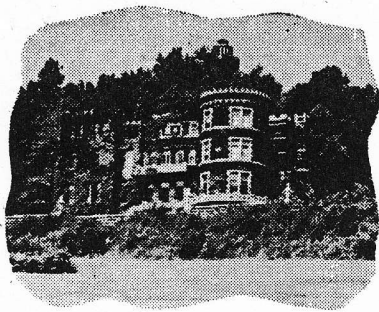
2. **Mrs. P. C. Schaffer, 453 Greencastle LA., Virginia Beach, VA 23452**, is researching the Royle and Rice families of Paterson. Her husband is a descendant of Elizabeth Royle, sister of John Royle, Sr. Mrs. Schaffer would like to locate the genealogical notebook/manuscript (500 pages) compiled by Vernon Royle. Elizabeth Royle married John Rice on December 26, 1847.

3. **Larry and Carol Hengeveld, 304 North Euclid Ave., Westfield, NJ, 07090**, are trying to confirm the names of the parents of Christopher Cornelius Hengeveld. Christopher was born on either November 1, 1876 or November 1, 1878. His siblings were Garret, Jacobus, Abraham, Henry John, Mary and Wilhelmina Hengeveld. Larry and Carol would also like to locate a birth record for Christopher (i.e., church record or Hengeveld Family Bible).

4. **Shirley Coleman, 39 Heather Drive, Charleston, IL 61920** is one of three correspondents researching the Van Zile Family of Passaic County. Mrs. Coleman needs information concerning Abraham and John Van Zile. Abraham married Maria (Demarest) Mabie in 1820. Their children were: 1. Peter, b. 1822; 2. Abraham, b. 1826; 3. Adelia (married Moody), b. 1835. John appears to have been the father of the three Van Zile children that are listed as members of the Benjamin Romaine household in the 1860 census.

5. **Mrs. Dorothy E. Wahl, 5853 Wheelhouse Lane, Agoura, CA 91301**, desires information regarding John Edwards, who was born about 1800 and resided in Paterson. John and his wife, Elizabeth Card Allington, were the parents of Aaron and Andrew (b. 1841). Mrs. Wahl will be happy to exchange information concerning the family.

This Newsletter is published as a membership privilege of the Passaic County Historical Society, Lambert Castle, Valley Rd., Paterson, New Jersey 07503. Telephone (201) 881-2761. Office Hours are Monday through Friday (9:00 - 4:00). President: Ruth Kane Fern; Director: Catherine A. Keene.



News Around The Castle

Annual Sunday Concert Series is funded this year by grants from the Passaic County Cultural Commission (Passaic County Community College) and Midlantic National Bank/North. Come and enjoy the enchanting music and inspiring view from the Castle. The following musical organizations will perform this fall:

Oct. 14	The New Jersey Pops Orchestra	(\$ 7.50)
Nov. 18	The Cantilena Clarinet Quartet	(\$ 2.50)
Dec. 2	The Summit Chorale Singers	(\$10.00)

(at the Castle Christmas Party)

Contact PCHS at 881-2761 for information and reservations.

Two new publications are available from the Historical Society. Catherine Keene, Director of the Society, collaborated with John Herbst, Executive Director of The American Labor Museum, on a pictorial social history of the silk industry in Greater Paterson. Entitled *Life and Times in Silk City*, it is on sale for \$8.50 (\$7.50 to Society members).

Dr. Flavia Alaya, of Ramapo College and the Society's Board of Trustees, recently completed *Silk and Sandstone*, a study of the life of Catholina Lambert and the construction of his Castle. Her book is on sale for \$4.00 (\$3.50 to Society members).

Replacement and renovation of the roof of Lambert Castle are nearing completion. By the end of September, stainless steel will replace the original, often repaired, copper roof. New exterior frames and glass panes for the skylight will also be installed. The standstone blocks on the upper portions of the castle have also been cleaned, with many of the granite crenels replaced.

Did you know? . . . that Catholina Lambert planned to build a residence in Hawley, Pennsylvania, in the 1880s that would "present the appearance of a castle from its rough and castellated construction." Furthermore, it was to be in the Gothic style of architecture "with an open and domed stairway in the centre leading to balconies from which entrance is gained to the various apartments of the different stories." (Our thanks to Rob Dubits for this item from the *Paterson Daily Press*, March 15, 1883).

Have you seen the "Life and Times in Silk City" exhibition yet? It is a collaborative exhibition with the Paterson Museum and The American Labor Museum. If you have seen the Castle exhibit, don't miss the other two components of the exhibition. It's well worth the effort. The Paterson Museum describes "The Process" of making silk and The American Labor Museum which is the restored home of silk mill workers houses "The Worker." The exhibition will run through June of 1985.

Fourth Annual Beefsteak Dinner The Passaic County Rotary Clubs will hold their fourth Annual Beefsteak Dinner Saturday, September 22, 7:30 p.m., at the UFCW Hall, Little Falls. The proceeds of the dinner will be used for the conservation and care of the PCHS collections. For more information contact Cathy Keene at 881-2761.

Special announcement: An exceptional weekend is planned for October 6 & 7 at the Dey Mansion in Wayne. The 50th Anniversary Celebration of Dey Mansion's dedication as a museum will take place. Activities include an authentic 18th century Revolutionary encampment and mock battles. On Saturday, the 6th, at 1 p.m., formal rededication ceremonies will begin. Hours are 10-5 and for further information call 696-1776.

Film Festivals: The American Labor Museum's annual Labor Film Festival will be held this October. The series includes: *The Wobblies*, Oct. 4; *Northern Lights*, Oct. 11; *Salt of the Earth*, Oct. 18; and *Norma Rae*, Oct. 25.

The Historical Society in cooperation with The American Labor Museum will hold the Pietro Botto Film Series this fall. Scheduled presentations include: *The Organizer*, Sept. 14; *The Leopard*, Oct. 19; and *The Tree of the Wooden Clogs*, Nov. 16. All showings begin at 8 p.m. at the Botto House National Landmark. For more information, call (201) 595-7953.

Henry Steele Commager, noted American historian, will be a featured speaker at the day-long "Symposium on Censorship and Information in Contemporary America," at William Paterson College, Friday, October 12. For more information, call Terence M. Ripmaster at 595-2324.

Workshops and seminars: The American Labor Museum is also offering a series of workshops and seminars this year. Cuisine classes and Family workshops will be offered this fall, as well as the annual seminar series on industrial history. Call (201) 595-7953 for more information.

Barbara Rivolta, formerly assistant director of the Historical Society, has accepted the position of Director of the New Jersey Museum of Archeology at Drew University. We wish her good luck in her new post.

Volunteers are needed at the Castle to help in a variety of capacities. If you are interested in helping the Historical Society and the Castle Museum, please call Annita Zalenski at 595-7684 or 881-2761. We need Museum guides, gift shop attendants, and people interested in helping inventory, catalog and maintain our collections.

Special thanks to all the volunteers, Society members and friends whose tireless efforts made the opening and the Soiree such high successes.

Floods of the Passaic River

Hydrological experts consider the Passaic River one of the most floodprone river systems in the United States. They will get no argument from most of the local residents, especially after last spring's inundation. The flood of April 4-6, 1984, had many denizens of the river basin seeking higher ground. It also had many of us searching our memories and the record books for a comparison: When were conditions as severe?

As a basis for comparison, there have been more than thirty major flood events on the Passaic River since 1800. The most extensive floods (based on peak flow rates recorded at Little Falls) were: October 1903, 31,700 cubic feet per seconds (cfs); November 1810, 27,000 cfs; July 1865, 22,500 cfs; March 1902, 22,500 cfs; July 1945, 19,500 cfs; March 1936, 19,400 cfs; September 1882, 18,260 cfs; February 1896, 17,200 cfs; December 1818, 16,590 cfs; May 1968, 13,200 cfs. This list excludes the April 1984 flood, which is still under study.

Preliminary computations based on US Geological Survey statistics for the flood of April 4-6, 1984, indicate that approximately 5 inches of rain fell on a deep snow cover and produced a total runoff volume of 6.2 inches. According to Mike Rybicki, hydrologist for the US Army Corps of Engineers' Passaic River Special Studies Branch, the cumulative effect of this water produced a peak flow rate at Little Falls of 19,500 cfs and reached a height of 12.91 feet.

Therefore, the April 1984 flood was one of the worst since the Great Flood of 1903. According to Rybicki, it was equivalent to a 40-year flood in Paterson and has become the flood of record for the Pompton and Ramapo rivers.

Comparisons with previous floods, he cautions, are difficult, and sometimes misleading. The amount of flooding in a given area is the result of a complex interrelation of climatological, topographical and hydrological factors. These factors include: the intensity, duration and distribution of rainfall over the 935 square mile basin; the direction of the storm; the saturation of the watershed prior to the storm; the season of the year; the amount of snow and ice melt contributing to runoff; the speed and timing of the tributary flood peaks in relation to the main channel of the Passaic; and the height of the tide in the lower river.

New Jersey's geographical position places the basin in the path of a majority of east coast storms, but heavy rainfall usually results in a major flood only when one or more of the other conditions conducive to excessive runoff are also present. Ella F. Fillippone, Executive Administrator of the Passaic River Coalition, makes the following example in a recently released study of "The Flood Control Saga in the Passaic River Basin." The 1903 flood, which is the flood of record for most of the basin, resulted from a downpour of 11.98 inches over a four-day period. The flood peaked in 50 hours with a maximum flow of 31,700 cfs at Little Falls. The flood of 1882, which was a smaller flood than that of 1903 resulted from 13.56 inches of rain in four days. The peak discharge at Little Falls from the 1882 flood was only 19,000 cfs, which was reached in 66 hours.

The reason for the discrepancy lies in the fact that only six

and a half inches of rain fell in the two-month period prior to the 1882 flood. Thus the ground was dry and able to absorb much of the rainfall. On the other hand, 14 inches of rainfall was recorded over the two month period before the 1903 flood. Accordingly, the storm runoff was greater over the saturated ground.

Topography further hinders flood comparisons because flooding varies in the three major areas of the Passaic basin: the Highlands, the Central Basin and the Lower Valley. The causes for the floods stem in part from the river's particularly torturous course. The slight gradient and slow movement of water in some sections and inadequate channel at other points cause floods at times of heavy rains and substantial runoff. The rivers of the system rise in the Highlands and are swift flowing. After heavy rains, such rivers as the Pequannock, Wanaque, Ramapo, Mahwah and Pompton combined with the Rockaway and Whippany, send such a high volume of water into the system that it is unable to pass through the outlet at Little Falls and backs up. This results in flooding in the lowlands upstream of Little Falls, on both the Pompton and Passaic systems. When the volume of water passing through the gap at Little Falls becomes excessive, there is flooding of the low-lying areas of Paterson and the communities downstream.

The topography of the river basin is the result of glacial events occurring between 25,000-50,000 years ago. As the glacial mass reached its southernmost point, it deposited its cargo of gravel, sand and stone in long ridges between Perth Amboy and Morristown. Behind this natural dam, the melting glacial ice created a lake 30 miles long and 10 miles wide, with an average depth of 160-200 feet. The continual retreat of the glacier opened a gap at Little Falls, which drained "Lake Passaic." It drained, but never became completely dry. Its remnants are still visible in the extensive wetlands known today as the Great Swamp, Black Meadows, Troy Meadows, Hatfield Swamp, and the Great and Little Piece Meadows.

Glacial Lake Passaic is today the Central Basin of the river. It is a broad and relatively flat valley measuring 253 square miles. In addition to the 27,000 acres of wet lands, the flood plain measures 5,000-20,000 feet in width. Flooding occurs primarily in Wayne, Lincoln Park, Pequannock, Pompton Lakes, and Fairfield.

The Highlands are a parallel series of ridges running in a northeasterly direction. This 489 square mile area of streams and tributaries are characterized by flash flooding because of the steep and narrow valleys. Major flood damage in the area occurs in Morristown on the Whippany River, Denville and Dover on the Rockaway, Oakland on the Ramapo, and Mahwah and Suffern on the Mahwah River.

The Lower Valley is 193 square miles in size and stretches from Little Falls to Newark Bay. It is fairly flat and its flow is quite slow. The last 17 miles of the river is tidal, and the Saddle River joins the Passaic near Lodi. Therefore, flooding is dependent of the height of the ocean tides and the staging of flows upstream. Accordingly, Paterson and Passaic are prone to severe flooding.

(Continued on page three)