



The Historic Village at Allaire

The Village Star

	Summer 2025	
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IRISES BLOOM AROUND THE VILLAGE

**“Here in a sylvan glade, where once the sound of the hammers of
hundreds of iron makers was heard, ... life is stirring
afresh...The clamor of industry is replaced by joyful shouts of
carefree youngsters.”**

— Asbury Park Press, November 11, 1928

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



The Historic Village at Allaire

Letter from the Executive Director

“The furnace, which is made of brick and perhaps the largest in the United States, is also a matter of much curiosity. Connected with the blast furnace is a cupola furnace, to which is attached a steam engine as an additional power to create the blast. The superior workmanship of the ware from the furnace, the regularity, and the civility of the workmen, is a source of much pleasure to the visitors – and let it be known that the furnace operations are conducted on the strictest principles of temperance.” Monmouth Inquirer, Freehold, NJ October 6, 1836.

The Historic Village at Allaire is a reminder of our nation’s industrial and manufacturing ingenuity. In the year 1835 I can only imagine the immense and laborious building projects that James P. Allaire was undertaking at his Howell Iron Works Company – now known as the Historic Village at Allaire. The Bakery, Charcoal Depot, three-story Dormitory, and many other buildings were nearing completion to create a self-sufficient village. Howell Works was surrounded only by small settlements, farms, and a labyrinth of streams and lakes, which James P. Allaire engineered to harness the energy from flowing water to power his mills. A crown jewel of Howell Works by 1836 – the four-story Store boasted to be the largest of its kind in the State of NJ. Of the near 30 buildings that comprised Howell Works, only 12 remain today.

We are all stewards of this great history at Allaire and the industrial site that James P. Allaire built here. Nearly all the buildings are original to the site. The Manager’s House is 275 years old and the General Store turns 190 this year. The buildings contain much of their original fabric and reside on their original foundations – even the Blacksmith Shop that was rebuilt in the early 1960s. Our visitors can easily learn how the Manasquan River is interconnected with the history of Allaire. Or how the Howell Works, as a factory town, embraced mechanization and was a melting pot of nationalities, cultures, and progressive thought. Moreover, Howell Works came to life through James P. Allaire’s great social planning, which you learn about in your visit.

As stewards of history, let’s ensure that The Historic Village at Allaire continues to not only exist physically with its remaining centuries-old buildings, but thrives to embrace the past so we can better ourselves for the future – in decision-making, for better understanding, and to appreciate the evolution of where we’ve been and what possibilities could be ahead. Being a steward means not only visiting and being witness to the Allaire history, but being apart of it.

This summer we have new events on the calendar, particularly “Opening the Allaire Vault” – a special presentation and “show and tell” of Allaire treasures! Our hallmark events such as James P. Allaire’s Birthday Celebration (including a dedication of our Revolutionary Tea Garden sponsored by the NJ Questers), American Flag Display, Beyond the Counter, History Kids, and others are being enhanced. Check out our calendar of events with tickets available on our website. Pre-purchase of tickets is encouraged, as some events have limited capacity and have already sold out! Just like James P. Allaire, the staff at Allaire continually look to improve and perfect our museum operations, events, collection management and learning opportunities.

The Village Star

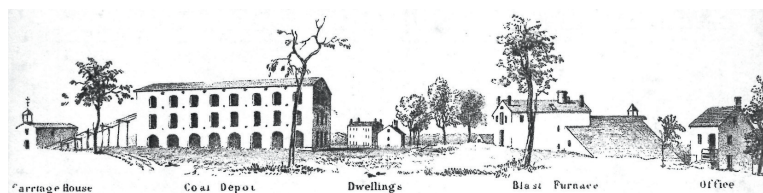
To be part of history, this also can mean becoming a volunteer in one of our historic homes, craft shops, exhibit halls, or outdoor interpretive areas. We've identified 18 different interpretive areas throughout the village. Areas such as the Mill Pond and its importance as an "energy source" for Howell Works, or the Blast Furnace, the heart of the village. It's not just our buildings that we are looking to staff regularly with interpreters, it's also outdoor "areas" that hold history as well. We long to have interpreters at various areas of the village. Please consider coming out to volunteer Friday to Sunday, 11 am to 4 pm.

As we have learned since opening in 1957, it takes a village to run a village. Volunteers are the backbone to ensure our success. We understand that your time is precious and there is so much to do in today's world. But please consider coming out to be part of the 19th century. Or show your support by becoming a member or donor of the museum. We need your support to staff our buildings, keep traditional museum functions operating (e.g. our library, archives, 20K+ museum objects, tour guides for our 7,000 students that visit a year). We rely on special event admission and about 14 other revenue streams to raise, on a grassroots effort, approximately \$1.5 million a year to operate this 40-acre historic district. Please be sure to read about our recent grant awards. We are extremely grateful as they are critical to meeting our historical programming and preservation needs.

Yet the opportunity to do **MORE** educational programming, or repair our centuries' old historic buildings, or get more objects in our collection restored (and out for exhibition), requires that we have more stewards of history, members, and donors sharing in the passion of Allaire Village. As James P. Allaire must have thought in 1835 when he saw the four-story store being completed – ***opportunities for growth are endless, yet dependent on funding.***

Be on the lookout for special 90-minute weekend tours at 1 pm (just \$3 add-on to our regular \$5 general admission charge). Phase one to "refresh" the Row House and Village Museum (complete with new introduction site videos in the theater) – will be complete by Labor Day. An Allaire Member Reception is being planned. Exhibits here haven't been refreshed since 1985! The Enameling Building continues with rotating exhibits throughout the season and will soon benefit from much needed climate control, especially the beautiful brick floored basement.

Like the Monmouth Inquirer stated about this site in 1836, we hope Allaire challenges your **curiosity, is a source of much pleasure to the visitor**, and produces a **superior product** of historical programming and community events for everyone!



**-Hance Morton Sitkus, CPA,
Executive Director**



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A note from the Editor

Hello and thank you for reading the newest issue of The Village Star. Summer is kicked off with a bunch of fun events including the Antique and Vintage Show and the upcoming Allaire Arts Festival, which both are in their third year. We have some new historical events coming up that I am very excited for. "Opening the Allaire Vault" on June 21st allows visitors to see never before seen items that we have in the museum collections. The Event is presented by our Executive Director, Hance Sitkus, and guests can ask questions and get close to some of the artifacts. This event is hosted in the Allaire Chapel and is included in the general admission price for the day.

We are also planning an artist showcase with the Art Society of Monmouth County for the fall. More information will be announced soon. The exhibit thanks those who have contributed their art to Allaire Village in the past.

I hope to see everyone in the village this summer, especially at the Antique American Flag Display which is my personal favorite event coming 4th of July Weekend.

Felicity Bennett
Museum Collections Manager
Village Star Editor



The Historic Village at Allaire



Allaire Apparel is back in stock at the Allaire Village General Store. Rock a baseball hat, sweatshirt, or t-shirt. You and a furry friend could even match. All Sales of our Allaire Bear go to supporting the “Everyone History” Program for special needs children and adults.



Wishlist

Cardstock (all colors)

Copy Paper

Battery Operated Candles

Amazon Giftcards for supplies

Dehumidifiers

Exterior Paint

Historic Clothing including cloaks and capes.

Large Wooden Embroidery Hoops

Monetary Donations are always Appreciated.

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



The Chapel is newly renovated and ready for your special event!

Call Cynthia, our Chapel Coordinator at (732) 919-3500 ext. 16 today for more information.

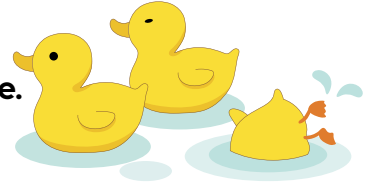
Select Events at Allaire

Summer Events

General Admission into the Village Saturdays and Sundays.

General Admission is Friday to Sunday on Non-Event days. 11 am to 4pm. Village Buildings, Historic Homes, and Retail Shops are open. 19th Century trade demos and tours are available. Admission is \$5 per person ages 4 and up. Admission is free on Fridays. If you are interested in free admission check out our membership program. More info available at allairevillage.org.

Add a tour to your general admission for \$3. Friday to Sunday. 90 Minutes starting at 1pm at the Village Museum or the General Store.



NEW!

Saturday, June 21st:

Opening the Allaire Vault

Visit with and see relics of the Allaire Collection up close in the Chapel. 1pm & 3pm

NEW DATE!

Saturday, June 21st:

Allaire Arts Festival in Collaboration with The Art Society of Monmouth County

Tickets \$6 ages 11 and up

Saturday, June 28th

Ducky Derby! - TWO DAYS

Rubber Duck races down the millpond. Races every half hour, animals, scavenger hunt & more!

Sunday, June 29th:

Tickets \$10 ages 4 and up

Thursday, July 3rd

Antique Flag Display

Located in the chapel. Free of charge. Donations Appreciated. Please note Allaire Village is closed Friday, July 4th.

Saturday, July 5th

Sunday, July 6th:

Saturday, July 12th:

Flea Market

Tickets \$5 ages 11 and up

Saturday, July 19th:

James P. Allaire's Birthday

Tickets \$5 ages 4 and up

Saturday, August 16th:

Flea Market

Tickets \$5 ages 11 and up

Sunday, August 24th:

30th Rolling Iron Antique Auto Show!

Show Cars \$25, Admission \$5 a car

Saturday, August 30th:

Antique & Vintage Show

Tickets \$5 ages 11 and up

Wednesday, September 10th:

Home School Day

Tickets \$10 ages 5 and up

To see our full calendar of events, purchase vendor spaces or tickets, or to find out more information please visit us online at allairevillage.org.

Select Events at Allaire

Workshops and More!

Beyond the Counter

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

Register Online \$ 25, designed for ages 16 and up.

Beyond the Counter Upcoming Dates

All Beyond the Counters are hosted on Sundays from 2pm to 4pm.

July 13th - Fruit Shrubs (drink) Tasting

August 17th - Fabric Coil Baskets

September 7th - Tussie Mussie Paper Flowers

November 9th - Christmas Putz Houses

History Kids 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

History Kids Club Upcoming Dates

All History Kids Clubss are hosted on Sundays from 1pm to 3pm.

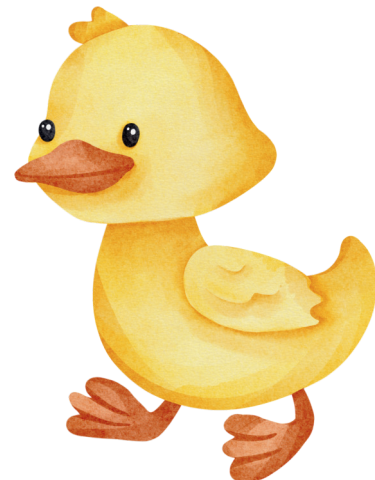
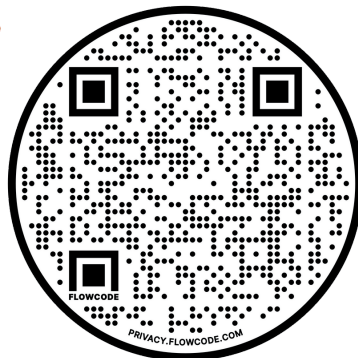
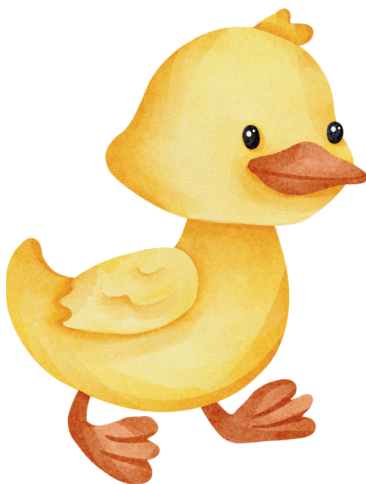
June 22nd - Nature Walk

July 13th - Paint Your own Yo-yo or Spinning Top

August 17th - Bog Iron Hunt

September 7th - Leather Making

November 9th - Sachets and Pomanders



*For tickets and more information, check out our Allaire Village Eventbrite Page!
Scan our QR code to see more!*



The Village Star

Lions, Tigers...and Mermaids? The Amusements of the 19th Century.

by Alex Capobianco, Library &
Archive Coordinator

The early 19th century was marked by agricultural and cooperative labor gatherings like husking frolics, sewing circles, barn raisings, and quilting circles, especially in rural areas. The village would get together and do one family's work, removing rocks from their field for example, within a day. Some of the first agricultural fairs were a way to celebrate a good harvest, show off livestock, or sell the latest agricultural technology (Albemarle County Fair, *The History of the Fair*).



John Archibald Woodside, *Pennsylvania Country Fair, 1824*

However, these communal get-togethers slowly faded out with the growing industrialization and commercialization our country would go through during the 19th century (269, Larkin). As the century moved forward there was a want for street entertainment that followed alongside the curiosity of science, technology, the supernatural, and the novelty. Traveling performances and exhibits grew in popularity as fairs with tents and animal menageries popped up on the streets.

The 19th century fair would have a mummy of a mermaid (a taxidermy of a monkey and a fish put together), next to a circus of lion tamers, a snake oil salesman with a miracle cure all, a freak show, and a never before seen state of the art technology, all in one place. These shows were often exploitative and fraudulent, filled with con artists and crooked businessmen. With the Freak Show, but called raree shows, pit shows, or kid shows earlier in the century, this exploitation is in full view (Chemers, "Freak Show").

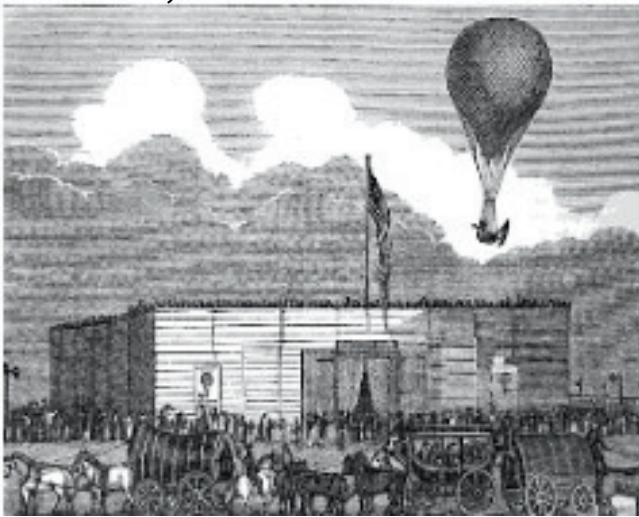
Oftentimes science and the supernatural were intertwined, creating a powerful, and oftentimes cunning, mix of oddity and new scientific advancement. Charltons used this new curiosity in the ever expanding scientific world at the time, "through their performances, they entranced their audience with the latest scientific terminology, charming them with strange mechanical wares and boasting of the possession of occult powers" (2, Sales).

Looking through the newspaper, you'll see advertisements for a Kaleidoscope exhibition, an exhibition of the Phantasmagoria Apparatus, an automaton show, or an exhibition of the Panorama box. All showing off these amazing scientific feats, but sometimes with ghosts as a selling point.



1831 print depicting a 1797 Phantasmagoria show by Entienne Gaspard Robertson, *Mémoires récréatifs, scientifiques et anecdotiques du physicien-aéronaute E.G. Robertson*

Alongside the curiosity of all things novel, the hot air balloon became a very popular novelty of the time, producing large gatherings to watch the balloon ascend into the sky (190, McCutcheon).



Flight of Balloonist Charles F. Durant, Sept. 13, 1834.
Massachusetts Historical Society Collection

Waxworks were also well loved, the most famous waxwork displays coming from Madame Tussaud in London. These works were popular in travelling shows and pop up exhibits, in the United States as well. The waxworks alongside the freak show became some of the most popular travelling forms of entertainment during the century ("Sideshowes and Freak Shows").

Moreover, on the fairgrounds you might see an exhibition of unicorns and animals never before seen, like the carcass of a whale that was washed up, a bison, orangutan, elephants, lions, and so much more. These traveling animal shows, also called Menageries, were quite popular, leading the way to the start of the zoo.

The circus grew around the 1830's, with the acrobat troupes, menageries, horse shows, clowns, music, stilt walkers, magic shows, jugglers, and many other performers all bringing in large crowds (192, McCutcheon).

It's very important to note that these shows of the exotic and never before seen with cabinets of curiosity are closely tied to the imperialistic and exploitative nature of industry in the Victorian Age. Not only are there new inventions being made quickly and people want to experience the changing world that the industrial age is creating, but with the deep imperialism of the time, people want to see "the other side" of the world, a part that was once not known.



The Hyde park Fair, London, 1838, The British Museum Collection



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Works Cited

1. Larkin, Jack, "The Reshaping of Everyday Life, 1790-1840" New York; Harper & Row, 1988
2. Albermarle County Fair, History of the Fair.
3. Sales, Martha, "The Supernatural in Variety Performance, Early Medicine and Quackery" National Fairground and Circus Archive, 2020.
4. National Fairground and Circus Archive, "Sideshows and Freak Shows- Waxworks and Tableaux Vivants"
5. McCutcheon, Marc, "Everyday Life in the 1800s: A Guide For Writers, Students and Historians" Ohio: Writer's Digest Books, 2001.
6. Chemers, Michael M.. "freak show". Encyclopedia Britannica, 12 Jan. 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/art/freak-show>. Accessed 16 May 2025.



A magician performs at the Easter Celebration in Allaire Village.

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Allaire Village?
Looking for a way to
earn some extra money
this summer?**

**Become a Tour Guide!
Looking for tour guides
and Games on the Green
coordinators for the
summer and fall school
and camp seasons.
Interested in helping
out?**

**Contact Ren Kelly at
732 919 3500 ext. 14 or
lkelly@allairevillage.org**

The Village Star

Hal Allaire, the recluse that owned the village?

**By Felicity Bennett,
Museum Collections Manager**



A portrait photograph of Hal Allaire, around the age of 30 years old.

James P. Allaire was the founder of the Howell Iron Works factory town, after his death the area was named Allaire after him. At some point it was later incorporated into Wall Township. Hal Allaire was his son after his second marriage. James P. Allaire was married to Frances Allaire, together they had 5 children that made it to adulthood. Frances died in 1836 after a long illness. James later married Calicia Allaire Tompkins, who had helped nurse Frances and was a distant cousin. Hal was born to them in 1847. James P. Allaire died in 1858 when Hal was just 11 years old. James left the Howell Works property to Calicia and Hal.

He and Calicia were part of an 18 year court battle with the children of the first marriage who felt they were owed more in the will. Calicia eventually won the case but died shortly after in 1878. At this time Hal was 31.

For many years the story of Hal was that after James P. Allaire passed away he became a recluse, allowing buildings to fall to ruins, being excluded from the family plot in New Rochelle, New York, and living in seclusion in his father's shadow. However is this a myth or misunderstanding? You be the historian based on newspapers published during his lifetime.

Hal Allaire was college-educated graduating from Columbia with a degree in Architecture. In school, he was on the crew team and worked on the student paper as well as pursuing other creative endeavors such as poetry. While he did design several buildings in Lakewood including a store and church, his architecture career was short and sporadic.

The first time Hal was called a hermit was in 1886 in the August 12th edition of *The Monmouth Inquirer*. The paper described Hal as living alone on the Allaire property, which at the time was quickly becoming a destination for those seeking adventure in the scenic woodlands and ruins. The story while appearing in 1886 may have been written earlier as it mentions Calicia who passed away almost 10 years prior. The story is a rather poetic version of the history of the Howell Works and conflicts with contemporary news stories that were being published.



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The other papers report consistently through Hal's life time on his involvement with several committees, government, the church, clubs and theater. The earliest paper found that talks about Hal's day to day life is an issue of the Monmouth Democrat from 1873. In the article Hal and Calicia Allaire are hosting a play at the Allaire School house to raise money for the Allaire Chapel. The school during Hal Allaire's time was held in the Bakery instead of the Chapel as it was in the 1830's. This play was one of many reported throughout Hal's life time. He began performing as an actor in plays in Freehold in 1876 and in Asbury Park in 1880. That same year he became the President of the Asbury Park Dramatic Association. He continued to be involved in theaters around Monmouth county as both an actor and director through the 1890's.

Like his father James P. Allaire who created a school for both boy and girl students for the workers, Hal was interested in education. According to The Monmouth Inquirer, in 1877 he became superintendent of the Allaire school and established a Sunday School for the Episcopal Church at Allaire. He later became the President of the Wall Township Board of Education, and was one the Monmouth County School Board. In 1899 a statewide school board, the New Jersey State School Board Association, was created for New Jersey in Trenton and Hal was elected Treasurer.

Hal Allaire was in town last Wednesday. Mr. Allaire is a handsome bachelor of forty years, a graduate of Columbia college, a connoisseur in art, and a chivalrous gentleman withal. His great-great-grandfather, with other Huguenots, came to this country in 1680 and founded New Rochelle on the Hudson, naming it for the seaport of France where the Huguenots suffered such cruel persecution. "Prince Hal," as some of his friends call him, gives most of his attention to his large estate, but now and then he paints a picture or designs a handsome cottage for a friend.

A description of Hal Allaire published on March 6th, 1889 in the Red Bank newspaper, The Daily Register.

Hal was also very interested in agriculture and farming. He became a farmer as his main profession and employed several workers who lived in Allaire Village. He was on the Board of Directors for the Monmouth County Agricultural Society. He served as president of the society for two decades. As president, he hosted a series of lectures with guest speakers and research reports.

Ever involved in Monmouth County, Hal was on the committee to erect a monument for the Revolutionary War Battle of Monmouth. The Monmouth Battle Memorial is still standing in front of the Monmouth County Court House in Freehold. He helped arrange fundraising events for the monument such as a shooting tournament. Hal submitted designs to the memorial but it is unclear how much of his design was used. Hal was part of the Monmouth County Fair until the fair eventually lost funding and shut down. He was a judge of the art competition and competed with farm animals and vegetables.



The Historic Village at Allaire

He helped to raise money for an Art Building to be put on the fairgrounds and became the superintendent of the art department for the fair in 1886.

Hal Allaire was a member of the Monmouth County Republican Convention and Served on a Committee for the third congressional district. He ran for State Senator in 1890 but did not win. During his life, he was also a stakeholder and active member of the Board of Directors for the Farmingdale and Squan Village Railroad Company and the Freehold and Jamesburg Railroad. In 1899 he joined the Forestry Association.

The village also had a bit more life than one would think amongst the ruins. Church camps and picnics were hosted at Allaire featuring tents and live music. By the 1880's the "deserted village" of the former Howell Iron works became a popular destination for cyclists and walkers. An Article from the Monmouth Democrat in 1887 discusses how pleasant the area of Allaire and the ruins are to visit during the summer, but laments it's a bit depressing in the Winter. In the same article it says Hal supposedly gave turkeys out to residents during Christmas time. In 1881, one of the buildings in the village was converted in a summer boarding house for guests from New York City. The building was "the largest" so it is unclear which building they were referring to at this time but possibly the General Store. In the 1890's a golf course was planned for the area. In 1895 he founded the Allaire Water Supply and Land Company with other investors.

Outside of working Hal was a fan of boating. He had a yacht Winifred that he would take out during the summer. He also created a Canoe Club in Red Bank. Newspapers would also report on the coming and goings of important people so we know Hal went on several boat outings, a trip to Niagara Falls, another to Boston, and was often in Red Bank and Asbury Park. He also helped judge a Sand Castle competition. A fun fact is that Hal Allaire suggested the name Belmar for the town. Originally a part of Wall, Belmar broke off to form the town Ocean Beach in 1885. It was later renamed Elcho in 1889, a few months' later residents did not like the name and voted to change it to its current name Belmar.

Hal Allaire passed away in 1901 from heart disease early in the morning the day after surveying the property.

Looking through newspapers can be useful for historical research as well as fun and interesting. I encourage you to look through your own family history through newspaper articles, maybe you can find something interesting about a grandparent or a new fact about your town.

List of Newspapers referenced (a full works-cited would be too long to publish)

Monmouth Democrat
The Monmouth Inquirer
The Daily Register
Matawan Journal
Courier-Post
Asbury Park Press
The Shore Press
The Jersey City News

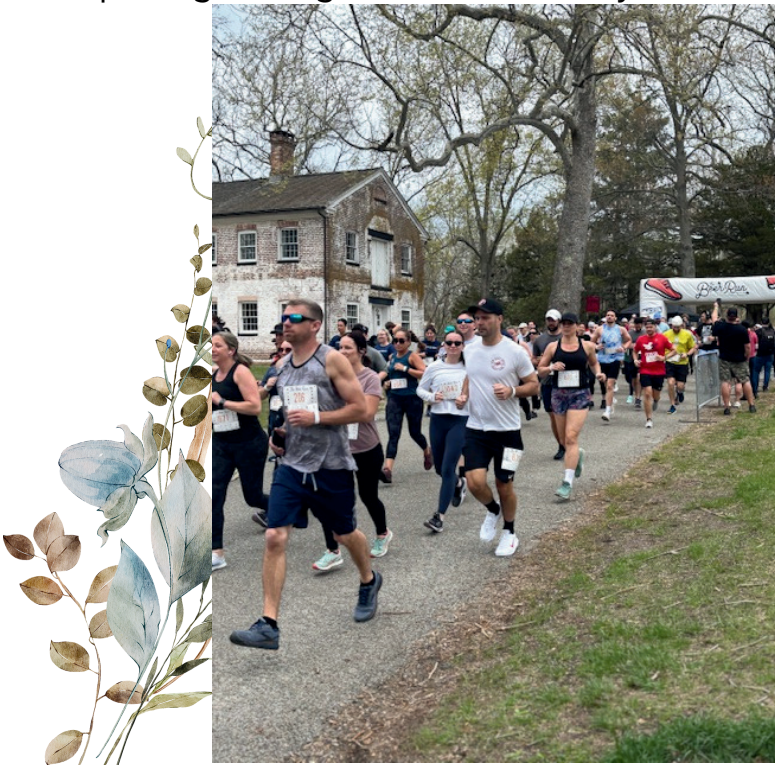
The Freehold Transcript and The Monmouth Inquirer



The Historic Village at Allaire

Spring Highlights

Off to the Races! Spring starts strongly at Allaire Village with the Annual Allaire Beer run that drew in hundreds of runners despite the rain and the Easter Celebration which included animals, acrobatics, and more! The spring continued with Home School Day and the Craft and Vendor Show, Flea Markets, and the Antique and Vintage Market! School Tours and Friday to Sunday general village openings brought the 19th Century to life throughout the Spring season!



The Village Star

The Monmouth Park Charity Fund and New Jersey Natural Gas present the **"Accomplish More Together" Grant** to Allaire Village and the Fighting HARD Foundation. "Accomplish More Together" matches non-profits with similar goals and enables collaboration between the two. Allaire Village hosts the **Fighting HARD Foundation**. Families from Fighting HARD were able to have lunch, make crafts, and enjoy a day at Allaire Village. The lunch was made in memory of Marc Weisneck, a member of Fighting HARD, who sadly passed away last year. Together we remembered and celebrated Marc and his love of gardening and the joy he brought to others. This event was made possible through the "Accomplish More Together" Grant.

A huge thank you to the **Gant Family Foundation** for their generous grant to the Historic Village at Allaire. The Gant family are direct descendants of Throckmorton Allaire (son of James P. Allaire). Chris Gant and his daughter Sophia joined us a tour of the village. We are indeed honored to receive these needed funds for our mission to keep Allaire Village open for generations to come!

Start your tour and visit to the village at the **Row House and Village Museum**, formerly known as the Allaire Visitor Center. Village information and daily programs can be obtained here. The Row House is staffed by Allaire Village personnel.





The Village Star

A Thank You To Our Annual Sponsors & Grantors



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grants from these generous funders:**

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