

Hunterdon Historical Newsletter

Volume 49
No. 1
Winter 2013



Hunterdon County Historical Society

www.hunterdonhistory.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Apr 6-7 - Reenactment

Clinton Civil War Days
at The Red Mill
www.theredmill.org

May 5 - Opening Day

Holcombe-Jimison Farmstead
www.holcombe-jimison.org

May 11 - NJ History Fair

Spirit of the Jerseys
Washington Crossing State Park
www.njhistoryfair.org

May 18 - Barn Dance

Bouman-Stickney Farmstead
www.readingtontwp.org

June 8-9 - Reenactment

Lambertville Civil War Days
at Holcombe-Jimison Farmstead
www.holcombe-jimison.org

SOCIETY HAPPENINGS

Mar 17 - Society Spring Meeting

"Railroading in Hunterdon"
by Lou Judice
see lead article

Library Hours

Open 10 - 4 p.m.
these Saturdays:

March 9, 23
April 13, 27
May 11, 25
June 8, 22

and

Open 12-4pm every Thursday

Railroading in Hunterdon is March 17 Meeting Topic

Railroad buff Louis Judice of Hampton, speaks on Railroading in Hunterdon at the Society meeting Sunday, March 17. The public is invited to attend the program at 2 p.m. at the Flemington Presbyterian Church, 10 East Main Street. Refreshments will be served.

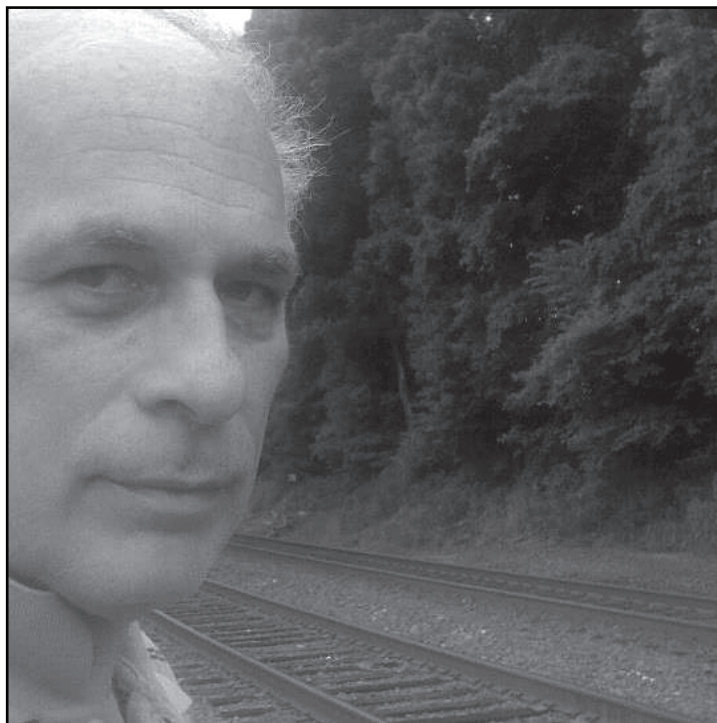
Lou has held a life-long interest in railroading and model railroads. His historical look at them will discuss the development of railways in Hunterdon County -- what made them come, what made them go, and what made some stay. He also will talk about the industrial archeology of Hunterdon's rail system and the re-purposing of railroad stations and rights of way.

A Hunterdon County resident for over 20 years, Lou has actively served his Bethlehem Township community as Mayor, township committee member, and planning board member. He is a member of Bethlehem Presbyterian Church

and a Life Member of the Historical Society.

He is knowledgeable in computer operations and in 2005 formed the Round Mountain Group, LLC, an internet design and marketing firm focused on web, mobile and social media development. He also generously designed the Society's first web page and introduced it in 2011.

Born and raised in New York City, he attended St. Francis Preparatory



Lou Judice

School in Brooklyn and received a Bachelor of Engineering degree in Electrical Engineering from Manhattan College. Over his career, Lou worked in a variety of worldwide technical and managerial roles with RCA Laboratories, Digital Equipment Corporation, and Hewlett-Packard. A sampling of his wide-ranging achievements include the development of the NASDAQ trading network, the earliest video-on-demand systems in the US, and deployment of the world's first mobile website in Switzerland.

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Thursday, Noon to 4 p.m.
2nd and 4th Saturday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
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Membership Report
A warm welcome is extended to those members who have recently joined the Hunterdon County Historical Society.

Reported by Harold O. Van Fleet, Membership Chair

- Lisa Arnold, Provo, UT
- Janet M. Dowe, Pittstown, NJ
- Sharon Garrison, Brentwood, CA
- Andrew Huzar, Milford, NJ
- Maurice W. Jones, Annandale, NJ
Life Member
- Michael Lakat, Ringoes, NJ
- Louis Lehmann, Tacoma, WA
- John W. Leonard, Clinton, NJ
- Susan Opdyke, Newton Highlands, MA
- Martha and Arthur Snellbaker,
Port Republic, NJ

Acquisitions
Materials representative of the history of Hunterdon County and the families who resided here are welcome additions to the Society's collections. Large collections may not be available for research until they have been processed. To the donors of recent acquisitions, the Society expresses its sincere appreciation.

Combs Family, 1658-1930..., by Clara Jo "Rebecca" Wright (Brookfield, WI: 2013) Gift of Hunterdon County Cultural and Heritage Commission.

New Jersey's Lindbergh Kidnapping and Trial, by Mark W. Falzini and James Davidson (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2012) Gift of Publisher.

Roberts, Frank, Collection of letters and other documents relating to the Lindbergh kidnapping trial. Gift of Frank and Sonia Roberts. (Frank Roberts was juror number 4 at the trial.)

Sanborn Insurance Map of Flemington, 1902; stock certificates and other documents. Gift of Bill McCreery III.

Stories from Raven Rock, New Jersey, edited by R. Curt Chinnici (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2012) Gift of Publisher.

Treacherous Beauty: Peggy Shippen, the Woman Behind Benedict Arnold's Plot to Betray America, by Mark Jacob and Stephen H. Case (Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2012) Gift of Stephen H. Case.

The Trial: A Novel, by Jen Bryant (New York: Yearling, 2004) Gift of Charles Fisher. (An account of the Lindbergh kidnapping for young readers.)

Van Fleet, Peter S. (1814-1902), biographical sketch, clipping from unidentified newspaper. Gift of Harry Van Fleet, via Fred Sisser III.

Wright Family: Walter and Susannah Wright: Nine Generations and Allied Families for One Line of Descent..., by Clara Jo "Rebecca" Wright (Brookfield, WI: 2008) Gift of Hunterdon County Cultural and Heritage Commission.


HAPPY 100th BIRTHDAY ELLA HAVER!

Ella Haver, whose family has been in Hunterdon since 1776, celebrates her 100th birthday on February 21st. Several events are planned in her honor.

An exhibition of photographs and artifacts about Ella were on display at the North Country Branch Library in Clinton in February.

A gala fundraising event benefiting the Jenny Haver Scholarship Fund, which Ella has headed since 1971, honors her centennial on March 15 beginning at 6:00 p.m. at the Hunterdon Hills Playhouse, 88 Route 173, Clinton, NJ. Be there to share memories about Ella, dine, dance and be entertained. Tickets are \$65 per person. Call (908) 500-5580 for reservations.

Anyone wishing to send a birthday card to Ella should address it to her, in care of Hunterdon County Historical Society, 114 Main Street, Flemington 08822.



VOLUNTEERS TO THE RESCUE!
Restoring rare Civil War relics

By John W. Kuhl

In the collection of our society are 25 frames of individual Civil War battle flag fragments of New Jersey and a few captured Confederate regiments, each identified with elaborate calligraphy. These were given to the Society for preservation years ago by one of the four G.A.R. (Grand Army of the Republic) posts in the county, perhaps filtered through their successor, Sons of Union Veterans camps. These fragments are from either the stars and stripes, or the state banners, both carried by each unit. Time and the elements have had their effect on these relics preserved years ago by materials and methods not acceptable today. A few specimens might have gotten wet over time and had been seriously attacked by mold. And, the integrity of some of the wooden Victorian deep frames, including their covering gesso has not stood the test of time. In short, they were deteriorating badly.



Special thanks go to Trustee John Kuhl and Super Volunteers Lynn Burtis, Richard Pierce and Judy Grow.

Society volunteers, including our fabric conservators Judy Grow, Lynn Burtis, and Mary Lyn Damaschke plus noted flag expert Richard Pierce, undertook the task of arresting the deterioration and suitably reframing these historically important artifacts of the great Civil War of 150 years ago. The group initially received valuable advice from textile conservator Kathy Francis. All the frames were disassembled, the fragments carefully removed from the old backer boards, and then appropriately cleaned with ethanol to kill the mold. Allan Grow expertly repaired the spots in the gesso of the frames in need. For those that were beyond repair, six new matching frames were purchased at a generous discount from Picture Perfect Framing of Flemington. New 8-ply rag mat board was supplied for each and the old glass was replaced with acrylic glazing. Calligrapher Catherine Lent of Frenchtown skillfully reproduced the regimental identification. The reverses were sealed with a new Tyvek backer. Their preservation and transformation is now remarkable and, especially being housed now in our climate controlled archives, the fragments are well placed to survive

HOW TO JOIN
Hunterdon County Historical Society
114 Main Street
Flemington, NJ 08822

Please enroll me as a member of your Society.

| | |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| Annual | \$20 per year |
| Family | \$25 per year |
| Contributing | \$50 per year |
| Sustaining | \$100 per year |
| Institutional | \$100 and up per year |
| Life | \$400 |
| Patron | \$1000 or more |
| Student | \$5 per year (up to 18 yrs old) |

Amount enclosed \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

ph # _____

email _____

I want to volunteer! ____Yes

well into the future.

The costs of the program were aided by a local history block grant from the Hunterdon County Cultural and Heritage Commission. Judy Grow contributed the new rag backer boards as well as the tools of her framing trade. Catherine Lent generously donated back some of her labor costs. Other cash donations were received from John W. Kuhl and from the local 15th N.J. Volunteer Infantry Association of the North-South Skirmish Association. The completed frames were exhibited during the month of December in the main county library on Route 12. Our new on-line website elicited comments and questions from several people across the country, as well as promises of future visits.

This outwardly small but vital project has been the work of many hands. We did good!

FOR SALE: *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant*, two vols., 1885 & 1886, first ed., leather bindings with marbled endpapers. Very good condition. \$2,500. Contact the Historical Society for more information.

HISTORY OF SCHOOLS IN HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY, PART 3

By Cornelius S. Conkling, County Superintendent

District Number Nine is the Junction [Hampton] School. This is a comparatively new formed district, and its past history is involved in that of the next district to be introduced.

Five years ago the children of the Junction were all included in the census of Clarksville [Glen Gardner], which according to the returns of 1870 contained two hundred and fifty-one children of school age. At that time the only public school accommodation was found for all that number in the old dilapidated and small stone building at Clarksville.

District Number Eleven, Mondalia, had been formed essentially out of the same Clarksville district about five years before. It is here proper to mark that old Clarksville thus became the mother of two large and flourishing school districts in the space of six years, the children indeed somewhat outweighing the mother of them.

The Junction district was formed into a district essentially by being set off by the present county superintendent. Afterward South Hampton, being *District Number Fifteen*, and immediately adjoining the Junction was annexed thereunto.

South Hampton, though including in it a census of one hundred and thirty-five children, had not at this time any school building whatever, nor indeed did it appear to have ever had a school house, but through having a board of trustees annually elected, and receiving the share of public money, was content to receive the funds and send forth the children included in the census to the adjacent districts to be instructed. Hence the entire district of South Hampton was appropriately absorbed in the newly formed district number nine.

This new district, immediately upon its formation, found ample accommodation in the school building belonging to St. Ann's church, but in the year 1873 the inhabitants of the Junction clearly discovered the importance of possessing a proper place for the education of their children. And consequently in the autumn of 1873, the large, imposing, well arranged and well furnished school edifice of district number nine was with appropriate ceremonies dedicated to purposes for which it had been erected.

The School Building at the Junction is a substantial frame structure, having three large rooms each 25 feet by 35 feet on the ground floor, with a ceiling of 15 feet.

The cost of this house was seven thousand dollars and has a good seating accommodation for two hundred and eighty pupils. The first board of trustees were Stephen H. Brown, George W. Rowland and James Welsh. The present incumbents are George W. Rowland, Charles O. Smith, and Ezra Nason.

The first teachers were I. P. Moore, Nora W. Bogart and Mrs. I. P. Moore. The teachers at present in charge consist of Peter G. Wyckoff, Nora W. Bogart and Emma Harrison.

District Number Ten is commonly known as the

Clarksville School. Allusion to this district has already been distinctly made, accounting it as the mother of districts.

The very early history of Clarksville district cannot be satisfactorily obtained. Inasmuch as the Clerk of the district had failed to secure the desired information, the services of John H. Nunn, Esq. of Clarksville were enlisted in the matter. Mr. Nunn has sought efficiently to collect the older dates and facts appertaining to the Clarksville School, and has kindly forwarded to me, in detail, the results of his research and his interviews. But notwithstanding all that Mr. Nunn has accomplished in the matter, the early history of the district, to quote the language of the gentleman, is wrapped in considerable obscurity.

The investigations of Mr. Nunn have verified the statements of the district clerk of Spruce Run, district number seven, and also coincide with the history furnished of the Charlestown district number sixteen, which two districts adjoin the Clarksville district.

Mr. Nunn obtained an interesting interview in the course of his research with Mr. Abraham Banghart, now living between the Clarksville and Spruce Run districts. The statement of this aged gentleman, is furnished in his words: "My father settled in this part of the country in the year 1766; my oldest brother was born in that year and started to school when he was eight- or ten-years old; he went to the school by the Spruce Run Church. I heard my brother say John Forrester was his first teacher. I started to school there in 1795 when I was about ten-years old, and James Brown (an Irishman) was my first teacher. I am now in my ninety-first year."

Mr. Banghart says that in the year 1800 the school house at Spruce Run was turned into a blacksmith shop, and there was no school there for 10 or 15 years. Thus the history already furnished of the Spruce Run District is verified.

The history of Clarksville district is very much intermingled with that of the Charlestown district as will appear in the extended account of that district, which is to follow in due course.

Mr. Nunn traced the history of the Clarksville district to a school house standing near the present residence of Nathan Terriberry, Esq. on the road leading from Junction to Charlestown, which was discontinued about the year 1830.

In the Clarksville district, according to its present boundaries, there has been but one school building preceding the present beautiful structure.

The first school house erected in Clarksville proper was built of stone, and was probably about 20 feet square. This house was erected in 1833, and was the only school accommodation until the year 1865 for the whole region now included in Clarksville, the Junction and Mondalia or

(cont'd page 1157)

More Memories of Hiram Deats' Minneakoning Farm

A continuation of William M. Curtis' (1932-2012) collection of childhood memories

The Grand Front Lawn

The acre-plus front lawn, directly across from the Flemington Junction Railroad Station, rose up a gentle slope from the road a couple of hundred yards to the manor house at the top of the knoll. The long driveway bisecting the lawn provided a grand approach and ended by circling around a large metal goldfish pond and fountain. (Except that in my day the driveway consisted of two badly eroded ruts half filled with coarse gravel – so rough that I always walked or biked on the lawn, not on the driveway.) Just behind the fountain were the covered front steps leading to the front entrance and forming the end of a gracious veranda that wrapped around the south end of the house. It continued around to provide a more private western porch overlooking the tennis court and covering the western entrance to the main hallway. Branching off the sides of the front circle, the drive circled the manor house and then rejoined to continue back along the north side of the garden to the tenant farmer's house and the main farm complex.

The drive north of the circle came first to a cast-iron blackamoor securely installed to provide a visitor a convenient place to tie up his horse. The bright multi-colored paint job that it presumably originally had was long since gone. I recall only ever seeing one horse ever tied to it. That was the horse of Bert Pickell, Hiram's groundskeeper, used to pull the six-foot gang or reel-type mowers to mow the lawns. (With the lawn mostly shaded by a tall, stately tree, I now understand why he seemed to stop so often while he was mowing the lawn, as it takes only a small stick to stop a reel-type mower.)

One large portion of the front lawn was free of trees so that was our ball field. If we could get four or six kids together and someone had a baseball or a football, we'd have a game. There were no Little Leagues, no coaches, no uniforms, no helmets or kneepads (only corduroy knickers). We made up our own rules to accommodate our small teams and our varied ages and athletic capabilities. None of us became notable ball players but we had a lot of fun and got a lot of exercise.

Next along the north drive came a line of buildings along the north fence that buffered the house from the north winds and created a sunny lawn/courtyard that gave the place much of its "plantation" character.

The Smokehouse – Plus

The first building along the north fence was a small ivy-covered stone smokehouse, which I remember being still in use. I looked in a time or two when someone was tending the fire – a surprisingly small bed of hickory coals and embers on the dirt floor with several hams hanging over it.

The fine gravel path to the smokehouse didn't stop at its door but split and went around each side to two two-hole outhouses discreetly hidden directly behind the smokehouse – girls to the left, boys to the right. Not only did the smokehouse hide the outhouses, but also when in use, the smokehouse aromas would overpower the outhouse odors. Plus, both were located where the prevailing southwesterly winds would waft most all aromas out over the north field and away from the house. A little nicety from a bygone era that no architect today would ever need consider.

The outhouses were there for us kids to use and I believe they were also the only facilities available for the family in the tenant house – even though the tenant house was attached to the northwest corner of the manor house. The manor house had been updated, though. It had a throne with a varnished wooden seat that was flushed from a tank mounted high on the wall.

The manor house kitchen also had been blessed with indoor plumbing at some point. Its previous water supply was still very much intact, so it was also still in use. Off the kitchen on the north side of the house was a small, enclosed porch.

Hanging from the ceiling was a pulley and over the pulley was a long metal chain. On each end of the chain was a wooden bucket of three to four gallons capacity. When one wanted fresh water, one took the bucket that was resting on the side of the well enclosure and hung it over the well opening. Next one pulled down on that chain until that bucket hit the water and the other bucket came up with a fresh load of water. A large kitchen window was located right next to the well so that a cook wanting some fresh well water had only to open the window and dip into the bucket parked next to it. If we kids got thirsty while playing in the yard, we were free to go to the back porch and drink from the tin cup that was always there. Just no fooling around or messing things up!

More to come...



Deats Farm. Hunterdon County Historical Society. Px213.

FROM THE DESK OF DONALD CORNELIUS, HCHS MANUSCRIPT CURATOR

As I write this column, I am very glad that I am sitting in the (relatively) balmy 58 degree manuscript vault here at the HCHS Archives. I can't remember the last time this space felt so warm to me – but then, when it is 11 degrees outside, a refrigerator feels warm! Fortunately,

despite the chilly temperatures, the volunteer staff of the HCHS Archives has not slowed down. Since the last newsletter was published, the crew has been sizzling! Here are some of the latest releases available for research now at the Deats Library:

Collection 110: The Elisha Warford Papers

A collection of business and legal papers from the county resident who was said to own so much Hunterdon County land in the early 1800s that he could walk from the Delaware River to Croton and never step foot off of his own property. This collection also includes a set of four diaries from Warford's son-in-law, Benjamin Ellicott, and they are a cracking good read about the home interpretation of the events of the Civil War in 1862 and 1863.

Collection 112: The George W. Van Syckel Collection

Contains good genealogical information and some photographs on the Alexandria branch of this good old Hunterdon County family.



Paul Eckel (cousin of the Van Syckels), ca. 1880. Collection No. 112, George Van Syckel Papers. Px6634.

Collection 114: Bruno Hauptman Trial Photographs

A small collection of photographs from the famous trial of the century. Some are copies of images that have appeared in print, but some of them are unique.



Reilly, Hauptman, and others at the defense table, 1935. Collection No. 114, Bruno Hauptman Trial Photographs. Px6621.

Collection 118: Papers from the Office of Alvah Augustus Clark

Clark was a US Congressman from 1877 to 1881. Although he lived and worked in Somerville for most of his life, Clark was a native of Lebanon Township and began his law practice in New Germantown before moving to Somerset County. He still did legal work for several Hunterdon County residents and firms, and those records are the ones that make up this collection.

Collection 119: Davis Family Papers

A small collection containing records of the family of Sylvanus and Mary Davis of Tewksbury.

Collection 120: Records of the Second English Presbyterian Church of West Amwell

Better known as the Mt. Airy Church, this collection contains some of the Church's foundational documents.

As many of you are learning, when we release new collections, we are now making the finding aid, or research guide, for the collection available on our website, www.hunterdonhistory.org. If you have a computer, and you have not done so yet, you really should check out the Society's webpage. As I write this, our volunteers are busy at work on projects such as the John Schenck Papers, the Edwin K. Large Papers, the League of American Wheelmen, and many other exciting projects. The first place the guides for those records will be posted is the internet! In addition to the finding guides for new releases, we are also scanning the inventory for the Society's first archival collections (released over 30 years ago) and making them available on the web over time!

Not all of our volunteers arrange and describe manuscript collections. Two of our volunteers are working on a project to make an electronic (in other words, searchable) record for every photograph in our collection. As part of our computer

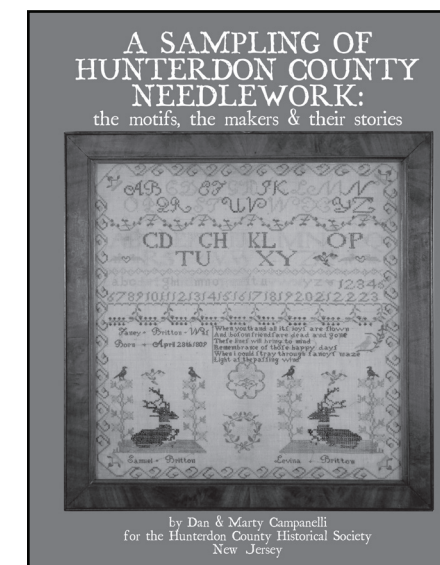
catalogue, this will greatly enhance the use of this collection, which is one of our most valuable but underused jewels. So far, these two volunteers have catalogued the first 300 photos (yes, it takes a LONG time) in our collection, and that list can be seen on our website.

Finally, I would like the membership to know that we have been awarded a project grant for 2013 from the New Jersey Historical Commission! The money from this grant will fund the professional cleanup and conservation of three day books from George H. Large. It will also provide funds to purchase 150 custom-made archival quality containers for the most used and at-risk volumes in our bound manuscript collection, and provide two book cradles for viewing those volumes when someone needs to use them for research.

We hope you enjoyed this report on the happenings at the HCHS Archives, and remember – check out the Society's web and Facebook pages for updates!

HUNTERDON NEEDLEWORK BOOK UPDATE

The Hunterdon County Historical Society received a grant in March from the Edward Thatcher Astle Memorial Scholarship Foundation to pay for the printing of a full-color, 132-page book about Hunterdon County schoolgirl needlework. Authored by researchers and collectors, Dan and Marty Campanelli, it will feature 74 beautiful examples of the artistry made by the young ladies of Hunterdon. The samplers range in date from 1798 through the 1840s, and come from all over the county, including the lower portion that was set off in 1838 to help form Mercer County.



A *Sampling of Hunterdon County Needlework: the motifs, the makers & their stories* will appeal not only to needlework enthusiasts, but also to local history buffs and descendants of Hunterdon's early settlers. The book is due to be released in June 2013, and will retail for \$25 per copy, with all proceeds to benefit the HCHS. There will be a one-day book signing and small exhibition of Hunterdon samplers at the Doric House in Flemington sometime in June. Watch the website, www.hunterdonhistory.org, for the exact date and time, or call 908-782-1091 for details.

(*History cont'd from page 1154*)

that which is now districts number nine, ten, and eleven, and which according to the last published school census, contain 666 children between the ages of 5 and 18 years.

The school house at Clarksville having stood thirty-nine years, and having become utterly unfit for use, and every way inadequate to the wants of the neighborhood, was by a unanimous vote of the legal voters of the district, in the presence of the County Superintendent, condemned and in the year 1873 the present tasteful, beautiful and adequate edifice, with furniture appropriate, was completed.

Hunterdon County nowhere presents a more delightful

school house than that which now occupies the place of the old stone affair that a little while ago crowded on the road side at Clarksville.

The first trustees in present district number ten were Peter Eucland, George Martenes, George Foss, James Smith and George Fritts.

The present trustees are Lucian C. Shepherd, Eli W. Young and John Eucland.

The first teacher of the district was Moses Gardner, the present [teacher is] Emma C. Erwin. The names of all the teachers of this district for the space of forty-three years are in the possession of the County Superintendent.

Images from the Past

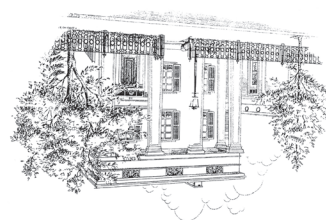


Hunterdon County Historical Society, Photograph Collection. Px606.

America, Engine 308

Flemington Branch, Lehigh
Valley Railroad

ca. 1905



Hunterdon County
Historical Society
114 Main Street
Flemington, NJ
08822