

P.O. Box 1341
Montague, NJ 07827
Feb. 7, 2017

277 Clove Road
Montague, NJ 07827

Dear Mayor Crawford,
& members of the Township Committee:

Having been reappointed by the township committee as Montague Township Historian for 2017, I again thank you for allowing me to continue to serve our township in this capacity.

Please accept my annual report as per N.J.S. - Title 40 Municipalities and Counties - 40:10A-1, the "Local Historians Enabling Act." which is also being sent to Sara Cureton, Executive Director of the NJ Historical Commission, as required by the statute.

Summary for 2016:

- Have responded to inquiries/ requests from staff at the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area [DEWA], NJ DEP - State Parks, and related agencies – e.g. Nature Conservancy, NJ Fish & Wildlife – about sites under their jurisdictions within Montague.

Assist National Park Service [NPS] DEWA cultural staff by serving as a Volunteer in the Park directly to NPS/DEWA, to assist with historic research relative to DEWA.

Remain in communication with NPS staff regarding small burial grounds [located within the confines of DEWA, though not administered directly by them], as well as with family descendants of those buried there. While continuing to assist a family member in obtaining Severyne Westbrook's replacement tombstone, also worked with a colleague to stabilize a broken tombstone at that site and help to keep the area accessible.

Attended NPS Informational Meetings on the Historic Properties Management Plan - which will prioritize the structures within DEWA. Three vacant ones remain in town.

FYI a Public Comment period will be held in March 2017.

- Am now in communication with a newly assigned reviewer at the State Historic Preservation Office [SHPO] in Trenton, who hopes to finalize the still pending National Historic Register Nomination for the Millville Historic District Boundary Expansion. Delay occurred due to last reviewer's retirement and NJ SHPO awaiting info from NPS Keeper of Register.

- Have provided info to the NPS contractor charged with DEWA redoing the Nelden-Hornbeck National Historic Register nomination. It also remains pending advance to the National Register from within NPS channels.

- For the annual NJ State Fair in August 2016, created a display highlighting Montague at the Sussex County Building. It focused on aspects of our township that related to the County's preferred focus on heritage tourism.

- Respond to inquiries seeking data about cultural resources or information specific to Montague's history, as requested of me.

- Submitted info as requested to the Montague Association for the Restoration of Community History.

- Continued to research St. James the Greater Parish and also St. Thomas the Apostle Parish and the Walpack Missions, at the request of pastor, Rev. Wayne Varga. The Montague and Sandyston parishes mark 75th anniversaries respectively in 2018 and 2016. Necessitated travel to diocesan archives and conducting outreach.

- Continue to collaborate with Jennie Sweetman – History writer for the Sunday NJ Herald, regarding topics about Montague Township and area.
- Network with local tri-state historical societies and history-focused colleagues – involved with expanding research, and compiling information and data, relative to Montague Township and the overall Delaware River Valley.
- Assist as a volunteer with the NPS Historic Structure Steward Program – a program striving to assist DEWA with general maintenance under their supervision regarding the exteriors of vacant historic structures and clearing of overgrowth around them. Report vandalism to or trash being left at their sites in town.
- Attended meetings & roll-out as a contributor to the National Geographic, the Scenic, Wild Delaware River Geotourism initiative. Also assisted Minisink Valley Historical Soc. with entries.
- Attended a Community Roundtable meeting sponsored by National Parks Conservation Association at Bushkill, PA.

Related activities:

County

- At the request of MaryJo Mathias, Exec. Director of Sussex County Arts and Heritage, once again assisted her in coordinating the 2016 Sussex County Heritage Weekend. High Point State Park and Westfall Winery were among sites included.
Contributed articles, as requested, for SCAHC's Legacy Newsletter addressing topics re: Sussex County.
Attended the History Alliance and other History related meetings with Mrs. Mathias.
- Availed myself of two webinars offered by the American Association for State and Local History.
- Responded to History info as requested by Prof. Anthony Balzano of SCCC

Region

- Continue to serve as Board Member for the Minisink Valley Historical Society [MVHS] in Port Jervis; was re-elected at their annual meeting for the 2017 term – and also serve as Recording Secretary.
Assist at the society's archive – conduct research for specific projects and respond to inquiries as requested by MVHS Exec. Dir., Nancy Conod.
Participated with MVHS in the "Art & History in the Park" event held in Port Jervis.
- Assisted regional geocache group in compiling historic factoids for a scavenger hunt held in the Tri-State area.
- Remain in contact with researchers, focused on the earliest Dutch and colonial heritage of the Minisink region.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Alicia Batko
Montague Township Historian

cc:

Sara Cureton, Executive Director, N.J. Historical Commission - NJ Dept of State *via email*