



# Hunterdon Historical Newsletter

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WINTER 2006

## Hunterdon Quilts 1820-1950 Topic of Annual Meeting 26 March 2 p.m. Flemington Womans Club

The culmination of the Hunterdon Quilt search, an outgrowth of the Heritage Quilt Project begun in 1986, is in sight! Veronica Mitchell's love of quilting and interest in history combined together to bring her to document New Jersey quilts for the Heritage Quilt project. That led her to focus on a regional study of quilts made in Hunterdon. The Historical Society cosponsored Quilt Discovery Days early on in her study and participated in an exhibition of some "discovered" quilts about five years ago.

Since then Mrs. Mitchell has written *Herstory Quilts of Hunterdon County New Jersey 1820-1950* and prepared it for publication. During her March 26th visit she will share her experiences during discovery, describing, photographing and writing about these quilts. She plans to have a very few quilts on exhibit, and have her book available for sale to those who want to purchase a copy.

Join us at the Flemington Womans Club at 2 p.m. for an interesting afternoon. A brief business meeting with election of trustees will precede Mrs. Mitchell's talk. Refreshments and social hour will close the afternoon.



Cover of *Herstory* illustrating one of the quilts described inside.

### 2006 Calendar

**March 26 Annual Meeting of the Hunterdon County Historical Society** - guest speaker Veronica Mitchell, speaking on Hunterdon County quilts 1820-1950 and her new book, Flemington Womans Club 2 p.m.

**May 3 Annual Volunteers Luncheon**

**May 6 Talk about the Lenape Indians**

by Archaeologist Jim Wade  
Main Lodge, Echo Hill Camp, Lilac Drive,  
Clinton Township, sponsored by the Hunterdon  
County Parks Department. For information call  
Park Office: (908) 782-1158

**May 13 Doric House and Fleming Castle open 1-4 p.m.**  
celebrating *Historic Preservation Week*

**June 13 Society Spring Meeting** - location and topic to be announced

### Oops!

We discovered after it was printed that the first issue of Volume 41, No. 1, Hunterdon Historical Newsletter was erroneously identified as Spring 2005 and should read Winter 2005. If you retain these issues for future reference you might want to correct this on your copy.

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**PUBLICATION COMMITTEE**

Roxanne K. Carkhuff, Editor

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# Membership Report

A warm welcome is extended to those members who have recently joined the Hunterdon County Historical Society.

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| Steve & Nancy Balliet, Milford, NJ                |               |
| George Sigler Boeman, Kailua, HI                  | Century Club  |
| Adam Chou, Flemington, NJ                         | Contributing  |
| Kevin & Jane DeHaven, Flemington, NJ              |               |
| Noel & Frances Goeke, Pennington, NJ              |               |
| Carmen L. Grimes, Flemington, NJ                  | Contributing  |
| Brenda A. Higgins, Oxford, NJ                     | LIFE          |
| Mike Komorowski, Frenchtown, NJ                   |               |
| Lambertville Historical Society, Lambertville, NJ | Institutional |
| Ray Lowe, Vellville, AR                           |               |
| Marti Marshall, New Ulm, TX                       |               |
| John H. Ramer, Fond Du Lac, WI                    |               |
| Jean R. Walton, Califon, NJ                       |               |

*Mrs. Shirley V. Favier*  
Membership Chairman

## Flemington Rocks” for 250th Anniversary of Fleming Castle

This theme, using decorated rocking chairs and rocking horses that have been donated by businesses and residents, will highlight the birthday of Fleming Castle.

The Castle was built on a 105 acre plot of land in 1756 by Samuel Fleming, as his home, a tavern and stagecoach stop. This attractive clapboard building was the first house to be built in the area.

Friday, May 29th the rockers will be auctioned at the Flemington Womans Club, 43 Park Avenue, at 8 p.m. The club will be open 2-4 p. m. for preview. The proceeds of the auction will benefit the Castle’s educational and promotional programs, administered by “Friends of Fleming Castle.” The Friends is a volunteers group that includes members and docents.

The Castle is open to the public the second Saturday afternoon of each month, from 1-4 p.m. For many years Fleming Castle was owned and maintained as a museum and meeting place by the local Colonel Lowery Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution and was recently acquired by the Borough of Flemington.

For further information about “Flemington Rocks” call Carmen at (908) 782-8235 or Sue at (609) 397-0108 or see the Castle website [www.flemingcastle.com](http://www.flemingcastle.com).

### HOW TO JOIN

**Hunterdon County Historical Society**  
114 Main Street  
Flemington, NJ 08822

Please enroll me as a member of your Society

<b>Annual</b>	<b>\$15.00 per year</b>
<b>Family</b>	<b>\$18.00 per year</b>
<b>Contributing</b>	<b>\$25.00 per year</b>
<b>Sustaining</b>	<b>\$50.00 per year</b>
<b>Institutional</b>	<b>\$50 and up per year</b>
<b>Life</b>	<b>\$250.00</b>
<b>Patron</b>	<b>\$1,000.00 or more</b>
<b>Student</b>	<b>\$3.00 per year (18 years of age or less)</b>
<b>Century Club</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>

for which I enclose my remittance in the amount of \$

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Saving the Sergeantsville Hotel

A Personal Recollection by Charles Jurgensen

The year was 1920. The 18th Amendment to the United States Constitution had been ratified. Prohibition was now the law of the land and would remain so until it was repealed in 1933. It prohibited the manufacture, sale and transportation of alcoholic beverages anywhere in the United States. President Herbert Hoover called Prohibition "a noble experiment" but others, like Jacob Wilson did not share his view.

Prohibition had a devastating effect on Wilson who had owned and operated the Sergeantsville Hotel since 1872. He no longer had a profitable enterprise and faced a crisis.

The hotel [presently in Delaware Township at the intersection of Route 523 with Route 603] by this time had a rich history of serving as a meeting place for the town and its visitors for close to one hundred and fifty years. It was recorded that Agesilaus Gordon owned the building in 1780 and applied for a tavern license.

In the intervening years, between Gordon's ownership and that of George Gaddis in 1842, the tavern changes hands many times and in each case the owner or the operator applied for a tavern license. Among the owners were Godfrey Rockafellar (1794), John Barcroft (1799-1800), James Larew (1816)

Othniel Lake (1817) William Rake (1821), William Kugler (1825), James W. Hart (1829) and Henry W. Wagner (1838). Between 1851 and 1856 alone there were five owners.

Presumably there were some structural changes and improvements made through the years. However, the most dramatic change occurred when George Gaddis, an entrepreneur, added the western section to the present structure. He too continued to operate it as a tavern.

In 1867 Jeremiah Trout acquired the tavern. He made changes to the eastern section and converted the structure into a hotel.

In 1872 Jacob Wilson and his wife, Gert, bought the hotel and named it the Sergeantsville Hotel. Wilson operated it for forty-eight years — longer than any other person. It was the last time the building would be in private hands.

The Sergeantsville Hotel was a classic 18th century design. Its walls were constructed of random stone which was later covered with stucco. The stucco was removed during a 1974 restoration. Porches were added over time, but they were also eventually removed. Wagon Sheds, a barn and a livery stable that had been constructed for the accommodation of daily visitors

*(Continued on page 976)*



The Sergeantsville Hotel *circa* 1906

### **Saving The Sergeantsville Hotel** *(Cont'd from page 975)*

and overnight travelers to Philadelphia and New York began to be demolished in the early 1920s with the advent of the automobile. One carriage shed remained until a short time ago when the Township Committee, in a controversial decision, stated it no longer wished to maintain the shed and opted for additional parking.

Following their purchase of the hotel, the Wilsons had found it profitable to operate in spite of numerous restrictions that had been imposed during the World War I years. But as the demand for lodging and meals slowly began diminishing year by year, Jacob Wilson depended heavily on his bar business to carry the hotel. The enforcement of Prohibition, however, ended all hope of running a profitable operation. Wilson had no alternative but to sell the hotel, leaving the future of the town's most important building in jeopardy.

One of the last meetings held at the hotel was the annual dinner meeting of Sergeantsville's Vigilante Society. The names of those who belonged to the organization were posted in the hotel's bar room. The sole function of the Society was to catch any would-be horse thief and return the horse to its owner. Should the Society members be unsuccessful in catching the thief, a cash gift was to be given to the owner of the horse's replacement. No one could ever remember a horse being stolen, but the annual dinner was a high point of the year.

When prohibition had put an end to liquor sales, Jacob Wilson complied with the law and sold his stock of whiskey, allowing one quart per customer. On a personal note, my father, who was not a man to consume alcoholic beverages, bought a quart for "medicinal purposes." It was still standing on the kitchen shelf not fully consumed when the last section of our farm was sold in 1942.

Subsequently an auction of the hotel's furnishings was held. My father bought an oak table that could be extended with ten extra leaves. Our family grew up around that table.

When Wilson made it known the landmark hotel was for sale the community leaders reacted with concern for loss of a public meeting place that had existed longer than anyone could remember.

Strangely enough, help in saving the hotel was to come through the intervention of members of another historic institution in town — the Methodist Episcopal Church of Sergeantsville which had a long history of its own.

In 1830 a man named Amos Hoagland convened a "woods meeting" of a small group of Methodists to explore their interest in forming a society. The newly formed society soon decided to build a small church of stone in Sergeantsville on what was to be the site of the present Methodist church. Thanks to the generous donation of a building lot and a cash gift of \$100 from H.H. Fisher, a member of the group, the first church was completed in 1832.

By 1867 the congregation had outgrown the small structure and building expansion was planned. This construction gave the church the form that it had maintained to the present.

It was to the credit and ingenuity of Frank and Mattie Epele, active, long time parishioners of the Methodist church, that a plan was devised to rescue the hotel for public use. The Epeles lived in nearby Headquarters. Mattie was the granddaughter of George Gaddis who had owned the hotel between 1842 and 1867. Her ancestors were among the early Delaware Township settlers. Frank was a leading Trenton industrialist and owner of the Trenton Malleable Iron Company. He was president of the Wilbur Trust Bank in Trenton and on the boards of many civic organizations.

The Epeles' plan was to have the Methodist Church buy the hotel, thus taking it off the tax rolls. The purchase price was \$4,000. The hotel would then be converted to a Community House, continuing its historic role as a town meeting place.

The conversion would include the construction of an auditorium with a stage on the second floor. On the first floor there would be meeting rooms for various organizations. And on the back of the building quarters for a live-in custodian were to be added.

To finance the acquisition and renovation of the building Frank Epele offered his leadership and financial support. He devised a campaign tool for public participation in raising the necessary funds. A rendition of the building was artistically drawn with rectangles referred to as "bricks." Residents of the township were urged to contribute \$30 for every "brick" they wished to donate. Names were then printed on each "brick." (Unfortunately, the drawing with the donors' names was eventually lost.) How much the Epeles personally donated was never made public, but the work on the conversion of the hotel to a Community House was never interrupted for lack of funds. When the renovated building reopened to the public, movies provided by Frank Epele were shown every Saturday night.

The Methodist Church continued to own and operate the Community House for twenty-eight years until it was purchased by Delaware Township, its principle tenant, in 1948. Although the name was then changed to the Delaware Township Municipal Building, its mission of serving the public was remained the same through subsequent years.

### **AFTERWARD**

Jacob and Gert Wilson retired and moved to the farmhouse across the street from the hotel to live with their daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Bird. Jacob died in 1927.

H.H. Fisher's descendants still live in the vicinity of Sergeantsville and use the same initials.

Frank and Mattie Epele continued to live on the former Poulson homestead in Headquarters which they called Glen Epele. Mattie oversaw the estate while Frank commuted to Trenton to work during the week. They spent their retirement years in Headquarters. Frank died in August 1936. He was a generous man with both his time and resources and was known for him many acts of kindness. The city of Trenton recognized him as Man of the Year for his numerous contributions over many years.

The Methodist Church of Sergeantsville has remained a vibrant church to this day. In 2007 the church will celebrate its 175th anniversary.

## Bequest from Roberta Grauert

The Society inherited a tall-case clock from Life member Roberta Besson Grauert who died 1 July 2005 and the clock had come down several generations in her family. She was the widow of E. Robert Grauert and left no children.

The clock had previously belonged to Elijah Rittenhouse Case [1848-1934] who passed it to his daughter Addie Case Besson (Mrs. Harlan Besson). Mr. Case was a son of John Case [1817-1888] of Alexandria Township and grandson of Godfrey Case [1766-1840].

The clock was in beautiful condition, is 95" tall, inlaid with fans and a horse head and plow. The case required only a minor repair and it has now been placed in the living room of the Doric House beside the Grandin desk.

Visitors to the Doric House will appreciate the wonderful gift and the Society is pleased to have an opportunity to preserve the clock for the future as an example of craftsmanship and family pride.



### Saving The Sergeantsville Hotel (Cont'd from page 976)



The Sergeantsville Hotel, now the Township Municipal Building celebrated its 225th anniversary in 2005.

#### Acknowledgements:

Marfy Goodspeed, Delaware Township historian and writer, for historical information and photographs  
Joan Jurgensen for editorial assistance.

## Acquisitions

Artifacts, manuscripts, family Bibles, and other material representative of the history of Hunterdon County and the families who resided here are welcome additions to the Historical Society's collections. To the donors of recent acquisitions the Society expresses its appreciation.

*Chicago's Great White City: A Postal History Of The 1893 Columbian Exposition.* by Harvey M. Karlen, 2003. Purchased by HCHS, an addition to information regarding philatelist Hiram Edmund Deats [1860-1963].

*The Library Edition of The Chagewater Murders* by Robert and Sharon Meeker, 1998. Donated by the authors, Washington, NJ.

Four rolls microfilm, Hunterdon County Democrat, July-September, October-December 2005, January-March 2005; Delaware Valley News, January-December 2004. Donated by the publishers, Flemington, NJ.

Ephemera pertaining to Liberty Village in Flemington. Donated by Bob Perzel, Flemington, NJ.

Signature book identified as such by label, "H. Co. S. B. & T. Co." [Hunterdon County Savings Bank & Trust Co.?]; appears to have been used by Flemington National Bank. Donated by Charles Barrick, Ringoes, NJ.

*George Ammerman In Alaska* prepared by George W. Ammerman, Jr., Neshanic Station, NJ.

*Mayflower Families Through Five Generations: Family of Henry Samson*, Volume 20, Part 2, compiled by Jane Fletcher Fiske, FASG; Robert Moody Sherman, FASG; and Ruth Wilder Sherman, FASG; published by General Society of Mayflower Descendants, 2005. Donated by NJ Society of Mayflower Descendants, Mr. Harry P. Folger, 3rd, DGG, Woodbine, NJ.

Two copies of the Base Ball Score Book #225 for Milford New Jersey Athletic Association, one for the 1919 season and the other for the 1921 season, probably belonging to Charles Glasing. Donated by his great granddaughter, Lisa Spanier-Teklits, Bend, OR.

## Learning About The Lenapes

If you missed the November Society meeting featuring Archaeologist Jim Wade speaking about the Lenape Indians, or want to hear him again, now is your chance. He will be the featured speaker on Saturday, May 6, 1-2:30 p.m. at the Main Lodge at Echo Hill Park.

Echo Hill is a County owned facility maintained by the Hunterdon County Parks Department. It is located on Lilac Drive in Clinton Township. Admission will be \$3 per person and preregistration for the lecture is required. You may call the County Park Office at (908) 782-1158.

## Daniel Pierson Case Bible

The Society recently received the family Bible in which is recorded the family of Daniel P. Case, along with a modest collection of family photographs and memorabilia. The donor, Joyce Case, is one of Daniel's granddaughters. The Bible was printed by A. J. Holman & Co., Philadelphia in 1886. Contributions of family Bibles are most welcome as genealogically valuable record sources.

### Births

Daniel P. Case was born December 20, 1854  
 Minnie Case was born January 19, 1855  
 Leslie J. Case was born May 10, 1883  
 Fred S. Case was born December 2, 1884  
 Rectford D. Case was born March 11, 1893  
 John Preston Case was born March 2, 1897

### Marriages

"That on the 17th day of December in the year of Our Lord 1879 Daniel P. Case and Minnie Sturm were united in Marriage."

### Deaths

Minnie Case, wife of Daniel P. Case, died April 8 in the year of Our Lord 1934  
 Leslie J. Case, son of Minnie and Daniel P. Case died May 7, in the year of Our Lord 1943  
 Daniel P. Case, husband of Minnie Case, died July 10, 1946 in the year of Our Lord  
 J. Preston Case died July 20, 1966  
 Rectford Case died June 8, 1977  
 Margaret Case [wife of J. Preston Case] died February 9, 1986  
 Florence Joyce Case [daughter of J. Preston and Margaret Case] died December 30, 1997

Clippings, photographs, and other ephemera accompanied the Bible and provided the basis for a brief genealogical background on Daniel P. Case's antecedents.

One clipping reporting the celebration of Mr. Case's 90th birthday on Wednesday, 20 December 1944, gave information about his parents, brothers, etc. On the happy occasion of his birthday he was honored by family and friends with a reception and dinner at his home, at 30 Maple Avenue in Flemington. He had retired from farming at age 60 and built the Maple Avenue house in 1914.

Daniel P. Case was born near Croton on 20 December 1854 to David and Susan Rebecca [Pierson] Case and attended Summit, Klinesville and Ringoes schools. He joined his father and worked the family's farm at Ringoes, later farming at Quakertown. He married Minnie Sturm in 1879 and they raised four sons, including John Preston Case, father of Joyce Case [the Bible donor].

David Case had married Susan Rebecca Pierson, the widow of John Rudebock with two girls, and they had four sons; Joseph, who lived at Lambertville and marked his 102nd birthday in 1944; Jonathan; John R., and Daniel Pierson Case. Daniel's two half sisters, daughters of his mother and her first husband, were Mary Rudecock and Elizabeth M. Case [wife of Asa Case].

## Notes and Queries

Address correspondence to Genealogical Committee. One query listing of ten lines free to members. 35 cents per line over ten; nonmember rate is 25 cents per line. Remember to enclose a SASE (self-addressed, stamped envelope) with genealogical correspondence if you expect a reply.

DILTZ, HOFF/HUFF, SHEPPARD: Who were par/o, sibs/o, grandpar/o Joseph Diltz, b. ca. 1805, who m. Mary Jane Hoff/Huff? They had a dau Sarah Elizabeth Diltz, b. 24 July 1835, d. 16 Dec 1925, who m. Benjamin F. Sheppard 25 Oct. 1856. Benjamin d. 2 Aug 1896. He was b. at Three Bridges. She d. at age 92 in Easton PA and both were bur in Easton. Joseph W. Diltz and wife, Mary Jane Hoff/Huff are bur in a Diltz farm at Three Bridges. ADD: R.E. Dils, 27515 Rd. U6, Delores, CO 81323 [e-mail: edils@frontiernet]

EVERITT/EVERETT, GARRISON, MODAVIS, SPANGENBERG, WELCH: Searching for par/o Louisa A. Garrison Welch (1819-1902), m. Christopher Welch, liv BethTwp in 1850. Believe her par were John Garrison (ca. 1790-?) b. NJ and Martha (Mattie?) Everitt/Everett b. ca. 1790 in NJ. Louisa's siblings: James H. Garrison (ca. 1820-1910), Rebecca Garrison Walker Spangenberg (ca. 1825-1912), Nancy Garrison Modavis (ca. 1826-1910) and William E. Garrison (1827-after 1900). ADD: Diane Hearne, 23802 Cassandra Bay, Dana Point, CA 92629 [e-mail: Phearne4@cox.net].

GULICK, WILLIAMSON: Looking for burial site of Peter Williamson, b. 24 July 1763 at Six Mile Run, d. 18 March 1844. Married wife Charity Gulick December 1784. Their one son, Gilbert, b. 1787/88 in NJ, d. in Columbiana County, OH in 1865. Peter was a pensioned RevWar soldier, file S3598, application made 7 May 1833. Also desire info on Charity Gulick line and others related to this couple. ADD: Charles Smith, P.O. Box 221, Thomaston, CT 06787-0221.

## Form of Bequest

(This form is recommended for use in making a bequest of real property, in a Will or otherwise, naming your society as beneficiary)

**ITEM:** I bequeath the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to the Hunterdon Historical Society, Flemington, NJ.

**ITEM:** I bequeath to the Hunterdon County Historical Society, Flemington, NJ, without restrictions title to and full possession of historical materials and objects, (real estate, account books, diaries, Family Bibles, documents, papers, photographs, programs, newspapers, clippings, books, records), etc.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

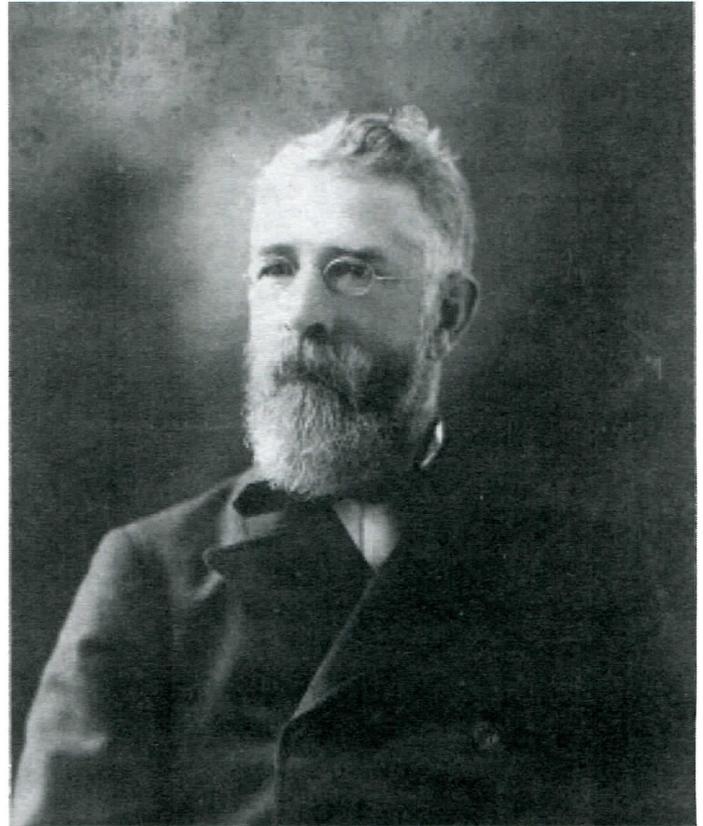
## George Best, Society Founder's Photograph

Thanks go to Lesley Clingerman, Kettering, OH for finding a photograph of Dr. George N. Best in an antique shop, rescuing it and returning it back to Hunterdon County. Her original suggestion as that we find a descendant, but there are none.

The photographer was Mr. Fritz of Lambertville, N.J. and on the reverse of the photograph, in beautiful penmanship, is written, "George Newton Best Born Oct. 16th, 1846." He died 18 June 1926 — eighty years ago. His obituary reveals him to be a son of Cornelius and Elsie Alpaugh Best, born in Round Valley. As a boy he worked on a farm and clerked in a store. When he was 21 he obtained an appointment to teach in a little country school where he earned money enough to attend Pennington Seminary. He later attended Lafayette College and studied medicine at University of Pennsylvania, receiving his diploma in 1875. He located at Rosemont where, for fifty years, he ministered to the people of that area, covering a wide radius in all kinds of weather.

He was a keen observer and began, as a young man, to study flowers and plants and was a member of Torrey Botanical Club of New York and the New Jersey Natural History Society.

When this Historical Society was formed in September of 1885, Dr. Best was among the founding members. We appreciate having a photograph of him and thank Ms. Clingerman.



## Another View of 1940 Frenchtown Fire



The photograph in "Images from the Past," Fall 2006, volume 41, #3, was of the 3 May 1940 fire at Eddy's Hardware store on Bridge Street in Frenchtown. Found recently in the Society's collections was the photograph left taken at street level and looking toward the fire. This view shows more detail of the two stores adjacent to the hardware store.

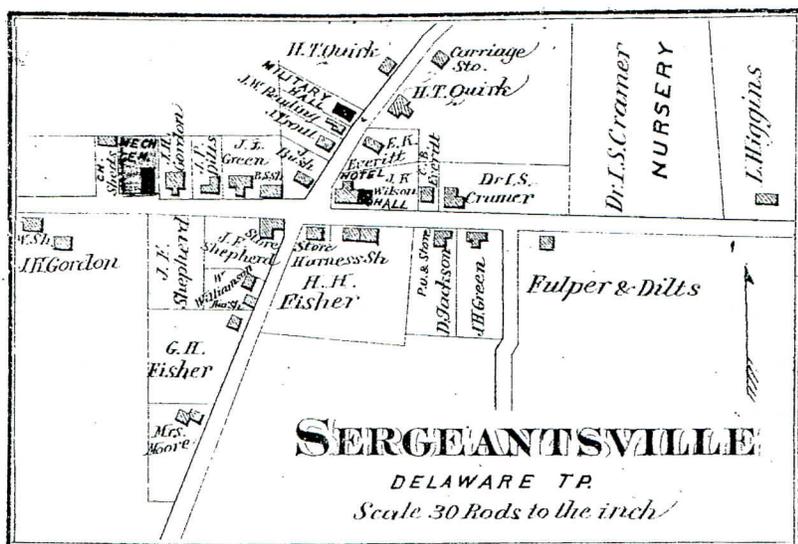


# Images from the Past

## Community Day in Sergeantsville circa 1922



Paul Kurzenberger Collection



Mr. Kurzenberger dates this view circa 1922, after the former hotel became a Community Center. His approximation of the date is based on the automobile license plate which reads 1922.

During proprietor Jacob K. Wilson's tenure a story about the Sergeantsville hotel appeared in the *Democrat-Advertiser*, 30 August 1906, written by J.M. Hoppock.

Left, is a map from the 1873 *Atlas of Hunterdon County New Jersey*, of the crossroads where the Sergeantsville Hotel was located, now the Delaware Township municipal offices.