

Postcards tell Cedar Grove's history

Photos used in book are on display at town's museum

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Philip Jaeger points to a picture of a bucolic scene in Cedar Grove, taken about 100 years ago. Today, in that place, there's a busy intersection and a shopping plaza with the Cinema 23 complex and a Radio Shack, among other businesses.

"To think, that's what the area looked like back then," Jaeger said.

Jaeger, 67, spends a lot of time documenting the old days in his hometown, and in other Essex County towns as well. Through the years, he has collected hundreds of old postcards, including 600 of Montclair.

That collection led to a book about Montclair consisting primarily of his postcards. Then came his historical pictorial book "Images of America: Cedar Grove" (Arcadia Publishing).

The Meadowbrook club in Cedar Grove was so popular among young people, Jaeger recalled, that during World War II, a Japanese radio station tried to demoralize American troops by reporting that the building had burned down.

Some 200 postcards of Cedar Grove made it into that book and about 50 of them are on display through month's end at the Canfield-Morgan House and Museum in Cedar Grove in an exhibit titled, "Pompton Avenue: Stepping Back in Time."

"Today's Pompton Avenue was originally part of the Newark and Pompton Turnpike toll road," he writes. "The road ran from North Broad Street in Newark through today's Bloomfield, Glen Ridge and Montclair to the crest of First Mountain in Verona."

Visitors to the museum will see pictures of Dreis Tavern, now a residence. They'll also see Cedar Grove's first barbershop, which was also a pool hall, located at West Bradford and Pompton Avenue. Today, a medical building occupies the space.

M.W. Jenkinson's Brush Manufacturers, Cedar Grove's oldest business, specializing in brushes for industry and still remains today, except for the horse barn. And the town's only funeral home — Shooks Fu-



PHOTOS BY JENNIFER BROWN/THE STAR-LEDGER
Philip Jaeger points out photos in the display of 50 historic postcards of Cedar Grove, on exhibit through the end of the month at the Canfield-Morgan House and Museum in Cedar Grove.



Shirley Harder, a Cedar Grove resident since 1952, checks out the display. The photos are also featured in the historical pictorial book, "Images of America: Cedar Grove."

neral Home — was built around what was once a boarding house.

A photo of St. David's Episcopal Church — designed by Arthur Wynne, the inventor of the crossword puzzle — is among those on display. These days, a modern glass building stands in its place.

When Jaeger began doing research for his book on Cedar Grove, the retired Millburn High School math and computer science teacher discovered that the crossword puzzle was invented there. The first puzzle was created in 1913.

When Wynne invented the puzzle, he

called it a word-cross, Jaeger said. The newspaper's typesetter at the New York World inadvertently reversed the words and it became known as the "crossword."

Jaeger also includes a picture of the Meadowbrook (formerly called Castle Terrace), where the sounds of Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey and Frank Sinatra entertained the World War II generation.

The club was so popular among young people that during World War II, a Japanese radio station broadcast a piece of propaganda to U.S. armed forces that the Meadowbrook had burned down, Jaeger said.

"It was to demoralize the troops," he said.

The Canfield-Morgan Museum opened in 1999, and at first, the exhibits were limited to the old farmhouse where the Morgan family had lived. Benjamin Canfield built the farmhouse in 1845, and James and Edith Morgan bought it in 1910.

The barn exhibit features a collection of tools, old saws, a horse-drawn cultivator, early plows, pitchforks, rakes and an eclectic collection ranging from old snowshoes to a rendering pot that might have been used as a still. It is also home to the Cedar Grove Historical Society.