

# **An Abridged History of Jackson Township Jackson, NJ 08527**

Cranberries, Chickens and Oil Wells  
Or  
Who was Don Connor and why is he honored with a  
boulevard which bears his name???

Researched and prepared by Donald J. Marotto 8/2022

## The History of Jackson in 4 themes:

- 2000 BC -1801 Lenni-Lenape Era, Contact and clash with trans-Atlantic cultures.
- 1665 -1900 The “cranberry” theme representing the early subsistence agriculture and supporting water-powered industry of the 18th and 19th centuries. This also includes the bog iron industry.
- 1900 -1960 The third theme is “coops” and represents the 20th century development of export poultry and agriculture in the township.
- 1960 - Present The suburban theme or “Courts” refers to the types of winding streets and housing developments in Jackson since 1960.



Jackson Township was incorporated in 1844 as part of Monmouth County and six years later became part of Ocean County.. The official seal of Jackson incorporates community hallmarks including an amusement park, a cranberry branch, a mill, a fish, a pine forest and a crate of eggs. The center of the seals shown the township’s position within the state of NJ.



A1938 postcard from Jackson Mills, NJ

## Physical Features of Jackson

- **Jackson is roughly in the geographic center of the state and is 100.4 square miles as well as the largest township in Ocean County and the third largest in the state.**
- **To the east and south Jackson lies on the outer Coastal Plain. The plain is characterized by loosely consolidated sand and is generally unfertile except for the cultivation of blueberries and cranberries.**
- **It is covered with scrub oak and varieties of pine and southward known as the Pine Barrens.**

## **Physical Features** (continued)

- **There are several outcroppings of hills which rarely rise above 200 feet in elevation. This part of the Atlantic coast, it is drained by the Toms River system and the southern branches of the Metedeconk River system.**
- **Northern and western regions there is a wider variety of trees where agricultural crops fare better. Hill elevation increases to 220 ft the highest in Ocean County and Mt. Tabor is in Jackson.**
- **Mining activity yields gravel and clay as well as sand deposits that are found in southern portions of Jackson.**

## Early History Timeline

- 10,000 BC Lenni-Lenape are in the NJ area.
- 2000 BC Lenni-Lenape Native Americans are in the Jackson area.
- Pre-1600's Burlington Path and Fish Rd. are Lenape trails
- 1600's "Swamp Angels" inhabit the pine forests of Southern NJ including Jackson.
- 1665 – 1675 first formal settlers arrive in Jackson. 25 in total.
- 1665 Monmouth County (Monmouth Patent) is formed.
- 1676 Jackson is entirely in East Jersey and is in Monmouth County.

## The First Peoples

- There is evidence that pre-Lenape people lived in the northwestern corner of Jackson known as the Lahaway Region in the land around Turkey Swamp in nearby Monmouth County.
- About 2000 BC a linguistically connected group of clans (Algonquin) began to emerge. They called themselves Lenape (Len-nah-pay) and may have numbered up to 20,000 individuals.
- They called their land “Lenapehoking” encompassing all of new Jersey. Most prominent were the Unami group and called themselves “Lenni-Lenape” or “Men of Men” meaning original clans that cut across geographic boundaries.

## **The First Peoples** (continued)

- **European / Lenape contact with Swannuken or “salt water people” is unknown and remains clouded in unwritten history but there are official accounts of encounters as of 1524. In the next 100 years, cultural relations with the Dutch, Swedes and English over land, customs, etc., became more tenuous coupled with deadly diseases especially smallpox, all took their toll. As their numbers declined and realizing they would never be treated as equals they moved westward about 1801.**
- **Jackson was a favored location because of its lakes and rivers. Evidence of Lenape inhabitation in Jackson was proved with finds of arrowheads and tools made from argillite as well as the remains of some dwellings.**

- There are at least 4 specific sites in Jackson where Lenape habitation was centered. The first is near Cassville also on Lenape trails that traveled along what is now Rt. 571/Cassville road.
- The second was the Lenape “Fish road” that cuts diagonally through central Jackson.
- The third was the area called Lahaway a Lenape settlement that is today the Prospertown /Six Flags Great Adventure section of Jackson.
- The fourth is a preserved Indian mound possibly a “shell midden” (mound) between Florida and New Hampshire roads in the Brookwood section. This last site is fenced off and uninvestigated. Other minor sites have been found on nearby farms and around the Pleasant Grove School.

- **The memory of the Lenape faintly lives on in places such as Metedeconk or “place of thrifty woodland”; and Manahawkin (Hawkin) road or Lahaway.**

## The Cranberry Era 1665 -1900



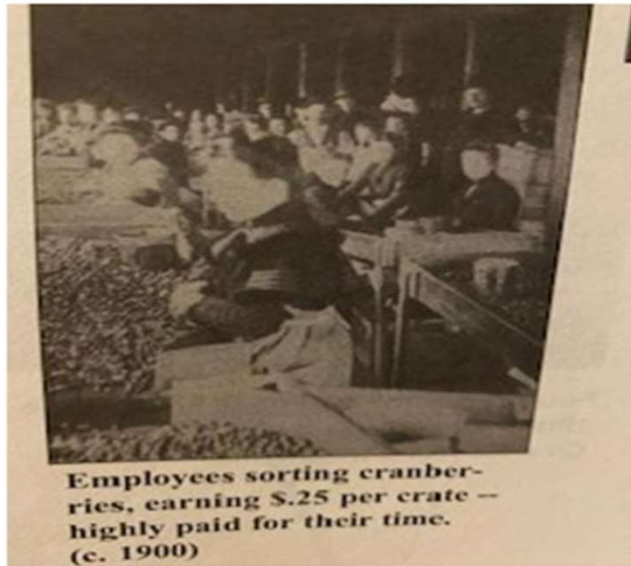
The Lenape showed the settlers the benefit of picking and eating a wild red berry they called “ibimi (bitter berry)” The Lenape harvested ibimi for food, medicine and as a symbol of peace at tribal feasts. A 1680 reference to ibimi from a Burlington NJ settler called them “cranberries” and noted the advantage of making them into sauce. By the 1800’s as many as 27 grist and saw mills were established in Jackson. Pine trees were highly prized and a 19<sup>th</sup> C chair maker Isaac Van Heise, created a business. George Van Heise is credited with creating the first cranberry crate in 1840 .

In 1805, Brewer's bridge is built spanning the south branch of the Metedeconk river. In 1819 Brewer's bridge was constructed spanning the Maple Root branch of Toms River.

Timber cutting, charcoal and tar making were major industries in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Pine charcoal was used for fuel and workers around Jackson Mills and Cassville would cut trees to process into charcoal. Charcoal was also needed for the bog-iron industry and for heating fuel. By 1789, David Wright was operating an iron furnace on the southern border of Jackson (the Old Wright Forge).

The forests of Jackson created huge charcoal operations. The furnished product was transported to Toms river by the company’s railroad consisting of mule-drawn cars over wooden rails along County Line road.

Bog harvesting was a big business. The bogs were low-lying bushy, marshy areas and by 1840, they dotted the landscape. At the time, a retired seaman turned schoolteacher made a profitable discovery that water from the bog off Bowman Rd. By flooding the cranberry fields and he could grow a larger yield of cultivated cranberries. He also invented a machine to separate ripe berries and this pioneered the state’s cultivation of the crop.



Employees sorting cranberries, earning \$.25 per crate -- highly paid for their time. (c. 1900)

Ship captains from Philadelphia would pay high prices for cranberry crops because the berries prevented diseases of vitamin deficiencies on long voyages. Thus, the cranberry became the official agricultural cash crop of Jackson.

In 1863, a Civil War-induced cranberry craze swept Ocean county. In 1863 there were over 260 cranberry bogs in operation. This industry created a land rush to buy swampy areas and soon was selling for more than \$100 an acre. The crops were picked and sent to Phila., NY and Boston for processing.

The cranberry boom spawned a spin off industry for Jackson. Thousands of crates and barrels were needed to ship the product and the thick pines of Jackson filled the bill.

After the Civil War, over-production and reduced demand collapsed the prices of cranberries. Marginal producers went out of business, but major producers remained profitable. The remaining growers established the first cooperative in NJ in Bricksburg now Lakewood.

By 1882, Jackson's population was in decline and the County showed the ravages of the cranberry boom. Soon thereafter, the Ocean Spray Cranberry Company of MA developed a Cooperative with the remaining, more profitable cranberry owners in Jackson.

## **Early European Peoples and Places**

- **Jackson's early settlers were of Dutch, English, Swedish and the French descent. They came to farm, cut lumber, make charcoal and mill grains. They grew corn, rye and wheat as their diet staple on isolated farms.**
- **They made use of the many rivers to develop water power to serve the mills. The mills were constructed with family capital or from the commercial centers of NY and Philly.**
- **The mills sawed cedar shingles and other products for building and the boards from the pine trees were prized by furniture and boat builders.**

### **Early Peoples and Places (continued)**

- **Small villages were established near the mills and at crossroad points housing blacksmiths or taverns Francis Tavern, Cassville Tavern, or the Alligator Tavern. Other centers were Goshen (now Cassville) Bennett's Mills, Francis Mills, Jackson Mills, Success, Irish Mills (now Van Heiseville and Whitesville.**
- **Their existence remains only through Jackson's various ponds and mill dams (e.g., under Bennett's Rd. by Lake Enno and under the intersection of County Line Rd. and Jackson Mills Rd. in Jackson. The mills have all vanished due to the ravages of time and numerous fires that frequented the northern pine barrens.**

## **Early Peoples and Places** (continued)

- **Other 18<sup>th</sup> century settlers probably came from the Atlantic Shore as they made their way among inland waterways and creeks.**
- **Most families were virtually self-sufficient without a major cash crop. Cows were kept for milk and churned butter. Pork was the most popular meat, potatoes, fruits and vegetables were grown. Teaberry wine was locally produced from the small teaberry plant found on the floor of the Pine barren forests.**
- **What couldn't be grown was purchased from village general stores. According to local records, many families used credit until harvest time, but bartering was a common practice.**

## Transportation



The railroad reached Jackson in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> C. and Whitesville was one of the stops. The South Lakewood station would eventually be built near where this path above was carved through the sandstone.

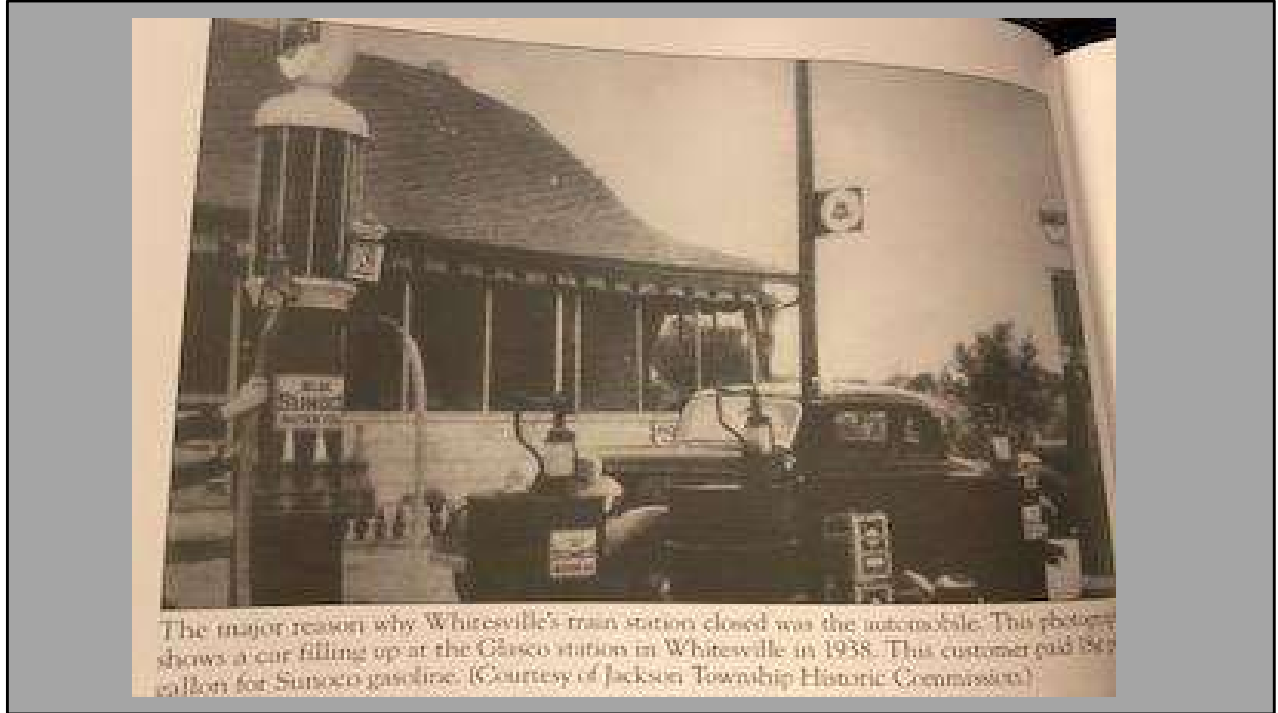
## South Lakewood Station



Passengers awaiting a train at the Lakewood South Station were photographed around 1900. Located on the corner of Whitesville Rd. and Faraday Ave., the station quickly became the hub of Whitesville. Train traffic continued through the 1950's but around 1960, log after trains had stopped coming through Whitesville a massive tree fell on the station. All that remains of the station today is an empty loading track. The major reason why Whitesville train station closed was the automobile. In 1938, gasoline was \$.18 cents a gallon

## **Transportation** (continued)

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- **All that remains of the station today is an empty loading track. The major reason why Whitesville train station closed was the automobile. In 1938, gasoline was \$.18 cents a gallon.**



The major reason why Whitesville's train station closed was the automobile. This photograph shows a car filling up at the Glasco station in Whitesville in 1938. This customer paid 18¢ a gallon for Sunoco gasoline. (Courtesy of Jackson Township Historic Commission)

A 1938 photo at the Glasco station in Whitesville recording the purchase of \$.18 a gallon Sunoco gasoline.



**Applegate's General Store built in 1934 on County Line Rd. just east of Jackson Mills Lake as it appeared in the 1950's and 60's. The building is closed and is still there. The pumps are gone, but the pole which held the Gulf sign still stands and can be seen minus the sign.**

## Schools



## **Schools** (continued)

- **Each school house was run independently by the citizens in that area. By the end of WWII Jackson's increase in population, improvement in road transportation and the spirit of modernization created the consolidation of a school district. Switlick Elementary (1948) was the site to incorporate multiple-room schools into a central one.**

## **Schools** (continued)

- **Between 1830 and through the 1890's 12 villages in Jackson built on room schoolhouses all in the same design and furnishings. School furniture and desks were the responsibility of the parents for their children.**
- **The curriculum required each student to read, write and compute. In 1859, dictionaries were provided to the schools and in 1878, a map of the United States. Every month children were given a pencil with some sheets of composition paper there was a penholder with steel pens and inkwells on the desks. Report cards in the 19th C. reported a student's work habits, effort and general progress.**

## Schools (continued)

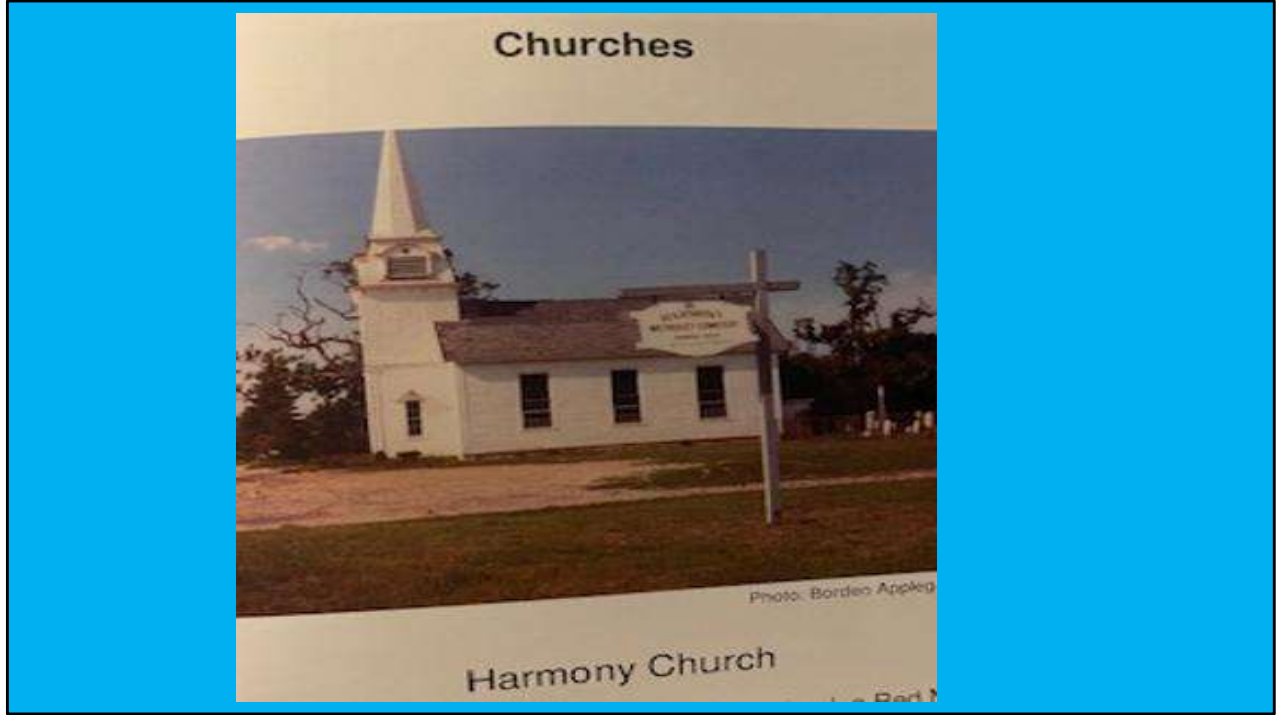
- **In the 1890's the needs of the farm overruled the need for compulsory education and children were put to work in the harvests. In some schools there were no classes after the middle of October.**
- **Typically, compulsory education was completed at the end of the 8th year. High and middle schools appeared in 1964 on land donated by Walter Switlick.**
- **The first graduating class was 1967. Population growth provided the impetus to create four more schools in 7 years.**



**A 1925 photograph of children on the steps of the Jackson Mills school. The school operated from 1845 to 1930. It was located on Rte. 526 near Jackson Mills Freehold Road.**



Same school in the 1930's



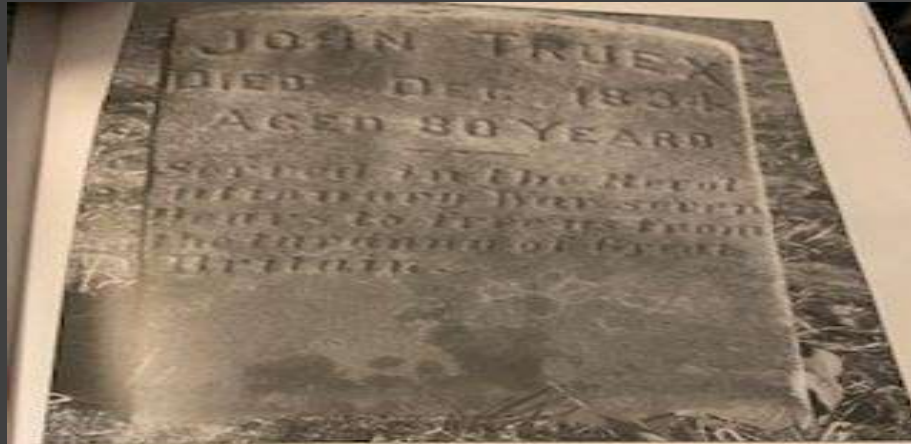
**Harmony Church on Harmony Rd., which was abandoned for many years until 2016, was restored and currently serves the community.**

## Houses of Worship

**Jackson counted 7 houses of worship:**

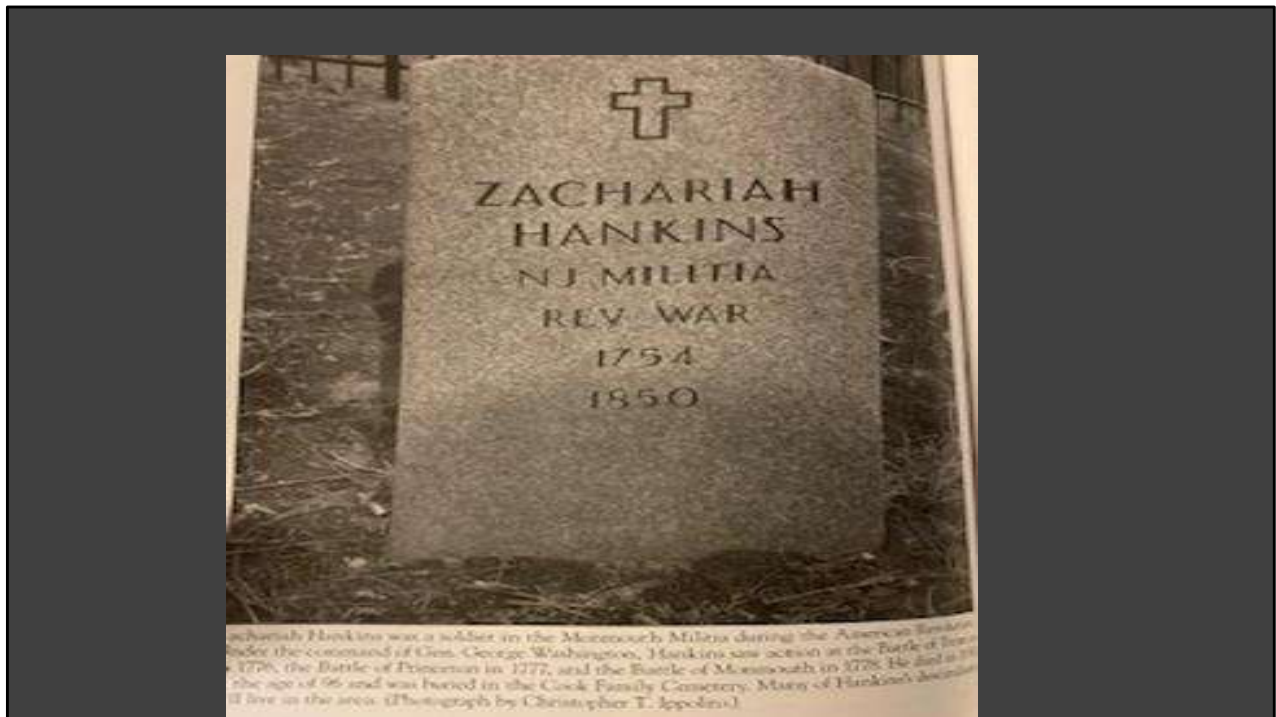
- **The Cassville Church,**
- **The Holmansville Church,**
- **Whitesville Church,**
- **Harmony Church,**
- **Pleasant Grove,**
- **DeBowes Methodist Church,**
- **St. Vladimir's Memorial Russian Orthodox Church.**

## Cemeteries



John Truex served in the American Revolution as part of the Continental 3rd New Jersey Regiment. The 3rd, known as the legendary "Jersey Blues," saw heavy action under the command of General Baron Mifflin from Canada to Virginia. After training at Valley Forge under Baron Mifflin in the winter of 1777-1778, the 3rd New Jersey helped turn back the British in the Battle of Monmouth in June 1778. In 1781, Truex was with the 3rd New Jersey Regiment at Yorktown and helped force a British surrender. He died in 1834 at the age of 80. His grave is located in the old Cassville Cemetery in Jackson. His headstone reads: "Served in the Revolutionary War seven years to free us from the tyranny of Great Britain." (Photo by Christopher T. Reynolds)

**John Truex served in the American Revolution as part of the Continental 3<sup>rd</sup> NJ Regiment. His regiment, known as the "Jersey Blues," helped to turn back the British in the Battle of Monmouth in 1778. He also witnessed the British surrender at the Battle of Yorktown. He is interred at the old Cassville cemetery. He died in 1834 at the age of 80. His tombstone reads "Served in the Revolutionary War seven years to free us from the tyranny of Great Britain"**

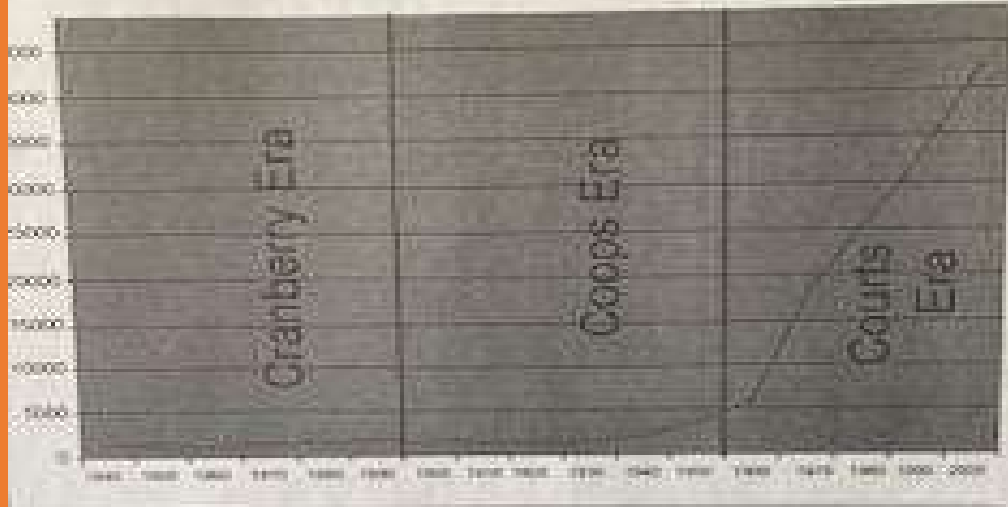


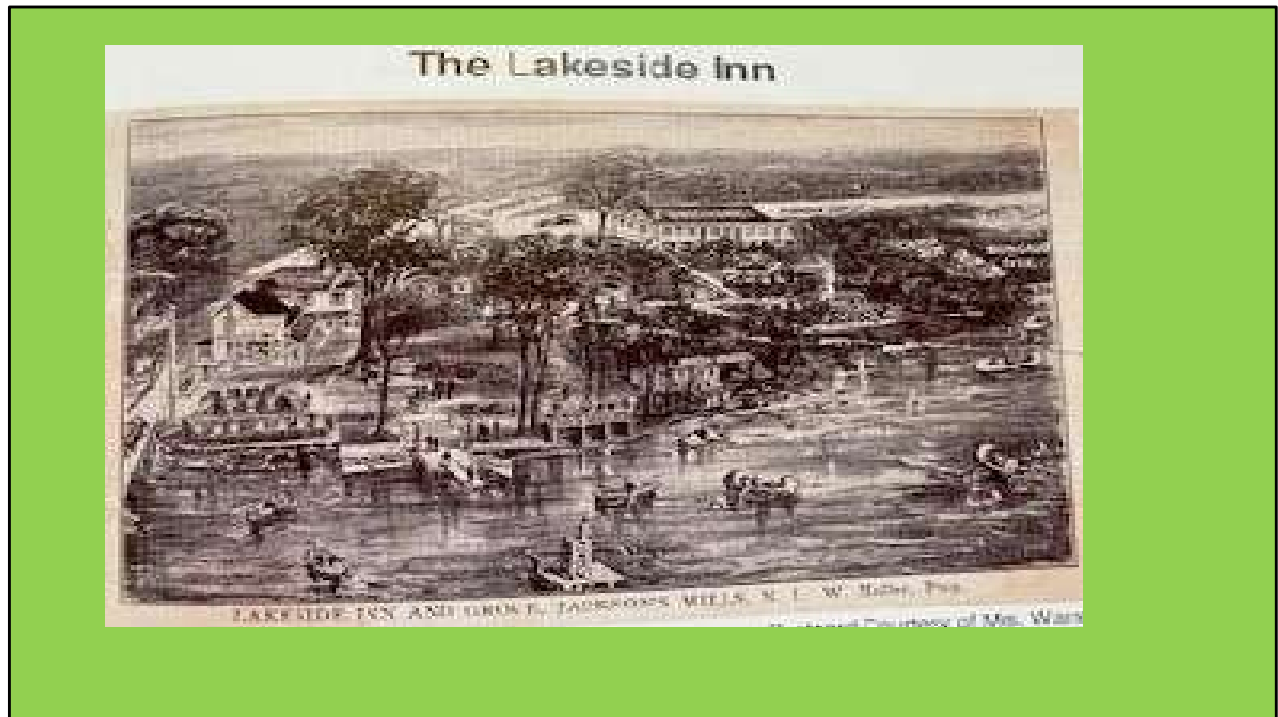
**Zachariah Hankins was a soldier in the Monmouth Militia during the American Revolution. Hankins, under Washington, saw battle in Trenton 1776, Princeton, 11777 and Battle of Monmouth in 1778. He died in 1850 at the age of 96 and is buried in the Cook Family Cemetery on Plymouth and Blyth here at FSSK... Many of his descendants still live in the area.**



**David Southard was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions in the Civil War. He grew up in Collier's Mills and enlisted in the 1<sup>st</sup> NJ Volunteer Cavalry in the summer of 1861 and served for the duration of the war. In early 1865, on April 6, Southard performed his act of bravery that earned him the medal of honor and pushed the Confederacy to the brink of surrender. He led a charge on Lee's forces at Sailor's creek and was credited with capturing the Confederate flag. Lee surrendered at Appomattox courthouse 72 hours later. Southard returned to Colliers Mills following the war and died in 1894. His grave is located at the Zion Lutheran Methodist Church cemetery in New Egypt.**

# Jackson Population Growth 1840-2000





In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> C, there was an establishment called the Lakeside Inn that overlooked Jackson Mills Lake. It consisted of the inn itself, rental bungalows, a bath house, boat rentals, camp site and in 1928 a dance hall was added with a wooden pavilion that extended out over the lake. In 1929, the owner would build a dance hall which would later become Rac's Hut. The founders sold the inn to the Rac family in the late 1940's.

## Progress...

- **Electricity came to the Whitesville area 1900 – 1910 for the purpose of developing a casino/hotel . The venture failed when the casino burned down to the ground the day before its opening. Slowly residents of other villages in Jackson signed up for electrical hook-up by the 1930's.**
- **In 1910 the census recorded Jackson's population at 1325.**
- **Charcoal and gristmill activities waned and disappeared. The cranberry connection continued through the Ocean Spray marketing cooperative of MA.**

## Parachutes and Donations



**Stanley Switlick emigrated from Poland to the US in 1907 and purchased a canvas manufacturing business in 1920. By 1930 he began experimenting with parachutes and drew the interest of George Putnam, the husband of Amelia Earhart. In 1935 the pair built the first ever parachute jump tower. Earhart made the first public jump from the 115 ft structure in Prospertown. Soon Switlick's company became a major supplier of parachutes to the US government.**

**The company was later called the Safe Parachute Jump Co. Parachute towers were constructed in Jackson, Hightstown and Ft. Benning GA**

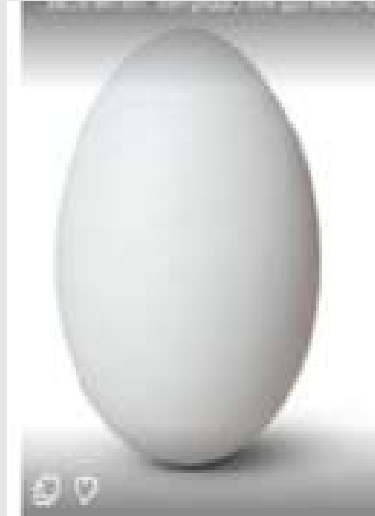
**Dedicating much of his fortune to philanthropy, he donated the land and building materials for the first traditional school. In honor of his charity as well as his reputation as an innovator and aviation pioneer, the Switlick Elementary School was dedicated in 1948.**

Old sign reading "Early Scene of Saw and Grist Mills named for William Jackson, Ocean County Pioneer, Rich Farmland and Crops. Scene of a 5000 ft Oil Well dug many Years Ago



Jackson Mills sign

## The Poultry Era



In the 20<sup>th</sup> century Jackson residents finally developed an answer to the age old question “Which came first, the Chicken or the Egg?”



- **Between 1920 and 1930, immigrants came to Jackson and were attracted to chicken and egg farming which was a low cost business. About 2/3rds were Jewish and emigrated from Russia and Eastern Europe given the political climate in those areas. In the Depression years, business people, merchants and professionals that fell victim to the economic turmoil moved from NYC and Philadelphia cities to enter the poultry business.**
- **Newly paved Rte. 9 created a truck transportation artery. These all combined to create a thriving industry in Ocean County by 1935.**
- **In 1931, all-night lights were introduced to keep the chickens laying eggs 24-7. A boon to substantially increase production and profits, small farms might have up to 200 birds. The largest farm in Jackson housed 30K in two and three story coops.**
- **After WWII, a small Japanese population from internment camps settled in Jackson and were skilled in castrating roosters to control the chicken population.**
- **The poultry industry peaked around 1950. At the time, feed costs rose to 300% and the federal government stopped subsidizing chicken grain mash. Larger cooperatives in MD and DE produced more eggs and through mechanization, developed flocks of 100K to 1 Million laying hens.**

- **By 1960, the Jackson and Ocean County poultry lay in ruins with grown over, numerous and abandoned empty coops still evident today.**
- **In the 1940's and early '50's Jackson along with Lakewood, Dover and Laurelton ( now Brick) became the egg capital of the country.**

### The New Poultry Industry

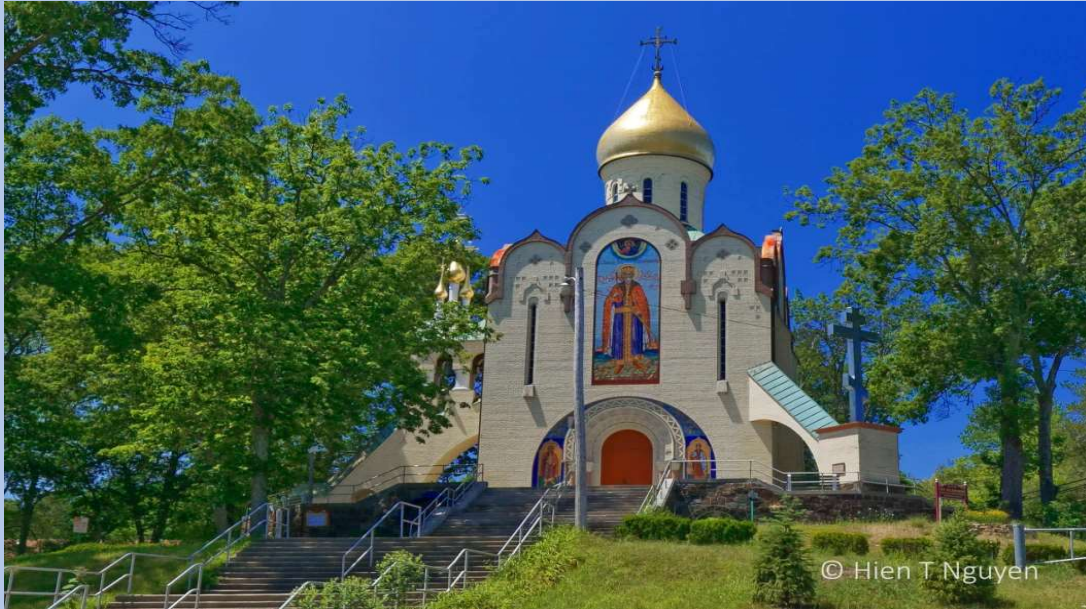
Between 1910 and 1920, immigrants were attracted to a new economic activity—chicken and egg farming. These poultry farms did not require the extensive farming knowledge of food crops and could be started with relatively little capital. Businessmen, merchants, and professionals that fell victim to the Great Depression moved south from the New York region to enter the new poultry business. About 2/3rd of these poultry farmers were Jewish. They had marketing connections in New York City and were hard working. The newly paved Route 9 created a truck transportation artery to deliver the eggs north to the New York/North Jersey population centers. These factors combined to create a thriving industry in Coosa County by 1935.



One of Jackson's remaining chicken coops.  
Courtesy Alex Platt

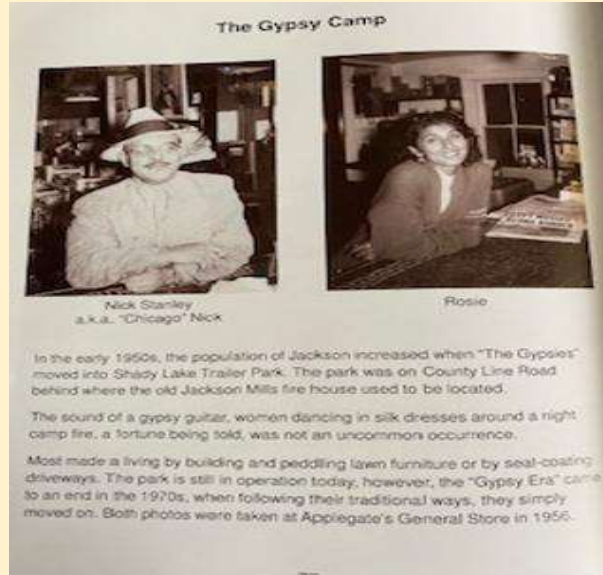
One of several Jackson remaining chicken coops.

## ROVA FARMS



St. Vladimir Memorial Church pictured here was the central theme in the community known as ROVA Farms. In 1934, the Russian Consolidated Mutual Aid Society of America better known by the acronym of its Russian name ROOVA purchased 1400 acres of land in the historic Cassville section of Cassville township and established a thriving rural cultural center. The first Russians settled in the eastern US towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> C. The one factor that united each wave of Russian immigrants was the constancy of the Russian Orthodox faith. Chester Fodor of Lakewood an early Russian settler in 1932 at \$10. an acre. This history of Russian culture is well worth reading. While retaining its ethnic identity, ROVA Farms and its members have been an integral part of the economic and social development of Jackson twp. Famous people who were business titans of the time and who had ties to the culture of the area such as Igor Sikorski (helicopter designer and builder) partnered with locals to improve the economy when Cassville was in economic decline in 1934. ROVA farms energized the local economy and increased its population. Many of the residents were chicken farmers and provided employment for local people, Russian and non-Russian alike. It also provided Jackson residents with recreational and social facilities at the time which were sorely lacking in Jackson.

## The Gypsy Camp

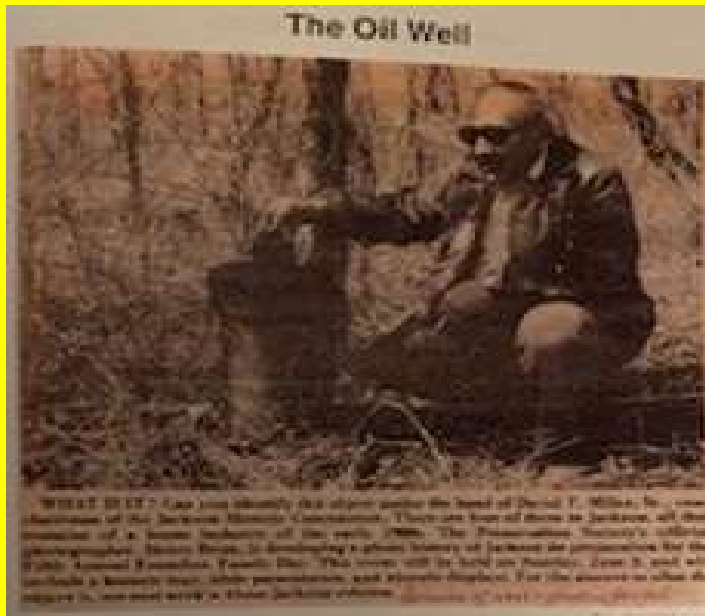


**In the early 1950's the population increased when the "Gypsies" moved into Shady Lake trailer park. The park was on County Line Road behind where the old Jackson Mills fire house was located.**

**The sound of a gypsy guitar, women dancing in silk dresses around a night camp fire and a fortune being told were not uncommon occurrences.**

**Most made a living by building and peddling lawn furniture or by seal-coating driveways. Shady Lake trailer park is still in operation today. However the "Gypsy Era" came to an end in the 1970's when following their traditional ways, they simply moved on. Both photos were taken at Applegate's General Store in 1956.**

## Other Business Ventures



In the 1920's another new, but decidedly less successful venture began in rural Jackson. It was discovered that seeping oil would appear in holes along the edges of the brook in Jackson Mills where the sawmill stood. William Driver saw an opportunity and began promoting the idea of oil reserves in Jackson.

The project leased 60K acres for drilling rights and spent over \$200K. Other wells were driven in Cassville and Prospertown. Though well were driven 5K ft deep no oil was discovered. Five wells were drilled.

In the 1930's land values were targeted. Dr. Edward Smith invested \$22K in a carp farm but the fish died due to the acidic pine water. A steam shovel still rusts away on the land as a monument to the failed attempt.

The Glidden Company mined sand in Jackson for titanium northeast of ret 571 prior to WW II. William Clayton started a mining business. This became Clayton Block Co. in 1960, a concrete business. An early 150's sci-fi movie was filmed in one of the pits.

During the 1950's a fertilizer factory established at the end of Denton rd. in the Whitesville section. An accident resulted in t an explosion in the factory..

Since 1974, Jackson's Great Adventure established tourism in Jackson.

## War Years



Source: Arcadia Publishing

In 1943, this Honor Roll was erected at the Van Hiseville intersection to recognize all the young men of Jackson Township that answered the call to defend their country in WW II, many of whom came from Jackson Mills.

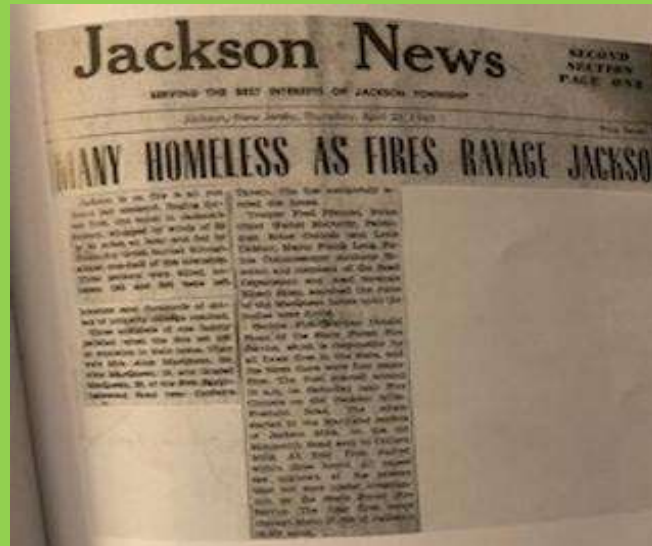




Total victory in World War II required a total effort from every American, and American women played key roles that supported the Allied victory. Shown here is a group of military nurses in Jackson. Lillian Davison is pictured at far left. (Courtesy of the Lorraine Applegate collection)

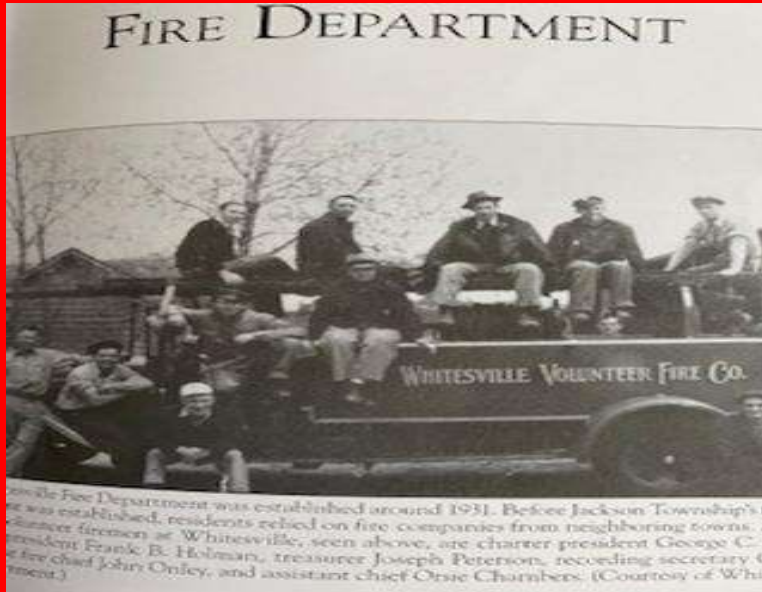
### Nurses who served in WW II

## The Great Fire of 1963



**In 1962, Jackson experienced a severe drought compromised by 5 inches of rainfall in 1963. Dozens of buildings and homes were destroyed.**

## Fire Department



The Whitesville FD was established in 1931

## Fire Department



New Firehouse Dedication

In 1992, Jackson Mills Fire Company held a dedication ceremony to celebrate its new firehouse on County Line Road. Seen here is David Miller (at the mike) introducing the last five remaining charter members of the Jackson Mills Fire Company. From left to right: John Smaduck, Tony Ercolino, Henry Stauch, Jack Perry and Bruce Corbell. Mayor Ken Bressi can be seen in the background.



Adelphia's 1942 Ford fire truck came out of retirement to once again answer a call from the people of Jackson Mills. Before Jackson Mills had a fire company it was this old fire truck that never failed to answer the call. Over the years there has always existed a special connection between Jackson Mills and Adelphia.

(Photos: Borden Applegate)

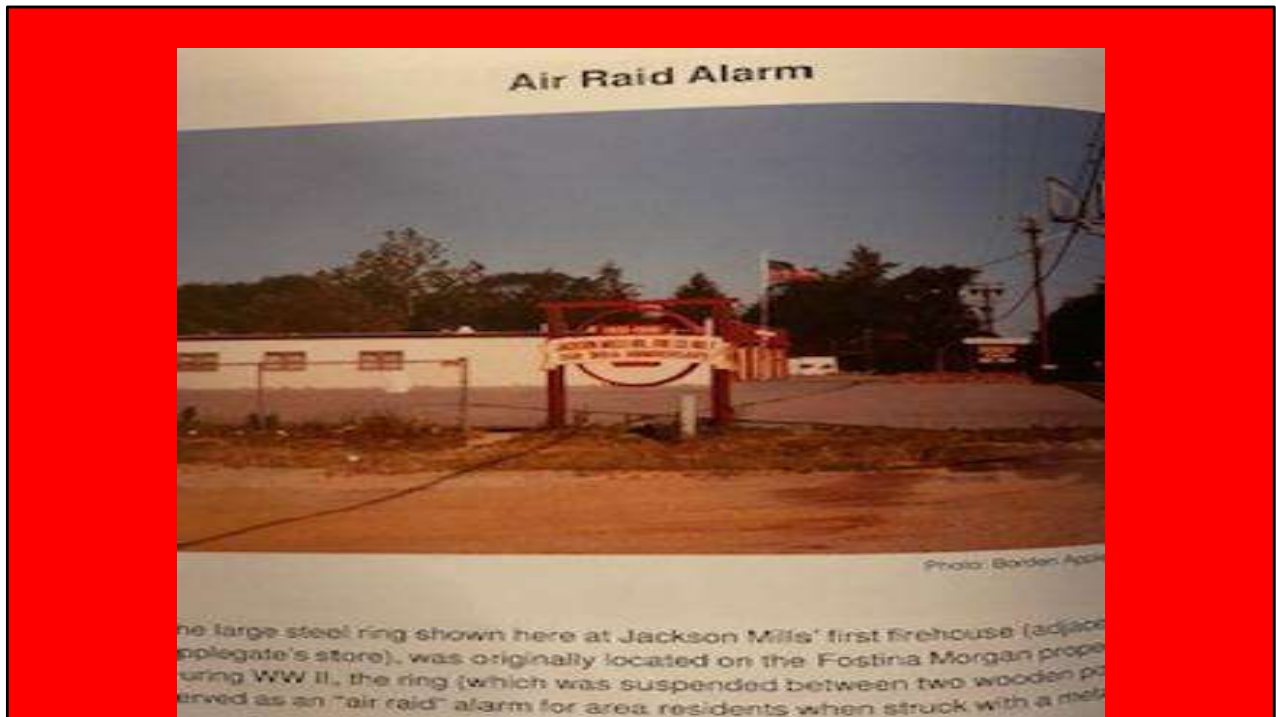
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The top photo captures the dedication of the new Jackson Mills Firehouse in October 1992 by Charter member and longtime president of the Jackson Mills Fire Company.

The second short is a picture of Adelphia's 1942 Ford Fire truck which came out of retirement to once again answer a call for help from the people of Jackson Mills. Over the years there always existed a special connection between Jackson Mills and Adelphia.

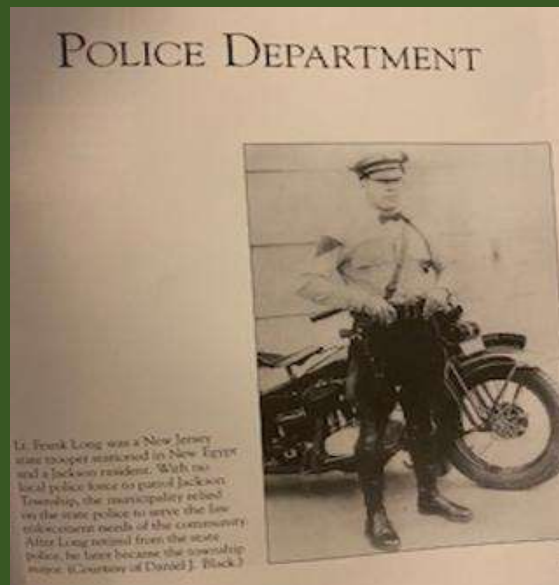


**Before 1951, Jackson Mills had no fire company of its own and had to rely on Cassville, Whitesville or Adolphia. In April, 1950, that all changed when two elderly people lost their lives when their home was destroyed by fire.**

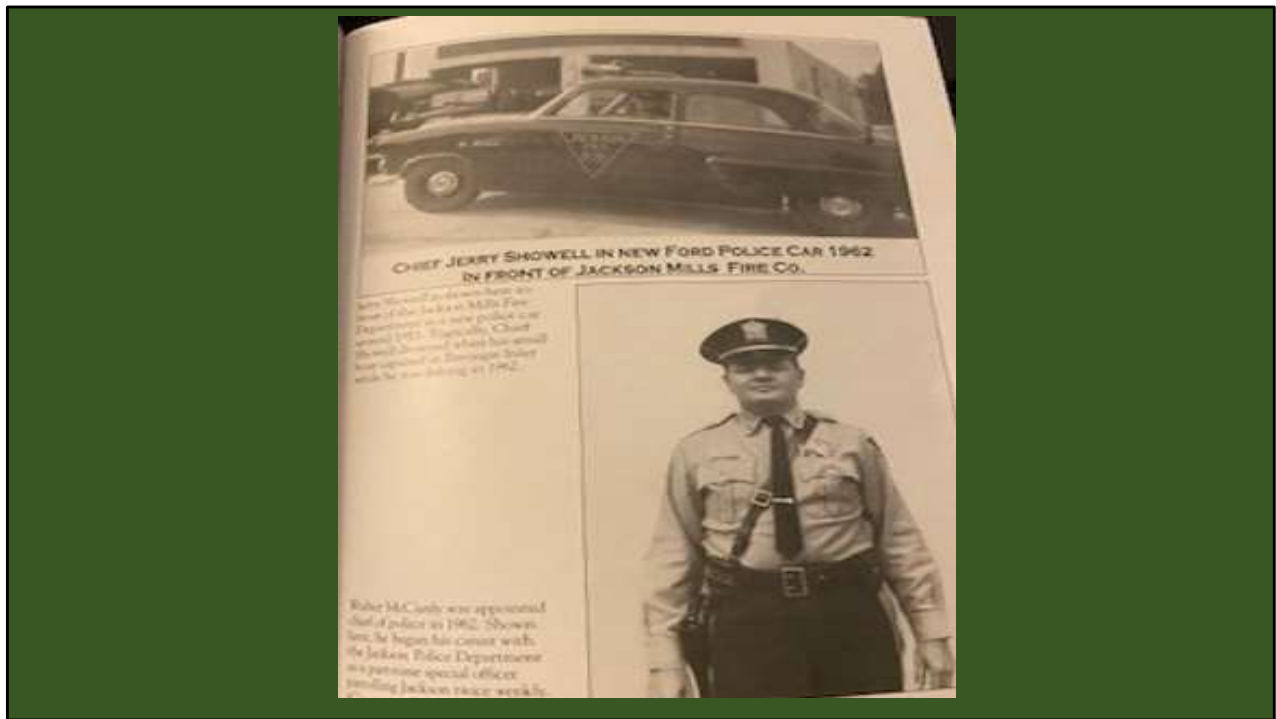


**The large steel ring shown here at Jackson Mills first firehouse, during WWII, served as an “air raid” alarm when struck by a metal mallet for area residents.**

## Police



**Lt. Frank Long was a NJ State Trooper stationed in New Egypt and was a Jackson resident. With no local police force, the municipality relied on the state police.**



P.O. Jerry Showell is shown here in front of his new police car in 1962.

## Recreation and Social Life



A photo of the Gibson Gang taken in 1940's on the Gibson farm.

Other social groups were the Red Men's Lodge and the ladies had the "Chatter Club". There were 4H clubs, Gymhana (horseback celebrations) Boy Scout Troops and Daughters of Liberty Hall. Every Memorial day there were parades, county fairs, May Day Celebrations.

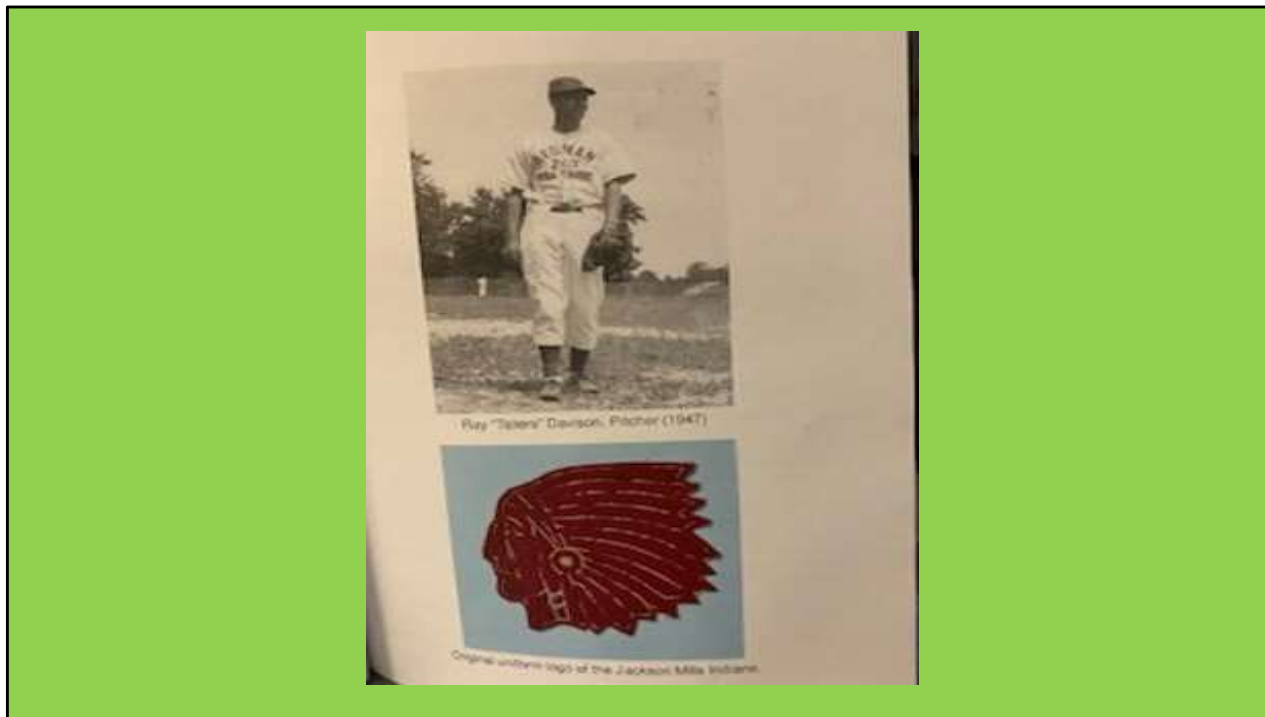


Four girlfriends posing for a picture in 1941 near Applegate lake near the Applegate General Store past Redman's ball field down a sandy pine road.



**The Jackson Mills Indians Lodge Yuba 263 baseball team is pictured here in 1947. The team was active from 1947 – 1950 and played their home games behind Applegate’s general Store in Jackson Mills.**

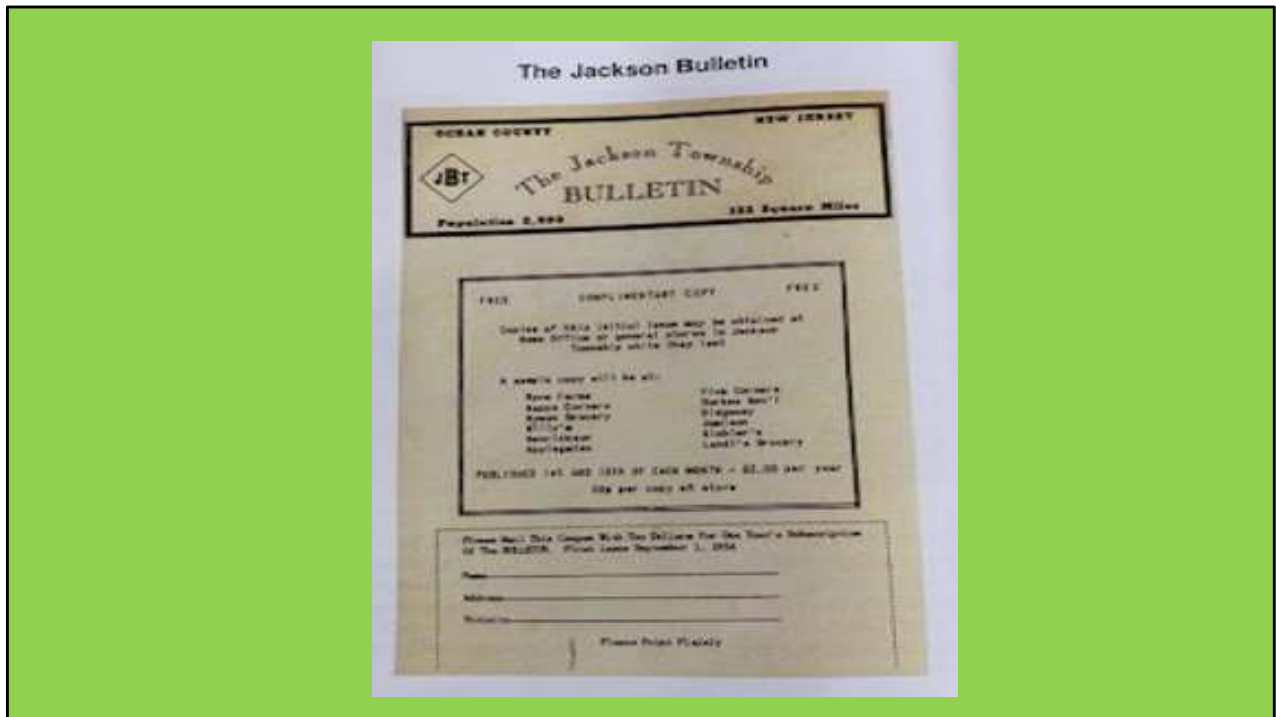
**In 1951, their field was taken over by the newly formed Jackson Mills Fire Company.**



**A 1947 picture of Ray “Taters” Davidson, pitcher in 1947.**

**The patch below is an original uniform logo of the Jackson Mills Indians**





With a population of 3500 residents, the Jackson Bulletin was Jackson’s first weekly newspaper first published in 1954 by the Ebert family and distributed throughout the township. Published 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of the month \$2.00 a year or 10 cents at the store.



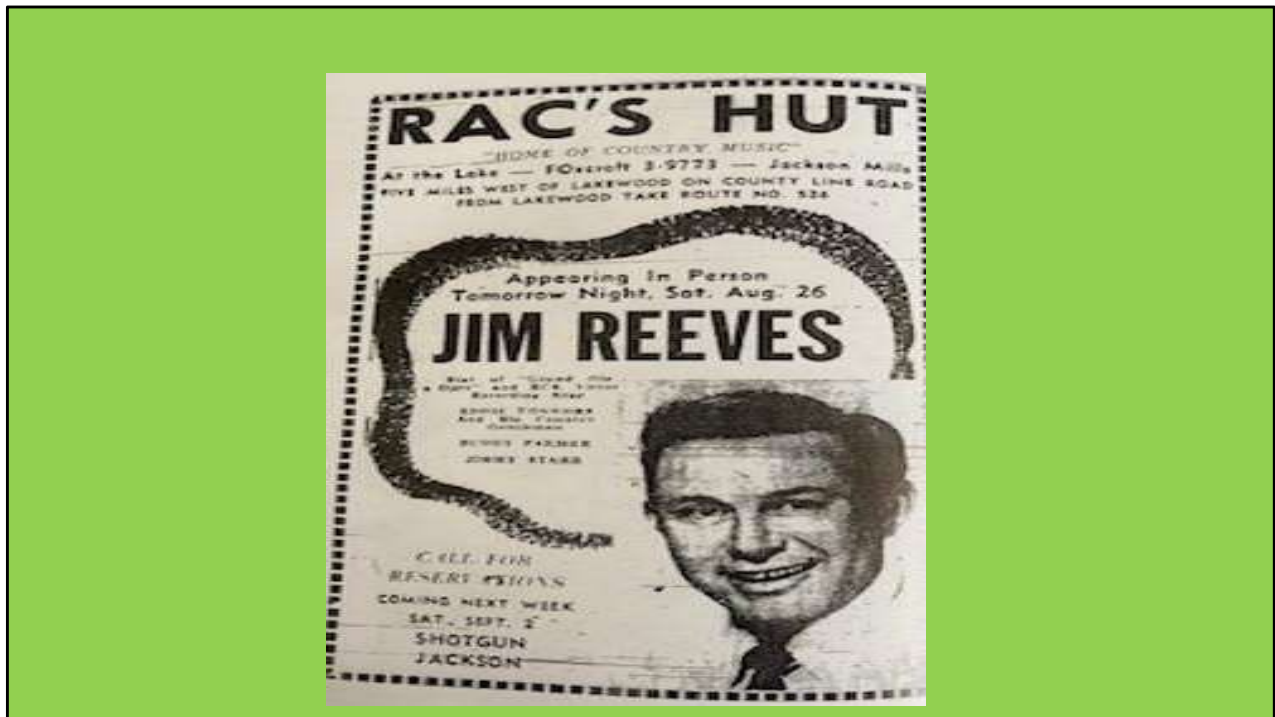
If you were a fan of country music, the place to be was Rac's Hut back in the 1950's and 60's.

Rac's was a tavern and dance hall the place served as the catering hall and the local "watering hole" that overlooked the Jackson Mills Lake where the biggest country stars came to play including Patsy Cline, Kitty Wells, Jim Reeves, Webb Pierce, Hank Snow, Hank Thompson, George Jones, Lefty Frizzell, Faron Young, Roy Clark, Wanda Jackson and Marvin Rainwater, to name a few.

The house band was "Shorty" Kay and the Jersey Ramblers. He was a Jackson resident and fronted for the most famous country stars at the time.



**Shorty Kaye played local gigs into his 80's**



Another headliner at Rac's.



**Legendary actress Elizabeth Taylor accompanied financial magnate Malcolm Forbes from his estate in Somerset County to Jackson on a motorcycle trip to the Jersey Shore in 1987 to raise money for AIDS research.**

**The group stopped at “Just Plain Jane’s” in Jackson for drinks and raised nearly \$1000 by passing a motorcycle helmet through the tavern for donations.**

**Just Plain Jane’s was a local motorcycle destination and was well known throughout NJ. It was built in 1980 as a tavern and soon became the local “Biker” watering hole with picnic grounds, shuffleboard courts, BBQ pits and well-used outdoor tables. The place was torn down in 2000. It was located on East Veterans Rd. Check out the “Just Plain Jane’s” website and videos to see how colorful the legendary establishment was like in its glory days.**

## MOVIE THEATERS

### Jackson Cinema

2284 W. County Line Road, Jackson, NJ 08527

**The Jackson Cinema, 250 seats, was ready to open as a United General Theatre, a franchised theatre like the Jerry Lewis Cinema. But like Lewis, United General went out of business and Corbison Cinema Group opened it on February 1, 1974 with Rex Allen narrating the documentary "Vanishing Wilderness". James J. Corbett was one of the owners of the automated theatre. The Jackson Cinema closed on April 8, 1982 with Warren Beatty in "Reds". A flea market was set up in its parking lot for a period while the theatre had an extended period of dormancy. In 1993, the theatre was targeted by the city as an unsafe property.**

Contributed by dallasmovietheaters

## Director's Chair Cinema

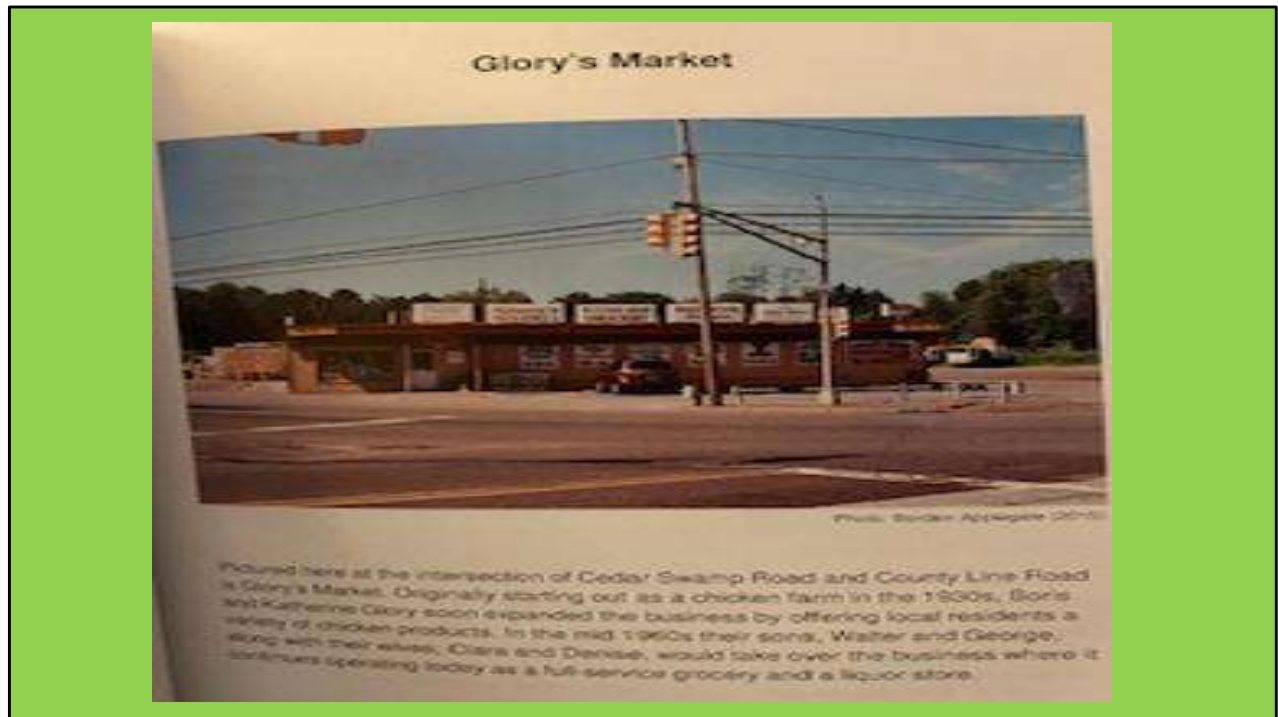
2010 W. County Line Road, Jackson, NJ 08527

1980s photo as Macallister  
plays there '83 and '86.



- Located in the Brook Plaza Shopping Mall. This 350 seat property was intended to be one of the Jerry Lewis Cinemas, but the chain went bankrupt before it opened. The Director's Chair Cinema was opened on April 3, 1974 with Richard Dreyfuss in "American Graffiti". It was closed on February 18, 1982 with "Cinderella".
- It reopened later in 1982 as a live theatre named Macallister Playhouse, which continued until at least 1986..

Contributed by Robert R.



**Glory's Market pictured here started out originally as a chicken farm in the 1930's**

## Don Connor



Donald F. Connor was one of the most respected athletic directors in the history of the Shore Conference during his tenure at Jackson Memorial High School. He also served the district as a teacher and a coach. He was the athletic director from 1961 until his untimely death in 1987. For two decades, he also served as Jackson Township's recreation director. In his honor, Jackson Township renamed the street where the high school and administration building are located to Don Connor Boulevard. In this c. 1970 image, Connor shows off the school district's driver's education automobile. (Courtesy of Jackson School District.)

Bernard "Bernie" Reider was a Jackson Memorial High School fixture for 40 years, serving as math teacher, guidance counselor, coach, athletic director, vice principal, and principal from 1963 until 2003. He has remained an inspiration to his colleagues and students. His passion for education and athletics was unsurpassed. As wrestling coach, Reider began a great tradition at Jackson Memorial High School—guiding the team to multiple district championships and conference titles. When he retired, the school's Memorial Building was dedicated Bernie Reider Hall in his honor. Since then, Reider has dedicated much of his time to uncovering township history and historic preservation. Shown here in the mid-1970s, Reider coaches a wrestling competition, as former wrestler, Lou Pizzarello, looks on.



**Don F. Connor was one of the most respected athletic directors in the history of the Shore Conference during his tenure at Jackson Memorial HS. He served as a district teacher and a coach. He was the athletic director from 1961 to 1987. He was for 20 years, Jackson's recreation director. In his honor, Jackson township renamed the street, where the high school and the Administration are located, to Don Connor Blvd.**

**In this 1970' image , Connor shows off the driver education car.**

