**The Olde Stone House**

This building is the focus of our historic village, our oldest extant structure, and the icon of our community.

The George (Jr.) and Sarah Morgan House was built about 1765 in Deptford (now Washington) Township, Gloucester County, New Jersey. Though locals have generally dated the house to 1736, no records actually exist prior to the mid century. George Morgan Sr (1708-1759) and his wife Susannah (nee Davis) were married in 1730 in Philadelphia and settled in Gloucester County sometime after 1732. The exact date is not known. Morgan Sr. died in 1759 and willed 200 acres with the house to his oldest son, George Jr. Built of local ironstone, it has an evently spaced stone front that adds a sophistication not found in farmhouses constructed before the mid-1700s . The house was probably built between ca. 1760 and 1775. The Egg Harbor Road was cut through in 1793 and the house is referenced in the county Road Book of the time.

What you see is the original size of the house. Originally there were two rooms downstairs and two bedrooms on the second floor. It is probable the attic was also used as a bedroom. The house has four fireplaces connected to two chimneys, one on either end of the house. When the house was restored in 1981, plaster was removed from the kitchen wall and the beehive oven was discovered. It was restored to specifications for such ovens after research by George and Cookie Kaizar of the Restoration Committee.   Indoor life for most in the earliest days of South Jersey was a cramped affair. Whole families ate, drank, and slept within the confining four walls of a single, tiny room. During most seasons, the householder, away at work in the fields or the furnaces, could breathe the air of the out-of-doors and stretch his legs in the open spaces. On the other hand, the housewife had only the garden patch alongside the cottage to relieve the tedium of the dark, crowded interior where she sewed, spun, wove, cooked, cleaned, and raised their offspring, some of whom were always underfoot.

Morgan Sr. owned a sizable, 600+-acre farmstead located on the west side of the south branch of Big Timber Creek.

The Plantation stretched from Blackwood Lake to what is now Delsea Drive and from Route 41 to Mount Pleasant Road, covering 1,000 acres. George Morgan Jr. died in 1795 and his will directed that after his youngest son came of age, his property was to be equally divided between his wife and children. His inventory included cash, notes, and book debts totaling £1,192, livestock (horses, cattle, sheep and hogs) valued at £137, boards and farming utensils valued at £70, and “household goods, rye in the ground and wood at the landing” valued at £58.

There have been only 3 families who have lived in this house. After the Morgans, a daughter Sarah married a man named Meriall Turner, an uncle of John Turner who founded Turnersville.

Large wooden additions were added in 1846. The Turner family owned the home at the time. Their son Robert's wife died during the birth of their sixth child and he then returned home. His sister Ann's husband Jacob Park also died, and the house then welcomed Ann and her three children.

The house then passed to Meriall's daughter who married Jeremiah Hobson Paulin. The next owner was his son Robert Turner Paulin, who operated a dairy on the property with a dozen cows. His daughter Rachel told this story: " One day father went out to milk the cows and a grumpy cow named "Bossy" decided she didn't want to give her milk and kicked him in the stomach. He lived only for three days. Dr. Hurff, then the only local doctor, tried to help, but my father died when I was only 3 years old." (Per Joan Michael)

After the Paulins, the property was sold to Frank and Anna Atkinson in November 1912. At this point the property included 144 acres and sold for $10,000. The Atkinson's raised four children there, Franklin, James, Edna, and Louis. Franklin lived on the Morgan Plantation until his death. James and his family lived on County House Road. Mr. James Atkinson was a Gloucester County Freeholder and the Atkinson Memorial Park on Rte 41 is named after him.

There are two front doors in the house. One leads into the kitchen and the other into the parlor. During the Paulin family's residence, the parlor became a country store, selling flour, grain, beans, and vegetables. It also was used as a Methodist church when the Meriall Turners were in residence. Some say there were two front doors so women and men could enter church separately, but as there were a number of homes in the area with such doors, this is only speculation.

In June 1961 the property was rented to Frederick Powell who turned the farm, barn, and stables into the “Starlite Stables.” Powell used the farm to raise, sell, and board horses until the 1970s. The house was used to store feed and other supplies. After Powell moved away, the house was left to demolition by neglect. In 1973 the then 400+ acres were sold to Orleans Co which gifted the Morgan House and 6.2 acres to the Township. Three months later a fire in December destroyed the frame additions to the building. The Wash. Twp Historical Society then spent 5 years restoring the house to its 1765 appearance.

Presently, the Washington Township Historic Commission has obtained grants which have placed the house on the National Registry of Historic Sites, and will also pay for a plaque to be erected to that effect. A grant is in process to restore the entire foundation system that has been badly impacted by weather over the years. Work will begin this coming year to replace the beams in the basement area, to regrade the area around the basement to prevent further water damage, and to restore the herb garden side windows. Further work will still be needed to replace mortar, doors, and more.

**The Kitchen Herb Garden**

The kitchen herb garden was once on the side of the house, but was recreated by the Historic Society in the 20th century. The spices and vegetables being grown there at the moment are those which would have been present in an 18th century garden. Spices were needed for cooking, such as sage, thyme, mint, and dill. Other herbs such as soapwort or comfrey were used for household or medicinal purposes. The Certified Gloucester County Gardeners presently keep the garden for the Historic Commission.

**Stone House Smokehouse**

The smokehouse was essential to keeping an 18th century home, and into the 19th century, in order to preserve meats.  Cattle, pigs and chickens could be killed nearly all year, but in the case of the beef or pork, there would be too much meat to be used immediately. Chicken was often a choice for sunday dinner as it could be eaten fresh.

After the cattle and pigs were slaughtered, roasts were hung on large metal hooks hanging from the ceiling of the smokehouse over the fire pit. The meat was roasted over hardwood until a crust formed that sealed the meat inside.  The roasting took at least a full day and meat would then be left there until it cooled. The meat was then wrapped to keep it clean and it was stored in a pit under the floor of the basement to keep it as cool as possible. Some of the meat would inevitably spoil, but most could be used all year round.