



News

Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders
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For Immediate Release

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VICTORIAN GAMES AND FREE FAMILY FUN AT SMITHVILLE

Croquet, Hopscotch, Kids' Activities and More, Sunday, May 20

The Burlington County Freeholders are sponsoring *Victorian Games*, an afternoon celebration with friends in Historic Smithville Park playing croquet and other fun games from the past on Sunday, May 20 from noon to 4 pm, rain or shine.

Hosted by the Burlington County Division of Parks in collaboration with the non-profit Friends of the Mansion at Smithville, the Victorian Games celebration will kick off the mansion's annual tour season, and parking and admission are free.

Throughout the afternoon, kids of all ages will be invited to play a variety of games that Hezekiah B. Smith and his wife Agnes may have enjoyed while residing at Smithville in the late 1800s when Smith's model industrial town thrived, such as croquet, hopscotch, kick the can, hoops and sticks, jacks, jump rope and leap frog.

Other attractions will include live entertainment, featuring baritone Charlie Zahm and Les Finesse performing music of the Victorian era. The event will also give a sneak peak on ballroom dancing during the 1860s. Visitors can take lessons in tea etiquette, enjoy free carriage rides, and view Victorian wedding photographs and other items with a presentation by Jane Peters Estes on Victorian weddings customs and traditions. Children will enjoy Punch and Judy puppet shows and a visit by Mother Goose dressed in Victorian garb with stories based on Alice in Wonderland.

Guests may also tour the Historic Smithville Mansion, built in 1840 and furnished to reflect Smithville's heyday, at a cost of \$4 per person, and tea will be offered for \$5 per person.

The public will have its first opportunity to visit two recently-restored buildings at Smithville: the post mistress' former home at 34 Maple Avenue, which has been converted into a Visitors' Center; and 8-9 Park Avenue, which was used to house village workers and has been restored with period furniture dating from 1865.

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PRESS RELEASE: Victorian Games – 5/7/12 – Add One

Burlington County Historian Joe Laufer will offer free tours of the Smithville Industrial Village from the Visitors' Center at 1:30 pm and 3 pm. The Smithville Conservancy will be selling commemorative bricks that will be placed in the pathway in front of the Visitors' Center, the oldest building on the property, for \$125 each.

Visitors will also be invited to view a collection of quilts spanning three centuries that will be on display in the restored workers' housing. The exhibit, which will run from May 20 until June 24 (Earth Fair), focuses on five Victorian-era quilts made during Hezekiah B. Smith's lifetime. The collection also features quilts made, used, and still owned by five succeeding generations of the same Burlington County Family and are similar to those that may have been found in homes throughout the Village of Smithville. Although some of the quilts were intended to be precious heirlooms, others were simply designed to be hardworking bedclothes made from scraps during an era when waste was unthinkable. Other quilts were made by a child learning to sew under protest, created as gifts to welcome new babies, and served as a creative outlet for women with busy lives and demanding careers.

Our Guests can visit the Historic Smithville Mansion Annex Art Gallery to view the "The 40th Annual Robert Ransley Open Juried Art Exhibition" on display through June 7. Burlington County Art Guild's most prestigious show of the year, the annual tribute to the guild's late co-founder features pieces by approximately 100 artists from the tri-state area.

Historic Smithville Park is located on Smithville Road, three quarters of a mile off Route 38 in Eastampton. There is no cost to participate in the Victorian games, but anyone interested in playing croquet should register for a time slot in advance. To register, or for more information about the event, call the Division of Parks at (609) 265-5858.

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