



The Historic Village at Allaire

The Village Star

	Winter/Spring 2024	
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**THE VILLAGE IS COMING ALIVE IN BOTH NATURE AND
COMMUNITY. SPRING BLOSSOMS AT ALLAIRE.**

**“A Light exists in Spring
Not present on the Year
At any other period —
When March is scarcely here”
— A Light exists in Spring, Emily Dickinson**

The Historic Village At Allaire
4263 Atlantic Avenue
Farmingdale NJ 07727
www.allairevillage.org



The Village Star

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Editor Felicity Bennett,

Museum Collections Manager



Be Sure to Pick up a Flat James P. Allaire at any of our events and take him on all your adventures!



Tag us @thehistoricvillageatallaire on Facebook and Instagram and use the hashtag #flatjames to share all your awesome photos! You could be featured on our social media or in the next issue of the Village Star!



The Historic Village at Allaire

Letter from the Executive Director

This is the time that peace and quiet settles outside in the village grounds. But things are truly busy in the Allaire office as we plan for an exciting 2024 season. New events, expanded programs, group tours, research projects in our library, new rotating exhibits, some re-arranging of the museum collection in our historic buildings – these are just a few things we are working on to ensure we “balance our budget” and bring history alive for another season.

We are excited to launch “Everyone History.” Everyone History is a brand-new program created by the Allaire Village staff. This program offers tours and historic experiences to everyone regardless of any special needs or disabilities.

Do you have an Allaire Village membership? Have you renewed not only for you and your family, but how about as a gift for someone special? Allaire Village members get free entry into the village on “general admission” days as well as for any of our flea markets and craft shows. We have an exciting year ahead, with special member programs and offers, so be sure to get your museum membership today via our website or onsite via our membership brochure.

Due to a lack of operating funds, the village will only be open Friday to Sunday on a regular basis April to November (special events in December) this year (11am to 4 pm). Our calendar of events and other marketing literature is out and will certainly be available for our Opening Day event on Saturday, April 6th from 11am to 4pm.

To all our volunteers and staff – thank you for all your help and support in 2023. We certainly had a wet fall that affected our operations as an outdoor living history museum, but we pivoted quickly and moved to rain dates. Hopefully this year we will see more sun on weekends in the Spring and Fall.

The backbone of our museum organization is, and continues to be volunteers. Now more than ever, we are always in need of volunteers to be historical interpreters in our village buildings, and talented volunteers to do or learn blacksmithing, carpentry, carving, cooking, or other 19th century crafts. Every time the village opens, it’s a historical event, and we so look forward to everyone that gets to experience the living history program that is The Historic Village at Allaire. See everybody soon!

**-Hance M. Sitkus, CPA
Executive Director**



Letter from the Board of Trustees President

Good Day – My name is Eloise Eith, everyone calls me Ellie. At the Trustee Reorganization meeting this January, I was elected as Chairman. I am honored to serve in this position and look forward to working with my fellow Trustees as we move ahead into the future. Part of our Mission is to provide an immersive educational and recreational experience while making our history accessible to all members of the Community we serve. Keeping our history alive is a priority because Allaire has a unique and interesting history to share.

My association with Allaire began shortly after I moved to Point Pleasant and then Brick in 1967. I joined the Allaire Auxiliary and volunteered as an interpreter for the Manager's House and Allaire Mansion. As a result of my career in Health Care, I had to step back from my Allaire activities due to frequent travel. When I retired in 2011 I was able to return. I joined the Auxiliary and served as a School Tour Guide. I became Auxiliary President in 2022 and became a member of the Board of Trustees at that time.

Over the years I have volunteered with numerous organizations including the Girl Scouts as a troop co-leader, the Boy Scouts as a Webelos leader where I earned the Cub Scout Wood Badge, the Brick Township First Aid Squad as an active member, and the Squad's First Aid Instructor for over fifteen years and the Veteran's of Foreign Wars Auxiliary for over fifty years and served as the New Jersey State President from 2017-2019.

As Chairman I have the privilege to work with Staff and Volunteers who are some of the most dedicated people I know. They have put together a schedule of programs for the year that has something for everyone. If you haven't visited the Village recently I would urge you to attend one of the upcoming events and while you are here make sure to stop in the General Store and Bakery. I am sure you will be pleasantly surprised.

I hope you are as excited as I am about the upcoming season. I thank you in advance for your support because without it we would not be able to do what we do. I look forward to meeting you, our members, when you join us for one of our events.

Ellie Eith
President, Board of Trustees
President, Allaire Auxiliary



The Historic Village at Allaire

A note from the Editor

I wanted to take this space to thank everyone for reading the Village Star these past few issues and to introduce myself. Hi, I'm Felicity Bennett, Editor of Allaire Village's newsletter and Museum Collections Manager. If you have any articles you want to contribute to the Village Star or an item you want to donate/loan to the museum you can contact me fbennett@allairevillage.org

**This year we are introducing
"Everyone History" which
offers customized tours and
experiences for special needs
groups. For more information**

call:

(732) 919-3500 ext. 19

ALLAIRE WISH LIST

- Portable Projector
- Cardstock all colors
- Laminator
- Battery Operated Candles
- Amazon Giftcards for supplies
- Steamer
- Golf Cart Rain Cover

**Please call (732) 919-3500, Ext. 13
if you would like to donate to
our wish list.**



What's that at Allaire?

Don't worry these strange claws popping up from the ground aren't an alien life form, it's sprouting skunk cabbage! The plant not only smells like skunk it also generates its own heat and can even melt the snow around it when it sprouts in early spring. During the summer it looks like regular ol' green cabbage. (Despite looking like and being called a cabbage, skunk cabbage is not cabbage so please don't try to eat it).

**SCOUT PATCH
PROGRAM
AVAILABLE!
REACH OUT TO
(732) 919-3500
EXT 14**



The Historic Village at Allaire

Winter Highlights



Lighted Ladies Grace the Night at Allaire Holiday Strolls

For the second year, our Holiday Strolls were a popular way to spend the evening and experience the magic of Christmas in the Historic Village. The self-guided structure allowed groups with small kids to experience our candlelit buildings without needing to go on a tour.



Our first Offsite Event huge success!

Gerald Charles Dickens, great, great grandson of Charles Dickens helps Linda Cafone of the Allaire Village Auxillary present a banner to the Monmouth County Board of County Commissioners at a one-man performance of *A Christmas Carol* at The Vogel in Red Bank. Also shown are the Allaire Village Staff Directors and Board of Trustees. Gerald will performing again for 2024 on Decemeber 9th!



Lantern Tours bring lights, music, and winter magic to Allaire Village.



Marzipan Hedgehogs were a popular treat during the holidays in the 1800's. They could be eaten alone, or put into a bowl of custard so they could go swimming!

Select Events at Allaire

Spring Events

This is just a small sampling of our upcoming events. See allairevillage.org for more information!

***Saturday, March 23rd:**

EASTER CELEBRATION

Day of Tickets \$10 (ages 3 and up)

***Saturday, March 30th:**

Sunday, March 31st:

EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE

Free

Saturday, April 6th:

OPENING DAY

Day of Tickets \$5 (ages 4 and up)

***Saturday, April 20th:**

ANNUAL ALLAIRE 5K BEER RUN

Registration Online Only

***Sunday, April 21st:**

Saturday, April 27th:

SPRING CRAFT SHOW

Day of Tickets \$5 (ages 6 and up)

Friday, May 3rd:

HOME SCHOOL DAY

Day of Tickets \$10 per person (ages 4 and up)

Saturday, May 25th:

ANTIQUE AND VINTAGE SHOW

Day of Tickets \$5 (ages 11 and up)

Saturday, June 1st:

ALLAIRE ARTS FESTIVAL

In Collaboration with The Art Society of Monmouth County

Day of Tickets \$6 (ages 11 and up)

***Saturday, June 22nd:**

DUCKY DERBY

Day of Tickets \$ 8 (ages 4 and up)

***Sunday, June 23rd:**

*Two Days
This Year!*

*Two Days of
Fun!*

NEW FOR 2024

***TWO DAY EVENTS**

Due to popularity some of our events are now two days instead of one! Look out for a full weekend of fun during the Beer Run, Ducky Derby, and the June Flea Market! Easter also now has an added date for 2024! For more information please look at our website and Eventbrite.com pages.

Select Events at Allaire

Workshops and More!

"Beyond the Counter"

An adult Workshop and Lecture series held monthly in the village General Store. Each month learn a new craft or skill. See our website for details on each month's activity.

Register Online \$ 20, designed for ages 16 and up.

History Kid's Club

A kid's activity and lesson for those that love hands-on history! New activities every month. See our website for details on each month's activity.

Register Online \$ 12, designed for ages 5-13

FLEA MARKETS!

Flea Markets are the second Saturday of every month from March to November!

Vendor spots are \$45 Pre-Registration or \$55 the week of. Admission Tickets are at the door \$5 (ages 11 and up). All Proceeds benefit the Historic Village at Allaire!

Saturday, March 9th

Saturday, April 13th

Saturday, May 11th

Saturday, June 8th and Sunday, June 9th

Saturday, July 13th

Saturday, August 10th

Saturday, September 14th

Saturday, October 5th and Sunday, October 6th*

Saturday, November 2nd*

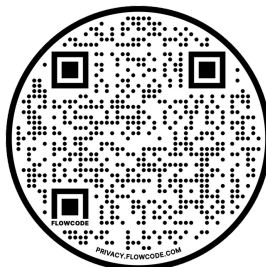
*October and November's Flea Markets are on the first Saturdays

NEW! Two day event!

NEW! Two day event!

OPENING DAY IS SATURDAY, APRIL 6TH!

Village open Friday to Sunday 11am to 4pm, April through November. \$5 a person (4 years and up) on non-event days



For tickets and more information, check out our Allaire Village Eventbrite Page!

Scan our QR code to see more!

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Digging up old Treasure: How inventories and cleaning led to fun discoveries

By Felicity Bennett, Museum Collections Manager

During the off-season, the Allaire Village staff is still hard at work prepping for events, planning, and getting the village ready for spring. The curatorial department has its own winter goals. The museum collections are inventoried and accessed for any damage and repair needs as part of a regular schedule to ensure all our historic artifacts are preserved. Smaller inventories are done throughout the year by interns and staff to upkeep buildings and during the setup and take down of exhibits. The winter inventory includes not only objects on display but also those in storage areas. In most museums, only about 20% of the collection will be on display at one time, the other 80% stay in (hopefully) climate-controlled storage. This is mostly due to space limitations and to help preserve artifacts.

Museums, such as Allaire Village, will collect items that are relevant to their mission. Allaire Village has a mission "of preserving the history of this site, and educating the public about life in the Village in 1836". However, sometimes we can have too many of one thing and can't display them all at once. For example, we have a large collection of quilts, but it does not make sense to have more than one or two on a bed inside a home, so the rest are stored.



Two Hitchcock style stenciled chairs circa 1830's, placed in the visitor center as we matched sets together. It was easier to sort with all of the dining chairs in one location.

Storing artifacts also helps preserve them. Light, fluctuating temperatures, and people touching objects will damage them over time. Rotating out objects helps give those on display a break from deteriorating conditions and gives a new object a chance to shine in the spotlight. Switching out objects and exhibits also gives people another reason to keep returning and a new way to continue engaging with volunteers and interpreters as they learn more about history through collection items.



The Historic Village at Allaire



A glimpse into the “chair closet”, a room upstairs in the Manager’s House that was used to store extra chairs.



Knowing what we have and where it’s located can help us make decisions on what to accept into the collection as well. This winter we collected and inventoried all the chairs in the village. There were over 100 chairs! Some are reproductions, some matched chairs that were separated between buildings, and some were moved to create a more accurate representation of an 1830’s home. Due to the number of dining chairs, we know to not accept anymore unless they have direct ties to Allaire or are excellent examples of one from the time. We also found we lack accurate cutlery and decorative objects in some of the homes, so we can put an effort into collecting these items.

While cleaning the spaces, we are working on making the conditions cleaner and safer for items and people alike. Some of the locations were forgotten and neglected in the past, amongst the cobwebs, old event props, and folding chairs lay some forgotten relics. As we look through shelves and rooms, carefully counting and examining objects, we find items that have not been on display for over a decade. Some of the items were thought to have been lost. Now they are being showcased again around the village, for example, a knife sharpening machine will be on display in the general store. But that is not the only item! Look for all the new additions to the homes and buildings around the village!



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Mystery at Allaire: Where is the Underground Aqueduct?

By Tom Shields,
Member Board of Trustees

Our tour is only a few minutes old when Former Allaire Village Board Member Paul Taylor sees two women standing around the old sawmill with quizzical looks on their faces. "Do you ladies have any questions?" He asks politely with a smile, and by chance they have many. By a stroke of their own sheer luck, they have found the right man for the job, and they ask away. When they depart sometime later, they thank Mr. Taylor profusely for his time, and he gives them a wave quietly divulging what brings us out here on this warm, late summer's day. It is a more interesting topic than they have anticipated.

The topic in question can bring a new understanding of the park, and ring in a new chapter of its history. What Mr. Taylor has uncovered is a striking new lead. At one time there were underground aqueducts underneath the Howell Iron Works, and a first-hand account of the grounds that was commissioned in 1853 and reprinted recently by Allaire Village, Inc. entitled: *The Howell Iron Works and the Romance of Allaire* by Halsted Wainwright is the key to uncovering this local mystery.

The written account gives one a vivid description of what this cistern and underground aqueducts might have looked like. Wainwright states:

"Crossing the brook to the northward on the left stood the sawmill now gone. On the right is the brick dwelling occupied in later years by an Irish woman named Wood. Near this dwelling may still be seen a portion of the stone which formed a large cistern into which was carried the water through an underground raceway from the end of the canal heretofore mentioned about 100 feet northward of the row of brick dwellings..."

Yes, you read that right: "An underground raceway."

According to Mr. Taylor's research, we know from the cistern, a duct could easily flow underneath to the sawmill, because the landscape grades down, but what Mr. Taylor is trying to ascertain is how did other subterranean aqueducts dip down to the impression of the mill pond and then go against gravity and climb an incline of about 20 feet back up to the blast furnace?

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"This feat would defy physics," Mr. Taylor points out, "and the water had to create enough energy to turn a 34-foot wheel at the blast furnace, and constantly feed 4 other mills."

As we all know, water does not flow uphill.

Still, there are more theories to sort out. One being that the cistern fed other "raceways" and maybe the mill pond was used to transport these "raceways" up. But in what capacity? We do not know, but what we do know is based on Mr. Taylor's research, which continues to evolve with every new clue. As we part there is one more:

"The mystery is: how did the water from the Mingamahome River get to the furnace? Since the only evidence we have is a map and the written account, we are going to need archaeology here. We need a pro-bono engineer, because it is hard to see what we're dealing with with 180 years of the park filling up."

"Wait, there's a map?" I ask Mr. Taylor surprisingly.

"Yes." He exclaims.

To be continued ...

Tom Shields is a career educator and lifelong resident of Wall Township, NJ. During his 15-year career in education, Mr. Shields has secured grants to send his students to the Broadway play Hamilton, and has directed workshops for high schoolers based on history and heritage months. In 2021, with the help of the Belmar City Council, the town historian, and mayor's office, he coordinated a wreath-laying ceremony in honor of the famed Negro Leaguers who graced Belmar's Memorial Field in the 1930s. In the summer, he works as a Monmouth County Park Ranger. In his spare time, Mr. Shields likes to fish, bird-watch, play the piano, golf, and tour various historical sites across the country. He co-wrote a children's book in 2021.

Mr. Shields is excited to serve on Allaire Village Inc.'s board of trustees. "I consider myself almost like a utility infielder. I am here to serve the village and the board in whatever capacity is needed." Allaire State Park has been a lifelong fascination for Mr. Shields: "I have always been rather enchanted with Allaire. I am happy to be in a position where I can see the park is further piquing the public's interest, and when appropriate accommodate said interest."



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Flat James' Adventures

Flat James has been traveling, baking, eating and exploring around the village and the world! If you and James took any fun photos together be sure to tag us on social media @thehistoricvillageatallaire to be featured online and in the next village star!



Flat James baking brownies.



Visiting Venice Army Air Base in Venice, Florida!



Shopping for fishing supplies.



Flat James enjoying a day in the village with Rudy the employee of the month.



A trip to Northern New Jersey ends at the Chit Chat Diner!

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Flat James at Big Ben!



Flat James in Paris!



Flat James in Zurich, Switzerland! He's quite the world traveler!



Flat James meets Gerald Charles Dickens, the great, great grandson of Charles Dickens!



Top: Flat James enjoying a day with Russ, Board of Trustees member, and Ice Cream at the Flea market.



Right: Flat James in London, England.



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Villager Spotlight: Steven Ritter

Steve Ritter was born and raised in the borough of Farmingdale, NJ. He and his wife both graduated from Howell High School and married a month later in 1982. After his initial enlistment in the Marine Corps, Steve and his wife moved back to the east coast and purchased his grandparent's home in Farmingdale. They became the fifth generation of Ritters to call the old farmhouse home. They raised two children of their own in the house. Interestingly enough, the house was built in 1892 and they have documentation that references James Allaire as having surveyed the property before the house was built here. Steve's grandfather said that this was originally an apple orchard in the early to mid-1800s.

After more than 30 years of military service, Steve retired last March. He was in Special Operations Command (SOCOM) with a primary mission being international counter-terrorism. Since he grew up in the area, Allaire has been a place where he and his family have enjoyed for many years. Steve started working in the Village last April.

"Upon learning the history of Allaire Village, I had no idea of the significance and legacy of the park. I have barely scratched the surface of knowledge of Mr. Allaire and the Village history, but I hope to become a better historical interpreter with learning more."

Steve Ritter

Steve's favorite part of being a historical interpreter is making that connection with the Village guests who appreciate the living history aspect of the park. It's a much more visceral interaction when the guest can actually experience a skill or task that we all perform. Because of that, the Carpenter's Shop is by far his favorite. Steve's father, grandfather, and great-grandfather all had carpentry skills. He inherited many of the same tools that he talks about as an interpreter in the Carpenter's Shop. While Steve believes he is still not as skilled as my forefathers, he has a woodshop that he enjoys. The other thing Steve enjoys is when his three grandchildren visit when he is working in the Village. They scour the village and bring him sticks to whittle. Steve actually made some walking sticks that have been purchased from the General Store from the ones his grandchildren have brought him. And of course, their reward is a big cookie from the bakery.





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A Thank You To Our Annual Sponsors & Grantors



Allaire Village Inc. received a Monmouth County American Rescue Plan (ARPA) COVID-19 Community Recovery Grant from the Monmouth County Commissioners.

Allaire Village Inc. received an operating support grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, a division of the Department of State.

**Allaire Village Inc. received a grant from :
Ocean First Foundation
Manasquan Bank Foundation
New Jersey Council for the Humanities
New Jersey Arts and Culture Recovery Fund
Brisbane Associates
Estate of Evelyn Frostick Kessler Morton
Sandpiper Questers
Americana Corner**

The Historic Village at Allaire

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(732) 919-3500

allairevillage.org

Check out our Facebook and Instagram!
[@TheHistoricVillageAtAllaire](#)

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