



THE HISTORIC COUNTY

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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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ROMANCE IS ON THE POSTCARDS

By Heather Garside

With large shimmering red hearts ubiquitous in the world around us, February will forever be the month associated with lovers. Therefore, it seems only appropriate that we use this time to share with our readers the details of an interesting romance that has emerged from the annals of the Society's archive amongst the postcard collection.

The year is 1906, the place is Paterson and the hero of our story is Mr. Emil Wehling. However, what makes this romance distinct from thousands of others in the turn of the last century is that our hero Emil is not courting his lady love. Rather he is being pursued. The first postcard, postmarked at 10:30 PM on July 26, 1906 was sent simply by "Anna." The front of the card is illustrated with a couple sitting on the grass, clutching hands and gazing longingly into each others' eyes. One would think this image was suggestive enough of what Miss Anna had on her mind. Perhaps Anna feared her message was too subtle for her intended recipient, for she also penned him a message which reads "hope you are not bashful, Emil."

The plot thickens on the arrival of Emil's second postcard, which was postmarked at 7:30 AM on October 4, 1906. Decorated with another loving couple, this card depicts the pair standing in a wood beside a pond. Reminiscent of the first couple, they are also looking longingly into each others' eyes. However, this gentleman has his hand just under his lady's chin, the hint of an impending kiss hovering between them. The handwritten message below the picture reads "this is you. Hoping I will see you soon... From Pauline." With those words, a love triangle is born. Helen of Troy may have had a face that launched a thousand ships, but Emil clearly had qualities to keep the Paterson mail carriers busy on their route. One wonders how many more postcards from his adoring fans, however many there may have been, have now been lost to history.

The third and final postcard within the Society's possession arrived in November 1906. The most suggestive of the three, the couple on the front are sitting on a bench, the lady leaning back across her beau's lap, her arm around his knee. They are locked in a passionate kiss, oblivious to the flowering trees and picturesque stream the illustrator so thoughtfully drew around them. But from which of the ladies was the postcard sent?

Is the triangle about to become a square? The script below the lovers reads "I suppose that is the seat you made for me. From your friend Pauline." On its own, this text conveys a fairly unromantic message. However, considering the adoring embrace occurring on the bench pictured above, a more passionate appeal appears between the lines. "Your friend Pauline" is also a subtle contradiction on Pauline's part, to downplay the intensity of her siren's call.

If one were to sum up Emil's situation in modern terms, he might be referred to as playing the field. But making such a statement is to dismiss the humanity and the depth to this story. And what happens after November 1906? Lucky for our readers, the postcards provided us with Emil's address, 81 First Avenue, Paterson. Through census records and city directories the details of Emil's life become apparent. Born in New Jersey in 1888, he was one of three children born to German immigrants Philip and Dorothea Wehling. In 1906, Emil worked as a bartender in his parents' saloon, also

located at 81 First Avenue. The saloon seems to have been a truly family run business. Emil's brother also tended bar, as did their father until his death in 1905. At the time he received the postcards, Emil was eighteen years old. He remained a single bartender through the 1910 census.

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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.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year everyone. For myself, as I am sure it is for many of you, the New Year brings to mind thoughts of the successes and challenges of the preceding year and the setting of goals for the current one.

As I reflect on 2016, I realize that PCHS had a very interesting year. When I think of the highlights of this year, I am proud of the culmination of the Federici project and the wonderful reception that took place to celebrate that achievement. I also think of the many cultural events held at the Castle and what I consider to be the highlight of the year, the open house in September to celebrate our 90th anniversary and the pleasure of knowing that each of our visitors that day and all of our members, received a beautiful commemorative bookmark (designed by our very talented second Vice President, Robert Hazekamp and made possible through the generous donation of Trustee Helen Mault).

The year also brought challenges. The temporary closing of the library was, for me, a major disappointment but necessary. In addition to the library, issues with the building itself were of concern and dealing with getting them addressed required a significant amount of time and effort on the part of the Board of Trustees and the staff and some of those issues remain yet to be resolved.

As President, I have had the opportunity to work with a group of very talented and dedicated individuals, members of the Board of Trustees who volunteer their time and expertise to keep PCHS going. Last year was a personally challenging year for some of us on the board. As a result, some key individuals had to take time to attend to personal obligations resulting in the cancellation of some critical fundraising events and stalling of addressing concerns about the conditions in the building and the library. But with the advent of the new year I am optimistic that things will move forward.

In looking back and reflecting on my time as President so far, I now have a much greater appreciation for all the officers and trustees who preceded me. I began my relationship with PCHS as an ordinary member and came to the organization because of my interest in genealogy. I attended meetings of the Genealogy club, and although I had a desire to volunteer if I could, I had no inclination to assume a leadership role, as I did not consider myself as having leadership potential, but when I was asked to step up to the plate, I felt compelled to answer the call. I felt that it was an organization well worth my time and commitment.

It has been quite a learning experience. There have been those difficult moments when decisions that were bound to be become unpopular had to be made. There were also those moments that I found to be the most personally rewarding – the opportunity to interact with visitors, members, volunteers and staff. I have met so many wonderful people and have seen the work of so many dedicated volunteers who so generously donate the gift of their time to make the Society what it is. And I now have a greater appreciation of the demands of leadership and what it takes to keep this wonderful organization going.

The new year also brings to mind the concept of renewal. As I wrote out my check to renew my membership for 2017, I thought about all of the members, past and present whose commitment and dedication made it possible for PCHS to exist for ninety years. But the past is where we've been and the future is where we're going.

As I look to the future, I think of all of you out there now who may be considering becoming more involved. The future of PCHS is in your hands and the direction taken rests with those who will follow. As for me, I hope to be standing somewhere in the middle, an ordinary member, who for a short period of time was privileged to serve in a leadership role, in what I hope will be the long and enduring history of PCHS.

Catherine Cavallo
President

Victorian Tea at Lambert Castle April 21-23

Join us this Spring for our
Annual Victorian Tea
at Lambert Castle.

Seatings at 12 p.m. and 3 p.m. daily
with a musical performance.

Admission is \$45. Reservations required. To reserve a seat call (973)247-0085 ext. 201



But our readers should have no fear, for our Casanova did not live a bachelor's life forever. Sometime in 1917, Emil married Anne or Anna B. Taylor, which this researcher has chosen to believe, is the elusive "Anna" of our first postcard, postmarked July 26. Anna was a native Patersonian, born in 1883, making her five years Emil's senior. Together Anna and Emil had Emil Jr. in 1918 and James in 1919. Unfortunately, our love story ends on a bittersweet note. While the 1920 census has Emil and Anna living with their sons at 122 Broadway, the April 14, 1921 edition of the Paterson Morning Call lists Emil among the deceased members of the Paterson Moose Lodge.

Following the data collection for the census, Emil passed away on September 16, 1920 leaving Anna to raise their sons alone. He was 31 years old. Anna does not appear to have remarried. She moved the family to Marshall Street by 1922, where she worked as a tailor or seamstress. She passed away in 1965.

Here is a story that has everything. A love triangle, a handsome bartender, true love cut short. After such a narrative it is hard to believe we began with three postcards, each with one or two line greetings. Imagine how many more stories there is yet to uncover. Trustee and volunteer Helen Mault

References Consulted

1910 and 1920 U.S. Federal Census Population Schedules.

The Paterson Morning Call, April 4, 1921 edition.

Paterson City Directories, 1906, 1909, 1910, 1922. Published by Price and Lee Publishing Company

has been working to organize, and catalog the Society's extensive collection of postcards since 2013. After sorting the postcards into separate collections (International, USA, New Jersey, and Passaic County) her project is nearing completion, with only the miscellaneous categories left to be organized. Thanks to Helen's efforts, we now have a comprehensive list of the Society's approximately 15,000 postcards, which will allow us to better incorporate both their images and their messages for future exhibitions, newsletter articles and research projects. Please keep checking the archival find aid page of our website for updated lists of the Society's postcard collections.





PASSAIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Lambert Castle, 3 Valley Road
Paterson, New Jersey 07503

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S POSTAGE
PAID
PATERSON, NJ
PERMIT NO. 132

PCHS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- February 1** **Quarterly Meeting.** 7 p.m., at Louis Bay II Library in Hawthorne. Business meeting of the Society followed by “The Castle” in Ramapo State Forest presented by Richard Moon. The presentation will discuss the history of Jacob Rogers’ (of Rogers Locomotive Works) Van Slyke Mansion. The story includes Warren Clark Van Slyke, an Assistant Chief of Naval Intelligence during WWI, who sought war reparations from the German government for the sinking of the Lusitania. Free admission.
Wednesday
- February 10** **Valentine’s Day Masked Ball at Lambert Castle** 7p.m.- 11 p.m. Don a mask and join us at Lambert Castle for some dancing. Light refreshment will be served. Cash Bar. Semi-formal attire requested. Tickets \$25 per person. No one under twenty-one years will be admitted. Reservations required. Call (973)247-0085 ext 201.
Friday
- February 11** **Make your own Victorian Valentine.** 1p.m.-4p.m. at Lambert Castle. Join us at Lambert Castle on Valentine’s Day and make your own Victorian style Valentine. Learn about early Valentine cards and the evolution of the holiday. Regular museum admission applies.
Saturday
- April 21-23** **Lambert Castle Victorian Tea.** Join us this spring for our annual Victorian Tea at Lambert Castle. Seatings at 12 p.m. and 3 p.m. daily with a musical program. Admission is \$45 each. Reservations required. To reserve a seat call (973)247-0085 ext. 201.
Friday-Sunday
- May 3** **Quarterly Meeting.** 7 p.m. Lambert Castle. Business meeting of the Society followed by Trish Chambers presenting *Women Justices of the U.S. Supreme Court*. Four magnificent women have achieved the position of Supreme Court Justice to date. Join Trish Chambers Productions in a fascinating introduction to these accomplished jurists. This program also introduces the audience to the traditions and history of the Supreme Court. Free admission.
Wednesday

Visit lambertcastle.org for the most up-to-date event information.