



# THE HISTORIC COUNTY

Volume 16 • Issue 2  
Spring 2016

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
PASSAIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Bloomington • Clifton • Haledon • Hawthorne • Little Falls • North Haledon  
Passaic • Paterson • Pompton Lakes • Prospect Park • Ringwood • Totowa  
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## LILLIAN JEAN WARDLE (1919-2012)

### A LIFE WORTH LIVING

by E. A. Smyk, Passaic County Historian

Since the founding of the Passaic County Historical Society ninety years ago, the organization has attracted a loyal following of devotees, many with generational links to places like Paterson, Passaic, Clifton, Wayne, Ringwood and West Milford. They developed something akin to an affectionate yearning for localities where their immigrant ancestors settled, worked and prospered.

People nowadays have the tendency to relocate, often because job opportunities demand it, but in mind's eye, with a glint of nostalgia, they conjure youthful memories of more simpler times, like Wayne and Woodland Park crisscrossed by farmland, Ringwood's brisk mountain air, or how it was in long ago Paterson, when after a jaunt to one of Silk City's bustling department stores, they would indulge their sweet tooth with a jolly good ice cream sundae at Wieda's famed confectionary emporium. Perhaps it is almost a truism: physical separation from someone's old hometown does not impair that wonderful mechanism called retentive memory, and the satisfying images that feed and burnish it. Obviously, such robust visits to the attic of the past hold an allure for the historically minded. For a select few, there is an additional component to their support and loyalty.

The Society counts among its honored advocates those who became benefactors, women like Jennie Tuttle Hobart who played an immense behind-the-scenes role in helping the Society gain a permanent niche at Lambert Castle, or Helen Sterrett McBurney, who willed the organization the contents of her Atlanta, Georgia home. The proceeds from the sale of Mrs. McBurney's elegant French-style furnishings enabled the Society to establish an endowment fund. It was appropriately named in her memory. In more recent years, Elizabeth Ann Beam, an avocational genealogist with family roots in Paterson, bequeathed a sizeable portion of her estate, whereupon the Society invested the principal and uses the interest to help underwrite library expenses. The Society's research library is designated in her honor. Their names are inscribed, in perpetuity, on the Society's roster of patrons who performed extraordinary acts of generosity.

With a sense of humility and joy, the Society is proud to tell the membership of yet another remarkable bequest left by Miss Lillian Jean Wardle, a lady with family roots in Paterson. She gives renewed meaning to the phrase, "here was a life worth living." Miss Wardle, who died at age 93 on December 27, 2012, left the Society as a residual beneficiary twenty-five percent of her estate, or \$322,435.

She specifically directed that the bequest be "used for repairing and restoring furnishings and paintings on display" at Lambert Castle.

In this increasingly materialistic age, where personality attributes like uncontrolled self-indulgence and brash egotism are looked upon as something to be emulated, the trajectory of Miss Wardle's life was, to put it mildly, one of quiet accomplishment. She instinctively understood the nuances accompanying the altruistic impulse, and how such traits were deemed inseparable from time-honored tradition. We speak of a family steeped in tradition. The Wardle clan could trace its lineage to seventeenth century progenitor John Wardle (1748-1826). Another relative, Henry Wardle, served in the 1870s as a Passaic County Freeholder, and also two decades later on the Paterson Aldermanic Board. With pride of family, and strong religious conviction, Lillian Wardle joined Paterson's Eastside Presbyterian Church in May 1933.



**Lillian Jean Wardle**  
**Benefactress of the Society**  
**She found the simple pleasures**  
**of life much to her liking.**

(Photo courtesy of Louanne Hennessy)

She steadfastly remained with the church until June 1986, when changing demographics and dwindling membership caused the congregation to disband. At the time of her acceptance, Miss Wardle adopted as her watchword the Bible verse in John 14:13, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

We may conclude from reviewing the records of Miss Wardle's life, and from people who knew her, that she was a woman of gentle conviction, firmly planted in what we call "the American grain." Louanne Hennessy and Laura W. Cassavell, Esq. are the executrixes of Miss Wardle's \$1.3 million estate. Mrs. Hennessy had not known Miss Wardle from her Paterson days, but she shared the following impression of the lady who liked to be called Jean or Jeanie. For Mrs. Hennessy, Jeanie Wardle was

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**PASSAIC COUNTY  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

**LAMBERT CASTLE**

3 Valley Road  
Paterson, NJ 07503-2932

Museum: (973) 247-0085

Fax: (973) 881-9434

E-mail: info@lambertcastle.org

Website: lambertcastle.org

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Lambert Castle, a picturesque 1892 Victorian mansion located on the Garret Mountain Reserve, is on the National Register of Historic Places. The Castle is operated and managed by the Passaic County Historical Society, a not-for-profit 501(c) educational institution.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Did you know that one of the most active genealogical groups in northern New Jersey is right at home here with Passaic County Historical Society? The PCHS Genealogy Club, an adjunct group within the Society, meets monthly September through May. The meetings feature guest speakers who present on a variety of subjects relating to genealogical research and other topics of interest.

The Passaic County Historical Society Genealogy Club (Genie Club) was the brainchild of Jessica Peters and Annita Zalenski. Both were volunteers who answered queries sent to the Society by individuals seeking information about local families. Recognizing the great interest in family history and the role the Society could play in addressing the need for information about resources and researching techniques, Annita presented the idea of creating a genealogy club to the Board of Trustees and it was approved in 1985.

Thirty years later, the Club is a thriving and vibrant group of individuals who meet to hear interesting presentations, share information about research successes and brick walls they have encountered, network with others who share their interests, and make new friends. Newcomers are always introduced and welcomed at every meeting and often find that others in the group are researching the same families and surnames.

In addition to the monthly meetings the Genealogy Club sponsors an annual bus trip in June and a holiday brunch with silent auction in December. The Club has its own newsletter, The Castle Genie, and has also published several books of historical and genealogical interest. There are no additional dues or fees to join the Genealogy Club. Membership is a benefit of membership to PCHS. Most meetings are held at Lambert Castle on the second Saturday of the month. Anyone having an interest in family history would find the meetings of the Genie Club informative and helpful.

Catherine Cavallo  
*President*

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**City of Paterson Historic Preservation Commission**

presents:



**THE LEGACY OF  
GAETANO FEDERICI  
SYMPOSIUM**



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**SATURDAY, JUNE 4, 2016**

**1:00 PM – 5:00 PM**

DOORS OPEN AT 12:00 PM

at LAMBERT CASTLE, 3 Valley Road, Paterson

**\$10.00 per person**

**Please join us for presentations about the life and art by well-known artist, Gaetano Federici. Followed by a virtual tour of Federici's commissioned public monuments.**

**Seating is limited! Please call ahead to reserve your seats.**

**\*\*\*RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED\*\*\***

**PAYMENTS MUST BE MADE IN ADVANCE**

**Checks are payable to:** City of Paterson Trust Fund

**Mail to:** City of Paterson Historic Preservation Commission

125 Ellison Street 4th Floor

Paterson, NJ 07505

**For more information and reservations please contact:**

Kelly C. Ruffel

Phone: 973.321.1220 ext. 2263

Email: kruffel@patersonnj.gov

**Free parking available at Lambert Castle**

**This event is made in partnership with the  
Passaic County Historical Society & Passaic County Community College**

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**LILLIAN JEAN WARDLE** *cont. from page 1*

the sum of many parts, namely, “pretty, loving, witty, smart, frugal, fiercely independent, proud, fastidious, interesting, voracious reader.” In the latter category, Mrs. Hennessy recalled how Jeanie would sometimes read two or three books at a time, “always ready for the new one you had to offer up until a week before she died.”

Miss Wardle was born into an austere lifestyle. She was the daughter of Charles Boyd Wardle and Lillian Greer Cameron Wardle. Apparently, thriftiness reigned throughout the household, but disdain for glaring excessiveness did not clip Miss Wardle’s desire to nourish her soul with periodic infusions of beauty, those simples pleasures readily available to all who seek them. Mrs. Hennessy relates, “she loved to ‘go for a ride.’ Sometimes that was an autumn ride across the Sourland Mountain to be enveloped in color, or the absolute wonder of sitting in the woods on an early spring evening with the overwhelming chorus of spring peepers. The last few years she took great joy in watching and caring for hummingbirds.”

In selecting a career path, Miss Wardle chose well, working her way up the ranks of the office force in the Gas Division at Public Service Electric and Gas Company. She was hired on February 20, 1942, when World War II was raging and Paterson counted as one of the nation’s centers for war production. Her loyalty to the company was exceptional. She remembered how fortunate it was to participate in company sponsored, overseas tours for employees and their families. In 1960, she was able to visit Austria, Switzerland and Italy. “That trip,” she wrote, “gave me a touch of wanderlust, and I travelled with fellow employees on four trips, seeing eleven European countries and visiting Hawaii.” Eventually, the day arrived when she elected to retire from PSE&G, November 21, 1980, after 38 years and 9 months of active service. Miss Wardle proudly concluded her tenure as an office manager. The opportunities available to a retiree – the freedom to explore and refresh oneself – awaited this supremely active lady, and she accepted them with gusto.

We know from exploring the Society’s archive when Miss Wardle expressed her intention to be involved with the Lambert Castle Museum. On August 16, 1987, she enrolled in the Senior Retired Volunteer Program at St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center in Paterson, expressing an interest in volunteering as one of the Castle’s tour guides. Annita Zalenski, who ably served as trustee, officer and later president, recalled that “Jean was a lovely, pleasant woman. She was somewhat quiet and very unassuming.”

From 1987 and afterward, in the days before Lambert Castle was restored to its former grandeur, Miss Wardle logged many hours as a docent. She was also entrusted by then Curator Andrew Shick with helping arrange components of the Society’s outstanding Bertha Schaeffer Koempe Spoon Collection. We can only imagine her thoughts while studying these precious spoons, as they glinted in the dazzling sunlight of a summer day, or her impressions of the ornately framed oil paintings that satisfied the aesthetic cravings of silk mogul Catholina Lambert, or how the imposing Cornu clock chimed away the hours, delicately, in the same way when Lambert resided in the Castle with his family and a deferential retinue of servants. Considering that Miss Wardle had selected the Society as one of the beneficiaries of her munificent generosity, we can deduce the Castle and its contents had worked a subtle sort of magic, directly to her heart.

Miss Wardle, after years of residing in the Lawrenceville and Pennington, New Jersey area, did come home to Paterson for one final time. Her resting

place is Cedar Lawn Cemetery, but while her physical presence is no more, her memory lives on at Lambert Castle. In accordance with her intentions, the Society is carefully developing a plan to restore many of the exceptional paintings that line the walls of the Castle’s atrium. The Society has already restored the Lambert Dining Room chairs, and one of the old castellan’s elaborately worked marquetry tables. All of this and more will be possible because Lillian Jean Wardle bequeathed a living testament, wanting to make certain the paintings and artifacts that gave her such delight would be preserved for the enjoyment of all those who visit Lambert Castle, and marvel at its unique treasures.



**Miss Wardle (seated first from right) was a valued Public Service Electric and Gas Company office manager. The photo was taken on August 25, 1966 at the retirement dinner of her colleague, E. L. Birkland. (Photo courtesy of Louanne Hennessy)**

#### References Consulted

The Society’s archive yielded copies of Lillian Jean Wardle’s quite useful volunteer activity reports, but continued probing revealed that this gallant lady had a good appreciation for what satisfies the historical researcher. She was a saver who had the inveterate habit of keeping records, correspondence, genealogical delvings and other documentation. They proved to be indispensable resources in preparing her biographical profile. I have mined this material, including information contained in Miss Wardle’s obituary, published in *The Record* and *The Herald News* on January 1, 2013.

Fortunately, Executrix Louanne Hennessy saved from dispersal an important trove of Miss Wardle’s papers. I am indebted to her for sharing this material, as well as locating some excellent photographs, and for providing me with a transcript of the remarks she made at Miss Wardle’s memorial service. Further, I would like to express my gratitude to Heather Garside, the Society’s director/curator, for her welcome editorial scrutiny, and Robert Hazekamp, Society trustee, whose talents as a graphic designer are readily evident in the pleasing layout of this article.

I had actually met Jeanie Wardle once, when we exchanged pleasantries at Lambert Castle’s front door reception desk. It was an all too brief encounter, but in writing this story, mainly through documentation, I could almost sense her shimmering zest for the things that were dear to her. Indeed, Miss Wardle’s extant papers, and the words and sentences that resulted from a careful reading of them, found ultimate expression in the title for this essay. Her time on earth was unquestionably a life worth living.



## PASSAIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Lambert Castle, 3 Valley Road  
Paterson, New Jersey 07503

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# PCHS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**May 29** **Lambert Castle Concert Series.** 5 p.m at Lambert Castle. **CJSO on the Go.** Founded in 1970 as the Somerset County College Orchestra, in 2002 the CJSO re-organized as an independent nonprofit organization. CJSO on the Go is a Chamber music outreach program featuring members and friends of the Central Jersey Symphony Orchestra. Tickets \$15.  
Sunday

**June 12** **Lambert Castle Concert Series.** 4 p.m on Lambert Castle's North Lawn. **Clifton Community Band** presents, *Music at the Castle: A Welcome to Summer.* Founded in 2002 and directed by Robert D. Morgan, the Clifton Community Band is a traditional concert band (brass, woodwinds and percussion). The band appears in the area and around the state performing a variety of music including classical, pop, big bands and marches. \$15 donations requested.  
Sunday

**June 26** **Lambert Castle Concert Series.** 5 p.m at Lambert Castle. **Pianist Sophia Agranovich** presents *Sublime Passion, Haunting Beauty.* Sophia Agranovich is the award-winning virtuoso pianist, recording artist, educator and program director. A Steinway Artist and a Juilliard graduate, she is "a bold, daring pianist in the tradition of the Golden Age Romantics...A tigress of the piano" – Fanfare. The program will feature Franz Liszt's epic *Après une Lecture du Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata* – by Victor Hugo's poem 'After a Reading of Dante' ('Divine Comedy'), exquisitely poetic and passionate 3 *Sonneti del Petrarca*, nostalgic and dazzling Hungarian Rhapsody # 14 and other works. Tickets \$15.  
Sunday

**July 10** **Lambert Castle Concert Series.** **New Jersey Music Society** presents *Music through the Ages: Greatest hits from Opera to the Jazz Age.* Join members of the New Jersey Music Society in a concert of music taking you throughout the times of Lambert Castle. Featuring the greatest hits of Puccini and Verdi, Gershwin and Cole Porter, Jerome Kern and more, let us take you back in time in a truly unique performance. Featuring soprano, Brittany Hines-Hill (2011 National Semi-Finalist with the *Metropolitan Opera*), Sandy Taylor (acclaimed Jazz vocalist), and Jessica Davy, clarinet. Tickets \$15  
Sunday

**July 22-23** **Shakespeare at the Castle.** The Passaic County Historical Society will host ATC Studios' Summer Shakespeare Conservatory for three performances at Lambert Castle on July 2th at 7pm in the Atrium of the Castle, and July 23rd at 3pm and 5pm on the Castle lawn. Tickets for Friday night are \$10. Outside is free on Saturday, but reserved lawn seating is available for \$10 (only patrons who reserve are guaranteed inside seating in the case of rain).  
Saturday & Sunday

**Visit [lambertcastle.org](http://lambertcastle.org) for the most up-to-date event information.**