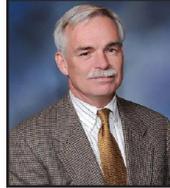


COLONIA THEN & NOW... By Dan D'Arcy

A couple articles from different years that I found to be interesting and informative.



July 2013 – The Old Minisink Path

The Minisink Trail was a north/south trail that the Monsey Indians in the Sussex County area used to traverse to the Navesink River at Atlantic Highlands to acquire shells and seafood to supplement their diet. David Miller writes about the trail in his book of Colonia. He states that the trail entered Colonia, crossing the modern Parkway around Lake Avenue, roughly following it through what is now the Colonia High School. Miller says that the last of the trail was erased with the construction of the high school.

While growing up near the Parkway, we always were on the horse path that ran along the parkway, from the high school to the old parkway rest area and beyond. I would think that the possibility of the trail being the remnant of the old trail is a possibility. So, I did some investigating. Following the path along the parkway to the high school, you go past a home located on Jason Court that is entirely out of place for the block. I knocked on the door and talked to the owner. She told me that the home used to be located on West Street on the other side of the Parkway but was moved to East Street when the Parkway was built. When Jason Court was built years later, her address changed again. The same house has had three addresses. But anyway, I asked her if there was ever a path near her home. She pointed to a section of her property that went directly through the high school property. That made my day. Earlier in the day I parked my car in the back lot of the school and proceeded to walk into the woods to an area that I was told I could find a path. It was there and it was beautiful. The path led through the woods across a stone bridge which led over a brook. The bridge I would guess was added later by the owners of the Freeman estate or the Tom's Estate. This is speculation, but it makes sense since it was not uncommon for Indian trails to be turned into roads by the colonists. The best example of this in Colonia is Chain O' Hills Road which was part of the east/west trail, later named the Dutch Trail in the early 1700's and later renamed Queen Anne's Road. When I lined up the path to the path that was along the Parkway and which went through the Jason Court property, it was a perfect match.

February 2014 – Hazelwood Cemetery Chapel

I was cleaning out my basement last week and I looked in the rafters to clean out a corner where a few things were stored. This was before I blew some cement debris into my eye, scratched the cornea and ended up in the emergency room at four in the morning, but that's another story. I bought my home from the Witkowski family. I am very thankful for many of the things that they did around the house, and I am still using many of the tools that he left. But he also left things in the rafters that I enjoy, such as some old township political campaign signs, a sign for Richard Nixon and plenty of other artifacts of the time. Before my unfortunate encounter with that piece of cement, I found a few articles from the Elizabeth Daily Journal and the Newark Sunday News. The chapel was dedicated on May 30, 1956, in honor of Miss Clara Vanderhoven whose \$1,300,000 estate at the time of her demise at the age of 96, funded the construction of the \$200,000 chapel, thus known as the Vanderhoven Chapel. The construction was planned for 1954, but two distant relatives contested the will. The courts ruled in favor of the estate and construction was completed. Made of granite, the chapel seats 108 people. The waiting room contains framed pictures of Miss Vanderhoven and her brother Ross. Rows of pews face a non-sectarian altar in front of a large bow window looking out upon the cemetery grounds. I have personally been to the chapel a few times and it is very peaceful yet the interior as well as the exterior beg to be examined. By this I mean it says to me.... Look at me...aren't I something? Yes, you are. I suspect Mr. Witkowski was invited to the dedication as there is also a copy of the invitation. Also in the article it says that Miss Vanderhoven gave \$100,000 in her lifetime to the cemetery. On top of one of the articles, there is a handwritten note that says Miss V never gave anything to the cemetery. The \$100,000 was used after her death for the maintenance of the cemetery. Since the articles are copies, I don't know if they are in the comments of Mr. Witkowski or someone who sent them to him. Also, excuse me, but Mrs. Witkowski cannot be ruled out as the recipient of the article and invitation. I have to use the rationale of the 1950's as well as today's. Anyway, if you ever get a chance to take a look, you will enjoy it.

*Thanks for reading,
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