

In the Good Old Summertime

Contributed by Donna Brock

When the dog days of summer hit and many of us skinny down to our lightest and most comfortable clothing, I often wonder, just how did those late 19th century Hackettstown men and women deal with the heat? Can you imagine wearing a bathing suit that was typically a black, woolen, puffed sleeve dress over



bloomers, accessorized with long black stockings?

Take a look at this group gathered for a picture at Sully's Grove in August 1889, in their hats, proper layers of clothing, long sleeves and restrictive corsets. I've got to stand in front of my air conditioner just to look at them!

In the mid to late 19th century, many residents stayed close to home in the summer months, visiting Budd Lake, Lake Hopatcong and the springs at Schooley's Mountain. Schooley's Mountain was home to one of America's famous resort spots for the wealthy and fashionable from New York and Philadelphia. The Chalybeate springs drew numerous visitors from the East to its hotels each summer.

David Crowell's Belmont Hall, renamed the Hotel Dorincourt in 1899, was nestled on thirty-three



The Hotel Dorincourt

acres with croquet grounds, picnic groves, paths and ball courts. It did a thriving business in the summer months. In 1868, at the close of the Civil War, Heath House, under the proprietorship of J. Warren Coleman, was enlarged to 150 rooms and continued to attract visitors for many years.

Sully's Grove was a 17 acre tract just over the river in Morris County. For many years, it had been a favorite summertime location for local residents to picnic and hold community outings.

By the turn of the century, beaches and sea shore resorts had become the favorite summer relaxation spot, and many of the grand hotels on the mountain saw fewer and fewer visitors. After bankruptcy in the early part of the 20th century, the Hotel Dorincourt was closed and the buildings demolished in 1943. The Heath House met a similar fate in 1910.

While it's sad to think that these grand old buildings are lost except to history, and the simplicity of those summers in the mountains are only stories we read about, it is nice to know I'll never have to go to the beach in a woolen bathing suit.

Do You Recognize These Picnic Goers?

This gathering at Sully's Grove is one of the many pictures at the Hackettstown Historical Society Museum which is not completely identified. Click [here](#) for a larger version of the image and the identification chart. If you recognize one of your ancestors, and can put a name to a face, please contact the [Historical Society](#). Your help in keeping our history alive for future generations is greatly appreciated.

Information for this article was found in Ray Lemasters book, 'Hackettstown New Jersey, Growing in America', and J. Harold Nunn's book, 'The Story of Hackettstown'. Both publications are available for research and reference while at the Hackettstown Historical Museum