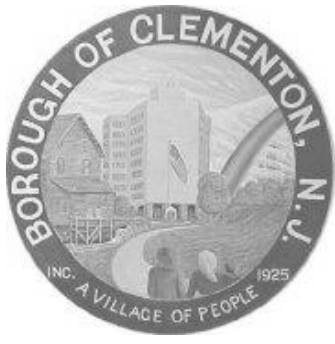




The Clementonian

Fall/Winter 2026

Issue 17

A Short History of the Building Now Known as Harper's

by the Clementon Historical Commission

After Clementon Park, it might be Clementon's most recognized landmark: the building squeezed between the railroad tracks and Gibbsboro Road at Clementon's main downtown intersection. Built by Frederick Ribaut in 1912, this structure served as a watering hole for 100+ years until becoming Harper's Discount Liquors in 2023. But it wasn't the first bar to stand at that location.

That honor belongs to Fred Ribaut's *original* Clementon Inn, a hostelry and ground-floor tavern that opened its doors sometime around the turn of the 20th century, just as the village of Clementon was gaining popularity as a lake resort. The building's location next to the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad (and across from the train platform) was a boon to business – but ultimately its downfall. In July of 1911, a spark from a passing locomotive set Ribaut's original Clementon Inn ablaze, burning it to the ground.



Fred Ribaut's original Clementon Inn, destroyed by fire in 1911. A plaque reading "F. Ribaut" hangs beneath the "Clementon Inn" sign.

Not to be deterred, Ribaut set up a tent the very next day beside the charred remains of his inn. It housed a makeshift bar and two cash registers that let tavern business continue as "usual" until Ribaut's new inn – the building that still stands today – debuted in 1912!



The rebuilt Clementon Inn in an undated photo.

When Prohibition outlawed alcohol in 1920, Ribaut's tavern became a soft drink counter, operating in summer months only. Perhaps deterred by limited earning potential, Ribaut sold the entire operation to Hungarian immigrant Sebastian Gruber and his wife Theresa in 1926, reportedly for \$20,000. Newspaper coverage of the transaction called the Clementon Inn "one of the oldest and best-known hostelries in this part of Camden County." The Grubers made renovations and additions to the building.

Sadly, Sebastian died just two years later, at age 38. Yet his family – "Mom" Theresa and the couple's three children – continued operating it for another half a century, making Gruber's Clementon Inn (later Gruber's Inn, then simply Gruber's or Gruber's Restaurant) a respectable and popular area draw, offering delicious food, dancing, and live music and entertainment. It is unclear when the inn stopped offering upstairs lodging.



An undated photo of Gruber's Inn, which at this point included a liquor store with an entrance on Gibbsboro Road.

In the 1970s, the building changed hands and names several times – Railside Inn, Grist Mill Inn, Split Rail Inn – and sat dormant for stretches. Then, in the 1990s, its next act: it reopened as Harper's Pub, becoming a popular Clementon destination for another three decades. In 2023, Harper's Pub was converted to Harper's Discount Liquors.



The Split Rail Inn, 1992.

There's another interesting aspect of the building's history worth sharing: In the 2010s, Harper's Pub gained a reputation among paranormal groups for its reported supernatural activity. Ghosthunters reported communing with the spirit of a young boy who had died on the building's third floor, in a bedroom adorned with old airplane wallpaper. Interestingly, we did find an obituary for a 10-year-old boy who died while living upstairs at Gruber's in 1945.

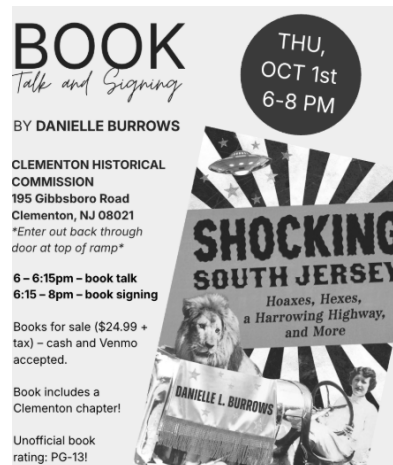
This story was assembled to the best of our ability using Clementon Historical Commission archives and publicly available information.

Visit our monthly museum open house, held the third Wednesday of every month from 6 to 8pm at 195 Gibbsboro Road. Enter using the ramp out back.

Want to learn more about Clementon history? Follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/ClementonHistoricalCommission) and Instagram (@clementonhistory).

CLEMENTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION SPECIAL EVENT

Danielle Burrows, author of "Shocking South Jersey: Hoaxes, Hexes, a Harrowing Highway, and More," will give a book talk and sell and sign copies of her book at the Clementon Historical Commission museum on Thursday, October 1st from 6 to 8pm!



Now a Philadelphia resident, Danielle was raised in Clementon in the 1980s and 1990s. It was here that she discovered her love of local history (one of her book's ten chapters actually takes place in Clementon in the 1930s!). She is still involved with our borough today, helping the Clementon

Historical Commission research and write the posts and stories you see on the Clementon Historical Commission Facebook and Instagram pages.

Danielle's book talk will take place from 6 to 6:15pm; book signing and selling will follow through 8pm. Join for one, the other, or both!

Can't make it but want a copy? Use coupon code BURROWS at ArcadiaPublishing.com for 15% off, or look for *Shocking South Jersey* in South Jersey bookstores!

Unofficial book rating: PG-13.

COUNTY LIBRARY

Did you know Clementon pays into the County library system? Our residents are able to use ANY county library. You are eligible for a free two-year library card with proof of address. There are two branches within 5 miles of us, located at 203 Laurel Rd Voorhees, and at 15 S Black Horse Pike Blackwood. The library has many programs for all ages! Some upcoming events and classes include tax assistance, toddler play and story times, senior card groups, and teen game nights and writing workshops.

Visit www.camdencountylibrary.org for more info.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Clementon's Annual Memorial Day ceremony was held on May 27th, with several local veterans both attending and presenting. Thank you to all that came out! Special thanks to the fire department for performing the flag ceremony.

The Veterans Day ceremony will be held at Heroes Park on Garfield Ave. on November 11th at 11am. If you or someone you know entered any branch of Service while a resident of Clementon, please let us know; we'd love to add you to our veterans deserving of recognition.

Please contact

clementonhistoricalcommission@gmail.com

The Office of Veterans Affairs serves all veterans and their family members within Camden County. This office is located in the Wolvorton Library, 3rd Floor 200 College Drive, Blackwood, NJ 08012, and is available Monday through Friday to give assistance to all our veterans and dependents. If you have any questions regarding services, please call (856) 374-5801.

PEOPLE OF CLEMENTON

Marjorie Huff passed away in August at the age of 87, after a life of service to others.

As the wife of former Clementon Councilman Lea C. Huff, she was involved in many committees in an effort to make Clementon a better place to live. While raising three young children alone after her the death of her husband, her commitment to our community, young people and families never wavered. Mrs. Huff's service with the local Girl Scout troop as a Den Leader of the Clementon Cub Scouts, and as President of the Clementon PTA, showed her willingness to always step forward when needed. In every role she brought energy, organization, and a genuine desire to help others - all while continuing her career with the State of New Jersey as a nursing supervisor, retiring in 2008.

Post retirement, Mrs. Huff volunteered as the arts and crafts coordinator at the Clementon Senior Center, then later the director. She certainly worked to make Clementon a better place, and will be remembered as a woman who gave generously of herself, both at home and in the community.

PUBLIC WORKS

Fall is fast approaching. The hot days and the high humidity make it a welcomed season. Public Works has been very busy with multiple water & sewer projects, repairs, and updating our aged system. Public Works and the Governing Body have been planning for resurfacing roads and utility infrastructure updates at multiple locations. The weather has been perfect for grass growing this summer, keeping us very busy at all parks & borough properties. Signs are being replaced as needed. Road striping/markings are being redone.

Fall Leaf Collection:

Leaf collection will take place as follows:

Round 1:

- Zone 1 – Week of October 19
- Zone 2 – Week of October 26
- Zone 3 – Week of November 2
- Zone 4 – Week of November 9

Round 2:

- Zone 1 – Week of November 16
- Zone 2 – Week of November 23
- Zone 3 – Week of November 30
- Zone 4 – Week of December 7

To ensure your leaves are picked up, please follow these guidelines:

- NO sticks, brush, trash, grass in leaf piles
- Do not block leaf piles with vehicles
- Keep piles 10 ft away from stormwater drains
- Do not put out after leaf season is completed, as they will clog drains, be unsightly and remain until spring.

A list of streets and zones is included at the end of this newsletter.

Winter Season Reminders:

As fall leads into the winter season, Remember these recommendations for winter storms:

- Do not park vehicles in road ways
- Allow room for large trucks to pass safely on all streets. If we can't get by, we can't treat your street.
- Do not throw or blow snow back in street
- Do not cover inlets, storm drains, hydrants, sidewalks, ADA ramps, water service curb stops, or your sewer lateral clean outs.

Last winter saw extreme prolonged freezing temperatures. Water lines have the potential to freeze on your responsible portion of the service line; we recommend having your water line looked at before winter regarding insulation methods by a plumber or

yourself. Preventing it from freezing is so much better than a frozen/busted line.

Hydrant Flushing

Date: October 5 – 16, 2026, during the day.

During this period of flushing, you may experience low pressure or discolored water. Flushing your location by running the cold water for a short period in most cases clears it up. Be patient, and if you experience any issues let us know.

Meter Readings:

Date: September 8 – 30.

Please make sure the water department can access your meter to read.

Trash Holidays:

Trash holidays for the remaining 2026 year are:

- Thanksgiving - Thursday

These holidays will push the pick-up back to the next day.

Mayor, Council, and Public Works are committed to always improving and updating the Borough of Clementon, now and in the future. As always when a resident has a concern, a question or sees something, reach out to the borough by:

- Borough website/Calendar
- Borough hall 856-783-0284
- Public works 856-784-0495

CLEMENTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Clementon Elementary School (CES) is more than a school - it is the heart of our community. As a pre-K – 8 walking district serving around 600 students, our children grow up together right here in Clementon, building relationships with their classmates, teachers, families, and neighbors throughout some of the most important years of their development.

We are incredibly proud of what our students accomplish academically. Clementon has been recognized as the highest-performing Title I school in New Jersey for English Language Arts, reflecting the dedication of our students, staff, and families and our continued focus on providing a strong education for every child. But at CES, we also believe that educating a child means providing opportunities to discover who they are and how they can contribute to the world around them.

Our students have opportunities to participate in middle school electives, athletics, clubs, leadership programs, visual and performing arts, and music, including

opportunities to share their talents with the community through concerts and performances. Through programs such as Legendary Leaders, EmpowHer, Bulldog Ambassadors, Student Government, National Junior Honor Society and Bulldog's Best, students develop leadership skills, confidence, healthy relationships, and a sense of responsibility to others.

Our PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) program helps create a positive school culture by recognizing students for making good choices, demonstrating respect, showing responsibility, and contributing positively to their school community. Those lessons extend beyond the walls of CES. We are especially proud to see our students serving their community at the local food pantry, participating in community events, representing Clementon through our sports & arts programs, and learning firsthand what it means to give back to the town they call home.

As a walking district, there is something particularly special about the connection between our school and our community. Our students aren't simply attending a school located in Clementon - they are growing up as part of Clementon.

From our youngest learners at Little Bulldogs Preschool through our eighth-grade graduates, our goal is for every student to be known, supported, challenged, and prepared for what comes next. After eighth grade, our students have the opportunity to continue their education at Overbrook High School or Camden County Technical Schools, providing multiple academic, career, technical, athletic, and extracurricular pathways.

Whether or not you currently have a child attending CES, our school belongs to the entire community. Strong schools help create strong communities, and the accomplishments, character, and opportunities of our students are something in which all Clementon residents can take pride.

These children are Clementon's future. They are our future graduates, tradespeople, professionals, artists, business owners, neighbors, parents, and community leaders. The education, experiences, and opportunities we provide them today are an investment in the future of Clementon itself.

COUNTY SERVICES

Special Needs Services: The Camden County Division of Programming for Individuals with disABILITIES and Special Needs offers a wide range of activities and programs throughout the year. Most programs are free to attend, but registration is required. Activities include monthly dances, fitness classes, adaptive sports, arts and crafts events, and a parent support group.

To find out more information contact:
www.camdencounty.com/service/disabilities-special-needs or Karen Weidner at 856-216-2127

Homeward Bound Animal Adoption Center: Clementon contracts with Homeward Bound Animal Adoption Center to house wayward dogs and cats until their owners can reclaim them. Call 856-401-1300 or email info@homewardboundnj.org for help locating your fur friend. They are located in the County Services complex at 125 County House Rd, Blackwood, and at www.homewardbound.org

Senior Services: The Carol Norcross Senior Social Wellness Center is located at 512 Lakeland Road Blackwood. This center provides opportunities to active adults for social interaction with their peers in a safe, quality environment through meaningful activities and programs, and to offer support systems for families with care giving responsibilities.

Services are free to Camden County residents 60 years or older who are self-medicating, ambulatory, and social functioning (a small fee is required for crafts). The center is open from 8 AM until 4 PM, Monday through Friday. Participants may attend the center two or three days per week. To apply or to receive additional information regarding this or any other senior citizen benefit plan, call us at 856-374-6005, visit www.camdencounty.com/service/senior-disabled-services Or stop in and visit!

SPECIAL EVENTS

The Special events Committee is always looking for volunteers; more help = more events! Contact gcantwell@clementon-nj.com to join us.

Trunk or Treat:



Date: October 30, 2026
Time: 7pm
Location: Clementon Fire Hall

This location gives us access to restrooms and the Community Center in case of inclement weather. As always, there will be prizes for both vehicles and children! To register your vehicle, please contact the below email.

Holiday Party:

Date: December 11, 2026
More info will follow closer to that date.

Light the Night Contest:

We will also be hosting our annual 'Light the Night' contest, with prizes for best decorated houses.

Clean Communities:



Dates: October 17 & 18, 2026
Time: 9am – 3pm

Dumpsters will be located at the Daniel Dougherty Sports Complex on Berlin Road, and is available to Clementon Borough residents only. Public Works staff will be on site to check ID's and answer questions. This is the perfect time to clean up your yard, clean up your street, or clean up that 'no mans land' on your block that always seems to accumulate trash.

Looking to help around town but not sure where to start? We will also be hosting a community cleanup on Saturday, October 17, 2026! Meet at the field at 9am to collect bags, 'picker' claws, and get assigned a street. If you have one in mind, please contact gcantwell@clementon-nj.com to let us know you will be doing a cleanup and to request pick up of the trash once placed curbside. Rain date Sunday, October 18, 2026.

Rabies Clinic:

Date: January 9, 2026
Time: 9am – 11am
Location: Clementon Fire Hall
165 Gibbsboro Rd.

Free rabies shots for all County resident dogs and cats. Clementon Borough animal registration will be available on site as well for 2027 licensing.

CLEMENTON FIRE COMPANY

It has been said that the most rewarding thing one can do is service to their country, and many will agree. I will also say that service to your community is up there on the list of personal reward.

Do you think you may have what it takes to be a member of our department? Why not give it a try? Volunteering to protect your fellow community member or a visitor to our community provides a great feeling of accomplishment. We'll equip you, train you, and be with you during your journey. We'll end up being your second family.

So why not give it a try? Stop down on a Tuesday evening and get additional information.

Keep an eye on our social media for more information on upcoming events, Thanksgiving food drive, Holiday parade, and the SANTA expedition

Winter Fire Safety Tips:

Heating, cooking, decorations, and candles all contribute to an increased risk of fire during the winter months. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) states that home fires occur more in the winter than any other season. As the temperatures start to drop, make sure you take the proper steps to ensure your family and home are protected from winter fire hazards.

Heaters: make sure they are serviced and running properly. Ensure you have ample clearance around the furnace.

Space Heaters: place a minimum of three feet away from anything flammable (tapestries/curtains, upholstered furniture, mattresses/bedding) and please, make sure you turn them off when you leave the room or go to sleep. Additionally, never store clothing on or around the unit, and never cover the cord or place anything on top of it.

Candle Safety: keep candles at least a foot from anything flammable, never leave them unattended, and place them out of reach of children. Make a routine to check all flames before going to sleep.

Decorate with Care: as decorations come in and out of storage during the winter months, they also come with potential fire hazards. Check light strips for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires or loose connections, and throw away damaged sets. Be mindful of the amount of lighting connected to an outlet to ensure you don't overload the system. Overloaded circuits can overheat and start a fire.

Play it Safe in the Kitchen: cooking is the leading cause of home fires and home injuries, so it's important to know

what you can do to help keep your friends and family safe. Never leave cooking unattended. Check your cooking areas frequently and remain in visual distance at all times. Utilize the exhaust fan to prevent carbon monoxide (CO) from collecting inside your

Follow us on:

Facebook- Clementon Fire Rescue Station 61

Twitter- @CLEMENTONFIRECO

Instagram- clementonfirerescue

CONTACT INFORMATION

Address:
101 Gibbsboro Rd.
Clementon, NJ 08021

Borough Hall Hours of Operation:
Monday, Tues, Thursday: 7am - 5pm
Wednesday: 7am - 8pm Friday: Closed

Mayor and Council - 856-783-0284, Ext. 124

Thomas Weaver, Mayor.....	tweaver@clementon-nj.com
Gwen Cantwell	gcantwell@clementon-nj.com
Robert Dorsey	rdorsey@clementon-nj.com
Greg D'Amato	gdamato@clementon-nj.com
Christopher McKelvey.....	cmckelvey@clementon-nj.com
Christine Nucera	cnucera@clementon-nj.com
Thomas Shaw.....	tshaw@clementon-nj.com

Police Department

Emergencies	9-1-1	
Non-Emergencies	856-783-4808	
Records Requests	856-783-2271	records@clementonpd.com
Kim Ott, Police Clerk	856-783-0284, Ext 132	kott@clementon-nj.com
Donna Carns, Court Administrator.....	856-783-0284, Ext. 110	dcarns@clementon-nj.com

Tax Department

JoAnn Watson, Tax Collector	856-783-0284, Ext. 115	jwatson@clementon-nj.com
Michael Bernardin, Tax Assessor.....	856-783-0284, Ext. 118	mbernardin@clementon-nj.com

Finance Department

Debra DiMattia, Chief Finance Officer.....	856-783-0284, Ext. 122	ddimattia@clementon-nj.com
Margaret Giordano, Finance Clerk.....	856-783-0284, Ext. 122	mgordano@clementon-nj.com
Jean Yaniak, Finance Clerk.....	856-783-0284, Ext 121	jyaniak@clementon-nj.com
Shannon St. Maur, Finance Clerk/Deputy Registrar	856-783-0284, Ext 121	vkupsey@clementon-nj.com

Construction

Lisa West, Technical Assistant/Planning & Zoning Clerk	856-783-0284, Ext. 125	lwest@clementon-nj.com
Steve Buchhoffer, Electrical Inspector	856-783-0284, Ext. 125	
Dennis LaSassa, Jr., Plumbing Inspector	856-783-0284, Ext. 125	
Robert Allen, Construction Official/Fire Inspector	856-783-0284, Ext. 125	
Justin Nicholson, Building Inspector	856-783-0284, Ext. 125	

Emergency Management

Leah Freiling, Deputy Coordinator	856-783-0284.....	lfreiling@clementon-nj.com
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Public Works

Jason Flade, Superintendent	856-784-0495.....	jflade@clementon-nj.com
Adam Norcross, Water/Sewer Supervisor.....	856-784-0495.....	anorcross@clementon-nj.com
Joann DiBattista, Water/Sewer Utility Clerk	856-783-0284, Ext. 114	jdibattista@clementon-nj.com

Clerk's Office

Jenai Johnson, Administrator, Municipal Clerk, Registrar.....	856-783-0284, Ext. 124	jjohnson@clementon-nj.com
Jeanene Wynne, Clerk.....	856-783-0284, Ext. 112	jwynne@clementon-nj.com

Code Enforcement/Zoning

Nick Sapio	856-783-0284, Ext. 127	codeenforcepnz@clementon-nj.com
Brian Penilla	856-783-0284, Ext. 127	bpenilla@clementon-nj.com
Robert Freiling	856-784-0495, Ext. 121	rofreiling@clementon-nj.com

Fire Safety

John Zuggi, Fire Official/Marshal	856-783-0284, Ext. 123	jzuggi@clementon-nj.com
Tim Shannon, Fire Prevention Specialist	856-783-0284, Ext. 123	tshannon@clementon-nj.com
Phillip Beeler, Fire Prevention Specialist.....	856-783-0284, Ext. 123	pbeeler@clementon-nj.com

Fire Rescue

Randall Freiling, Chief.....	856-627-0277.....	rafreiling@clementon-nj.com
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Animal Control

Independent Animal Care Services	856-718-0305.....	iacsnj@gmail.com
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NOTE: Each Zone also includes any street in the area that may not be listed

<u>Zone 1</u>	<u>Zone 2</u>	<u>Zone 3</u>	<u>Zone 4</u>
Barber Ave	Adams Alley	Albertson Ave	Arthur Ave
Barry Place	Birch Rd	Berlin Rd	Atlantic Ave
Brighton Ave	Blackwood Rd	Central Ave	Barry Ave
California Ave	Cedar Lane	Clementon Ave	Brand Ave
Carver Ave	Cherry Lane	Delaware Ave	Cooper Ave
Chews Landing Rd	Chestnut Ave	East Atlantic Ave (off Berlin Rd)	Erie Ave
Dunwoody Lane	Davis Ave	Etlon Ave	Francis Ave
East Atlantic Ave (off Garfield)	Elm Ave	First Ave	Franklin Ave
Edison Ave	Erial Rd	Hazzard Ave	Gibbsboro Rd (East Side)
Forrest Ave	Evvanson Ave	Jerome Terrace	Godshalk Ave
Fulton Ave	Holly Ave	Lake Ave	Harding Ave (off Higgins)
Garfield Ave	Indian Springs Rd	Mohawk Ave	Higgins Ave
Glenn Ave	Laurel Rd	Narragansett Ave	Hoffman Ave
Harding Ave	Princeton Rd	New Freedom Rd	Hood Ave
Harwood Lane	Reading Ave	Niagara Ave	Knight Ave
Lincoln Ave	Scott Ave	Orleans Ave	Koller Ave
McDonnell Lane	Sitley Ave	Overington Ave	Meehan Blvd
Monmouth Ave	Spruce Lane	Palethorpe Ave	Norway Ave
Mt. Vernon Ave	Tomlinson Ave	Palmetto Ave	Ohio Ave
Naylor Ave	Walnut Lane	Park Ave	Park Blvd
Oak Lane	Wauseon Ave	Pawnee Ave	Pennsylvania Ave
Silver Lake Dr (off California Ave & Oak Lane)	West Atlantic Ave (off Sitley)	Point Breeze Ave	Reed Ave
Trenton Ave	Woodland Ave	Rancocas Ave	Roosevelt Ave
Trowbridge Lane		Saratoga Ave	Silver Lake Dr (off Washington)
Wallace Ave		Second Ave	Spring Lake Dr
West Atlantic Ave (off Blackwood)		Sepviva Ave	Trout Ave
White Horse Ave (off California Ave)		Smith Terrace	Van Horn Ave
		Wilson Ave	Washington Ave
			Watson Blvd
			White Horse Ave (off Berlin)
			White Horse Pike

Zones by Street for Leaf Pickup