

TEWKSBURY BARN TOUR

Sponsored by
The Tewksbury Historical Society &
The Tewksbury Trail Association

July 12th, 1998
10AM-4PM



Originally Published

July 12, 1998

*Digitally Reproduced Preservation Edition
All original content faithfully preserved.*

About This Digital Preservation Edition

The first **Tewksbury Barn Tour** was held on **July 12, 1998**, marking the beginning of a tradition celebrating the agricultural, architectural, and rural heritage of Tewksbury Township.

This Digital Preservation Edition has been created to preserve the original booklet and make it accessible to today's readers. The original historical content, organization, and character of the 1998 publication have been faithfully retained. Only minor formatting changes have been made to improve readability and create a searchable digital edition suitable for online viewing.

More than a guide to a single day's event, this booklet serves as a snapshot of Tewksbury Township at the close of the twentieth century. Through descriptions of historic barns, villages, farms, community organizations, and local businesses, it documents a way of life rooted in agriculture, preservation, and volunteerism.

We hope you enjoy this glimpse into the first Tewksbury Barn Tour and the remarkable farms, landmarks, and stories that helped establish a tradition that continues today.

Tewksbury Trail Association

The Tewksbury Trail Association was formed to promote the enjoyment of equine activity throughout our township. Now more than twenty years old, it is one of the oldest established trail associations in the state of New Jersey.

Additionally, it is dedicated to preserving the natural beauty of Tewksbury with a network of trails and to fostering a greater appreciation of the wonders of our countryside community.

The TTA sponsors a calendar of events that try to give back to the community, with local volunteer organizations being the beneficiaries.

A membership approximately 200 strong is made up of equestrians, landowners, and non-horse people who enjoy the year-long activities and social gatherings.

About the Tewksbury Barn Tour

Welcome to the Tewksbury Barn Tour. This booklet should be all the guidance you need to make your way from site to site. In the center is a map which is marked with all the sites mentioned in the pages. The designated sites are numbered in a semi-geographical fashion for ease of reference. There is no set route to take, and visitors are encouraged to enjoy the many interesting sites and scenic features of the surrounding countryside.

Depending on your particular schedule, you may want to stop in one of our local restaurants for a late breakfast, a leisurely luncheon, or a quick afternoon snack. For your convenience, we have marked the map and included information about three local eateries which helped support the production of this guidebook.

We are very fortunate to have access to the eight barns included on the tour. Our sincere thanks go to each farm owner for their generous cooperation. To demonstrate our appreciation, we ask that all visitors respect the integrity of our hosts' grounds by observing a few guidelines, **PLEASE:**

- Park only in designated areas;
- Keep any food, drinks, or pets in your car while visiting the farm;
- Use caution when encountering any of the resident animals;
- Refrain from handling any equipment or artifacts in the barns;
- Inform the Tour Guides of any problems you may encounter;
- Leave the farm as you found it, by taking any litter with you.

We know these guidelines are very basic, but by being good guests we hope to be invited back some time. **Enjoy your visit!**

Looking Glass Farm (1)

The barn at Looking Glass Farm was constructed when the farm was founded, in 1986. Owner Alice Schenker uses this lovely setting for the breeding of miniature horses, goats, and alpacas for sale, as well as living space for the miniature animals she keeps as pets.

Ms. Schenker began animal husbandry at Looking Glass Farm with miniature horses because they were easier to handle and care for, and she soon became enamored with them for their small size. In the years since, she has continued to add different miniature and otherwise distinctive animals to her menagerie and now has a wide variety of exotic animals. Sharing the farm with the Miniature Horses are Peacocks, Pygmy Goats, Pigeons, Spotted Donkeys, Miniature Cows, Alpacas, Emus, and waterfowl, including Siberian, Red-Breasted Geese and Black Swans. Most of the animals are tame and pettable (although sensible caution is recommended) and are quite comfortable around people.

Fairmount Sites (2,3,4,5,6)

The Tewksbury Township Historic Preservation Commission is in the process of nominating Fairmount as a New Jersey and National Historic District. The area centers on the Old Turnpike Road which was constructed as a stagecoach route in 1813 by the New Germantown (Oldwick) Turnpike Company. At the north end of Fairmount is the Fairmount Presbyterian Church(2), which celebrated its 250th anniversary last year. At the intersection of Old Turnpike and Fairmount Road is the Fairmount United Methodist Church(3), another building with a long history.

Across the road and a little to the south of the Methodist Church is the remains of a lime kiln(4). Resembling little more than a pile of stones now, the kiln was once used to "bake" limestone into a form that farmers could use to spread on their fields.

On Sawmill Road, in Lower Fairmount, is the ruins of the Vecillius tannery and sawmill(5) which was built 1840-1850 and partially torn down in 1911, leaving the 18"-28"-thick stone walls we see today. The tannery/mill was located along a tributary to the Rockaway Creek which served as a source of power. As early as 1850, the sawmill for which the road is named stood at the intersection of Mountain Road.(6) By 1921, there was also an active peach basket business in the mill. Remnants of the old mill pond and sluice are still in place along the road. The house that presently stands on the site is a reproduction of the original sawmill.

Fieldcrest Farm (7)

The south-central portion of this barn complex was constructed in 1836 by Frederick P. Hoffman. Built as a bank barn, the double doors on the north side of the barn open onto the threshing floor on the upper level. Over the years, there have been several additions to this barn. An addition on the east side includes horse stalls with a loft above, another on the west side provided another hay loft; these additions may have been constructed soon after the original barn.

Frederick Hoffman sold milk from the barn, and built a 6' high, 2' diameter hitching post in the shape of an 1840's milk bottle, which was probably whitewashed to look like milk. (The post was rebuilt in 1997 with the original stones.) From this milk business, we can guess the age of the southwest shed addition with its five cow stalls.

The last remaining addition is on the west side of the barn. Dating from c.1890, it was used as a peach sorting shed. At least three other additions have since been removed. They included a shed on the north side used to house a threshing engine, a shed on the southwest side where a wagon was stored, and a chicken coop attached to the wagon shed.

North of the barn are two hay barracks which were originally equipped with removable roofs which could be raised as the amount of stored hay increased. The upper sections of the barracks were enclosed in 1950. These may be the last hay barracks still standing in Hunterdon County.

Since 1949, Harris and Betts Smith have farmed Fieldcrest Farm; their primary "crop" is sheep, with several fields in grain production. Fieldcrest Farm has also been the site of a Sheep Shearing Festival each spring for the last 24 years, where Scottish dancers and bagpipers, craftspeople, bakers, cooks, and sheep shearers share their skills in this fund raiser for the Fairmount Presbyterian Church.

Fairmount General Store (8)

At the inter-section of Old Turnpike and Farmersville Roads is the former Fairmount General Store (now a private home). Moved to its present location during road work in 1995, the house had previously been moved from the southeast corner early in the century. That move relied on log rollers and horse teams. It is said that the move went so smoothly that there were no cracks in the plaster and not a single chipped cup in the fully loaded china cabinets.

Chelsea Kitchen

And General Store

Established in 1869, the Mountainville General Store offered groceries and supplies to local residents for over a century. In its newest incarnation, the focus has narrowed to providing delicious foods for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Open six days a week, Chelsea Kitchen's menu of enticing and creative fare has developed a faithful clientele of regular weekday customers as well as weekend visitors.

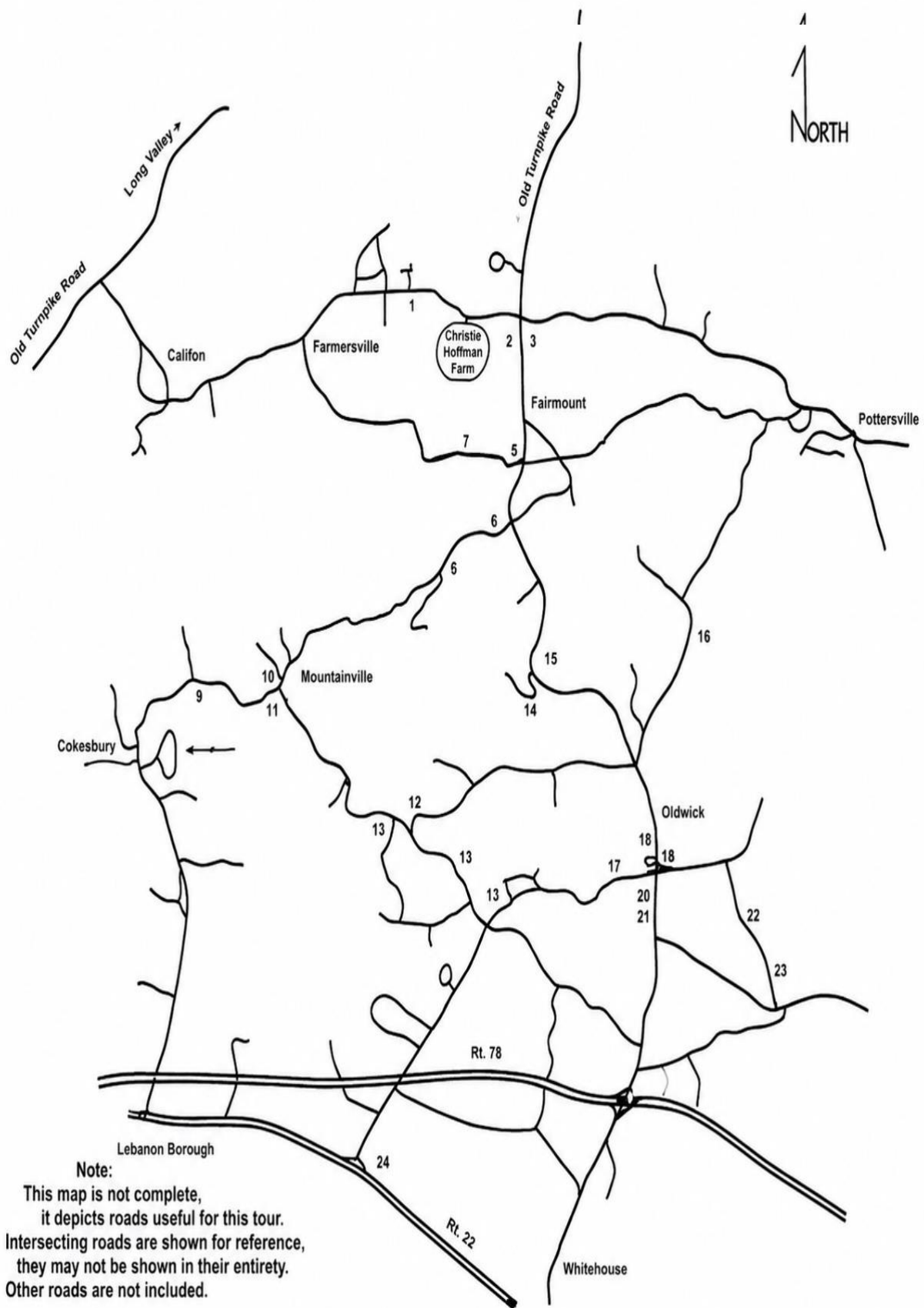
Whether morning coffee or weekend dinners, the gourmet offerings of Chelsea Kitchen are sure to please.

Hours:

Day	Hours
Tuesday–Wednesday	7:00AM–2:00PM
Thursday–Friday	7:00AM–4:00PM
Saturday	8:00AM–8:00PM
Sunday	8:00AM–4:00PM

Closed Mondays

Main Street, Mountainville
Phone: 832-0703



Note:
 This map is not complete,
 it depicts roads useful for this tour.
 Intersecting roads are shown for reference,
 they may not be shown in their entirety.
 Other roads are not included.

Fox Feather Farm (14)

When Susannah and Ting Pau Oei purchased their barn from a farm in Bally, Pennsylvania, it was in a sorry state of disrepair and slated to be razed and replaced with a convenience store. Using the services of a Pennsylvania contractor with years of barn renovation experience the Oei's purchased the c. 1800–1830 bank barn and had it relocated to its present site. Originally the dairy barn of a Mennonite family farm, the three lower story bays are used for storage and as stables for the four horses who live on Fox Feather Farm, while the hay loft retains its initial purpose.

The 30'x40' barn was built on a field stone foundation using the German system, including “Queen” posts. All of the hand-hewn oak posts and beams were extant and in good condition when the barn was laboriously dismantled in the fall of 1996 and moved to the present site until reconstruction began in the spring of 1997. Where possible, the pegs that held the timbers together were removed intact and reserved for later reuse; pegs that could not be removed had to be drilled out. All of the interior members are original, including the rafters—something unusual to find in a barn of this age and with such a varied history.

The barn had three roofs when the Oei's purchased it, along with asbestos siding. As part of the restoration, the roof was replaced with a metal sheeting, which may echo the original roofing material. The new siding is yellow pine, replacing the original siding which was beyond repair. Additionally, the Oei's installed new 2" floor boards over the original supporting sleepers.

The Dinnerpot (15)

At the bottom of the hill, Fieldview Lane intersects Old Turnpike Road in the middle of a hollow known as “The Dinnerpot.” Several suggestions have been put forth to explain how this area came to be called by this name—that this hollow, with its flowing stream, was a favored area for deer and other game animals where local residents knew to come when they needed something for the dinner pot, that this cool, shaded stretch which is about halfway between Whitehouse and Califon was a perfect stopping place for stage coaches when it was time to break out the dinner pot and give their passengers some food, and, less romantically, that its winding stream and road simply resemble a dinner pot when drawn on a map.

Homestead Farm (16)

The Homestead Farm barn was constructed in 1906 by John Emmett Rinehart after he purchased the farm from his father on April 2, 1906. The original wood frame barn was destroyed by fire. Kasterline & Son of Liberty Corner, NJ, used their milling machine to cut the oak timbers from trees felled in the woods on the farm. More than 30 men came to help their neighbor with the barn raising. The local women also came to help prepare food to feed the men at dinnertime. Mrs. Emmett Rinehart recalled "...roast home-grown lamb, vegetables, and fruit were served, with 23 pies for dessert."

A 40'×60' Dutch stone/frame bank barn, the lower story had wide Dutch doors at each end of the barn and two in the center, with six windowpanes (3 over 3) on the upper part of each door. Four other windows were on the west and east sides of the barn. On the north side, the second story of the barn opened onto the hill with wide sliding doors where wagons could enter to unload hay and other grain to feed the milk cows and work horses housed below.

Many times, the second story of the barn was used for square dancing. John Emmett and Frances Rinehart would have family reunions once a year, and, at times, neighborhood socials were held in the barn. People would come just for the enjoyment of dancing.

Next to the farmhouse was a stone building used to house hired help. It had two rooms on the first floor with a fireplace in one room; the upstairs was just a loft. Three generations before John Emmett Rinehart bought the farm from his father, this building was many times used to hide the family children from the Towonka Indians who would raid the local farms. About the time the barn was constructed, this stone building was dismantled and the stone used to construct a square silo with a wooden roof on the north side of the barn, the only one of its kind.

In 1949, John Alfred and Jean E. (Allison) Rinehart bought the farm from his father's estate. "Alf" Rinehart died after thirty-seven years of ownership, Jean was unable to maintain a working farm, and it was sold in 1986—after 200 years in the Rinehart family. The present owners are David and Jeanne Troast who undertook extensive restoration of the lower level of the barn, including new beams and new concrete reinforcing for the foundation to make the barn into a beautiful horse barn where they raise and train thoroughbred and Conamara horses.

Upper Farm (17)

Built in 1876, the Upper Farm barn is a fine example of a local bank barn. The dairy operations of the farm were conducted out of the lower-level cow stalls. The foundation was built into the hillside to take advantage of the natural insulating property of the surrounding earth. Bank barn construction also gave easy access to the second story which was used for storing grain, and other materials, while the loft held hay.

In recent years, the Watts family has cleaned up the barn for use by human inhabitants. The original fieldstone foundation has been preserved, as have the hand-hewn posts and beams that form the frame of the upper levels. The almost-clear space from wall to wall makes a wonderful setting for the recreational functions the family undertakes. Inclement weather is no hindrance to family parties and weddings—the wooden floor of the second story seems made for dancing—and the generous 30'x40' floor plan has provided ample space for the exhibitions of the works of local artists and artisans. The barn has even seen use as a studio for art classes.

The Village of Oldwick

The first historic district in Tewksbury to be listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places, Oldwick dates from the early 18th century, when it was founded by English settlers. From 1734 to 1753, the village was known as “Smithfield,” named by Ralph Smith, a prominent resident. The beginnings of the village were at the four corners of Church, King, and Main Streets(18). By the mid-18th century, a large number of German and Dutch immigrants had relocated to Smithfield, and the name of the village was changed to “New Germantown” in 1753-4. It was in this period (in 1749) that the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church(19) was constructed—in the Gothic/Greek Revival style. The church served as a focal point for the now largely German/Lutheran community.

Most of the buildings were constructed in the early- to mid-19th century, the greatest period of growth the village experienced. In 1918, anti-German sentiment during World War I prompted the residents to change the name of the village from New Germantown. After several town meetings, the name “Oldwick,” meaning “old village,” was chosen.

Oldwick General Store

First opened in October of 1755, the Oldwick General Store has been an integral part of the community ever since. For many years local farmers, and, more recently, busy commuters, have stopped in each morning for a hardy breakfast or a quick bagel and cup of coffee to go.

A full-service deli, the General Store also offers hot selections from the grill, as well as selling milk, eggs, and the other necessities of life.

Hours

Day	Hours
Monday–Friday	6:00AM–7:00PM
Saturday	7:00AM–7:00PM
Sunday	8:00AM–4:00PM

Phone: 439-2642

Fax: 439-9297

I also caught a few details to preserve exactly as printed:

- **"hardy breakfast"** (not *bearty breakfast*) appears in the original.
- The title banner reads **"Oldwick General Store"** with no subtitle.
- The hours and contact information are centered in the original; the table format is simply for easier editing in Word. We can style it to match the original booklet later if you'd like.

Oldwick United Methodist Church(20)

and Barnet Hall Academy(21)

Designed in the Romanesque Revival style, the Oldwick United Methodist Church was erected in 1865. The steeple was originally higher than what we see today. After significant storm damage it was thought best to make the replacement steeple of a more modest height, but it can still be seen from several miles distance. Ladders in the tower go to the top of the steeple to allow access for bell maintenance and exterior painting. The church was built with a slate roof, but after a century of service, it was replaced with asphalt shingles several years ago.

Built in 1807, Barnet Hall Academy served as the village school until around 1950 when the Sawmill School was constructed and Mr. J. Seward Johnson, Sr. purchased Barnet Hall and donated it to the people of Oldwick for use as a Community Center. Since 1969, the Community Center has housed the Tewksbury Township Public Library on the first floor; the second floor is used for classes, lectures, and various other community activities.

Greenock Farm(22)

The barn on Greenock Farm was built in 1910 by the owner at the time, Charles Apgar. The four-story high barn is a modified-bank barn, in that rather than the foundation being dug into a hillside, earth was piled against the foundation to build the ramp to the second floor. The barn was originally used to house various livestock. Today, the stalls on the lower level are used for horses, while the upper level holds farm equipment and, of course, hay in the loft. The upper reaches of the hay loft are accessible through a door in the gable end of the barn; the roof extension that protects this door was probably fitted at one time with a pulley for lifting hay bales.

While the barn is much as it appeared when new, there has been some restoration and remodeling work done in recent years. The floor between the stalls on the lower level was paved with bricks for ease of maintenance, the original roof was replaced with asphalt shingles, and a second-story caretaker's quarters was added above the well-equipped shower room and infirmary area in the ell.

The Kneser Farm(23)

The bank barn on the Kneser Farm was constructed sometime in the 19th century, perhaps when Marshall Craig, a Somerville doctor/dentist owned the farm. Post and beam frame was constructed using pegs to hold the structural members in place. Pegs were often hammered in place when their wood was still green (or soaked in water) which allowed the pegs to conform to the exact shape of the holes and make a closer, more secure fit. The lower level of the barn was used for beef and dairy cows, and the upper level was used as a drive-in hay loft.

In the 1920's, Dr. Craig sold the farm to James Cox Brady of Hamilton Farm. In 1936, Paul Spann and his family moved to the farm and used the barn for their dairy business, Spann Jersey Milk, for over ten years. In addition to the dairy, the Spanns imported and bred Jersey cows. The barn was modernized by Max Spann in 1958.

In 1978, the farm Joseph and Elizabeth Spann Kneser purchased the farm from Mr. Brady—members of the Spann family have lived on the farm for over 60 years. The Kneers currently use the barn to house beef cattle and sheep, as well as storing hay in the loft. In addition to their farming operations, the Kneers opened the barn for the Tewksbury Education Foundation's barn dance in the spring of 1998. For over a hundred years, this barn has been an active part of community life.

Tewksbury Township

The area now covered by Tewksbury Township was made up of parts of two tracts of land purchased from native Americans in 1709. At the time, the area was a part of Amwell Township, Burlington County. In 1714, Hunterdon County was established, encompassing Amwell Township (and "Tewksbury"). In or around 1730, the area was given over to the newly created Lebanon Township. Tewksbury Township was finally established as an independent municipality in 1755. The name *Tewksbury* was probably borrowed from the town of Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire, England.

The first hamlet in the township was Potterstown(24), which was founded in the late 1720's (near present-day Lebanon Borough, on Route 22). Potterstown was known as *Rachenay* by the German settlers who built a church there; the name had changed to *Potterstown* by 1748. Around 1749, Oldwick had become the most prominent village in the township.

Tewksbury Historical Society

Formed in 1989 to preserve the history of the township, the Society has a membership of over one hundred families, including many descendants of our original settlers. There are also members from other towns who are fascinated with our local history.

The Society holds four or five general meetings a year which include a program covering some aspect of local history. Recent program topics have included the Morris Canal, the Rockaway Valley Railroad (which transported Tewksbury produce to market), and a walking tour of Mountainville. This last program was the first held at our new headquarters in the historic Mountainville Academy, which served for years as the Tewksbury Township Municipal Building. We are delighted to finally have a place for our offices and archives, as well as a place to display artifacts of Tewksbury's past.

In addition to the programs at our meetings, we hold several annual fund-raising events. The spring Flea Market always draws large crowds. In June, the Garden Tour is a great introduction to summer, as four township gardens of special interest are showcased. The gardens vary in design, and have included formal and informal flower gardens, herb gardens, and vegetable gardens. Fall is the time for the annual Art Show. The Art Show chairpersons work hard to organize all the details—including the facility, staffing, handling of artwork, judges, ribbons, and, of course, the preview reception—to enable the Show to provide an enjoyable experience for all involved.

Through all we do, our focus is on preserving and disseminating the history of Tewksbury Township. By collecting and displaying artifacts—as diverse as deeds, grocery store ledgers, signs, and band instruments—recording the memories of lifelong residents in the Oral History program, documenting disappearing buildings, bridges, and landscape features, and sponsoring presentations of general interest, we strive to maintain a connection with the past, with those who came before us and said “This is my community, this is my home, this is the place where I belong.”

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Digital Preservation Edition • 2026