



ALLENDALE HISTORY AND HERITAGE

Allendale Historical Society

Fall, 1998

Changing Times at AHS...

THANK YOU Pat Wardell!

An historical event is occurring right within the Allendale Historical Society!

Society members are aware that there have been some changes in the leadership in the society in the last few years. Pat Wardell has been in the process of turning over the reins of leadership to a small group of neophytes. Not only has Pat been the newsletter editor, and president more years than not, but she was also the founder of the society. We, of the new board, view her as the heart and soul of the Allendale Historical Society--she IS the historical society! Therefore, her recent relocation to Florida and her departure from Allendale constitutes an historical event. (She tells us she won't be commuting to our society meetings from her home in Florida!)

To honor Pat for her years of service, and to mark her retirement from the society, the new board would like to do two things: 1. We would like to acquaint you, or re-acquaint you (as the case may be) with this woman we consider the very essence of the society. 2. We would also like to establish a scholarship in Pat's name to be given annually to a graduating high school student.

Now, let's turn to Pat's own personal history. Pat Wardell was not interested in history in school and disliked

GENERAL MEETING OF THE

Allendale Historical Society

Tuesday, November 17

7:30 p.m.

in the Council Chambers (Upstairs)

Allendale Municipal Building

West Crescent Avenue, Allendale, NJ

--Program--

Antique Appraiser

June Regal

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memorizing historical dates for history class as much as many of us did. Her interest in history was piqued when she was in her twenties and was a housewife and mother already. The trigger even was the death of her paternal grandmother. (Story continued on Page 2)

(Thank you Pat Wardell, con't from page 1)

Pat's grandmother left two items that launched Pat on 20-plus years of studying local history and preserving it through our society, as well as publishing books.

"People are what make history interesting..."

People are what make history interesting for Pat. People effect the development of a town--they create history. It's not surprising then that people--in the form of signatures and photographs--are what got Pat interested in Allendale's history. Pat's grandmother left a "friendship quilt." A friendship quilt displays signatures of family members, interspersed with the pattern of the quilt. The signatures are embroidered on the quilt and are clustered by immediate family groups. The quilt belonging to Pat's grandmother was not finished, but this did not diminish Pat's interest. Her interest in the quilt was the names themselves--Durie, Sneden, Haring and Demerest. These names, of French, Dutch, and possible English origin, have long histories in Bergen County. Pat set out to research these names--her ancestors. Pat wanted more than *names*--she wanted to know who these people were, and what they did--she wanted to know all about them.

The second item Pat's grandmother left was a collection of family pictures. Don't all grandparents leave family pictures? Pat's grandmother took her family photos project a few notches higher than some people do, though. These photos were in a Victorian velvet-covered album. Every person was identified by name, and each person was further labeled by relationship in the family! So, Pat had faces to go with the signatures on the quilt.

"...satisfaction from her research she compares to solving a puzzle--to form a clearer picture!"

Pat's research took her to Bergen County libraries where she would read old newspapers. Her research began with Allendale, where her family had lived on Crescent Avenue before 1900. However, she soon branched out to other nearby towns. Ramsey's library has their town newspapers dating back to the 1860's. Pat's pleasure and satisfaction in her research she compares to solving a puzzle--individual pieces of information are brought together to form a clearer, more whole picture.

Pat got involved in the Jr. Woman's Club in Allendale, serving as president and as a state officer as well. The Jr. Woman's Club undertook a project of researching old houses in Allendale. That was partially accomplished through a questionnaire distributed to the homeowners. At that time, many houses were still lived in by descendants of original owners.

Around the same time, Pat was asked, personally, by the Chamber of Commerce to write a short history of Allendale. It was used in a publication given to people who were considering moving into Allendale.

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In 1974, a group of people met informally at Pat's house to discuss the possibility of starting a historical society. Impetus for starting such an organization at that particular time was the town's 80th anniversary. There had been an earlier attempt at starting a historical society in 1930.

(Thank you Pat Wardell, con't from page 2)

There had been a particular focus at that time, too--saving the old toll gate house. Unfortunately the toll gate house burned early on in the effort to save it. With the focus of the group lost, the historical society did not continue. However, in 1974, the Allendale Historical Society, that continues to this day, was established. At that time the society established a few goals--the organization would hold four programs a year, and it would establish a collection of photographs.

Pat considers photos very important--photos were what sparked Pat's interest in the first place. Photos convey so much information. Pat explains that people will eventually throw out old photos if they don't have a place to donate them. A historical society provides such an outlet for preservation. Pat soon learned that even when people weren't ready to part with photos, they were frequently eager to share them by letting the society duplicate them.

"...people will eventually throw out old photos if they don't have a place to donate them."

In talking with Pat in preparation for writing this article, besides learning about Pat, I learned additional Allendale history. In fact, Pat's modesty and her love of history were both evident in her frequently moving the conversation from herself to Allendale's history. I did, however, learn that Pat has other interests besides Allendale's history. Pat attended college when her children were in elementary school, and earned her bachelor's degree. I jumped to the conclusion that her major was history. This error, on my part, led to learning about *many* other interests Pat has.

Pat started college, taking whatever courses interested her. Pressed to finally select a major, she first chose English, next library science, and finally earned her degree in art. But she did take a few New Jersey history courses. Pat explained art was connected to her other hobbies--folk art, Ukrainian Easter eggs, painting on china, and design. China painting eventually became a business. Pat traveled to shows, and she taught seminars. Pat has also bred and showed cats.

I'm not sure how Pat's work on history and the Allendale Historical Society allowed time for all those other interests. Her history-related accomplishments include the history

booklet for the Chamber of Commerce, a card file on Allendale history, a newsletter published continuously for 24 years, presidency of Allendale Historical Society for more of those 24 years, and finally a 427-page book, "Allendale: Background of a Borough." She also was active in the Bergen County Historical Society, serving as their librarian and trustee.

Pat's hope for Allendale Historical Society is that it continues. Pat knows many town historical societies have ceased to exist. Locally, only Ramsey, Upper Saddle River, and Mahwah have active town societies. Regional societies are a possible solution, but carry obvious drawbacks. Pascack Historical Society is a regional society that is active. It was its own building, and Pat believes that contributes to its success. A specific focus, or a building, does provide a certain impetus. However, Pat explains there are drawbacks to a society owning a building, too.

In concluding my talk with Pat, I marveled not only at all of her accomplishments, but at all of her interests. Pat explained, her husband, Walter, contends that her interests go in 7-year cycles. (History seems to be the exception--this interest has spanned the last 30-some years.) However, Pat sometimes abruptly gives up an interests and begins another after about 7 years.

I have been in awe of what Pat has done for Allendale Historical Society and the town of Allendale since I got to know her a few years ago. I left my conversation with her even more in awe. I wonder how we will survive without her. Considering Walter's analysis on the past, perhaps about the year 2005 we could entice Pat back to Allendale and back to Allendale Historical Society!

To honor Pat, Allendale Historical Society is establishing a scholarship in her name. If you would like to make a donation to the scholarship fund, please make checks payable to Allendale Historical Society and mark them for the fund. Send to: Allendale Historical Society, PO Box 294, Allendale, NJ 07401.

Thank you, Pat Wardell, for your unselfish, immeasurable contribution to Allendale!

-written by Judy Mc Kim,

Vice President, Allendale Historical Society

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*Mystery Photo! Tell us about this photo and
get your name published in our next newsletter!*



The newsletter, **Allendale History and Heritage**, is published three times a year about October-November, February-March, and April-May, and mailed to members of the Allendale Historical Society.

Send mystery photo answers, all comments and any information for inclusion in this newsletter directly to: Allendale Historical Society President: Beth Fylstra, 16 East Orchard Street, Allendale, NJ 07401.

Annual Membership Dues: \$8.00 for membership from May through the following April. Send dues payable to: Allendale Historical Society.
c/o--Treasurer: Joanne Hart, PO Box 294, Allendale, NJ 07401

Allendale Historical Society

Officers and Chairmen, 1998-1999

President: Beth Fylstra

Vice President: Judy Mc Kim

Treasurer: Joanne Hart

Secretary: Ed Murray

Trustees: Ralph Fylstra, Tim Fenton, Pat Wardell,

Rose and Tom Butler, Lynn Novak

*Just a note: Allendale Houses Built before 1940 series will
be continued in our next issue.*

**From: Allendale Historical Society
PO Box 294
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FIRST CLASS MAIL

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