

Hunterdon Historical Record



HUNTERDON
COUNTY
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

hunterdonhistory.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wed, June 20 - 6:30 pm

*The American Revolution
of Hunterdon's
Private Jacob Francis*

A fascinating talk by
Historian Larry Kidder
Society Library
114 Main Street,
Flemington

See page 1282 for article.

Watch for the semi-annual
book sale on October 6

Go to our website
www.hunterdonhistory.org
to learn about more
lectures, workshops, and
walking tours, and for
program updates.

Society Library Hours

Open every Thursday 10 am-4 pm
4th Fridays 12-4 pm

Friday am by appointment only
4th Saturdays-10 am-4 pm

Doric House

Open year-round by
appointment

1816: THE YEAR SUMMER NEVER CAME

By John W. Kuhl

We all complain about the weather. When is summer coming, and once it's here, when will that suffocating heat ever end?--especially when we have a March Spring with snowy, windy storms like the one we've just experienced. We long for the warmer temperatures we have come to expect by mid-March. But not always! There was a time over two hundred years ago when they waited and waited for summer-and it never came! Recalling it all in 1916 on the centennial of the event, the now defunct *Hunterdon Republican* in Flemington described 1816 as "*the famous year without a summer. The country experienced almost twelve months of winter weather with snow and cold from January to December*". There were no local contemporary newspaper accounts as it would be another nine years until Hunterdon had the first newspaper of its own. First appearing on 24 March 1825, the *Hunterdon Gazette*, and *Farmers Weekly Advertiser* finally evolved into the *Hunterdon County Democrat* of today. We will, therefore, be forced to rely on second-hand accounts that speak to that very trying time.

Food was Scarce; Has God forsaken us?

That spring and summer was a time marked by ever present "dry fog", pink yellowish skies, wildly fluctuating temperatures, persistent frosts, heavy rain, and frequent windy storms. "Has God forsaken us?" must have been on their minds. Though a few people would die in some heavy blizzards to the north of Hunterdon that summer, the prevailing temperatures, as bad as they were, were not low enough here to directly harm those already used to the normally rigorous winters of this region. The problem was with the crops and pastures that fed the agriculture of the time. It was quite simply a huge disaster for farmers. Unexpected frosts made crop planting totally problematic. Nothing grew as it always had. In Cape May, frost was reported five nights in a row as July approached, causing extensive crop damage. Wheat, oats, and corn yields plummeted as the plants failed to fully develop and what grain there was often froze before it matured and dried out, at which point it was useless to humans. Vegetable gardens suffered the same. Both feedstuffs for livestock and food for humans grew scarce. Food was scarce around the world and even if affordable or available, there was no infrastructure to bring it into an area like Hunterdon that was far more used to shipping it out. Railroads had not yet appeared on the scene and there were no canals available nearby. Prices soared; oats, for instance, rose from 12 cents per bushel in 1815 to the unheard figure of 92 cents in 1816.



Mount Tambora on Sumbawa, Indonesia, site of the largest volcanic eruption in human history. (pinterest.com)

Worldwide Affects

Hunterdon was certainly not alone in all this. It was even worse in more northern latitudes and around the world. Food riots arose in Europe. In Asia the cold and the floods killed food trees and most important, their rice crops.

continued on page 1224

HUNTERDON HISTORICAL RECORD

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Lora Jones, John Kuhl, Stephanie Stevens
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Acquisitions

Artifacts and documents on the history of Hunterdon County and the families who resided here are welcome additions to the Society's Collections. Donated materials may not be available for research until they have been processed, a continuing activity. The Society thanks the donors for these recent acquisitions.

Adam, Patty. 6 Playbills from St. John Terrell's Music Circus of Lambertville, NJ, & Clinton Music Hall, ca. 1959-1965.

Bilby, Joseph G. *"Freedom to All": New Jersey's African-American Civil War Soldiers* (2016).

Bush, Pamelyn. 1 volume: Greenagel, Frank L. *The Warren churchscape: early religious architecture in Warren County, NJ* (2014).

Central Books, Doylestown, Pa. A program from the Frenchtown Dramatic Club, 1885, & a postcard of the blown over steeple of the Readington Church, 1913.

Coppola-Beyea, Cindy. Two Vietnam War uniforms, miscellaneous news clippings, & a scrapbook concerning soldiers from Hunterdon County.

Dorf, Danny. Baseball memorabilia from the collection of Bucky Lance of Readington, including Little League, Little Big League, & Tri-County Baseball League images & news clippings, ca. 1955-2015.

Flemington Free Public Library. 7 boxes of material from the Vertical Files of the library, including news clippings, local government & organizations publications, pamphlets, newspapers, directories, maps, & other items.

Force, Jay. A diary of Louise Waite Force, 1934, & a history of the Force family farm in Three Bridges, NJ, 1973.

Geremia, Jeannie. Ruth Gibbs doll in original box. [See page 1286.]

Giles, John R. *The Story of Waterloo Village: from colonial forge to canal town* (2014).

Glazer, Steven D. *Discover your community's Civil War heritage: discover the role of your town in the most significant event in American history -- the great Civil War that determined whether our country would survive as a free and united nation* (2010).

Herster, James. A family photograph album, principally of the Severs, Beavers, Hoffman, & Young families of Hunterdon County.

Hightstown – East Windsor Historical Society, c/o Robert Craig. Funeral memorial book and six images of Herman Hageman of Pleasant Run.

Holzman, Michal. Collection of Ruth Gibbs dolls; doll dress patterns and doll book. [See article, page 1286.]

Hunterdon County Sheriff's Office, c/o Mary Benjamin. 3 Letters of Arthur Koehler of the Forest Products Laboratory & 1 newspaper clipping concerning the Hauptmann Trial, 1933-1936.

Jarvis, Aaron O. *The Jarvises of Surry County, North Carolina: a short history up to 1820* (2017). Gift from the author.

Jones, Marjorie Gelb. A small collection of memorabilia from the North Hunterdon Regional High School, including issues of the *Regitonian* (HS newsletter), 1955-1958.

Kinnaird, Carol. 1 photograph, Lebanon Cornet Band, 1880.

Kinney, Jonathan D. *Swindlers, pimps and vagabonds: New Jersey's Civil War bounty jumpers* (2016).

Martin, David G. *General James Longstreet & his New Jersey relations: a*



1954 Champs -Whitehouse team,
Tri-County Baseball League



Manuel Severs

continued next page

Acquisitions continued

brief genealogical history of the families & common ancestry of Jonathan Longstreet of Holmdel, New Jersey, & Confederate General James Longstreet (2000).

Martin, David G. *The Raising of New Jersey's Civil War troops* (1993), booklet.

McKaughan, Molly. A volume, *175th anniversary, Zion's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Spruce Run, New Jersey* (1950). Also, a family photograph album & a scrapbook of the Honness family, ca. 1920-1970.

Morris County Historical Society, c/o Amy Curry. 3 photographs of Clinton, NJ, n.d.

Riddle, Charles H. *Colonial and Revolutionary Bethlehem Township, Hunterdon County, New Jersey*. Donated by Patricia Christie.

Sands, Robert. An invitation for the Fall Flower Show of the Flemington Woman's Club, 1935, & a visitor guide to Flemington, 1971.

Sayford, Nancy McKinney. *Family McKinney: earliest records, Drenthe, The Netherlands; Flatbush, Long Island; The Raritan, New Jersey* (1983).

Schlagle, Diane. Diploma, Helen Emma Zink, Flemington High School, 1919.

Sheppard, Mark. 3 family photograph albums & 4 scrapbooks concerning the Sheppard family of Flemington & Hunterdon County, ca. 1880-1934.

Stevens, Stephanie. 6 "Echo" Yearbooks (Flemington High School) & 1 folder of high school ephemera, 1932-1980.

Stewart, Lois. 5 items relating to Hunterdon history including an image of the "Blizzard of 1888" & a marriage certificate for Harold Kitchin & Jane Carver, 1947.

Versteeg, Dingman. *Bergen records: records of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of Bergen [Jersey City] in New Jersey, 1666 to 1788* (1976).

Wilson, Juli. A collection of materials concerning Emma Josephine Thompson Bousquet, of Readington, NJ, including three early cased images, ca. 1880-1890.



Leigh & Elizabeth Honness

President Charles Fisher Reveals House Study Plans; New Grant Award

As a county historical society, we continually look back over our ever-changing history to determine what is important to preserve for future generations. But, we also have to look forward, and to change with the times to be certain the Society will continue to grow and to serve future generations.

Feasibility Study Sought

With that forward thinking, the Society is applying to the **New Jersey Historic Trust** for a feasibility study to determine adaptive reuses for the Doric House Museum. We want to explore how best to use the 1845 Greek Revival building without undermining its historic fabric. We'll study how we can best transform the Doric House from a static historic house setting to the multi-use program space of a vibrant history center. Both the search and the prospects are exciting!

Grant Awarded

With a generous \$7,500 grant from the **Astle-Alpaugh Family Foundation**, we are pleased to announce another energizing project. The Hiram E. Deats Native American Collection will be added to our online collection catalog. Housed in the Flemington Public Library in a room owned by the Society, the collection has been out of public view for decades. Now, it will be researched, photographed, and cataloged. New website pages will describe the history of the collection and the Native Americans in Hunterdon County.

This year will truly be one of both looking back and looking forward.

Welcome, New Members

Jeffrey Dalrymple, Bensalem, PA
 Patricia Geiger, Waynesboro, PA
 Jeannie Geremia, Flemington
 Richard Hayden, Pittsburgh, PA
 Margaret Hylan, Flemington
 Kathy Kent, High Bridge
 Susan Magnus, Hickory, KY
 Linda Miller, Salem, WV
 Bob Moore, Lambertville, NJ
 Mary O'Malley, Washington, NJ
 Karen Riedeberg, Lambertville
 Alice Smith, Bethel, VT

New LIFE members

Mary Van Horn, Ringoes
 Richard Moore, Vail, AZ

Be A Part of Hunterdon's History By Looking Ahead

Leaving a gift to the Society in your will or trust by beneficiary designation, or another form of planned gift, can make a lasting difference in preserving Hunterdon's history.

You also might consider filing a Promised Deed of Gift to pass on to the Society in the future for an historic treasure in your collection. For more information, please call our Executive Director, Patricia Millen, at 908.782.1091, or email her at hunterdonhistorypatricia@gmail.com.

Jacob Francis, a free black man**Society Documents Reward Dedicated Researcher**

By Larry Kidder

Researching the lives of individuals from previous centuries is always limited by incomplete records. Some records become lost over time and some records never existed in the first place. However, by taking the records that do survive and combining them with general information about the time period we can gain at least some insight into individual lives.

Several years ago I became interested in the life of Jacob Francis, a free black man from Amwell Township who served in the American Revolution. Fortunately, Jacob applied for a veteran's pension and told the story of his service along with some snippets about his life in general. To learn more about him I spent some time at the Society's research library and was able to develop a better understanding of his life and the problems and opportunities Blacks encountered in Hunterdon County in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The sources I found were not exclusively about people of color and could be used to learn more about the lives of anyone living in Hunterdon at that time.

Born to a Slave or a Free Woman?

Jacob was born January 15, 1754 and died July 26, 1836. He gave his birth date in his pension application and his death was recorded in his obituary in the *Hunterdon Gazette and Farmer's Advertiser*, which has been made searchable on a CD created by the Historical Society. A question that has mystified some researchers is whether he was born to a slave or a free woman. Jacob simply describes her as "a colored woman" and that she bound him out to a local farmer. To see if I could learn more about her I examined the Amwell Township Minute Book A covering the years 1741 to 1798. In addition to stating the election results for the various town officials, township meeting minute books from that period frequently mention individual people and their children who came under the care of the overseers of the poor. Several poor children are mentioned as being bound out as indentured servants by the town. However, no records were found that could even remotely refer to Jacob or his mother. So, we are left with his statement that he was bound out by his mother to a local farmer.

While several historians have stated that his mother was a slave, if that were the case, she could not have bound him out because he would have

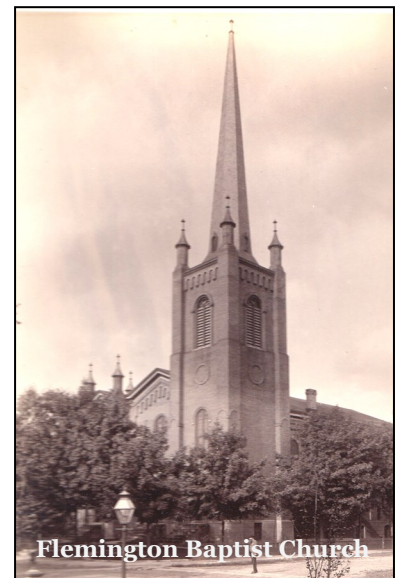
been the property of her owner. Jacob states that he became free of his indenture when he reached age 21 and, again, that could not have happened if he had been born into slavery. But, we are left with the tantalizing questions of just who his mother was and whether or not she had ever been a slave. His father also remains a mystery and Jacob says in his pension application that he did not know his father's name until told by his mother after he was an adult.

Revolutionary War Soldier

Jacob's experiences as an indentured servant and how his "time" was sold to several different people and then his experience in the Continental Army after he was freed from indenture are told in his pension application. Jacob was serving in a Massachusetts Continental regiment at the time of the Battle of Trenton and his enlistment ended five days later. He was close to the home he had not seen for a number of years so he did not extend his enlistment, as strongly requested by General Washington, and went to find his mother in Amwell. He remained with her and established himself in the community. After several years he married a slave woman, purchased her, and set her free. I was anxious to know more details and surveyed the Certificate Books 1787-1818 of Hunterdon County Slave Manumissions. These are not complete and there were no records pertaining to him or his wife.

Flemington Baptist Church Member

Jacob's obituary provided several important clues to follow. It stated that he had lived near Flemington for the past 35 years and had been a member of the Baptist Church there for 30 years. The Historical Society library has the manuscript — Church Records of the Flemington Baptist Church 1798-1867—so I went through them for the 30-year period of his membership. The records proved to be a treasure trove. There was information on



Flemington Baptist Church

when Jacob and his wife, Mary, were baptized and accepted into membership in 1805. Normally, this type of information was simple and direct. However, Jacob was recorded as satisfactorily giving his Christian experience statement on March 2, but was not accepted for membership because a church member objected on the grounds that Jacob had cheated him in a transaction involving bushels of rye. The problem was finally resolved when it was found that a clerk had made a mistake in counting the bushels and Jacob and Mary were accepted into membership on May 11. Reading through the church records revealed very few such objections to membership, leaving one to question whether racial issues were involved. There are a number of references to Jacob, Mary, and their children who are

routinely identified as “colored.” The Church was racially diverse in membership, but it is known that the pastor was an advocate for sending freed slaves back to Africa and at least one member of the church did free a slave and help him get to Africa.

Another interesting source was The Ledger of the Asher Atkinson General Store in Flemington. While no specifics on purchases are listed, the small debts of Francis family members appear over the years.

The story of Jacob Francis is far from complete, but thanks to the manuscripts available at the Historical Society library, a picture of the successful and respected Francis family emerges that answers some questions, and of course, raises additional ones.

A full article on the life of Jacob Francis was published with reference citations online in the *Journal of the American Revolution*, March 6, 2018.

Go to: <https://allthingsliberty.com/2018/03/american-revolution-private-jacob-francis>

Our Society in the Greater World

Acting something like an ambassador-at-large, Trustee Robert Leith recently traveled with his wife Leslie to Camden, SC and Warminster, PA. His purpose was to share reproductions of historical documents found in our Archives with other societies with an interest in the material.

Bob is seen below (left) at the **Camden Archives and Museum in Camden, SC**, with Rickie A. Good, Curator of Collections, and Tiffany Barlow of the Camden Junior Welfare League. Rickie is holding a copy of a letter from Henry Laurens to [NY] Governor Clinton, 1778 [from our Archives, Collection 18, Box 3, Folder 103]. Laurens was a South Carolina merchant and planter who succeeded John Hancock as President of the Congress. See “Gems” on our website for more details.

In the photo directly below, Leslie and Bob are seen in Pennsylvania with Erik Fleischer, president of Craven Hall Historical Society, and Harding Lindhult, CHHS board member and vice president of the **John Fitch Steamboat Museum** on the Craven Hall grounds. Fitch invented the world’s first commercial steamboat in 1790. The letter is from Fitch to John Hall, 1789 [from our Archives, Collection 31, Box 18, Folder 1133]. Hall, a British mechanic, worked for James Watt in England, came to Philadelphia in 1785, befriended Thomas Paine, and is buried at the Flemington Presbyterian Cemetery.

At the request of the **Metropolitan Museum of Art** in New York City, our Society has supplied a photograph and information on a three handle Fulper vase in our collection for an upcoming publication.



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1816: No Summer—continued from page 1279

It took several years to recover from all the damage before things got back to somewhat normal. Those who went through it would never forget it and would for the rest of their lives fear that it might happen again. Fortunately nothing as bad has happened since, but be warned that it could easily repeat on us if the same circumstances occurred. The future is always largely unpredictable. Every thinking person of today has to be aware of the varied threats to our environment with polluted air, global warming, nuclear contamination, and over population all being real dangers. And now add this sort of thing to the list of concerns.

Unlike today's instant reporting of world events, news in 1816 was glacially slow and it seems probable that many here did not learn the cause of this disaster until well after the event. Nor could the average citizen of that day quite appreciate or understand just how an event half a world away could have such a staggering effect on their own lives here. Newspapers were the prevailing media but a good percentage of rural dwellers were far out of range of a regular paper and many of those who could even read were little inclined to pay much attention anyway.

Tambora Volcano Erupts

Scientists would eventually pin down the cause of it all to the volcanic eruption on 10 April 1815 of Mount Tambora on the island of Sumbawa near Bali in today's Indonesia. The mountain, originally close to 14,000 feet

in elevation, lost 4,000 feet off the top in the explosion. This was listed as perhaps the most violent eruption in recorded history. It wiped out villages, reportedly killed up to 90,000 island inhabitants, and destroyed most all the vegetation on the island. By the following year, the atmospheric dust had slowly but surely spread its way around the world and would take another year or so to dissipate or at least drop down below the danger level.

The effect of the volcano's emissions was sort of the reverse of global warming so familiar to us now. The dust kicked up by the volcano blast greatly reflected the incoming sun's heat, keeping temperatures much below the norm. At the same time, the huge amount of sulfur dioxide spewing from Tambora converted to sulfuric acid, which then formed aerosols high up in the atmosphere that served to further block incoming solar radiation for several years after the eruption.

So the next time you are researching the genealogy or other history of the 1816 period, please excuse any hiccup you might find in their flow of events. They were busy tending to the necessary business of feeding themselves and their livestock. I have not cited sources for this since most of the information comes from my 60-year file of newspaper clippings that I am bit by bit, entering on an indexing database that will go to our Society for the use of our many research patrons. The internet was helpful in filling in some of the details. Please see the accompanying piece for still another departure from local weather norms.

Having just completed the survey and cataloging of our Society's holdings of the Delaware Valley News, I found another somewhat related news clipping that begs attention. This paper was a newsy cousin to the Hunterdon County Democrat and conveys valuable information not available elsewhere of the under-represented (in history) area of Frenchtown, Milford, and Holland Township. In its 10 January 1936 issue, the News shared a Port Jervis Gazette account of the terrible winter of 1835-1836. Since no other mention of this winter popped up anywhere, it seemed simpler to just reprint the short article for what interest it might arouse. Knowledge of happenings such as these is crucial to the proper interpretation of our total history. —John W. Kuhl

1835-36 Broke All Records for Cold

The winter of 1835-6 is fresh in the memory of many persons now living, and in depth of snow and severity has not been exceeded since, the nearest approach to it being that of the winter we are just emerging from. The opening month of the year of 1835 was marked by the coldest weather of any within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. In Goshen, NY, the thermometer stood, Jan. 3, at 28 degrees below zero, Jan. 5 at 32 degrees below, Jan. 5 at 14 degrees below, Jan 6 at 28 degrees below, the following day at 30 degrees below.

In October of 1835 came the great snow fall, which continued for three days and nights, covering the earth with snow to the depth of four feet hereabouts, according to the statement of J.M. Ridgway, who said that he several times measured it to ascertain the depth.

The most graphic account of the storm and the winter that followed is given by John H. Wood, the veteran real estate dealer, who was a boy at the time, living in Sussex County, NJ. He says that the snow fell at a time when no frost was in the ground, and that it was followed by rain that froze and formed a crust. Successive snow and rain

storms during the winter made the snow so compact that loaded teams were driven over it. The snow was six feet on the level, covering fences, leaving nothing of them in sight except the stakes. Sleighs passed in every direction, horses and cattle being driven over the hard crust no regard being paid to roads or fences. On the first of May snow still remained; Mr. Wood's parents moved that day in a sleigh.

There were snowbanks still to be seen in August of 1836. Apples, which lay on the unfrozen ground when the first snow fell, were found in good condition in the spring. Grain that had been sown in the fall was smothered by the ice and snow, and the only grain raised the next year was that grown on hillsides that were earliest uncovered. The great scarcity of grain that followed, and the riots in New York caused by the clamor of the famished people for bread, all make this period an eventful one. Mr. Wood said that in his section, people were unable to use flour on account of scarcity and dearness, his mother paying as high as \$3 for twelve pounds of the article.

Curator Cornelius Offers A Primer on Bound Manuscripts

The Curator finds the concept of a spring newsletter somewhat humorous at this writing. Spring has yet to make an appearance, but I certainly hope it does by the time you read this. Since it is still wintry, I would like to use this space to highlight an often overlooked portion of our collections: the Bound Manuscripts.

When we receive donations, bound manuscripts are often included. These are original and unique documents – one-of-a-kind and usually hand-written – that are bound in volume form, and not loose. The most common are fiscal ledgers, day books (records of daily sales), and accounts. But there are also many others, including diaries, court and docket books, minute books of organizations, school exercise books, school grade records, membership records, inventories, and many other types. In some cases, the historical importance of these volumes is obvious from their creation. In others, they acquire a secondary historical importance beyond that of their original purpose. When these items are included in a donation of mixed types of records, we tend to keep them in with the rest of the things they were donated with. Sometimes, though, these items are the only thing in a donation. When that happens, we include them in this group of records called the Bound Manuscripts.

Collection Recently Enlarged

The reason I have been thinking of this collection is because we have recently made large additions to it. By their nature, we tend to assign a lower processing priority to these items so we can process the “more interesting” collections: family papers, photographs, and such. Two of our archival volunteers, Harlene Rosenberg and Erin Brennan, spent the fall and winter painstakingly identifying, cataloging, and then wrapping these manuscripts. Their work added 126 items to the list available to the public for research. The list is available online. To find them, go to our website, choose the “Archives” tab, and then choose “other collections” from the drop down menu.

All of the items have considerable informational value, but of course I find some more interesting than

others. Certain things have obvious importance – such as MSS (that means manuscript) No. 1852, a session book of the Presbyterian Church of Asbury, 1860-1868. It includes session notes, minutes, church membership, baptisms, marriages, and deaths. Sources like this can be of great importance to genealogists. I am also sure our tombstone-hound friends will be equally pleased with the three volumes (MSS 1758-1760) of records from the Locust Grove Cemetery, covering the list of plot owners and burials from 1907-1945.

Unique Discoveries Possible

Another interesting item is the Hunterdon County Jury Book (MSS 1764). It lists jurors and amounts paid by the court and terms of service, along with occasional sheriff's notes, from 1912-1933. Note that it stops short of the Hauptmann case. Sometimes the sharply focused bound manuscript that only covers one thing can be just as interesting. MSS 1831 is a handwritten estate inventory. Specifically, it is the “Appraisalment of the personal property of the estate of John Grandin, Dr. Made on 24 February 1886 by John F. Grandin and Jane E. Grandin, Executor and N.W. Voorhees and James R. Klein, appraisers.” Some good old Hunterdon County names there.

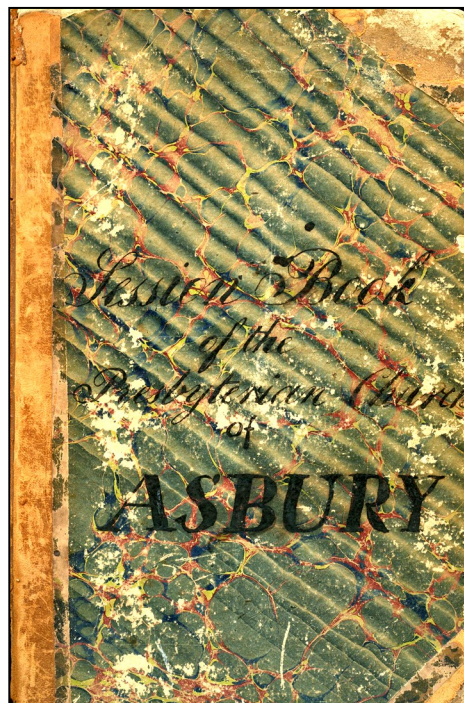
Schools and stores are well represented in this latest batch of Bound Manuscripts. There are school records from the Stockton Lyceum, Tewksbury School District, Raritan, and East Amwell. Stores with ledgers include those of the Wertsville General Store (1870-1896) and Alstyn Dilt's store in Three Bridges (1913-1918). And there are also runs of diaries, such as the ones from Henry Vanderveer Case and William F. Dilt's.

It is true that many people are familiar with our manuscript research collections, and the increasing amount of images available online from our photograph holdings has been attracting a lot of interest. But if you conduct family or local history research in Hunterdon County, and you have not consulted our Bound Manuscripts collection, you are missing out. Our HCHS archival team will keep on making more available.

41		
	Peter, Christ & Co	1.00
	S. Davis	1.00
	1 Ben. Hulew	.50
	Contents in Fine Mill	1.00
	1 Box cut Saw	.50
	1 Fine Saw	1.00
	1 Box Saw	.25
	Box, B. & C.	.25
	Contents in Stand Smith Shop	1.00
	1 Box Saw	1.00
	1 Tom's Haggan	5.00
	1 Saw in	5.00
	Shelton's Tools	.50
	1 Roller	2.00
	1 John's Saw	.25
	1 William's Haggan	5.00
	1 Saw	5.00
	1 Saw & Frames	1.00
	1 William's Haggan	1.00
	1 William's Haggan	1.00
	1 Scales	.50
	1 Saw Raps	1.00
		45.25

Top: 1831-001: MSS 1831. Appraisalment of the estate of John Grandin, Dr., 1886

Bottom: 1852-001: MSS 1852. Session Book, Presbyterian Church of Asbury, 1860-1868



Spotlight on Collections: What a Doll!

By Janice Armstrong

Six Godey's Lady Book and Little Women Dolls made in a Flemington factory are now part of our collection, through separate gifts from Jeannie Geremia and Michal S. Holzman.

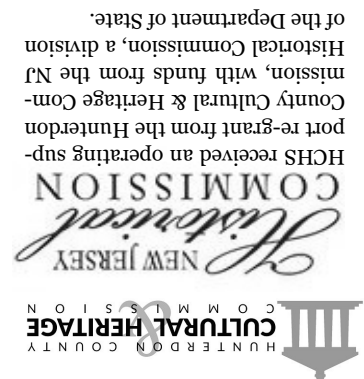
They were created and produced by Ruth Gibbs and her husband, Herbert Johnson, beginning in the 1940s. Ruth designed and patented a doll with a porcelain face, hands and feet, and a cloth body wired inside to make them easy to pose.

This was a doll girls could play with that also was a collectible. They came with a variety of hair colors; some rare dolls had applied wigs. The doll's faces were hand painted and most had 22 karat gold painted slippers like the one here.



Godey's Lady Book dolls were sold with different styles of clothing, including storybook (pictured) and fairy tale characters, brides, and colonial ladies. A McCall's pattern was available to sew new outfits for a doll, and one came with the donated dolls.

The name "Godey" came from *Godey's Lady's Book—The Victorian Bible of the Parlor*, a primer on a lady's proper etiquette published in Philadelphia, 1830-1878. The most widely circulated ladies' magazine before the Civil War, the guide stated, "The aim of a real lady is to be natural and to wear her talents, her accomplishments, and her learning as well as her newest and finest dresses, as if she did not know she had them about her."



Hunterdon's History

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08822

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