

## COMING EVENTS

### H. H. Historical Society Meetings:

We meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of January, April, July, and October at 7:00 pm at the Haddon Heights Library, 608 Station Ave-Lower Level

**Spring Meeting Mon., April 21, 2025**

**CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE**

[www.hhhistorical.org](http://www.hhhistorical.org)

*Send us your email at [info@HHHistorical.org](mailto:info@HHHistorical.org), then you will receive future Bulletins directly to your inbox for free!*

The League of Historical Societies now has a Facebook Group Page. We encourage our members and friends to join. Here's the link:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/338042729711243/>

### WE NEED YOU!

There are just a few of us who actively work to keep this organization going. YOU can help by volunteering to serve and by helping build our membership. We need YOU!!!!!!



*The Haddon Heights Historical Society is a 501(c)3 organization. Please keep us in mind as you plan your charitable donations. Make History by Making us part of Your Legacy...*

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## MEMBERSHIP DUES:

Please consider renewing your membership. All dues help your Historical Society cover ongoing costs and support our mission. Only "paid-up" members will continue to receive this highly informative and insightful (*in the Editor's opinion*) HHHS Newsletter! Renew in October for the upcoming 2026 year. Return the membership form on page 3 to remain a member in good standing.

~ 2025 ~

### HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD

<u>President (2025-2027)</u>	Elena Hill
<u>Vice-President (2025-2027)</u>	Bob Hunter
<u>Past President</u>	Margaret Westfield
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### COMMITTEES / CHAIRS

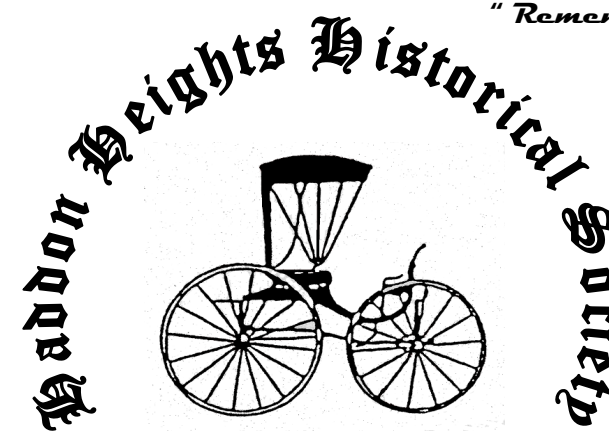
<u>Newsletter Editor</u>	Bob Hunter
<u>Membership Chair</u>	Ann Bishop
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<u>Nominating Comm.</u>	Bob Hunter & Peter Hill
<u>Programs/Publicity</u>	Peter Hill
<u>Program/Membership Dev.</u>	JP Gentile

### CONTACT THE BOARD

[WWW.HHHISTORICAL.ORG](http://WWW.HHHISTORICAL.ORG)

Mail correspondence and Dues to:  
P.O. Box 118 Haddon Heights, NJ 08035

" Remembering Yesterday For The People Of Tomorrow "



P.O. Box 118 • Haddon Heights, NJ 08035

# Bulletin

[WWW.HHHISTORICAL.ORG](http://WWW.HHHISTORICAL.ORG)

Volume 50 Number 2

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### **Monday, April 21st Meeting:**

Join us on Monday, April 21<sup>st</sup> as we welcome May Brill to speak on her service during WWII. At 20 years old, May enlisted with the WAVES, a branch of the Naval Reserve for Women. A display of ration cards, and Nellie Fries Gahagan's volume scape book of WWII news clippings will be on display.

### **Upcoming Meeting Topics:**

**July 21:** Talk and video on the Indian King Tavern

**October 20:** The Jersey Devil will visit Haddon Heights.

## Haddon Heights Youth Athletics

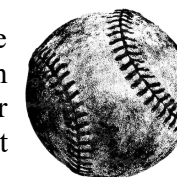
Ever wonder how Little League came to Haddon Heights? Well, I'll tell you as I work from a story written by George Kerns for the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, it was a combination of a magazine a story, a business trip, and a lot of talk that John T. Stevenson parlayed into a ballpark. As he explains, he and Mrs. Stevenson, who lived at 1110 Sycamore Street, Haddon Heights, stopped at Williamsport, Pa., in 1949, and for the lack of anything else to do, went to a baseball game, only to find out that it was just a bunch of kids playing. But their professional appearance interested Stevenson, and he sought out the teams' boss, Carl E. Stotz, founder and commissioner of Little League Baseball, Inc. who had been inching along the idea since 1938.

Armed with a magazine clipping about Little League baseball, Stevenson started on a one-man promotion to graft kid baseball with other community endeavors. Old-timers said it

couldn't be done. Stevenson, a Rotary Club member, broached the subject to local membership, made stump speeches, and won his point. They would try it as an experiment.

On March 8, 1950, Haddon Heights Little League Baseball was incorporated. The Courier-Post, March 11, 1950, reported that the Haddon Heights Little League Inc. was organized with John Stevenson as president, the Rev. Frank B. Stranger, vice president, George B. Baker, Secretary, and William B. Manlove, treasurer and L. Marvin Cross as board member. J. Zebley Guyer, William J. Hayes and David Gardner were appointed managers with a fourth man to be appointed by a Barrington group.

Businessmen William B. Evoy, Lendon Ruark, Joseph Orlando and George O. Davis agreed to sponsor teams. Ernie Smith recalls playing that day for the Suburban Hardware team and Dick Lindsey remembers playing for Davis Jewelers.



The youth of Haddon Heights and its neighbor, Barrington, were invited to try out for the teams. Getting budding baseball players in age brackets of eight to twelve years of age was not a problem. They flocked to tryouts on a field loaned by a Rotary member. Four teams of 15 boys each were picked to make up the "majors." Four additional teams filled the ranks of the "minors." Coaches and managers, recruited with the only requirement that they like kids and baseball, drilled the teams to professional performance.

Stevenson was not content with one league. He wanted competition. With a group of amateur photographers a semi-documentary home movie was filmed, recording life in the Little League from Spring training to the playoff games. Five thousand people, the membership of

clubs and organizations in other communities, saw the film and the reaction was contagious. Eleven additional leagues were formed.

The next problem to be surmounted was a playing field. Regular baseball fields are too big. Little League baseball requires a two-thirds size diamond. The Borough of Haddon Heights told Stevenson in 1951 that it would donate land. It was a tract on a downhill slope, across the railroad tracks and next to the water works. It was thickly grown with trees and underbrush. The condition of the land did not bother Stevenson. "We're in business," he said. Now the salesman came out. Anybody and everybody were buttonholed to buy in with money or time or both. A lot more promotion and sales talk by Stevenson and others sent bulldozers, welding equipment, hard

to-find steel, mortar and building blocks, to the site. The formula applied was not complex. Chisel it or buy it wholesale, only if you had to. Remember, the Second World War ended in 1945. Steel production was still in short supply and there was an increase in demand for building materials to build housing for all the baby boomer parents.

Business executive Cornelius Githens was handed the planning job. He became the surveyor, architect, contractor, carpenter, plumber, pipefitter, mason and mudhog. Work progressed on an infrequent schedule, any evening after dinner and on Saturdays that a volunteer could make it. The hillside was scooped out, fields leveled, dugouts, stands, and clubhouse erected. I have been told that John J. (Jack) Barr, resident on Third Avenue and later president of American Water Company, was able to

supply construction equipment. The announcer's booth was part of this original construction.

To raise funds, "Tag Days" were staged on Station Avenue. In exchange for donations, you received a lapel button with the slogan, "Go To Bat For The Little League". Women of Haddon Heights chipped in with donations from bake sales. The many churches in the borough took up special collections. Checking the Haddon Heights Rotary minute book shows that it donated over \$400 towards the project over a two-year period. Other clubs also contributed. The whole completed complex was valued at \$35,000 in 1950 dollars, or \$461,350 today.

Stevenson and his supporters found there was an unexpected benefit to having Little League in Heights. "One of the more severe rules was that a player had to keep up school marks or lose his uniform. Today, the kids are batting a thousand on that score. Another rule was that razzle-dazzle big league ball shenanigans would not be tolerated. **No yelling or booing the umpire,** who might by circumstances, be your father, brother, or Sunday school teacher."

Opening day came in May 1952, New Jersey Governor Alfred E. Driscoll and Little League founder Carl Stutz joined the many fans who came to enjoy the first Little League in Heights.

**NOTE:** On October 11, 1962, the papers of incorporation were amended to include girls in Little League and change the name to Haddon Heights Youth Athletics, Inc. Thank you, Jack Oliver.

The prime source of information for this article came from the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, May 30, 1952, written by George Kerns.

Thank you, Free Library of Philadelphia Newspapers department.

## Meet Laura Stein

Laura Stein works as our part-time archivist and is paid by the Society from a grant given by Camden County Cultural and Heritage Commission. Laura holds a Masters of Science, Library and Information Science from Long Island University and a Digital Archives Specialist Certificate from the Society of American Archivists. We are very fortunate to have her digitally inventory the archives that many, especially Rose Fitzgerald, Joan Rossler, and Irene Monti, have collected and organized through the years. When Ms. Stein is finished, everyone will be able to determine online our holdings.



## Haddon Heights Borough Hall 1907



The 600 block, even side, of Station Avenue, 1907, looking towards 7th Avenue from the West Atlantic corner. From left to right, the Frederick Fries Real Estate Company, a circa 1850 house used, since 1902, as the first Free Library in Heights, and the still under construction first borough hall.

The new borough hall, 608 Station Avenue, in 1907 looking towards the railroad tracks. The first free library in Heights is in the building to the left.

When completed, the borough hall contained the fire department on the left, the police department, the library, borough offices, council chambers and the Masonic Hall. Dances were held on the third floor?



1952

Entered as second class matter, November postoffice at Philadelphia, Pa., under the #

### Everything's Ready for 'Batter Up'



Seats and press box of the grandstand of the Little League's baseball park in the 400 block W. Atlantic av., Haddon Heights, are made ready for the official opening by residents who have toiled for a year completing the \$35,000 community project.

### Haddon Heights' Big Day

## 2025 Membership Application / Renewal - Haddon Heights Historical Society

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (H): \_\_\_\_\_ (C): \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Single-\$10 \_\_\_\_\_ Household-\$15 Additional tax deductible donation of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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