

# THE HILLTONE

HILTONIA ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER  
Winter 2002

## And Sam Created Hiltonia, *Andrea Lehman*

The Hilltone notwithstanding, Hiltonia, spelled with one “l,” was named not for the hill on which it stands but for the man who developed the tract, Samuel Hilton. An English immigrant, Hilton and his Hilton Realty Company acquired the land in 1923 and set about subdividing it and putting in streets, curbs, and sidewalks. By 1925 he began selling lots and building houses.

It’s hard to imagine the Hiltonia of the late ‘20s. Aerial photos show a decided absence of the big trees we treasure today, and Hilton’s sales brochures bragged of the view of the feeder canal and the Delaware River, not to mention a “perpetual vacation land” where “men, women, and children will put in joyous hours in the big open spaces.”

The brochures also proclaimed the neighborhood to be “the most healthful location in the city,” largely because its position on high ground meant that “fogs are unknown.” (Strangely, today’s realtors seem to neglect this important selling point.) The feeder canal was touted as a fabulous recreational facility, offering “at your front door all the

privacy of a private bathing beach.” We’ll have to remember that this summer and have a swim party.

And so people came to Hiltonia to escape the hustle and bustle of downtown life. Hiltonia was so far from the city that trolley lines didn’t even come this far until the neighborhood was built. A May 1925 ad boasted that 2,000

people had come to check out the new development the previous Sunday. Hiring architect Walter Hankin to design Hiltonia’s first houses “of Colonial and English design” Hilton advertised hundreds of available plans and photos from which to choose. Other buyers hired outside contractors, including Rolison-O’Donnell, Eugene Allfather, and Albert Micklewright.

And so Hiltonia was born. If you’re interested in the birth of your own house, pay a visit to the Trentoniana room at the Trenton Public Library. Curator Wendy Nardi can help you find old tax records and tax photos (available for some but not all Hiltonia properties) that go back over 60 years.

### Hiltonia Riddle

On average, how much did it cost Samuel Hilton to build each of the first dozen houses in Hiltonia?

Not sure?

Read on to find the answer.

## A View from the Hill, *Bill Graff*

The beginning of the year is when the Executive Board asks you to join the Hiltonia Association and 2002 is no exception. At \$10 per adult household member, membership to this organization is much less expensive than most of our other professional, social or religious organizations. Is it worth the time to write this small check? Absolutely! Here’s why.

When you join the association, your name is added to the list of well over 150 neighbors who understand that a great residential neighborhood does not happen without an active, self-supporting civic association. And it doesn’t matter where the neighborhood is. A local newspaper recently published an article about concerns over the purchase of land by The College of New Jersey in Hopewell Township. Elected officials told residents near the site what we in Hiltonia already know: form a civic association. We’ve had one here for about 50 years and it’s the largest in Trenton. Our large membership is important. Officials listen to us and understand what the vast majority of us feel we have and want to maintain: a clean, safe, beautiful neighborhood. If this is what you want — after all, it’s probably why you choose to

live here — please join the Hiltonia Association today. We always need more members! We need your name and your show of support.

The \$10 you send when you join the Hiltonia Association is used mostly to help those less fortunate and for our social events. It’s a great value! Last year, we donated significantly to the City’s Children’s Holiday Party and Summer Camp Fund. We need you to help us help children — many here in the West Ward — who have it tough. The social events for kids and adults are the glue of the Hiltonia Association that keeps us connected. They’re fun, too. This year, we’re proposing a deficit budget, so we need your membership more than ever.

Are you still hesitant about joining? Come to a general meeting, bring the kids to the Easter Egg Hunt, or attend the Spring Garden Party. Meet your neighbors through the association! You’ll find things festive, not formal; diverse, not divisive; congenial, not cliquish. And please bring your checkbook, because you’ll want to join the Hiltonia Association on the spot!