

HAMBURG HISTORY

A special section contributed by Mr. Daniel Barr on behalf of the Hamburg Historical Society

The Hamburg Intersection

Starting this spring, the town of Hamburg was taken over by the New Jersey Department of Transportation and their construction crews. Due to the increase of home development in our neighboring towns such as Hardyston and Wantage, the Hamburg intersection of state highways 23 & 94 is undergoing a make over to widen the roadways and create left hand turn lanes. Unfortunately that does come with some sacrifice. The state has to cut down some very old trees and tear down some very old and long cherished buildings. This will drastically change the look of an intersection that has remained mostly the same for the last 100 years. I would like to tell you about some of those buildings that will be gone forever except in the memories of some of our older residents.

The Hamburg Liquors

Located on the corner of Rt. 23 south and Rt. 94 south, this building had housed businesses since the turn of the 20th century. It was built by Coe Smith and operated his business under the name "Coe Smith's Store". It was a general merchandise store. Then in 1922, Barnet (Barney) Lazarus took over and opened the Hamburg Department Store. Mr. Lazarus hailed from NYC and operated the general merchandise store until the 1940's. Then Frank Hirsch bought the building and started the Hamburg Liquors. This was the first liquor store in town specializing in the sale of packaged goods. It continued to operate as a liquor store until it relocated to the new Gov. Haines Plaza in 1998. It was then opened only occasionally as an antique store until closing permanently when purchased by the state.

Max the Barber's House

This three story, white with green trim home, located on Rt. 23 north behind the Hamburg Deli, between Rt. 94 and Linwood Ave., has been a landmark in town for over 100 years. The house known as Max Berghofer's house, was built around 1900 by Frank Silvieus after he purchased the land in 2 tracts from Emma Edsal and Ellsworth Rude. Silvieus was a barber by trade and built the house to include a store front barber shop. In 1921 Max Berghofer took over and opened his own barber shop. He operated his shop for nearly 60 years, until his death in 1980. Max became a legend around town for cutting the hair of most everyone and even going to the hospitals to give customers haircuts when they were injured or sick and could not make it to his shop. For decades he was known to every kid in town affectionately as "Max the Ax". When young boys were taken there by their mothers, no matter what style haircut you wanted, you walked out with a crew cut and a free candy bar.

Violet's Beauty Shoppe

Max Berghofer and his wife had twin daughters who were trained as beauticians. On the corner of Rt. 23 north and Linwood Ave., Max built his daughters a beauty parlor and they named it the "Twins Beauty Shop.. Then in 1947 the shop was purchased by Violet Card. It operated as "Violet's Beauty Shoppe" until the early 1950's. It became residential until it was purchased by the state.

The Ice House

Located on Rt. 23 south behind the liquor store, this concrete ice house has stood the test of time. The razing of this building will result in the loss of something that is becoming rare around the state. There are not many ice houses left and this one has been around for more than a century. It was used at one time by George Beierle who owned a sweet shop on Main St. to house his cold goods such as milk and ice cream. You can still read his billboard on the southern side if you look close.

***Remember, once a building is torn down, it is gone forever.
Please help to PRESERVE OUR HISTORY!***