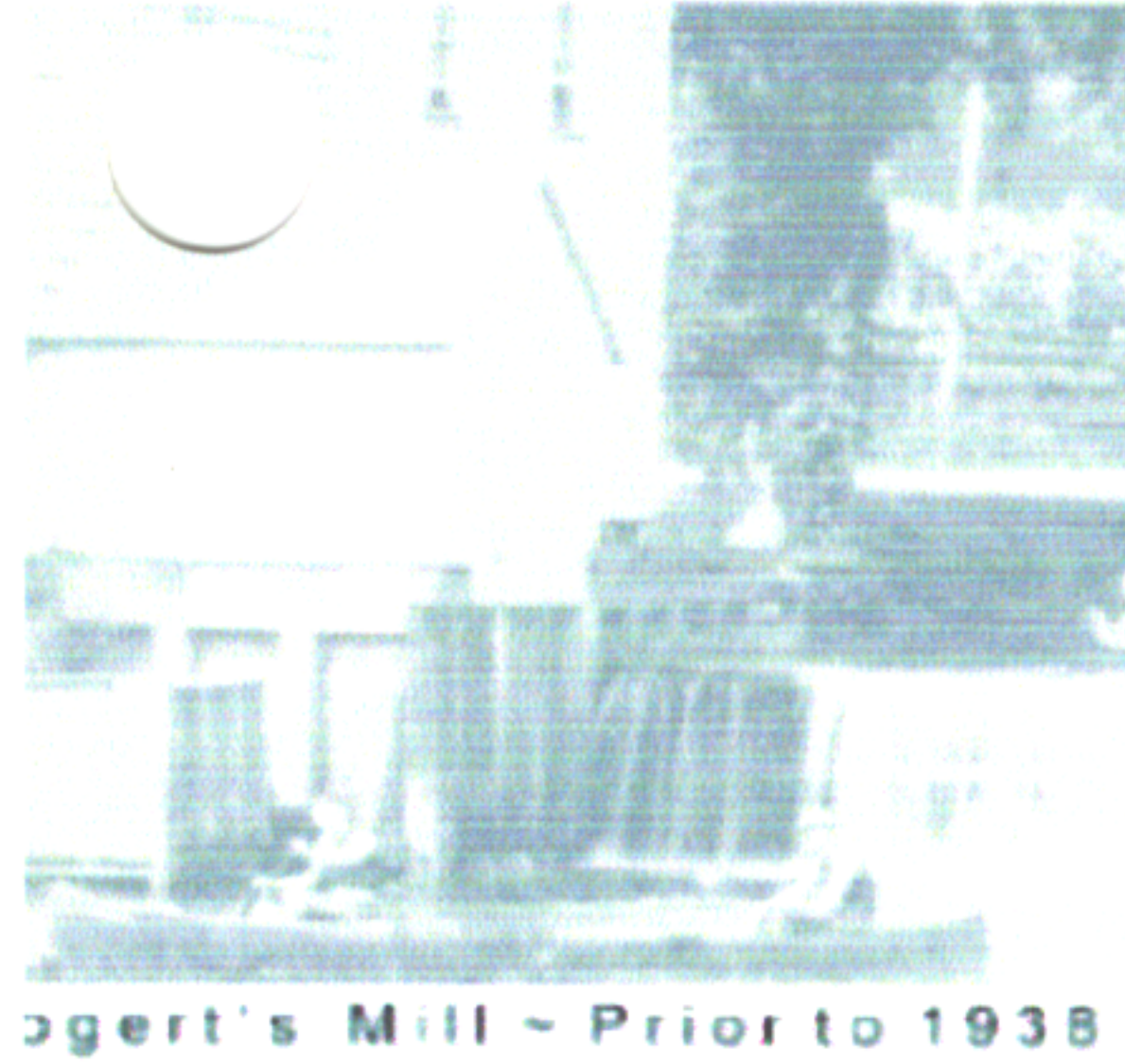


# HARRINGTON PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

POST OFFICE BOX 105, HARRINGTON PARK, NEW JERSEY 07640



## President's Report

### Notes, Narration, and Natter from *Gerri Gibney* [768-2615]

There is much good news to report to all of you, and to start, I am overjoyed to report that our Society is now officially a 501(c)(3) Corp. This tax status enables us to do many things for the Society, and, in addition, helps you, if you wish to donate to the Society. It is a tremendous benefit for us all. We have two special people to thank for getting this work done. **Greg Evarella**, pro bono, completed the reams of paperwork necessary to get this designation, and **Ellen King**, our Treasurer, compiled the financial information required. If you have any experience with government paperwork (taxes come to mind), you are well aware of the monumental job this was, and how much we all owe them our enduring thanks!

In this issue, you will be reading about the progress at The Old Burying Ground. After researching various tree services to help us with the blow down as a result of the

We are very happy we did, Ken is a real professional who was sympathetic to our needs at this historic site. We

You will have an opportunity to visit **The Old Burying Ground on Sunday, October 4th, 2009**, when a tour will be conducted by **John Mager** and **Davis Ross**, cemetery historians. We did a tour of the OBG a few years ago, and it was a tremendous success. Since that time much research has been done, and now you can get an update, and learn of the new information John and Dave have uncovered. After the tour, you will also have a chance to partake in a delicious repast at **Dino's Restaurant**. This is a major fundraiser for us, and so we are charging \$60.00 for non-members, and \$50.00 for members (an excellent reason to renew your membership, if you have not already done so). The breakdown of the cost is \$30.00 for the luncheon, and the remainder to the Society to maintain and preserve the cemetery. We believe this is a great way to spend a fall Sunday afternoon, and we hope you will too. **The tour begins at Noon, and luncheon will be directly following. Please meet in Dino's parking lot.** If you are not able to attend, we, of course, would appreciate your donation. For reservations, or if you have questions, please call **Anne Kruger** at (201) 768-0427 or [chakru51@gmail.com](mailto:chakru51@gmail.com).

microburst, we selected **Ken's Tree Service**.

thank him for his fairness, his willingness to help us above and beyond, and his considerable expertise.



We have a great ten lecture series for 2009-2010. September we began with Phil Jaeger and his talk on "New Jersey's Mills: Whatever Happened to Them." Phil is a most engaging and informative speaker, and everyone who attended the talk enjoyed the lecture. On October 5th, town resident and Ramapo College student, Peter Miele, will present his film; "The Cold War: Reflections from the Early 1950's." The film includes interviews with local residents discussing their thoughts and feelings about the Cold War, and analysis of popular beliefs of the time. The film was produced in 2008 in fulfillment of the course requirements of the "Decade of the 1950's" class at Ramapo College. All of the interviewees are current residents of Harrington Park who witnessed firsthand the events of the 1950's.

Peter is currently a senior studying History at Ramapo College of New Jersey in Mahwah. He is also head of media at the Harrington Park Public Library, and if you are a library devotee, you've seen the good looking guy behind the counter, that's Peter.

One of our own, **Ethel Johnson**, has been named as "Volunteer of the Year," by Mayor **Paul Hoelscher**. In the Harrington Park newsletter, Paul wrote; "Mrs. Johnson has been very active in the creation and development of our municipal library. Ethel has also held almost every position in the Woman's Club. She was also very active in the PTA before it became the

Harrington Park Home and School Association. In addition, Ethel has contributed many hours of service in church and political activities."

We want to add our congratulations to this fitting and well deserved honor for Ethel. The Society also wants to add our own recognition of Ethel's dedication and hard work on behalf of the Society as Archivist and as a member of our Executive Board.



**Figure 1: Mayor Hoelscher presenting the Borough's plaque declaring Aug. 24, 2009 "Ethel Johnson Day"**

Mrs. Johnson regularly meets with her fellow archivist, **Inge Nebel**, to organize, catalog, and archive the many historical documents of the Society so that our history is preserved and available for now and into the future. They have also put together what we call "storyboards," using copies of pictures and documents that show various categories in our town's history. Many of you have seen the fruits of their labor as we have displayed the boards in the library and at our History Day event held in April.



These storyboards are always a big hit with the public, all thanks to Ethel and Inge.

Ethel is always supportive of all Society activities, including baking goodies for our events! We appreciate everything Ethel does on behalf of the Society, most especially we value Mrs. Johnson for her knowledge, insight, and the good judgment she brings to our team.

You might have seen in the various local papers a story on the Abraham D. Blauvelt Homestead. This historic home is located at 622 Lafayette Road,



**Figure 2: Abraham D. Blauvelt Homestead**

and it is now for sale. The Mayor and Council considered purchasing this property with grant money. Unfortunately, grant money has dried up, and they could not justify the town paying at least \$300,000 to make up the difference between the grant money available, and the asking price. This is most certainly understandable.

But, (there's always a but) at an Executive Committee meeting of the Society, we were going over the events, and decrying our unfortunate state of affairs, until **Lou Apa**, Membership Chair, said; "Why don't we move it?" Light bulbs popped, eyes bugged, and a cacophony of ideas issued forth as we all realized, why not? What about Pondside Park, not more than 2+ blocks from its present site?

After letting Mayor **Paul Hoelscher** know of our idea, we have been looking into how we could accomplish this major undertaking. We've spoken to the attorney representing the seller, and the realtor selling the property. We have received an estimate from a historic building moving company, we will be meeting with Rockland Electric to see about the phone lines, we are awaiting an estimate for a new foundation/basement and the cost of brush and tree removal. That's just the start. We will need money, and quite a bit of it. We are seeking funding from various sources. And, we will need to work closely with the historic community in Trenton and in Washington to keep this Homestead on the state and national historic registers.

Wouldn't it be great to have a home for our archives, our meetings, and an opportunity to keep history alive in our community? As the months ensue, we will let you know our progress.



Looking forward to seeing you on October 4th and October 5<sup>th</sup>!

**The Cemeteries** [John Mager 387-7758 – [JohnMager@aol.com](mailto:JohnMager@aol.com); Davis Ross [768-3621 – [davisross73@gmail.com](mailto:davisross73@gmail.com)

Since the microburst left a swaft of fallen trees and tangled limbs on the morning of August 6, 2008 small groups of volunteers have whittled away at the debris. In addition to **Greg Evanella, Thomas Evanella**, John Mager, and Davis Ross who have worked at the site at various times, Scott Morrissey and his crew cut up and removed much of a fallen pin oak not long after the storm had struck. Troop 616 Scoutmaster **Tom Betancourt** led a team of Boy Scouts and adults assisting Eagle Scout aspirant Nicholas Zahos to gather material for his furniture crafting project (which resulted in several new benches at Highland Park); the team cleared debris well beyond the narrow scope of the project itself.

Most recently, a large step was taken when a trio of workers from Ken's Tree Care Company spent an entire day at the site. They not only cut up the major fallen trees



**Figure 3: Ken's Tree Care worker cuts the "leaning locust"**

remaining but brought down the "leaning locust" which had been seriously weakened by the wind storm and another one which posed an imminent danger to precious headstones. Parking their chipper on Tappan Road, they removed much of the debris which had littered the southern portion of the

cemetery. We are grateful that Ken's Tree Care performed this strategic work for a greatly discounted fee.

**Justin Demarest and Family** The seeming "reappearance" of the Wortendyke house at the NW corner of Tappan and Lafayette roads after the microburst called to mind one of its former owners and his family's connections with the Old Burying Ground: Justin Demarest. Justin and several members of his extended family are interred in the northern section of the OBG; their neat row of headstones was spared the clutter of debris brought by the storm.

Near the midpoint of OBG's northern boundary – and extending perpendicular to it – a row of headstones (8 in number; now 6 standing, 1 fallen, 1 shattered) mark the grave sites of the Demarest family, spanning 3 generations: [listed in order of death, showing life span and relationship to the patriarch Justin Demarest; headstone epitaph inscriptions are shown in italics in the discussion that follows.]

Mary Margaret Demarest (1829-1842) Daughter  
Ann Eliza Demarest (1846-1848) Daughter  
Justin Henry Demarest (1847-1849) Grandson  
Sarah Matilda Demarest (1850-1855) Granddaughter  
Justin Demarest (1797-1878) Self  
Mary M. Demarest (1855-1881) Granddaughter  
Rachel Durie Demarest (1829-1883) Daughter-in-law  
Margaret Haring Demarest (1803-1885) Wife

Justin Demarest was born on December 4, 1797 in Orange county (2 months before it took on its modern name, Rockland) New York. He had 8 siblings – he was the youngest of 3 sons – and lived as a young adult in Piermont. His oldest brother Jacobus may have served in the New York militia during the American Revolution. Justin himself served as a private with Captain Cornelius Sickle's Company, 83<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of the NY militia during the autumn of 1814 at Harlem Heights, NY, probably as a substitute for one of his brothers, James. He married Margaret Haring in 1823 at



Tappan. The oldest 5 of their 9 children were born nearby.

Justin brought his family from Piermont to Bergen County's Harrington Township in 1835. He purchased his new property for \$3,500 from Jacob I. Blauvelt (who inherited the homestead from his father, Jacob Blauvelt, the stepson of Jacob Wortendyke) and his wife Rachel who are both buried at the OBG. A portion of their main house (Wortendyke) was already about 112 years old. Another house on the property stood until about 1860 just to the north (probably near where the railroad now crosses Lafayette Road).

The 38-year old Justin and his 33-year old wife Margaret, along with their four sons and one daughter, took possession of the property on March 27, 1835. Justin had been a cabinetmaker in Piermont but now could farm his own 93 acres. At the time of their arrival that land roughly formed a



**Figure 4: Demarest Family Plot**

rectangle, extending westward from the brook called the Tappan Run (now the Dorotockey), along the north side of Tappan road and then Harriot avenue (itself only about 10 years old when they arrived) reaching the current western boundary of the modern school property, thence northward more or less to the modern Hackensack avenue, and eastward back to the brook, and down it to Tappan road. In that main house Justin and Margaret's family grew to include 3 more sons and another daughter. And from that house one could more or less easily look across the brook to the OBG on the hill to the east.

Unfortunately, in 1842, the Demarest family had need for the OBG when their oldest daughter, 13-year old Mary Margaret, died that June (*"The*

*Lord hath done all/things well."*) She died just 2 months before the birth of the last of Justin and Margaret's sons (and their 8<sup>th</sup> child). Although Margaret Haring Demarest was already in her early 40s and there was no demonstrable "economic" reason to add to a farm family already blessed with 6 sons, the couple tried again, perhaps mindful of the loss of their only daughter. Their last child, Ann Eliza, was born 4 years later in 1846. But the youngster did not survive childhood and took her place at the OBG in 1848 (no epitaph).

Within a year the childhood deaths continued. James Demarest – Justin and Margaret's oldest son – had married Rachel Durie in 1846, and lived near his parents. Within 4 years the couple lost both of their children; both children were buried in the OBG. Justin Henry (who died of dysentery and whose marker shows no epitaph) died in

1847 and his sister Sarah Matilda (*"We laid her in her narrow bed/And turned in grief away/And thought how sad would be our lot/For many a weary day./She was our all and best beloved/And since she passed from earth/The very air seems*

*desolate/Around our home and hearth."*) died 2 years later, in 1849. Sarah's epitaph no doubt accurately recorded James and Rachel's state of mind at that point.

Some time after this James and Rachel moved to Wisconsin – where their 3<sup>rd</sup> child, Mary, was born in 1855. James' brother, Justin, married Elizabeth Haring, a widow, that same year and earlier had settled in Wisconsin on land given by their father. However, James did not remain there long, returning to Harrington Township by 1860. The couple moved around thereafter, for a time in Oyster Bay; ending up at Farmingdale on Long Island.



Their daughter Mary is last seen in the 1880 federal census living with her parents, listed as Mary Noon. She died of "malignant scarlet fever" while visiting in Hackensack in August 1881, then a 25-year old young woman, joining her siblings in the OBG (no epitaph).

When her mother Rachel ("*Remembered*") died of a stomach disease on Long Island in 1883 her body was brought back to the OBG to lie next to her children. (James remarried and was buried elsewhere upon his death in 1909.)

Ultimately, Justin and Margaret lived long, productive lives. When Justin "retired" in 1874, they were able to divide their extensive Harrington township farm and woodland acres among their sons (three of whom served in the 22<sup>nd</sup> NJ Infantry during the Civil War).

As the railroads spread through the Northern Valley during the 1870s and 1880s, so too came changes in life trajectories for members of the Demarest clan. The older sons left farming and ultimately formed a hardware business in Closter. The familiar Windmill hardware building on Main Street housed the Demarest Brothers store with their descendants active until the 1960s. Justin and Margaret moved to Closter's High Street, where they both resided at the time of their deaths, both from heart disease: In 1878 80-year old Justin ("*Precious in the sight of the Lord/is the death of his saints*"); and 7 years later in 1885 82-year old Margaret, the last of the clan to be buried at the OBG ("*For to me to live is Christ/and to die is gain*").

It was Justin's will that his heirs should erect a new headstone for his daughter Mary Margaret. The first – erected only 36 years before -- apparently had not passed the test of time.



**Figure 5: Headstone for Mary Margaret Demarest**

What lessons does this have for the Society, the current caretaker of the OBG? First, that the deterioration of the cemetery was a continuous fact even while it was an active burying ground. Second, that perhaps other markers are also replacements, hence not as old as headstone inscriptions would suggest. And third, most obviously, the Society has to continue to act as a surrogate for the families who, were they still living nearby, would repair, even replace stones that had been damaged by nature or Man.

### **Possible Vandalism Occurrence**

A disturbing example of what appears to be a senseless act of vandalism occurred recently at the OBG. Two headstones have been toppled, snapped in two at ground level probably during the close of the 2d or the opening of the 3d week in September. The headstones were of two brothers, John and Cornelius Blauvelt. John Mager discovered the broken stones. He noted that the one for Cornelius Blauvelt apparently had been lifted and turned after it had fallen, ruling out the possibility that a strange



burst of wind had caused the damage. These events are the first to have happened in over two decades.

### **But . . . Another stone has been reset**

We close on a happier note. Within a few feet of the broken stones a team of workers reset the large headstone for Jacob I. Blauvelt. That large marker had been laying face up for an unknown number of years. Because of its great weight – we think around 320 pounds – we had deferred resetting it until we could muster sufficient manpower. Incidentally, this Jacob Blauvelt (there are 5 buried at the OBG) had been raised in the Wortendyke house and had sold it and the property to Justin and Margaret Demarest in 1835 when he and his family moved to Tappan.

Fortunately the team of John, Davis, Greg and **Thomas Evanella** was augmented by **Will Ocasio** and **Harry Kline** as we reset the stone on September 19, bringing the total of reset stones since 2007 to 18.



**Figure 6: The team backfilling the reset stone**

**Members' Corner** - Lou Apa (201-767-8325; [louisapa@yahoo.com](mailto:louisapa@yahoo.com))

### **Welcome and Thank You**

Returning members (as of 9/21): **The Angelos Family, Louis & Marianne Apa, The Betancourt Family, Julia & Louis Cambria, Mary Carley, Ed & Holly Ciccoricco, Marie & Nick D'Amico, Dot Durbec, Greg & Susan Evanella Family, Gloria & Ken Friedberg, Beth Gangeri, John Gibbons, Gerri & George Gibney, Clare & Gerard Gorek, Anne & Tom Hackett, Paul Hoelscher, Ellen King & Alberto Caballero, The Kruger Family, John & Virginia Mager, Francesca & David Moskowitz, Silvia & Toros Papagian, Cliff Peterson, Beth Potter, Marlene Rafner, Davis & Esther Ross, Micheal & Maryann Ryan, Michelle Ryan, The Schaff Family, Bea & Antonio Scorza, David & Marion Sunden, Lawrence & Mary Sunden, Bart & Jeanette Talamini, Dr. & Mrs. Edward Zajkowski**

First time members:

**Bobbie Bouton-Goldberg, Tom Clarke, David Garfunkel, The Mandalakis Family, Joe McArdle, Zoé Murr, The Joey Niece Family, Irene Stella, Marie Villas, Lee & Rich Williams**

If you haven't received our membership application please call or email me and I will get one out to you as soon as possible. And, of course, we appreciate you continuing support!

**Treasurer** (Ellen King, 201-247-0243, [ellen\\_king13@msn.com](mailto:ellen_king13@msn.com))

As I reported to the Executive Committee on September 21, the Society's bank balance as of the end of the HPHS fiscal year (8/31/2009) stood at \$9,742.67. In addition, the organization was granted a tax exemption under Section 501 © 3 of the Internal Revenue Code.



**Archivists** – Ingeborg Nebel (201-767-1521; [hansnebelviolins@msn.com](mailto:hansnebelviolins@msn.com)) and Ethel Johnson (201-768-6357; [ethelhj@optonline.net](mailto:ethelhj@optonline.net))

We continue to prepare “story boards” featuring themes, personalities, eras, architecture, and other special topics as a way to tell the story of the Borough’s past. For example, we finished one set that presented images and documents to celebrate the Public Library’s origins and development. We mount these boards for public viewing at various times, usually at the Library, but on occasion (as during History Day) at the Borough Hall. Any ideas you may have for future story boards would be greatly appreciated.

Throughout the year we accession artifacts, documents, photographs, and other materials for the Society’s collections. These range in era from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Should you have any items that would help shine a light on our local history, please let us know!

## Upcoming Events:

**October 4, 2009, Sunday 12:00**

Old Burying Ground/Dino’s Restaurant  
Old Tappan Road  
Fundraiser

**October 5, 2009, Monday, 7:30PM**

Quantmeyer Room, Harrington Park Library  
Mr. Peter Miele, “The Cold War: Reflections from the Early 1950’s.”

## Officers of the Society:

Gerri Gibney, President (768-2615)  
Regina Potter, Vice President /Treasurer (784-9628)  
Ellen King, Membership Secretary (768-2468)  
Davis Ross, Recording Secretary (768-3621)  
Louis Apa, Treasurer (767-8325)

## Other Members of Executive Committee:

Michelle Ryan, Hospitality (767-8544)  
George Gibney, Public Relations (768-2615)  
Ethel H. Johnson, Archives (768-6357)  
Ingeborg Nebel, Archives (767-1521)  
Anne Kruger, Fund Raising (768-0427)  
John Mager, Cemeteries (387-7758)

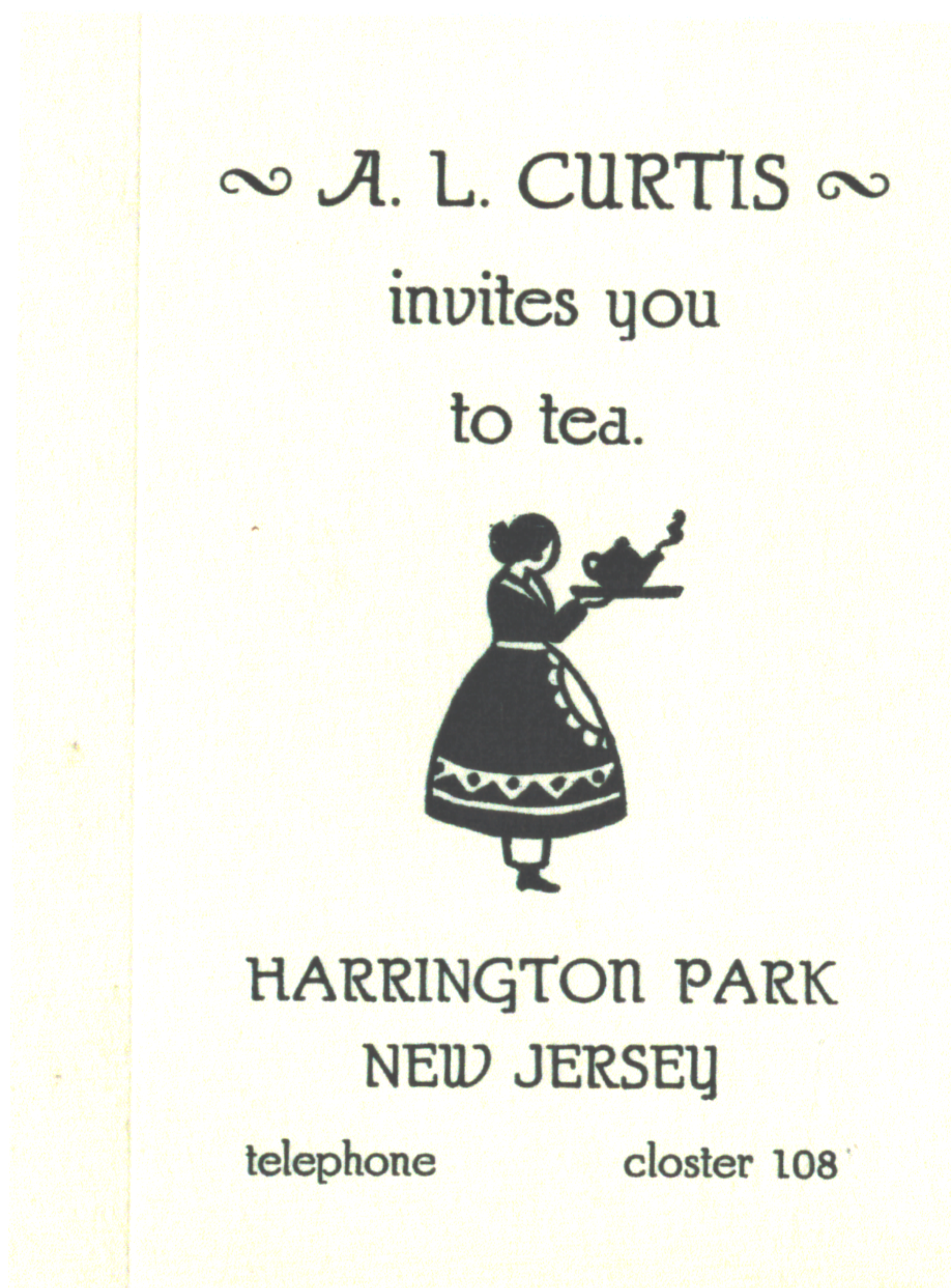


Figure 7: Teahouse invitation, donated by Larry Sunden