Proceedings Of The Livingston Historical Society

Lest We Forget . . .

March, 1981

By The Old Bridge

Stories of Old Livingston by Lillias Collins Cook

With a Biographical Sketch of Lillias Cook by Miriam V. Studley

Edited by Peter M.G. Deane

Proceedings of the Livingston Historical Society — Founded in 1963

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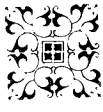

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Lillias Cook

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF LILLIAS COOK

by Miriam V. Studley

I have been asked to write an appreciation of Mrs. Lillias Collins Cook, the Livingston historian, my good friend. It was about the year 1958, when she came one day to the New Jersey Collection in the Newark Public Library, where I worked. She presented to the library a copy of her book, *Pioneers of Old Northfield.* I read it with interest, for I had become a resident of Livingston in 1951. From George Carpenter, a retired Newark lawyer born in Livingston, I learned of Lillias and her first-hand knowledge of the history of Livingston and its people.

In 1963, Livingston celebrated the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of its incorporation as a municipality. The celebration drew together a number of residents who shared an interest in local history. At the suggestion of Mayor Frank Biondi, we organized the Livingston Historical Society, with William K. Page, Jr., as our president. Lillias was a member of the small group of founders of the Society. Her vivid memory of the old times inspired several of us to engage in research on the town and its people. Both she and Freeman Harrison periodically wrote about Livingston history for the *West Essex Tribune.* Bill Klaber, the paper's editor, brought out that year the Anniversary Issue of the *West Essex Tribune,* still treasured today by persons fortunate enough to own a copy. A leading story in that issue was an account of the Mount Pleasant turnpike by Historical Society member Stanley Paton, assisted by Charles Bockelman, retired surveyor.

When we became interested in the Force home and its long-time owner, Thomas Force, Lillias told us how she and her mother lived there briefly after her father's death. This was some time before Lillias became the wife of Joseph H. M. Cook of Roseland, Master of the Verona Grange. Mr. Cook offered a course in bee-keeping, since he was a bee-keeper and a dealer of bee-keeping supplies in New York City. Some years ago I saw a copy of a catalog Mr. Cook published, for sale by a dealer of rare pamphlets in Maine, and I wish the Historical Society might be able to acquire a copy.

Lillias met Mr. Cook when she took his course, about the time of World War I. Many of us remember the shortage of sugar, among other necessities, at that time; people began to use honey as a substitute. Lillias joined the bee-keeping course, and proved to be an apt pupil. Soon pupil and teacher became engaged to be married.

Among the qualities that endeared Lillias to her many friends were her keen enjoyment of life and friends, and her sense of humor. Describing for me her wedding ceremony with Mr. Cook, she told how the clergyman recited the line "Lillias, wilt thou take this man to be thy wedded husband?" She replied clearly, "I bee."

Years later, Lillias described to me her life on the Cook farm, her first experience on a farm stocked with cattle, pigs, chickens, and cats (to keep rats and mice out of the granary). She loved the life, but grieved deeply if injury came to any of the animals.

As a young woman Lillias had worked as a Livingston reporter for the *Newark News*. The paper for years employed writers from communities within a fifty mile radius of Newark to supply local items. Lillias enjoyed her work as a reporter, faithfully reporting not only actions of the Livingston governing body, but also obituaries, club meetings, parties, and news of the town's people. Reading some of her accounts in old issues of the *News,* one becomes aware of her keen interest in people and her sense of the details that her readers wished to know.

It was a great shock to Lillias when, not long after the stock market crash which brought on the Great Depression, the *News* sent a reporter to tell her that she was no longer employed. I am not certain whether or not she worked briefly under the W.P.A., as did other journalists out of work. Mr. Cook died in 1930, leaving her his estate. Lillias continued until the end of her life to occupy her home in Roseland, which had a lovely garden of dahlias, cockscombs, and other showy flowers. Folks loved to visit her, and she thoroughly enjoyed entertaining them. She continued researching and writing, her chief interest being in the life of and genealogical research done by John Robertson Burnet. Burnet was a constant correspondent for many years with Samuel Cooper, the Secretary of the New Jersey Historical Society, himself a distinguished genealogist and authority on Newark and Essex County history.

Lillias had hoped, after finishing *Pioneers of Old Northfield,* that she could follow it with histories of other sections of the town she knew — Cheapside, West Livingston, Morehousetown, Swinefield, and Cook's Bridge. Often she talked to me about her childhood days in the old Collins home.

As Lillias grew older, she realized that, living alone, she could not give up her telephone. On Sunday afternoons, when she was alone in her Passaic Avenue, Roseland, home, and I here in my old house in Livingston, she would call me and talk for two hours at a stretch about Livingston events and Livingston people. It was she who told me about the illicit distillery of liquor at a farm on Chestnut Street during prohibition. When the neighbors of the farm saw wagon loads of potatoes being carted into it, they asked, "What for?" The farm family answered, "We're making potato chips!"

Despite her many historical interests, Lillias found time to be active in the Livingston community. When Northfield had its own lending library, Lillias served five years as its volunteer librarian. At the Northfield Baptist Church, she taught Sunday school, played the organ, and acted as church clerk. When she died at the age of eighty-nine, she was the oldest member of the Baptist church.

Written by Miriam Studley.
Edited by Peter M.G. Deane, August 18, 1980.

By The Old Bridge
Lillias Collins Cook

Between 1952 and 1961 seven stories of Livingston by Lillias Collins Cook appeared in the **West Essex Tribune,** Livingston, N.J.

During the Summer of 1980, Peter M.G. Deane, a member of the staff of the Free Public Library of Livingston, and a student at the University of Pennsylvania, transcribed, re-arranged and edited these stories, for the present publication of the Livingston Historical Society.

This publication of the Livingston Historical Society is dedicated to the memory of William Kingman Page (1913-1980), first President of the Society and a distinguished resident of Livingston for many years. His enthusiasm and foresight were crucial to the early success of the fledgling Society and remained fundamental to its activities and achievements thereafter. He will be missed by all who knew him.

On September 22, 1980, William K. Page Jr., appended this note onto the introduction by Miriam Studley.

Dear Miriam:

Lillias Cook was, together with Freeman Harrison a vital resource to our Historic Sites and House Inventory which you and I and Ruth Rockwood helped carry forward in 1961-1962. She contributed greatly to the proper identification of the old homes we inventoried as to ownership and historical reference. As you will remember, she and Freeman did not always agree. However, she and Freeman were responsible for correcting errors and misinformation contained in the W.P.A. history of Livingston (1939).

It was the Historic Sites Inventory of Livingston and Roseland which led to the formation of the Livingston Historical Society. Thus Lillias played a unique and vital role in this establishment.

Bill Page

Mr. Page passed away suddenly on October 18, 1980.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE LIVINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOL. III No. 1

BY THE OLD BRIDGE

In the December 30, 1954 issue of the *West Essex Tribune* was a bit of local history that rather startled me. It was in regard to the location of Cook's bridge, which in the story was located on Passaic Avenue, on the way to Chatham.

Now, I lived as a child a few yards from Cook's bridge, and I was astonished to find it had floated up stream and came to anchor over there.

The bridge referred to was on the old alignment of Mt. Pleasant Avenue. You walked over it and you were in the little village of Hanover, on the way to Morristown.

The new bridge is a short distance away over the Route 10 highway. I have fished from the bridge, canoed under it many a time, and almost drowned under it one winter day.

One summer day, a cousin and I were standing under the bridge. Across the river was a narrow ledge, and seated there was an old codger holding his pole, watching his cork to be on the alert when he got a bite. He was sitting on an old churn, in which were swimming the live minnows he was using as bait. He lit his pipe, and all was peaceful and serene.

Suddenly his cork went under, and his pole was jerked out of his hand. He sprang up, dropped his pipe, and overturned his churn; out flowed all the live bait. Down the river the pole was being towed at a rapid rate; his churn turned and bobbed after it. His pipe had already gone to the bottom of the river. In his rage he yanked off his hat and flung it after his lost possessions. We tiptoed up the bank from the tragic scene, while the timbers echoed and were almost scorched with his sulphurous remarks.

Uncle Will one time up on the bridge was more successful. He was always joking, and picking up a big pail, he took his pole and went out on the bridge declaring he would fill it with catfish before he came back. It just happened that a school of catfish was under the bridge, and as fast as he threw in his line, he hooked a fish. He became so excited that with every fish that came up he let out an exultant yell. One slipped the hook, turned, and got caught by the tail.

Uncle Will sounded like a wartime Indian when he hauled in this one! The big pail was overflowing with fish when they stopped biting.

The Hanover farmers harvested ice from the river near the bridge and stored it in a big ice house near where we lived. It had to be very cold before the current in the middle of the river froze solid.

My father, down on the ice measuring for the next day's cutting, did not see me launching my sled from the bank and sliding, not toward him as I had planned, but fast slipping toward a big black hole where cutting had been done that day. I, unaware of my danger, called, "Here I come." He jumped and threw me from the sled just in time to save me from drowning under the ice.

I hooked a big bass when fishing from the bridge, and only quick work by my father kept me from going down stream like the old fisherman's churn. The bass was simply too strong for my young strength.

Looking back to the days I played around the old bridge, it seems my father was always around to save me from a watery grave.

In a canoe, just at sunset, it was pleasant to be on the placid river and come back afterwards under the old bridge to the willows where we had left our canoe.

As Epaphras Cook's homestead stood near the bridge, we were most likely living in it in the eighteen eighties. The bridge was called Cook's bridge, although all maps have it down as Hanover bridge.

As I knew the error in location did not originate with Freeman Harrison, who supplied the information for the above mentioned article, I have taken the liberty of calling attention to it.

Written by Lillias Cook, published in *W.E.T.*, January 6, 1955.
Edited by Peter M.G. Dean, June 15, 1980.

The Northfield Baptist Church — 1961

n 1786 A.D. the Canoe Brook Baptist Society was formed. Eleven members of the Baptist Church at Lyons Farm, living in the sparsely settled hamlet of Canoe Brook, Township of Newark, found that the day-long trip over a rough mountain trail left too little time for worship, and so they asked for dismissal in order to form their own Society at home. With permission granted, pioneers Obed Denham and his wife, Mary; Moses Edwards and his wife, Desire; Content Edwards; Timothy Meeker, Sr.; Thomas Force, Jr.; William Meeker; Sarah Cook; Mary Cory; and Timothy Ward began to meet in Canoe Brook's stone schoolhouse, which had been built in 1782 by early settlers.

The local school-teacher, Reverend Mr. George Gutherie, baptized the eleven pioneers in the waters of Canoe Brook and led them in the formation of the Canoe Brook Baptist Society. Ministering brethren at this event were Elders William Van Ness, Ebenezer Ward, Ruene Runyan, and George Gutherie. The covenant adopted by the new church was Puritanical in its rules, with a closed communion and immersion a "must."

Obed Denham was the first deacon ordained at the new church. He was soon joined by Moses Edwards. When Obed Denham moved to Kentucky in the early days of the Society, his place was filled by Thomas Force, Jr. Meetings continued in the little stone schoolhouse and at the homes of members, of whom several were added to the roll: Abigail Walsh; Hannah Belton; Jemima Brown; Timothy Meeker, Jr.; Robert McChesney and his wife, Mary Ann; Cory Meeker; Susanna King; Jane McChesney; and Sarah Meeker.

Abner Ball came to Canoe Brook with his wife and little daughter, Betsy, in 1788. He became the first church "Clark" and later a deacon and trustee. Through his generosity the first steps were taken to satisfy the yearning of the new church for its own meeting-house. Until then to think of building seemed hopeless, for the pioneers could not even afford a regular pastor and had to be content with part-time preachers.

Deacon Ball gave freely the lumber with which he had planned to build a better home for his own family and continued to live for many years in his poorer home.

In 1793, Springfield was set off as a township from Newark, having within its boundaries the hamlet of Canoe Brook, which then became known as Northfield.

Moses Edwards, one of the first ordained deacons, felt the call to preach the Gospel in 1798. He became pastor and served for seventeen years without any stated salary. While he was a farmer and blacksmith, he had a natural gift of eloquence and was able to draw one hundred members into the spiritual fellowship of the Baptist circle.

The Canoe Brook Baptist Society became the Northfield Baptist Church through incorporation in 1801. In the same year the first meeting house became a reality. To Abner Ball's contribution of lumber was added oaken timber from the lots of Moses Edwards and Thomas Force, Jr., which was sawed gratis by the last-named at his mill. Others gave as they were able of timber and money. Three building sites were considered and it was ultimately agreed to allow the three largest contributors, Moses Edwards, Abner Ball, and Thomas Force, Jr., to make the final decision. The present site of the church, at what is now Northfield Center, was selected. There were objectors, and for the lack of their help, the meeting-house stood "guiltless of paint" for thirty years. The dedication took place on December 22, 1801.

By 1867, the green timbers, shrinking over the years, had made the meeting-house so drafty that it was colder inside than it was out of doors. Mr. John Craig, a new pastor who had been ordained at Northfield, realized the need and went out among his friends of the Baptist faith. With their contributions, as well as those from every member of the church, he was able to replace the meeting-house with a neat, white church, which was dedicated in 1868.

On the church's one hundredth anniversary, in 1886, a bell was presented to the church, and a baptistry was built. Over the years before this, all baptisms had been solemnized in the waters of Canoe Brook. However, water was still carried from the brook in large cans for use in the new baptistry. During the ministry of William Burrell, a chapel was added to the building, and a steam heating system was installed.

The old, white church, loved for so long by so many, burned to the ground in 1940. Out of its ashes arose the present building — a monument to Our Father's work — the result of careful planning and a great deal of sacrifice and giving.

April 1961 was a time of rejoicing for the large membership and the many friends of the Northfield Baptist Church. They could say, "Truly the Spirit of Our Lord has been with us in our historic old church — the House of Zion."

Written by Lillias Cook published in *W.E.T.,* April 13, 1961.
Edited by Peter M.G. Deane, June 20, 1980.

The Blizzard of March 1888

My father, Benjamin F. Collins, was in charge of the milk station just this side of the old Hanover bridge, in Livingston. An old-fashioned farm house stood on a side hill, just above where Flynn's tavern once stood, near Route 10. There was a long milk house over a large spring, an ice house in the rear, and a long windbreak where horse teams stood to feed while milk was being loaded into the four horse trucks that came daily to transport the milk from Livingston to East Orange.

The morning of the blizzard, my father started his helper, Archie Reeves, out with the one horse truck, and went out himself with a team of horses.

Archie had Sam, the mule. He got as far on River Road, in Hanover, as near where Clifford Griffith lived, and then Sam got stuck in a deep drift.

Archie was cold and he couldn't budge the truck, so he clambered out and waded to his home in Hanover, leaving the mule stuck in the drifts.

A horse would have perished, but not Sam. He hee-hawed incessantly and Mr. Griffith, hearing his braying above the howling storm, with his boys, dug out the beast and stabled him in his barn.

Mr. Griffith always maintained that the mule had called, "Archee, Archee," as Archie forsook him in the blizzard. And Archie had to stand much sport at his expense when the men gathered nights at Meade's store in Hanover. At any rate, Sam the mule never trusted Archie again.

Archie would start out with the mule, but in two jerks of a lambs tail, the mule would come trotting around the windbreak and haul up before the milk house.

And Archie would call, "Hi Guy, Ben, I can't get this darn mule over the bridge." Papa would spring upon the wagon and say, "Come Sam." And Sam would cheerfully cross under his guidance.

This happened every day and my father used to get provoked with both Archie and the mule.

But Sam wouldn't trust Archie and that was that! He wasn't ever taking any more chances.

As I mentioned, my father had a team of horses out in the blizzard. He got as far as Mulholland farm in Whippany and his horses, exhausted, were left at the farm. He plodded from Whippany bridge to Hanover bridge and home, constantly getting beaten down to his knees in drifts and staggering up again. The cold was bitter, the snow was blinding, and the wind came in gales. It took hours to make the distance.

Samuel Burnet, Sr., the father of Samuel Burnet, formerly of West Hobart Gap Road, almost lost his life in the storm, after saving the life of somebody else. Going over the hill to Orange, he came upon Edward Rowe, trying to drive one of the milk rigs but hopelessly stuck in the drifts. Rowe was a milkman of Main Street, East Orange, near the Roseville line of Newark. He bought his milk from the dairy farmers of Hanover, Whippany, Florham Park (then Afton), and Troy Hills. Burnet managed to rescue Rowe.

On the way home from Orange, Burnet left his wagon and one horse, riding home on the other. He was supposed to meet his brother, who was to have a team of oxen to help pull the wagon home. But the family would not let the brother leave to meet him. Burnet's horse got trapped in a drift just over the top of First Mountain. Burnet, himself, was so exhausted that it appeared impossible that he could make his way to safety.

Through the snow, he thought he saw a light. Yelling with all his might, he managed to attract the attention of an elderly couple living in a house on Old Northfield Road, whose light he had seen. (They had thought they heard the cat yowling, and went to the door.) They managed to get Burnet in, but the horse was hopelessly trapped and froze to death.

And it was on the third day, at noon, that Mr. Rowe, with two big sleighs drawn by four horses each, and twenty men with shovels, appeared on the scene.

The men dug their way from the City to the Hanover line. In 1888, fresh cows' milk was very necessary for the city babies, not to mention the grownups.

It was a glorious sight to see the men ahead of the sleighs, opening up the drifts, and widening what had been opened.

A drift that had whirled around the windbreak and lodged against the fence in front of the milk house made a miniature mountain, and it was in April before it softened up. As I had a new sled and a frolicsome pup dog who loved the sport, I had the time of my life riding down that drift.

When spring came, the planks of the old bridge over the Passaic River had sprung apart and glimpses of the water below could be seen.

An excerpt from the **Orange Chronicle** of that time states:

"The great storm here completely buried the township as far as moving about was concerned. The milkmen that started out on Monday morning for Orange and Newark, with but one exception, failed to get back again until yesterday. The exception was Bertie Crane, son of Isaac S. Crane of Cheapside (now West Livingston). He started for home from Newark on Monday afternoon, but was obliged to abandon his sleigh on the mountain and keep on with his horses. When he reached Northfield, his horses were completely exhausted and could go no farther. Bertie and his horses were cared for by William Diecks a little more than a mile from his home.

"No election was held in Livingston on Tuesday. The Inspectors of Election, Josiah Conklin (of the Roseland section of the township) and Charles Baldwin of Cheapside, lived at opposite ends of the township and were unable to get to the polls. The Township Clerk, Willie W. Burnet, started from Burnet Hill and struggled along in company with Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Diecks and his two sons, until they reached Northfield Center, where they left the ballot box. The high winds, great drifts, and driving snow prevented further locomotion, so the ballot box was left at the J.J. Farley residence. The men got back to their homes as best they could.

"Yesterday every man in the township turned out to open the roads."

Written by Lillias Cook in W.E.T. of March 13, 1952
Edited by P. Dean 6/27/80

The Northfield School

May I add a few items in regard to the old Northfield School? I enjoyed Freeman Harrison's fine story about Clara Maass. (Editor's note: see Freeman Harrison, **Flames Above The Riker,** 1965, p. 15.) She was a schoolmate of mine and a very nice girl.

In April, 1892, when the school picture Freeman mentions was taken, the Maass children were still pupils at the Northfield School, and Clara, Sophie, Madge, Emma, and their brother Robbie were in the picture.

Horace Ward never attended the Northfield School. He was a graduate of East Orange High School before his family returned to Burnet Hill in the early eighteen nineties. He had walked down to the center that day with his dog and was invited to pose with us.

In 1892 we were an ungraded school, and while we had final examinations (during which some of us stayed home, rather than be bothered with them!) we had no exercises of graduation. It was the "Last Day of School." A joyous time.

Our teacher's name was Otis D. Morey — it was his son who was named Francis. The boys, of course, had fun with his initials! O.D.O.D., as we called him, used no discipline and the older pupils did pretty much as they pleased.

O.D. must have been allergic to square roots, for during one entire term he kept my entire arithmetic class doing fractions, repeating day after day the same old lessons we knew by heart.

O.D. had a pretty, vivacious wife who doted on amateur theatricals, and many a play she directed and participated in. A play was being rehearsed and the costumes were in the little rooms off the pulpit in the old church. My cousin Kit had gone over to the church at noon and had not returned when the bell rang. I was delegated to bring her back. She was having such a good time trying on the costumes that she declined to come. So I remained with her.

We had entered the old church by the back window. This was not breaking into the building. In fact, it was quite the usual thing for Northfield folks if they needed to get in to enter by the unlocked window as if it was a back door. The window was wide and low and always unlocked; the sexton never was about except on stated occasions. His salary was so small that one needed a microscope to see it. (The building was heated by two big pot stoves. Since there was no steam heat, there was no worry about frozen pipes.)

Some time after I went in, Clinton Ward came over and with a twinkle in his eyes said, "You girls are to come at once." Then he spied a wig and a high hat and clapped it on his head. Of course, he did not return to the school.

Half an hour later, John Reinhardt, a third emissary, stuck his head in the back room window, where we had gotten in. John, later an Essex County Park Policeman, asked, "What are you all up to?" and as he lifted himself up into the window he too succumbed to the lure of the theatrical props.

And so there were now four truants! Although we were just across the road from the school, O.D. bothered no more with us. And I can recall no mention made of anyone eager to win his approval in both their studies and behavior.

It is to be noted that in 1892 the five school districts in Livingston each had their own trustees, who handled the separate districts. A township School Meeting up at Livingston Center cared for the appropriations for the entire school system's needs. Everybody went to the meeting, everybody found fault with the amount of money to be raised for school purposes. They aired all their year's grievances, got them off their chests, and then voted "Yes" as usual. And a good time of it was had by all the next day.

There came a "Black Friday." The morning session went off well, but when O.D. returned from his noon spell at home, a little demon of temper was perched on his shoulder. He took out his evil temper on the unoffending children, climaxing the day by dragging two little boys out in the hall and beating them severely. The whole school was subdued and frightened by this time.

Then in walked Frank W. Meeker, a school trustee and father of one of the little boys who had just been thrashed. We were all watching O.D.; he turned a sickly green when he saw who the visitor was, but Mr. Meeker had come to visit the school and knew nothing of the affair. He chatted pleasantly with O.D. and left.

That night, when he found his little boy crying after he had been put to bed and found he had been badly bruised, and found that his nephew Roy had been treated the same way, the trustees of the Northfield School had a session with O.D. Morey. Corporal punishment was banished forever from the school. Mr. Morey was allowed to finish the few remaining weeks of his school year. But as far as the school was concerned he was out.

The following September, John Hogan of Squiertown took over the Northfield School and soon straightened out the miserable conditions that had existed. He left the one room school at Squiertown to come to Northfield. He was a college man. His first thought was the interests of his pupils and their advancement. He added special lessons in music and drawing, and took special pains with the penmanship of his pupils.

Older scholars were given studies that would now be Junior High School work. Low voiced, kind, firm and just in his ways, he soon had in us a devoted group of pupils.

Written by Lillias Cook, in **W.E.T.** Dec. 10, 1953
Edited by P. Deane 6/24/80

A Tribute To Mrs. Emma Bedford Brown — 1958

With the passing of Emma Brown, an unforgettable character has been lost to our community. Few of her type are left to us.

She lived all her life in Cheapside, as West Livingston was known. She and her husband began their married life in the farmhouse on Parsonage Hill Road and Passaic Avenue, inherited by Will Brown down through the generations from Captain Enos Baldwin, who owned many acres in this section, reaching from Canoe Brook to the Passaic River.

The farmhouse, built in 1790, seemed the right setting for Will and Emma, and for nearly fifty years their marriage was a happy one. Will was a farmer, and both were active in the Cheapside Methodist Church, in which Will for years acted as treasurer. The congregation was small and the pulpit was served for years by young students of Drew Seminary, who had the courage to marry while studying at Drew and bring their young brides to the little Methodist parish.

While treasurer of the church, Will (acting as others always did), would pay the bills from his own pocket if the financial condition of the treasury was low, and say nothing about it. His mother, Aunt Nancy Brown, was a familiar figure driving about with her horse and buggy collecting for the minister's meager salary.

Emma and Will had no children, but the love they would have given to their own was spent on foster children whom they took in their home and cared for as if they were their own.

Emma was a charter member of the Livingston Woman's Club when it organized in 1932. Both she and Will became members of the Northfield Garden Club when it was founded by William O. Keubler in the early 1920s.

She was an active member of the Ladies Aid of the church.

When the Livingston schools were consolidated, the Washington Place one room school was abandoned. Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Crane and Will and Emma bought the building for a nominal sum and gave it to the Methodist congregation for a community house.

The Ladies Aiders, sensing possibilities in the building, cleaned and whitewashed a coal shed attached to the rear of the one room building, with strong armed help from their husbands. The women had shelves built by the menfolk. They brought in serving tables and oil stoves, and began to hold their harvest home suppers in the main room.

As Emma said, "They cooked the suppers in the coal bin, and walked the plank to do the serving." (This referring to a stout plank that connected the coal bin with the upper level.) As the Cheapside folks were noted for their church suppers, people came for miles and stood in line waiting their turns at the tables.

Twenty-eight years ago, Emma was entertaining several friends, and on the spur of the moment they decided to form a small group of the six present, into the Stitch and Chatter Club. They met every two weeks, alternating at luncheon at each others' homes; the afternoons were devoted to their sewing and fancy work. Once a year they had a theater and dinner party in New York.

Emma's death was the first break in membership. Of late she enjoyed membership in the Oak Leaf Club in Livingston. She had a strong sense of humor and enjoyed a joke on herself just as much as one on another.

She and Will loved to entertain friends in their home. There was a charm about the homestead and the genial atmosphere present when friends gathered there. And such gatherings were always happy ones.

Will's long illness and confinement in an institution for eight years was a sad time for Emma. Following his death she sold her home, but ill health came upon her, and she lived but a few years. Her last year was spent in a convalescent home in Bernardsville; she suffered greatly with arthritis. So ended the life of Emma Bedford Brown.

A Christian gentlewoman. Her friends were not blind to her faults but loved her just the same for her lovable ways and generous heart. Such was Emma Brown, my lifetime friend.

Written by Lillias Cook in W.E.T. April 3, 1958
Edited by P. Dean 6/16/80

A Suggestion — 1960

People and governments expend tremendous amounts of effort and money in order to wage war on tent caterpillar nests. Continued news from this front has led me to recall what the garden department of our Woman's Club did back in 1936.

As chairman I visited all the township schools and offered prizes to the rooms that caught the largest amount of caterpillar eggs that spring before hatching time.

With a vigor unsurpassed, the fields and orchards were visited by the children. People looking out their windows wondered what those boys were up to in their apple orchards.

As instructions were not quite clear, each group took in their thousands and thousands of egg clusters to their teachers, instead of counting them as I expected they would.

Their teachers, with one accord, exclaimed, "Take them to the basement." And then the fun began!

In such a warm place, hatching immediately started, and an S-O-S came to me. "Come and get 'your' caterpillars. They are crawling all over."

However, the janitor opened the furnace doors and in they went. We never got a correct count, but the whole of Livingston got a relief from the pest, thanks to the energetic youths.

Perhaps another spring this project could be repeated. (Just a suggestion, offered with a smile, over the excitement the hatching caused the janitors.)

Written by Lillias Cook in W.E.T. June 16, 1960
Edited by P. Dean 6/12/80

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