

# The Chester Historical Society's News & Views



Summer/Fall 2010 ✨ Newsletter

Chester Historical Society  
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...Visit our History Room in the Chester Library

## Celebrity on a Enchanting Chester Farm



Above: "Former Home of William Segal,  
75 South Road, Chester"

A Sunday, August 1, 2010 New York Times article by Elizabeth Jensen featured the headline "The Man Who Captivated Ken Burns" and went on to describe how the acclaimed documentary filmmaker Ken Burns met William Segal in the mid-1970s in a drawing workshop in Dorchester, Mass., and again years later at Mr. Segal's "farm" in Chester, N.J. in 1992. Whether it be called a farm, a country retreat, a meeting place, makes no difference -- the property is fifteen hilly, wooded, some might say enchanting acres located on South Road -- where

a stream then rests on a meditative pond, and where two very interesting men began a meaningful collaboration.

Ken Burns' award-winning documentaries include "Brooklyn Bridge" (1981), an 18-hour history of "Baseball" (1984), "The Civil War" (1990), "Lewis and Clark: the Journey of the Corps of Discovery" (1997) and most recently, "The National Parks: America's Best Idea" (2009). What brings us back to Chester is one of Mr. Burns' earlier works, "...three short and intimate films about William Segal, a painter and spiritual teacher" that were filmed between 1992 and 2000, the year Mr. Segal died at age 95.

William Segal (1904 - 2000) was a philosopher, publisher, writer, painter, self-made man, entrepreneur, teacher and student of life who made a lasting and important impression on Ken Burns and many others. One web site states that William Segal "searched relentlessly and compassionately for meaning in the 20th century...helped bring Western and Eastern spiritual traditions together, stressing what connects humanity rather than what differentiates it." The New York Times article

Article continued on Page 4



# Enigma

By Len Taylor

Ross Smyth was one of the early members of the Chester Historical Society, and he jumped into the organization with enthusiasm. Early during his membership, CHS bought the museum on Grove Street. The funds came from a Mennen family gift of twenty-five shares of Avon stock worth around twenty-five thousand dollars. The gift was brokered by the Reverend Robert Maseroni of the Community Presbyterian Church. Ross favored investing the proceeds, but a majority of other members supported buying a building for a museum during the bicentennial years. And so CHS went into the museum business.

Even though Ross was cool to the museum, he embraced it with his time and labor, frequently personally fixing broken or worn out parts of the structure. Once, when he was working in the basement ceiling joists, he was bitten by what he thought might have been a centipede. The bite took a long, long, long time to heal.

Ross also jumped at being offered the position of financial advisor and treasurer, placing the CHS money into high-yield investment funds. His mantra, "never touch the principal," still echoes in the halls of the Society today. Proceeds from the barn sale, memberships, gifts and publications all went into Ross's treasury. To remove funds, one needed Board approval, Ross's approval, and a letter from the Queen. George had this disease and so does Ed. It must infect you when you open the ledger books.

Working tirelessly at the barn sale, Ross's contributions were endless. He was one of the few retired but still able-bodied members, so he would pick up items at your home, shuttle people around, help sort and on sale day, cart items to people's cars. He complained

often about the "cabin full of junk," but always stayed with it until the barn sold out.

When the museum was finally sold, Ross was ecstatic. The sale proceeds of \$40,000 were immediately invested, and, in spite of several major purchases, projects and publishing adventures, Ross succeeded in doubling the investment in ten years. The Society owes him their gratitude for creating a solid portfolio and for watching the funds as though they were his own. Ross was often opinionated, ruggedly refined, annoyingly persistent, financially savvy and personally generous to a fault. Always appreciative of caring people and jobs well done, he was a close friend of the Taylors and of the Chester Historical Society.

## The Observers...



Outgoing CHS President Amanda Dean hands Chester Library's Lesley Karczewski a check for \$2500. The donation was used to help defray the cost of digitizing the Historical Society's extensive collection of Observer Tribunes. A searchable data base of the OT's are available on the library's computers.

*Photo and article by Ed Ng*



# CHS 2011 Program Plan:

## Discover and Help Write Chester's History

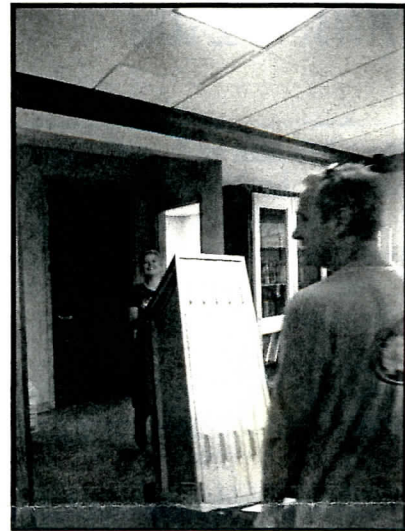
*By Alison Dahl*

Members and guests are invited to participate in a detailed study of Chester's history in 2011. The Society's publication, "Chester, New Jersey -- A Scrapbook of History" by Frances Greenidge will serve as the primary reference, study guide, and discussion guide. "The Scrapbook" as it is called, is described by the author as a "collection of widely gathered "scraps" of information and memories pieced together in order to preserve a historical picture of Chester."

The 175-page spiral-bound book consists of seventeen densely detailed, fascinating chapters, extensive appendices, numbered references, and illustrations, spanning the years 1713 - 1971, from "Before the Settlers" to "Then...and Now". Plans are to gather at 7 p.m. on the 2nd Thursday of the month at the Chester Library, to discuss several chapters of the book, beginning in March 2011. At the March meeting, participants will be given an orientation to the program, its study objectives, the schedule, and will be asked to begin gathering their own "scraps" of modern day Chester history to contribute toward what will become the updated edition of the "Scrapbook of History" from 1971 to 2011, the next forty years.

Copies of "The Scrapbook" can be purchased in advance at the Antique Mall on Rte. 24 in Chester, or through the Chester Historical Society. More details about his event will be announced later this year!!

## The Move is Over...



On Friday August 27, 2010 we completed the final stage of our archives move and furniture relocation!!! The History Room has space to work, filing cabinets for our future archives... before you know it, there will be a computer available for Chester History research!! Our archives room in Highlands Ridge has plenty of storage and ample room to continue to sort and catalogue our items. Thank you to Chris Belton, Sandi Lotz and Andrew Lotz for a great move!!

## ★ ★ HELP ★ ★ WANTED

It is time to pass the baton to a new Newsletter Editor. The newsletter comes out twice a year. We need someone to take it over next spring. Don't worry, if you do not have a background in editing or design, all you need is a sincere interest. Please contact Amanda Dean at 908-894-8057 or by email at [amandadean@earthlink.net](mailto:amandadean@earthlink.net). I am glad to help you set-up templates and guide you through the process. :)

Sincerely, Amanda



# Chester Farm cont.

By Alison Dahl

further describes him as "...a student of Daisetz Suzuki, the foremost exponent of Japanese Zen Buddhism in the West, and of the Greco-Armenian mystic and philosopher Gurdjieff. Mr. Segal was co-chairman of the Gurdjieff Foundation when he died."

A photo in the New York Times article shows a young Ken Burns standing with William Segal on the property in Chester in 1992, where the first of the three short films was made. The property, owned by Mr. Segal for about 40 years, included several outbuildings and the main house, built circa 1945. The buildings served as a gathering place for Mr. Segal's personal and professional circles, hosting visitors from abroad -- Paris, London, Venezuela, and across the U.S., to study, meditate, paint, and learn about the Gurdjieff philosophy.

It was in the last ten years of William Segal's life that he befriended Ken Burns and the two collaborated to produce the trilogy "Seeing, Searching, Being". The first of the trilogy, entitled "William Segal", is filmed in Chester in the art studio and gardens. In it, Mr. Segal talks about the creative process -- the relationships between the artist and the

work of art -- while he paints. The second film is "Vezelay" that looks at the beautiful serenity of the basilica at Vezelay in France. The third film is "In the Marketplace" which was filmed in Paris and follows Mr. Segal's everyday life, embracing all that is around him, living in the moment.

Check local Public Broadcast Service listings on PBS.org for program broadcasts of "William Segal", which is Part One of the "Seeing, Searching, Being" trilogy. As of press time, we believe a presentation is scheduled for the PBS Pledge Drive on September 12th, 2010. The trilogy is also available for sale on DVD -- check PBS.org and search "Ken Burns" filmography for details.

## Calling All Members!

*The Chester Food Pantry  
needs your HELP!!!*

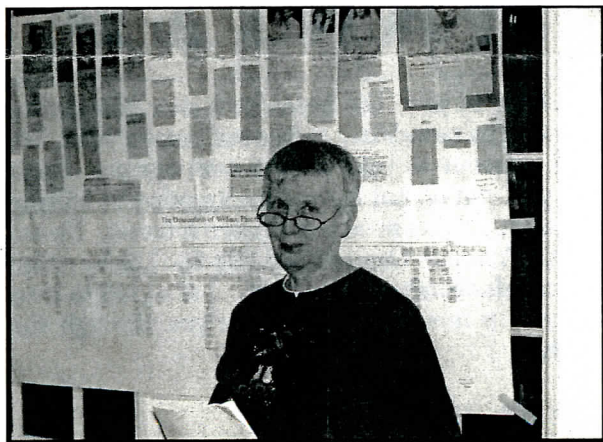
Now more than ever donations are needed to help local families. Please help us to help those in need.

### The following items are much needed:

paper towels, facial tissue and toilet paper.

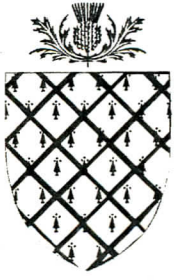
**Reminder** - The Food Pantry's drop off areas are in the foyer of the Chester Library, in the exit area of Shop Rite, Xercise in the Chester Springs Shopping Center, GianAngelos Pizza on Route 24 East and at Plant Detectives on Route 206 North.

*Many Thanks,  
Lois Taylor*



*Left: Peggy Lake Oswald standing in front of the Phoenix family tree history that she synthesized. (This photo was accidentally omitted from the Winter / Spring 2010 newsletter)*





# 1810 Tartan Day - A Macculloch Hall Bicentennial Celebration

*“Spotlight on Youth - A Scottish Themed Concert”*

*2:30 pm - October 24th 2010*

*St. Peter's Episcopal Church,  
South Street and Miller Road, Morristown, NJ*

Please join us for this family-friendly program honoring the Macculloch family's Scottish roots. Enjoy performances of pipes and drums, choirs, and musical guests including

- The Rampant Lion Pipe Band
- McAngus Highland Dancers
- St. Peter's Choir
- Connor and Sharlys Dugan of Dugan's Hooligans

*The honorees at the brunch will be Governor Thomas H. Kean and Walker and Fred M. Kirby, II.*



All proceeds raised from this event will support development of new educational programming at Macculloch Hall Historical Museum, a not-for-profit educational affiliate of the W. Parsons Todd Foundation. The Spotlight on Youth Concert is part of a day of festivities. Full details and tickets for the 1810 Tartan Day - A Macculloch Hall Bicentennial Celebration events are available at [www.maccullochhall.org](http://www.maccullochhall.org)

**Macculloch Hall Historical Museum, 45 Macculloch Ave., Morristown, NJ 07960.**

Contact the museum weekdays (973) 538-2404 or find us on Facebook.

Macculloch Hall Historical Museum received an operating support grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, a division of the Department of State.

## **Tickets**

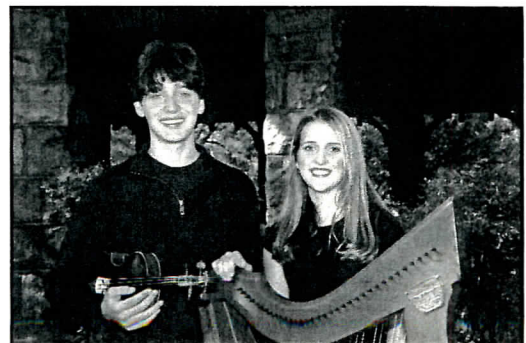
\$10 per person

\$30 Family Pass (2 adults, 4 children)

**Available online [www.maccullochhall.org](http://www.maccullochhall.org)**

Also in person at the Morris County Tourism Bureau,  
6 Court Street, Morristown

Monday through Friday 9 - 4pm





Chester Historical Society  
 P.O. Box 376  
 Chester, NJ 07930

**Membership Application and Renewal Form**  
*(Membership runs from Oct. 1 through Sept. 30)*

New \_\_\_\_\_ Renew \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Miss, Ms., Mr. First Name Last Name  
 Mr. and Mrs.

Street Address/ P.O. Box \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. No \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Age of Children under 18 if applying for Family Membership \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Schedule of Annual Membership Dues**

Individual...\$8.00/person x No. \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Individuals over 18 years old)

Associate ... \$5.00/person x No. \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Individuals 18 and under, or full time students, or those individuals who are 62 or older)

Family Membership... \$16.00/family x No. \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Sustaining Membership... \$35.00/each x No. \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Business Membership... \$35.00/each x No. \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Life Membership... \$200.00/person x No. \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 (under 62 years of age)

Life Membership... \$100.00/person x No. \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 (62 years of age or older)

Additional Gift... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please let us know if you are interested in serving on one of our committees. Thank you for your support!

Questions? Call Membership Chair Marla Jackson at 908-879-4382 or email jackson07930@gmail.com.

# Membership Renewals are in the Mail!!

You should have received your renewal notice in the mail. When you renew your membership, please take a few moments to answer the questionnaire on the back of the renewal form. Even though our "Life" members do not need to renew, we would still like to hear what they have to say. Take a minute or two to let us know what you think about our current offerings and what events or activities you might like added. We are always open to ideas for programs too!

Thanks so much!  
 Marla

# Mark Your Calenders

Thursday, **September 9th** at 7 p.m. at the Chester Library - "Celebrate New Jersey" with Linda Barth

Thursday, **October 14th** at 7 p.m. at the Chester Library - "Antiques Show and Tell" with Bill Cogger & Co.

Sunday, **December 5th** from 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. at the Chester Boro Field House - "CHS Holiday Celebration"

## Chester Historical Society

### Elected to the Board of Trustees

Amanda Dean.....President  
 Alison Dahl.....Vice President  
 Ed Ng.....Treasurer  
 Lois Taylor.....Corresponding Secretary  
 Elaine Hanington.....Recording Secretary  
 Helen Jones.....Member-at-Large  
 Alison Dahl.....Member-at-Large

### Appointed to the Board of Trustees

Matt Koppinger...Architectural Preservation  
 Carol Zaikowski.....Archives  
 Marla Jackson.....Membership  
 Helen Jones.....Oral History  
 Alison Dahl.....Programs  
 Ed Hanington.....Borough Historian  
 Len Taylor.....Township Historian