

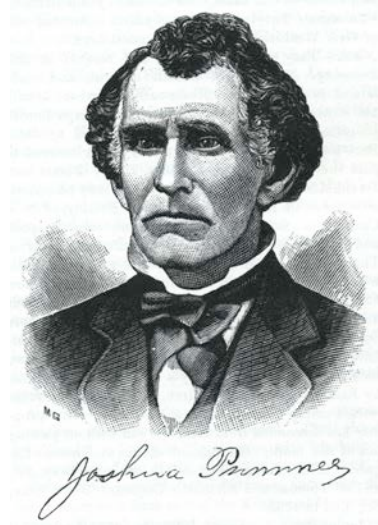
## The Democratic Club of Delaware Township, Part 2

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Part 2 continues with the biography of the president of the Democratic Club of Delaware Township. The remaining fifteen officers' biographies, as well as the full text of the booklet "Constitution and By-Laws of the Democratic Club of Delaware Township, Hunterdon County, N. J., Adopted July 4, 1863," appear below.

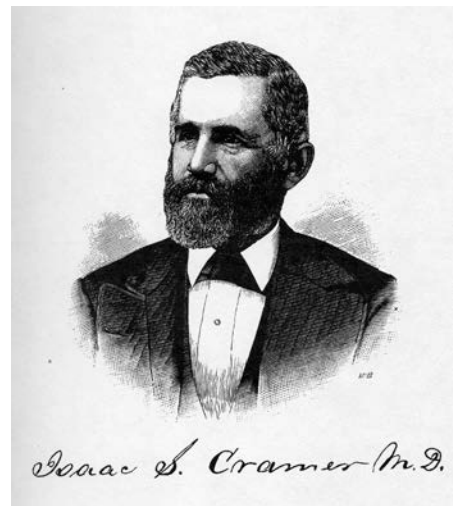
### President, Joshua Primmer.

Rev. Joshua Primmer was born June 25, 1813 in Hopewell to Richard Primer and Lydia Bunn. He married Mary W. Servis on April 26, 1837. They had no children. Primmer was a blacksmith before moving to Delaware Township. He settled on a farm on Route 523 south of Sergeantsville and became active not only in the Democratic Party but the Masons and the Methodist Church. He was often called Rev. Primmer even though he was not an ordained minister. Primmer was 50 years old in 1863. He died on March 18, 1904, age 90.<sup>1</sup>



### Treasurer, Dr. I. S. Cramer.

Isaac Smith Cramer, M.D. was born May 24, 1834 in Changewater, Sussex Co. to Peter Emery Cramer and Sarah Smith. He married Margaret R. Inghams on Feb. 14, 1855, but, like his friend Rev. Joshua Primmer, had no children. Also like Primmer, he was a Mason and was active in Democratic politics. He received his medical degree in 1854. In the 1860 census for Delaware Township, he was identified as a doctor of "Alapathy." In 1862 he was elected Secretary of the Hunterdon County Medical Society, and later became its president. After the war, he set up a nursery business in Sergeantsville, but continued his work as a physician. Later in life, he operated a drug store in Flemington, and served as county coroner. He died in 1911 age 76. His wife died the next year, and they are buried in the Prospect Hill Cemetery.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> A short biography of Rev. Primmer can be found in Snell's History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, p. 391. Also see goodspeedhistories.com for my article "Rev. Joshua Primmer."

<sup>2</sup> See Snell, pp. 390-91 for a short biography. of I. S. Cramer, M.D.

### **Secretary, Dr. H. B. Nightingale.**

Henry Billington Nightingale was born June 22, 1825 in Baltimore, MD. His wife was Albina C. Prince (also known as Elmira) of Bucks County, PA. They married on Feb. 19, 1851 and had 8 children. Probably not long after the marriage, Nightingale moved to the Rosemont neighborhood and set up his medical practice. He was associated with the Presbyterian church that once stood next to the cemetery, and in 1860 gave a 99-year lease to the cemetery trustees for a right of way across the church grounds. Like Primmer and Cramer, he was active in Democratic politics. He was chosen as quartermaster of the Hunterdon Militia Brigade in 1861, and in 1862 was elected president of the Hunterdon County Medical Society. In 1866, Nightingale embarked on a new venture—as publisher of the Hunterdon County Democrat, but that only lasted for a year. After selling the paper, he continued to practice medicine in Flemington until 1872 when he moved back to Rosemont. He was harnessing his horse to his carriage in preparation for a medical visit when he suffered a massive stroke and died on Sept. 10, 1873.

The Vice-Presidents of the Democratic Club were also listed in the booklet. Two school districts did not have vice presidents to represent them: the 10<sup>th</sup>, which was the Kuhl School, on the border with Raritan Township, and the 15<sup>th</sup> or Rocktown District, on the border with West Amwell. The following are the Vice Presidents that were named:

#### **1<sup>st</sup> District, Reading School, J. M. Hoppock.**

The Reading School was on the north side of Raven Rock-Rosemont Road. Jonathan M. Hoppock was the local historian whose articles I have been publishing on my website. He was born Sept. 20, 1838 to Henry J. Hoppock and Lydia Wolverton. For most of his life he was a school teacher. In 1859, Hoppock was one of the founding members of the Locktown Debating Society. The next year, the society debated the question: Should slavery be abolished. Hoppock argued in the affirmative. At the town meeting held in April 1862, he was elected to the township committee when he was only 24. On Sept. 16, 1864 he married Elizabeth Cain and had two daughters. He died on Oct. 29, 1906 at the age of 68.

#### **2d District, Centre Bridge [Stockton] School, David B. Boss, Esq.**

The Stockton/Centre Bridge School was located where it still stands today. David B. Boss was born Sept. 27, 1817, the youngest of nine children, to Peter Boss and Anna or Amy Bosenbury. They lived in Delaware Township, near the border with East Amwell. On Dec. 23, 1843, David B. Boss married Permelia W. Rounsavel, and they had two sons, Richard and Gershom. In 1850, the couple was living in Delaware with Peter and Anna Boss, and David was farming. In 1855, he was named a Justice by the State Legislature, and again in 1860. In the 1860 census, the Boss family was listed next to Peter Jackson and his family (mentioned above). In 1863, Boss was named Commissioner of Deeds for Delaware Twp.,

and in 1864, he was elected to the N.J. Assembly, and served that year and the next. In the 1870 census, when he was 52, he was identified as a retired farmer. He may have suffered from a lingering illness as he died on May 29, 1872, age 54, and was buried at the Sandy Ridge cemetery. His wife Permelia died on Nov. 14, 1899 and was buried beside him.

### **3d District, Vandolah School, Rev. Henry F. Trout.**

The Vandolah School was located on Sandy Ridge-Mt. Airy Road, south of the Sandy Ridge Church. Henry F. Trout was born July 29, 1829 to Jeremiah Trout and Mary Ann Dunn. About 1848 he married Mary M. Case. They had one child, G. W. Melville Trout, in 1858. Henry Trout, like Jonathan M. Hoppock, began adult life as a school teacher, teaching at the Dry Brook School. He and his family lived on a farm on Meszaros Road that he bought from Asa and Sarah Romine in 1860. This location was not at all near the Vandolah school at Sandy Ridge. Perhaps there was no one available in that neighborhood to manage the district for the Club. He died at the young age of 43, on Sept. 1, 1872, and was buried in the cemetery at Sand Brook. His wife died in 1910. The list of officers for the Democratic Club identified him as "Rev.," but I do not know which church he was affiliated with. Since he was buried at Sand Brook, it is possible he was a member of the Brethren Church in that village.

### **4<sup>th</sup> District, Moore's School, John M. Bowne.**

Moore's School in 1873 was on the north side of Route 604, just west of the intersection with Wagner Road. John Milton Bowne was born Sept. 18, 1831 to Hon. Joseph Gardner Bowne and Mary S. Barber. He married Anna Mary Fisher about 1850, and had five children. Daughter Mary Lee Bowne married Archibald Trout. In 1861, Bowne became a captain in the Hunterdon militia, and soon after was named Adjutant of the Hunterdon and Mercer Squadron, and after that, Quartermaster of the 4<sup>th</sup> Regiment of N.J. Cavalry.<sup>3</sup> His life was cut short when he died of diphtheria on August 31, 1863, shortly after being named to his position in the Democratic Club. His wife died on June 14, 1901. The couple is buried in the Barber Cemetery.

### **5<sup>th</sup> District, Locktown School, E. M. Heath.**

The Locktown School was located (where else?) on Locktown School Road, just east of the intersection with Locktown-Sergeantsville Road. Edward Mason Heath was born May 24, 1837 to George D. Heath and Mary R. Heath. He married Annie B. Trout (a cousin of Henry F. Trout) about 1858. They had one son, Robert T. Heath, born 1866. In 1858 when the Locktown Volunteers were organized as a local militia, he volunteered and was named a second lieutenant. In 1860 he was a school teacher, living with his wife in Kingwood Twp. At the Delaware Twp. meeting of 1862, he was elected Town Superintendent. In 1865,

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<sup>3</sup> Obituary for John M. Bowne, H. C. Republican, April 8, 1864, and H. C. Democrat, April 13, 1864. Surprising that the obits were not published until 8 months after the date of death.

he was clerk at a special meeting held in Sergeantsville to provide the town's allotment of volunteers. That year he became clerk of Delaware Township, a position he held until 1873. In 1866, he was chosen as Clerk of Hunterdon County, a position he held for two years. He was active in the local Granges, and witnessed many deeds. In 1875, he clerked for the Locktown Christian Church, of which he was a member. In the 1880 census he was 43 years old, a farmer and a school teacher. He died on Feb. 1, 1916, age 78, and his wife Annie died in 1922. Both were buried in the cemetery of the Locktown Christian Church.

#### **6<sup>th</sup> District, "Sergeant's," Gen. J. T. Sergeant.**

Sergeant's School was on Route 604 at the intersection with Reading Road, not far east of the covered bridge. This was John Trimmer Sergeant, who was "General" of the local militia. I am surprised to see him listed for the Sergeant's District, which was the Green Sergeant school, just east of the covered bridge, as he lived near Sand Brook. Perhaps there was no one else available to recruit in that area. Or maybe he asked for it in recognition of his likely ancestor, Charles Sergeant. John T. Sergeant was born Sept. 30, 1828 to William Sergeant and Elizabeth Trimmer, and married about September 1850 to Mary Jane LaRoche. They had three children (William T., Ann Elizabeth and Emma). Sergeant was Captain of the Delaware Guards as early as 1857. In 1859, he was chosen as Moderator for the Delaware Twp. town meeting, and was named a judge of election. He also moderated the town meetings held in 1862 through 1865. In 1864, he was named vice-president of the Freeman's Meeting, which was "called by men in favor of peace, and opposed to the present administration." John T. Sergeant died suddenly on November 26, 1865 at the age of 37, just three months after the death of his father, on August 4, 1865. He is buried with his parents in the Larison's Corner Cemetery. His wife Mary died in 1904 and is buried in the Amwell Church of the Brethren cemetery (Lower Amwell Old Yard).

#### **7<sup>th</sup> District, Sand Brook School, Henry Crum.**

Sand Brook School was located at the intersection of Route 523 and Sandbrook-Headquarters Road. Henry Crum was born April 6, 1815 to Benjamin and Sarah Crum, and married Catharine Moore on Feb. 18, 1837. They had nine children, and lived on a farm on Biser Road. For a time, Crum was a storekeeper in partnership with John C. Fisher, but that was dissolved in 1840. Crum was still a Raritan Twp. merchant in the 1850 census, but by 1860 he was a 45-year-old farmer living in Delaware Township. That year he purchased the Huber farm on Biser Road, where he remained for the rest of his life. Unlike many of the other officers of the Club, Henry Crum stayed out of politics for the most part. His wife Catharine died on Dec. 23, 1891, and Henry Crum died on Oct. 19, 1897, age 82. They were both buried in the Lower Amwell Old Yard.

### **8<sup>th</sup> District, Dry Brook School, Bateman Hockenbury.**

Dry Brook School was located on Route 579, north of Croton. Bateman Hockenbury was born November 1817 to John Hockenbury and Sarah Sutton of Croton. About 1845 he married Rebecca Snyder and had with her ten children. He ran the sawmill at Croton for many years, and, in fact, was the last to do so. Egbert T. Bush wrote of him that he was “a reliable sawyer,” and “a good farmer too.” I found nothing about him that suggested he was an active Democrat. Hockenbury was probably recruited for this position. The Dry Brook School was on Rte 579 north of Croton. He and wife Rebecca both died sometime after 1900, but I have not found their death dates.

### **9<sup>th</sup> District, Harmony School, Isaac Horne.**

Harmony School stood on the Raritan Township side of Route 579 across from Stone Signpost Road. Isaac Horne, Jr. was a chairmaker who was born on Nov. 1, 1809 to Isaac Horne, Sr. and an unknown mother. About 1835 he married Sarah Dunn, daughter of school teacher Hugh Dunn and Hannah Dilts. They had three children (Jeremiah T., Theodore M. and Charles). Horne was friendly with Benjamin Horn, another chairmaker (and possible relative) who served on the Township Committee in 1840. Isaac Horne died on Jan. 12, 1891, age 81, and his wife Sarah died on Oct. 1887, age 78. They are both buried in the Sand Brook Cemetery.

### **11<sup>th</sup> District, Mount Airy School, J. V. C. Barber.**

Mt. Airy School was located in the village of Mt. Airy on old route 179. John Van Camp Barber was another highly-respected member of Delaware Township society. He was born February 1841 to George H. Barber and Jane M. Van Camp. The family shared a household with John’s grandfather William Barber. In 1850, a black woman named Clarissa Mount age 40 and a boy named Westley age 3 were living with them. In 1860, Clarissa was now Clara Dickason 57, and Westley was Westley Barber, age 13. The census did not state whether they were free or slave, but in the 1840 census, a young free black woman was living with the Wm. Barber family. Other members of the Barber family did own slaves, but the family was not in agreement as far as politics went. John V. C. Barber’s uncle Johnson Barber was a member of the Republican Party, opposed to the extension of slavery into the Western territories.<sup>4</sup>

When John V. C. Barber joined the Democratic Club he was only 22 years old. He had just recently married (on Jan. 14<sup>th</sup>) Emma Augusta Holcombe, daughter of Solomon Holcombe and Miranda Holcombe. They had three children (George H., Cornelia H. and Miranda H.). Barber was a farmer all his life, his farm being just north of Lambertville along the railroad tracks and the canal, and near the Alexauken Creek. He did not become an office holder until 1886 when he was

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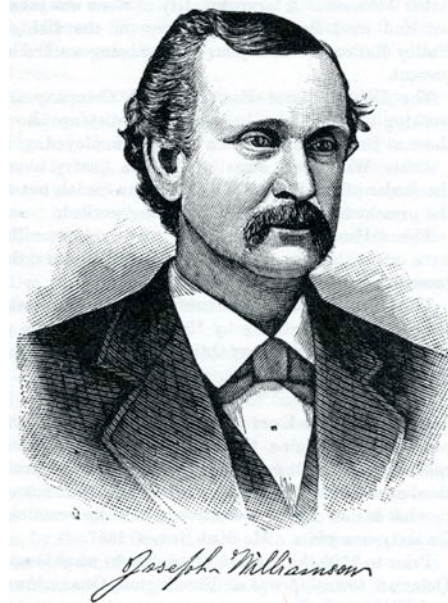
<sup>4</sup> Hunterdon Gazette, Aug. 27, 1856.

elected Collector of Delaware Township, and one of the Commissioners of Deeds. He also held those positions in 1887 and 1888.

John V. C. Barber died sometime after 1930, when he was counted in the Delaware Twp. census as an 89-year-old widower, living with daughter Maranda, age 56, and son George H., age 64, both single.

### **12<sup>th</sup> District, Supreme School, Jos. Williamson.**

Supreme School was located first on Strimples Mill Road, and later moved to the intersection of Strimples Mill Road and Co. Route 519. The Hon. Joseph Williamson (Justice of the Peace) was born Oct. 10, 1839 to Matthais Williamson and Susan Slack. He married Mary A. Gordon, daughter of John H. Gordon and Catherine Case, on Dec. 22, 1864. They had five children, including Franklin Pierce Williamson (1865-1946). In the 1860s he taught at the Oregon school and the Supreme school. Joseph Williamson was a farmer all his life. He farmed his father's property on Sanford Road until 1877 when he bought his father-in-law's farm west of Sergeantsville and grew peaches there. He was profiled in Snell's History of Hunterdon:



*In politics Mr. Williamson is of the faith of his fathers,--a Democrat,--and is also a member of the Masonic fraternity. For two terms he has held the office of justice of the peace, and has been called to fill other offices of trust and responsibility in his township. He has frequently been a delegate to the county and congressional conventions, and has served the interests of his party and constituents with intelligence and ability.<sup>5</sup>*

Joseph Williamson died on July 30, 1900, age 60. His wife Mary died in 1908, age 69. They are buried on the Rosemont Cemetery.

### **13<sup>th</sup> District, Ringoes School, John Fisher.**

Ringoes School was in Ringoes Village on Route 579, just east of Larison's Academy (now Harvest Moon Inn). There were so many John Fishers in Hunterdon County that I despaired of figuring out which one belonged to the Club. My best guess is that this was the John Fisher who was born March 25, 1830 to Wm. Peter Fisher and Sarah Wilson. Cornelius W. Larison wrote of him in his genealogy of the Fisher family. About 1855 he married his third cousin,

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<sup>5</sup> Snell, p. 388.

Martha H. Fisher, daughter of John C. Fisher and Catharine M. Skillman. As far as I can tell, his only occupation was that of a farmer, and breeder of Southdown sheep. In 1867 he bought a tract of 105 acres on Toad Lane in East Amwell and ten years later built “a substantial mansion” on that property. He died on that farm on Aug. 28, 1920 and was buried at the Larison’s Corner Cemetery (Amwell Ridge). His wife Martha had died on April 29, 1906 and is also buried there.

#### **14<sup>th</sup> District, Oregon School, A. B. Rittenhouse.**

Oregon School was located on the Locktown-Sergeantsville Road, just north of the intersection with Meszaros Road. The Hon. Andrew Bray Rittenhouse was born Nov. 22, 1807 to Edward Rittenhouse and Elizabeth Bray, and married Elizabeth Mettler in 1832. They had 7 children, including daughter Amy who married John Bellis. Rittenhouse began his adult life as a Baptistown storekeeper and postmaster, and, according to John Bellis, was “an ardent Whig.” But his politics certainly changed by the time of the Civil War. Of the various Vice-Presidents, Rittenhouse was the one with the closest association with the district he represented, as he was the one to lease a lot for the Oregon School in 1848.<sup>6</sup> He served as Freeholder for Delaware Township from 1851 to 1853, and again in 1862-63. He served as County Clerk from 1864 to 1869. It was said of him that “No man ever held the office who sustained himself and the interests of the county more creditably.”<sup>7</sup> After his term as County Clerk ended, he retired to Raritan Township and died suddenly on Sept. 22, 1872, age 64. His wife Elizabeth died five years later, on Feb. 20, 1887, age 70. The two were buried in the Mt. Pleasant cemetery of the Presbyterian Church.

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<sup>6</sup> To learn more about Mr. Rittenhouse, please visit [goodspeedhistories.com](http://goodspeedhistories.com) for the article by Egbert T. Bush called “The Oregon and Other Schools.”

<sup>7</sup> Snell, p. 374.