



# Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission

November 2009 **Chronicle**



*Bridgeton Fire House, 1896*

## Bridgeton House Tour offers two for the price of one

**T**imed to put residents in the Dickensian holiday spirit, a first-time East Side/West Side tour of Bridgeton's historic homes, churches and public buildings is a special feature of the city's annual Holiday House Tour on **Saturday, Dec. 5.**

The event gives patrons the opportunity to see the interiors of the many vintage structures that comprise Bridgeton's National Register Historic District. It's a virtual double bill, since visitors buying a single ticket will be getting two tours for the price of one, according to event coordinator Sandi Huster.

Huster says there will be more than 20 stops on both sides of the river and a bonus free evening ride on a Clydesdale-drawn wagon around the West side.

### East Side tour

Among the **East Side** highlights are museum-quality firefighter memorabilia in the Craftsman-style Bridgeton Fire House (1896), and two sites that shed light on the life and times of General James Giles, Revolutionary War hero and lifelong devotee of early "Bridge-towne" (Bridgeton's original name): the newly-restored Olde Brearley Lodge (1797) and the Cumberland Bank building (1816) at the Bridgeton Library. Giles was the first master of Brearley Lodge F and AM (Free and Accepted Masons) and the first president of the Cumberland Bank.

A lieutenant in the New York artillery early in the Revolution, Giles remained in military service until 1782. He studied law in Trenton and practiced in New York before moving with his family to Bridgeton in 1788. He died in 1826 in his homestead on Broad Street.

Among the homes on the East side, visitors can ob-

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*The Loder House, 1870*

### Upcoming Events

**November 7**  
Bay-Atlantic Symphony  
"Night at the Opera," 8 p.m.  
Cumberland County College  
Guaracini Performing Arts  
Center, Vineland

**November 27**  
Millville Holiday Parade  
High Street, Millville, 7 p.m.

**November 28**  
Vineland Holiday Parade  
Landis Avenue, Vineland  
7 p.m.

**November 29**  
Bridgeton Holiday Parade  
Downtown Bridgeton, 2 p.m.

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# Bridgeton House tour recalls Victorian era

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serve an array of interiors, ranging from the elegance of the classic white-columned R.E. Shoemaker House (1870) on East Commerce Street to the romantic charm of the Tudor-style Martin Estate (1920), whose many gables look past an English-style garden onto tranquil East Lake.

## West Side highlights

At the gateway to the **West Side**, the Cumberland Nail House (c1814-1866) in the City Park will be open, festively decorated for telling its story. The Nail House was a management office for an industrial complex operating from 1815 to 1899. It went through several owners but was incorporated as the Cumberland Nail and Iron Works in 1856. The company expanded along the Cohansey waterfront over the years and, according to Flavia Alaya, Cultural & Heritage Commission member and co-chair of Bridgeton Main Street's design committee, helped spur a major boom in industry there. The waterfront works produced cut nails, which were basically metal spikes used in construction at the time. They were in high demand during the Victorian era's construction heyday.

The David Sheppard House (1791), newly-restored as Rutgers University's Institute for Marine and Coastal Sciences, offers its first official House Tour welcome this year.

Homes along West Commerce and Lake Streets range from colorful Italian-style villas and Second Empire showpieces to spindled and turreted Queen Annes and Art & Crafts models. Another stop will be at the colonial Potter's Tavern on West Broad Street, where Cumberland County Historical Society re-enactors will welcome guests.

The special East-West double-bill is the product of a partnership among the City of Bridgeton, homeowners, and the redevelopment non-profit, Bridgeton Main Street, which Director Carola Hartley calls "another first." This year, she says, they want visitors to "get Bridgeton—to take in the 'village' spirit of this wonderfully compact little city."

The timetable allows visits on the East Side any time from 1 to 5 p.m., and just across the historic Cohansey Bridge, visits through the West Side any time from 3 to 7. "But smack in the middle," she says, "people should stop, eat, relax, do a little Christmas shopping, feel the spirit of Bridgeton's percolating Historic Downtown," which she promises will be decorated for the holidays and open for business.

The evening concludes with the traditional "Festival of Lights" in the City Park from 4 to 8 p.m. For information and tickets, call Bridgeton Main Street at 856-453-8130. The \$15 ticket includes both the East and West Side tours, program and guide map. Parking and West Side carriage rides are free.

## Special events will honor area veterans

**V**eterans Day, Nov. 11, will be a special day for veterans in the Cumberland County region with two celebrations honoring their service.

The **Millville Army Air Field Museum** at the Millville Airport is presenting its eighth annual "Veterans Appreciation Day" four days early, on Saturday, Nov. 7, from 10 a.m. to 4

p.m. The **Mauricetown Historical Society** will hold its tribute on the actual holiday, Nov. 11, at the Mauricetown Fire Hall, 9544 Noble St., at 7 p.m.

A full schedule of activities is planned by the **Air Field Museum**, starting with a welcome at 10 a.m. from the "Donut Dollies" serving donuts and a cup of hot "java." Veterans from World War II and the Korean and Vietnam wars will be available throughout the day to recount war experiences.

Area high school history students dressed in World War II period costumes will join in the tribute, performing songs and dances of the era and taking oral histories. Displays on the museum grounds will include military vehicles dating back to World War

II, an A-4 Skyhawk, a scale model of a P-47 Thunderbolt fighter plane and model airplane exhibits. In addition, antique automobiles will be on display from the Cohanzick Antique Auto Club.

Other highlights include a formal tribute ceremony in front of the original base headquarters and a free canteen lunch for veterans and visitors. All veterans are invited to the event, which is free of charge and open to the public. Sponsor is Dallas Automotive.

The **Mauricetown** tribute will feature World War II music and comedy by keyboardist Christine Klink Sheil, who will also lead a sing-a-long of World War II popular songs. All veterans are invited and admitted free; others are admitted with a \$5 donation. Refreshments will be served.

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