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It's not just Washington

Acorn Hall book promotes Morristown history, narratives beyond father of our country



KAREN MANCINELLI/CORRESPONDENT

Jude Pfister, chief of cultural resources at Morristown National Historical Park has written a new book: "Morris County's Acorn Hall." He stands in the library of the mid-19th century home on Morris Avenue in Morristown.

LORRAINE ASH @LORRAINEVASH

MORRISTOWN — At long last, Acorn Hall, the 1853 Georgian-style house at 68 Morris Ave., has its own biography.

The story of those who owned the Italianate estate, now home to the Morris County Historical Society, spans three families — the Schermerhorns, Cranes and Hones — and many chapters of American history.

"Morris County's Acorn Hall" was penned by Jude Pfister, chief of cultural resources at the nearby Morristown National Historical Park, known for commemorating the encampment of Gen. George Washington and his ragtag Continental Army during the bitterly cold winter of 1779-80.

"I've been driving by Acorn Hall every day for 10 years on the way to work. It's always fascinated me," said Pfister, a 20-year veteran of the National Park Service who has penned four other books.

When he uncovered connections between Acorn Hall and the historical park, the project became irresistible.

Among the park's Revolutionary War attractions is the Ford Mansion, another Georgian-style home — an eighth of a mile from Acorn Hall — built in the early 1770s for Jacob Ford Jr., an iron manufacturer. Ford's widow allowed Gen. George Washington to use her home as his headquarters during that fateful winter.

"I came across the deed that the Schermerhorn and the Hone family signed, where Schermerhorn bought the property for Acorn Hall, and it was attested by Henry Ford (grandson of Jacob Ford)," Pfister said. "Right there, from the beginning, you have this connection."

Yet, he explained, it's easy for historic sites like Acorn Hall, located next to Westin Governor Morris Hotel and just outside the park, to be overlooked.

"Whenever anyone thinks of Morristown history," Pfister said, "they think of the winter encampment."

The park attracts some 275,000 visitors annually, with 30,000 of them touring the Ford Mansion, he added. Yet last year Acorn Hall attracted 448 visitors, according to the Morris County Historical Society.

The new book, Pfister explained, can be used to increase public awareness of Morristown history that's not related to Washington and help the national historical park forge partnerships with other historic sites.

Not that the partnering idea is new. In the two years since park Superintendent Tom Ross took the reins, he has formalized partnership agreements with a dozen nonprofits to keep up the grounds, which include 27 miles of hiking trails and specialized gardens. The agreements are particularly important given the \$2.6 million park budget this year — a 3.5 percent decrease from 2010, he said.

But Pfister pointed out there's another plus to part-

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PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MORRIS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AT ACORN HALL
Actress Mary Crane Hone, circa 1930

LEARN MORE

MORRIS COUNTY'S ACORN HALL: AN AUTHOR TALK AND BOOK SIGNING

WHAT: Meet Jude M. Pfister, author "Morris County's Acorn Hall" (The History Press)

WHEN: 2 p.m. Aug. 2

WHERE: Washington's Headquarters Museum Auditorium, 30 Washington Place, Morristown

COST: Free

INFORMATION: 973-539-2016, ext. 210 or <http://tinyurl.com/nw5fv4j>

BRIGHT LIGHTS AND BIG CITY: MARY CRANE HONE ON BROADWAY!

WHAT: An exhibit of Mary Crane Hone's stage costumes

WHEN: Coming in early September

WHERE: Acorn Hall, 68 Morris Ave., Morristown

COST: Free

INFORMATION: 973-267-3465; www.acornhall.org

MetroWest: Iran deal may be risk to Israel

Urges 'close scrutiny' during 60-day review

WILLIAM WESTHOVEN @WWESTHOVEN

HANOVER — The Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest New Jersey's Community Relations Committee is expressing disappointment over the recently announced U.S. nuclear accord with Iran but stopped short of condemning the deal in favor of encouraging "close scrutiny" by Congress and the public before taking an official stance.

The MetroWest organization encompasses Morris, Essex, Sussex, Union and parts of Somerset counties and, with 130,000 members, says it is the largest Jewish philanthropy in New Jersey.

"The federation system, along with its Jewish communal partners, is continuing to study and understand the agreement," committee Director Melanie Roth Gorelick wrote in a blog posted Wednesday on the MetroWest website. "We will continue to do all we can to ensure the safety and security of Israel for the long-term."

Gorelick told the Daily Record on Thursday that MetroWest was not trying to politicize the issue but was continuing to work with state and national legislators to emphasize Israel's concerns about Iran, and maintain public pressure to ensure compliance with the pact should it be ratified.

"The 60-day congressional review window opens a critical period in which to examine the agreement to certify that it has the rigorous inspection and compliance components necessary to ensure that Iran does not continue to increase its uranium enrichment," MetroWest posted. "Additionally, we call on the international community to demand that all con-

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From Roxbury to Hollywood

Ex-bullying victim building on TV role, clothing line

WILLIAM WESTHOVEN @WWESTHOVEN

The career of a talented young former Roxbury resident has shifted into high gear this year with a featured role on a TV series and the launch of his own clothing line.

Victor Wallace has come along way from a difficult childhood that he says included being bullied at school, and a brief period of homelessness with his mother, Bellkiss Maldonado, as they moved to Florida and then California to pursue his dream of being an actor.

"I don't know what it was about Victor, but the kids at school would always bully him," Maldonado said during a recent, rare visit back to New Jersey to visit family while Wallace is enjoying a break in production for the Nickelodeon series "Talia in the Kitchen."

The handsome young man, with a big smile and a

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PHOTO COURTESY OF BELLKISS MALDONADO

Victor Wallace, 18, who grew up in the Landing section of Roxbury, earned a role on TV series "Talia in the Kitchen."

'Exit 13' is a lucky number for poets and poetry fans. In Sunday Best

ADVICE	8M, 10M
LOTTERIES	2A
OBITUARIES	4A
OPINION	4AA
REAL ESTATE	1C
SPORTS	1B
SUNDAY BEST	1M
TV	9M

