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ARCHIVES AND HISTORY DAY: AN ENDURING SUCCESS

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(MANALAPAN, NJ) -- Through the years, a dedicated group of men and women have meticulously preserved many of the historical records of Monmouth County dating back to 1665.

This month, on Archives and History Day, Oct. 13, the county's past will be celebrated once again at the Monmouth County Library Headquarters in Manalapan. Visitors will be treated to as many as 70 displays prepared by historical organizations in the county and from around the state, as well as a fascinating exhibit on the Jersey Shore on view through Oct. 31 in the library's lobby.

"Archives and History Day is a wonderful opportunity for residents young and old to learn about the traditions, beliefs and values that make our county so rich and diverse," said Freeholder Deputy Director Lillian G. Burry, who will be on hand to read a proclamation. "It allows us each to explore our cultural identity as citizens of Monmouth County."

The county's archives reveal the histories of families through property, marriage, birth and naturalization records. It also contains information about the freeing of slaves in the pre-Civil War years, and records of such diverse matters as lawsuits, executions and tavern licenses.

"This is one of the best opportunities to learn about the history because a variety of archivists, historians, curators, genealogists and others in the field of history and preservation will be on hand to share their knowledge," Monmouth County Clerk M. Claire French said. "It's an opportunity to learn about the history of Monmouth County and hear rich stories from people who have studied it."

Ms. French will present the Jane G. Clayton Award to independent historian Karen L. Schnitzspahn of Little Silver, who will be available for book signing.

Featured speaker will be Professor Walter Greason of Ursinus College, Collegeville, PA, who will speak on the topic, "Re-imagining the Garden of Eden: How Monmouth County Became a Suburban Paradise." Greason will focus on the post-World War II period during which Monmouth County's population grew dramatically, and discuss how the county changed from a largely agricultural area to a more densely populated county.

Since 1996, Archives and History Day has been celebrated annually in recognition of Archives Week. Its purpose is to bring together archivists, historians and other people and organizations who preserve New Jersey history and make it available to the public, particularly as it relates to Monmouth County.

"Archives and History Day enables institutions to promote the value of archives, publicize collections and programs, support professional archival practices and provide an opportunity for networking among history-related organizations in the state," said Gary D. Saretzky, county archivist. "It is also a great way for the public to learn about local history directly from a variety of experts."

A program is available on the Archives' Web site, www.visitmonmouth.com/archives and can be obtained by calling the Archives at (732) 308-3771.

In another Archives Week event, Saretzky will be giving a slide lecture on 19th Century Monmouth County Photographers at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 10, highlighting the most significant of more than 100 professionals and serious amateurs he has researched.

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