

Early in the last century, Joe Barrick was born into a world that, a few years earlier, had been told of the amazing exploits of two brothers from Ohio. In 1903 the two brothers had been on the top of what is now called Kill Devil Hill on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. In 2003 we will celebrate their centennial of that first flight. When Joe was born a decade afterward, the Panama Canal was still unopened and World War I was still looming in the future.

Years later, by the time of Lucky Lindy's flight across the Atlantic, Joe and his childhood buddy, Bill Slattery, were old enough to ride their bikes all around the town of Flemington. One day they happened upon a group of locals playing tennis on a single court on Elwood Ave. They became interested. This "interest" would lead to a lifetime fascination with the game of tennis.

Lloyd Fisher, a local attorney, became their mentor. He was one of the original members of the group and took an interest in the two young teenagers. Joe found a racket that he could use but Bill was out of luck. Lloyd Fisher stepped forward and offered some of his old frames for the boys to use. This man, who was so generous with his rackets and time would become deeply involved in the much publicized Hauptmann Trial as assistant defense attorney. It is not known if Lloyd had any time to spend on the tennis court in town but the boys took full advantage. While the world was obsessed with the Court House in Flemington, Joe and Bill became tennis players. They would go on to become champions on the local, state and metro level. When they played in the local county league, they hardly ever lost.

By the end of World War II, Joe Barrick was out of the Navy and again playing tennis with Bill Slattery. Joe got Bill a job with his insurance company in New York City. They entered a big tournament, won, missed their connections and had to hitchhike home with the huge traveling bags that the tournament director gave them for being winners. But Bill soon grew tired of the commute and took a new job with a local bank in Flemington. That ended their tennis adventures in the city.

When Joe had returned from the Navy, he discovered there was a lot of work to be done at the tennis club. A baseball diamond and pitcher's mound had appeared during the war. Joe scraped the surface and used the dirt from the pitcher's mound to form a "berm" along the court. This did the job of keeping the water from the street from running onto the court. Native clay for the courts was purchased from a local clay pit on the other side of Cemetery Hill just outside of town. (It is believed that the clay came from a pit that is today a POND in the backyard of Lex Roulston's former house) To spread the clay, Joe brought his old Chevy coupe into service. He hooked up a big metal bar to the back of the coupe and drove around and around until he was satisfied. This same metal bar can still be seen today imbedded into the steps under the metal roof at the club. He used chicken wire for the fences. He hauled big stones from local brooks for a wall alongside court #1. As the years went on, Joe built court #3 yard by yard.

The club members had known for years that they needed more space for the backcourt areas behind the baselines. But..... all attempts over the years to buy more land were