

HHHS PasTimes

Howell Heritage & Historical Society

Meetings 4th Friday, 7 pm, Ardena Baptist Church Gym, Adelpphia Rd. Howell

January 2026 Newsletter

Message from HHHS President

Greetings Friends,
Happy New Year!

I am worn out from too much fun, wonderful events this Holiday season. MacKenzie ran a beautiful Christmas tour. Over the Holidays, I have been busy cleaning up brush and dead trees around Ardena School.

I would like to get thoughts regarding recruiting new members. Everyone, please think of ways to attract new people to HHHS. Margaret has been doing a great job with our new Facebook page.

I hope all of you enjoyed the Holidays. Before you know it, we will be looking forward to the Easter Bunny at Ardena and to see what Leigh, Ron & Larry have up their sleeves for Spring.

Any thoughts about new members or events you would like to see happen, please let me know.

Sincerely,
Jude Meehan, President

Table of Contents

News.....	Page 2-4
Upcoming Event.....	Page 4
Program Calendar.....	Page 5-6
Event Photos.....	Page 6-7
Membership Form.....	Page 8

Follow us on Social Media for the latest HHHS events!

Facebook

Howell Heritage and Historical Society of NJ

Our Website

www.howellheritagehistoricalsociety.org

You can reach us anytime by email:

HowellHeritageandHistoricalSoc@gmail.com

By snail mail:

**Howell Heritage and Historical Society
2 Ardmore Road, Freehold, NJ 07728**

Upcoming Events – Join Us

MacKenzie House Museum & Library Open House

427 Lakewood Farmingdale Road, Howell

Saturday, January 17, 2026, 1pm to 4pm

Membership Meeting & Installation of Officers January 23, 2026 at 7pm

Ardena Baptist Church

Officers to be installed for 2026

President: Jude Meehan

Vice President: Margaret Winkelman

Secretary: Debbie Frost

Treasurer: Leigh Shaffer

Trustee: Catherine Schwier

Trustee: Donna Terkildsen

Trustee: Vicky Arose

NEWS

Old Ardena School Update

We're closed for the winter, but planning our activities to celebrate America's 250th Birthday. Where did the time go? It seems like only yesterday we had all of the bicentennial activities throughout 1976. Ardena School # 2 was moved to its current site, renovated, and reopened to the public to share a piece of Howell's past as part of America's 200th celebration. I remember the ride from Phillie to New York and the re-enactment of the first readings of the Declaration of Independence. We plan to highlight the Declaration of Independence at the schoolhouse in late June. Once again, Old Ardena School # 2 will host Peter Rabbit when we reopen in March. Old Monmouth Weekend is set for May 2nd and 3rd and we are proud to be part of the tour. The activities we plan help to bring in our visitors and have been well received. Many visitors share their experiences with their friends and neighbors and that helps to spread the word our precious Ardena School is open and alive with history.

Look for details about these upcoming events and others in future newsletters and on our Facebook page.

For general questions or scheduling of a private tour of Ardena # 2, the School Committee members are: Anne Hartmann, Debbie Frost, Margaret Winkelman and Vicky Arose



"Christmas in Camp" illustration by Thomas Nast for Harper's Weekly January 3, 1863

Mackenzie House Museum & Library Update

The December Open House at the MacKenzie Museum was a delightful time of singing and taking a step back in time. When you look at the pictures, later in the newsletter, you will see an illustration of Santa Claus hanging over the buffet in the dining room. That illustration is noteworthy because it highlights "Thomas Nast and the Making of the American Santa Claus."

The famed 19th Century political cartoonist is considered to be responsible for shaping the modern American Santa Claus. Born in Germany, Nast immigrated to the U.S. with his mother and sister in 1846. He studied at the National Academy of Design before beginning his career at *Illustrated Newspaper* in 1855. In 1862 he joined the staff of *Harper's Weekly*, where he became

nationally known for his scenes of the Civil War. Nast's first depiction of Santa Claus appeared in January 1863 in an illustration titled "Santa Claus in Camp." In that image Santa visited a Union encampment, dressed in "stars and stripes" coat and trousers, distributing gifts to soldiers.

Over the years, Nast continued to refine and elaborate Santa's image. Between 1863 and 1886, he produced 33 Christmas-themed Images for *Harper's Weekly*. The most iconic rendering seems to be his 1881 version reflecting his continued engagement with national issues. In the illustration over the buffet, Santa appears with a soldier's backpack, a dress sword, and a U.S. belt buckle – symbols of military readiness. A pocket-watch in Santa's hand alluded to the ongoing congressional debate over pay for sailors and soldiers, reminding lawmakers the time was running out for a decision.

As we celebrate the 250th Anniversary of America, we will be highlighting events that affected people who lived in Howell during the Revolution, and we will highlight some of the stories and artwork that help us remember our history.

We hope you will visit us often during 2026 to enjoy the celebrations!

For general questions or the scheduling of a private tour, you can contact the MacKenzie committee members at: HowellHeritageandHistoricalSoc@gmail.com

Larry Lastra, Leigh Shaffer and Ron Alessi

Wreaths Across America

December 13, 2025 was a day that saw many ceremonies and volunteers placing remembrance wreaths on Veterans' graves nationwide. In the Howell/Farmingdale area many of the local cemeteries participated in the event. Community volunteers came together to make sure wreaths were placed on the graves at Evergreen, Jerseyville, and Ardena Baptist Cemeteries. Check out the photos at the end of this newsletter.

And a special thank you to Leigh Shaffer and the Farmingdale Historical Society who organized Evergreen, Debbie Frost and Pastor Yoseb Jerseyville's organizers, and Ann Malsbury who assisted at Ardena Baptist's Cemetery. Without their work throughout the year, the wreaths would not have been purchased for the event and the individual cemetery ceremonies and remembrances to keep our veteran history alive in Howell and Farmingdale would not have occurred. You too could become part of this nationwide event this coming December 19, 2026. It's a great event to remember America's veterans!



Colts Neck HS ROTC Honor Guard

Check out the additional photos of these events that follow, later in this newsletter.



New Facebook Page

Our new Facebook page - "Howell Heritage & Historical Society of New Jersey"

We also have a new page. If you are on Facebook, please consider following us and sharing our new page with your friends. It can be found here. [HHHS](#)

[New Facebook Page](#)

FYI for all of you Researchers

First Irish Free State census

The 1926 census was taken on the 18 April 1926. It will be released to researchers in April 2026.

Census 1926 holds a unique place in history as it was the first census conducted after the establishment of the Irish Free State. Taken on April 18, 1926, it provides a detailed snapshot of life in Ireland during that period.

The 1926 Irish census recorded a population of 2,971,992, a decrease of 5.3% from the 1911 census.



*Mackenzie Museum
is Ready to Celebrate
Our Wonderful American
History!*

**PLEASE JOIN US
EVERY MONTH!**

**Beginning January 17th 1-4 pm
Then, every 3rd Saturday
throughout 2026!**

HHHS PROGRAM CALENDAR FOR 2026

Your help is needed to fill in our calendar for the year!!!

January 23rd Program: HHHS Installation of Officers

Refreshments: Vicky Arose

Open House: MacKenzie, January 17, 1-4PM

February 27th Program:

Refreshments:

Open House: MacKenzie, February 21, 1-4PM

March 27th Program:

Refreshments:

Open Houses: MacKenzie, March 21, 1-4PM, and Ardena School, March 29, 1-4PM

April 24th Program:

Refreshments:

Open Houses: MacKenzie, April 18, 1-4PM, and Ardena School, April 26, 1-4 PM

May 22nd Program: Colts Neck HS ROTC Color Guard Presentation

Celebrate 7th Anniversary of HHHS Inc.

Refreshments:

Special Activities: Weekend in Old Monmouth, May 2 and 3 & Farmingdale-Howell Memorial Day Parade, May 25

Open Houses: MacKenzie, May 16, 1-4PM, and Ardena School, May 31, 1-4 PM

June 26th Program:

Refreshments:

Open Houses: MacKenzie, June 20, 1-4PM, and Ardena School, June 28, 1-4 PM

July 24th Program:

Refreshments:

Special Activity: Monmouth County Fair at East Freehold Showgrounds

Open Houses: MacKenzie, July 18, 1-4PM, and Ardena School, July 26, 1-4 PM

August 28nd Program:

Refreshments:

Open Houses: MacKenzie, August 15, 1-4PM, and Ardena School, August 30, 1-4 PM



September 25th Program:

Slate of Officers Presented by Nominating Committee

Refreshments:

Special Activity: Howell Day & Green Fair

Open Houses: MacKenzie, September 19, 1-4PM, and Ardena School, September 27, 1-4 PM

October 24th Program:

Nominating/Election Committee - Slate of Officers for 2026

Refreshments:

Special Activity: Monmouth County Archives & History Day

Open Houses: MacKenzie, October 17, 1-4PM, and Ardena School, October 25, 1-4 PM

November, December — No Meetings

Special events: Wreaths Across America: December 19, 2026

Open Houses for MacKenzie House, November 21 and December 19

Holiday events at both sites: Dates to be determined

If you are interested in presenting at a Society Meeting in 2026, please contact HHHS via email

MacKenzie's December Open House



Wreaths Across America at Evergreen Cemetery



Jerseyville Cemetery's Wreaths Across America



2026 Membership / Donation Form

An important way to grow our membership is through word of mouth.
Please consider sharing this form with friends and family who may be interested in joining.

☐ I would like to enroll as a member in the category below:

_____ \$20 individual _____ \$30 family _____ \$50 sponsor _____ \$100 patron

☐ I would like to make a general donation:

Amount: \$_____ donation

☐ I would like to be added to your email distribution list only:

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please send this form & your check, payable to:

Howell Heritage & Historical Society, 2 Ardmore Road, Freehold NJ 07728

Email: howellheritageandhistoricalsoc@gmail.com

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Thank you