



# Hunterdon Historical Newsletter

VOL. 41, NO. 1

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SPRING 2005

## Hunterdon's Historic Churches Topic of Annual Meeting

Four major architectural traditions had an enormous impact on the churches in the County. Members and the public are invited to the Historical Society's Annual Meeting on Sunday 3 April, at the Flemington Womans' Club where Dr. Frank L. Greenagel will share his knowledge of our local churches. A 33 year resident of Hunterdon County, he has authored six books on the religious architecture of the state including *Less Stately Mansions: An Interpretation of the Old Hunterdon Churches* and *The New Jersey Churchscape*.

During the past seven years Dr. Greenagel has been photographing 18th and 19th century churches in New Jersey. Of the more than 1300 churches in his photographic inventory, at least 300 are located in Hunterdon, Morris, Somerset and Warren Counties and represent a diversity of architecture and a range of denominations.

Dr. Greenagel had donated a collection of his Hunterdon County church photographs to the Society several years ago and selections from it appear here in the *Newsletter* and will be on display at the Womans' Club for his lecture.

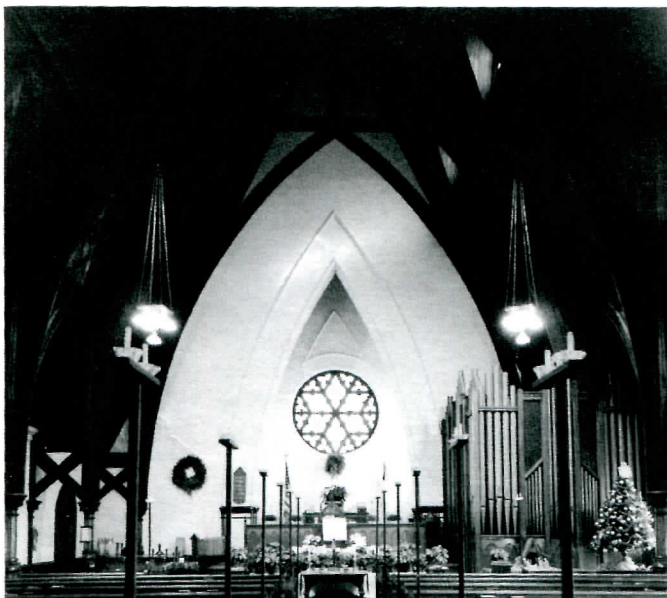
Copies of his book, *New Jersey Churchscapes* will be available at his lecture and a copy of each of his other books can be seen and ordered. Dr. Greenagel's web address is [www.njchurchscapes.com](http://www.njchurchscapes.com).

Join us for Dr. Greenagel's presentation on 3 April at the Flemington Womans' Club on Park Avenue. A short business meeting at 2 p.m. will precede his lecture and question period. Refreshments will conclude the afternoon gathering.



### The ruins of the Bethlehem Baptist Church

This church is located on Route 78 at exit 11. The church was built in 1837, with a cemetery adjoining, on land donated by Aaron Van Syckle. The congregation flourished until 1905 and was disbanded. The parcel reverted back to the Van Syckle descendants.



### High Bridge Reformed Church

The interior of the High Bridge Reformed Church taken at Christmas 1997. The congregation dates back to 1866 and the church and parsonage were erected in 1870.

## 2005 Calendar

27 March - HAPPY EASTER

3 April - Historical Society  
ANNUAL MEETING  
*Hunterdon's Historic Churches*  
Author, Frank Greenagle, speaker  
2 p.m. Flemington Womans Club

27 April - Volunteer Luncheon



**HUNTERDON HISTORICAL NEWSLETTER**

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**PUBLICATION COMMITTEE**

Roxanne K. Carkhuff, Editor

**— Library Hours —**

Thursday, 1-3, 7-9 p.m. and by appointment

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**Thelma Kline Miller**

1917-2005

Our Society deeply regrets the passing on 29 January of Life member Thelma Kline Miller of Three Bridges and expresses condolences to her family. She was widely noted for her large collection of memorabilia of the Hauptmann-Lindbergh trial which she donated to the New Jersey State Police Museum in 2003. As a condition of that gift she requested of the State Police that they provide our Society with copies of the more pertinent material, which they did ["Acquisitions," Hunterdon Historical Newsletter, p. 940].

But, more than that, she was the resident historian of her town in which she lived most of her life. She was for years the Three Bridges "correspondent" for the *Hunterdon County Democrat*.

She had amassed in her lifetime, a large scrapbook collection that dealt with Three Bridges over the years and it was to her that many came to provide clues to the town's past. She has donated to our Society many of those clippings and other items for our researching patrons to use in the years ahead. Thelma was the "soul" of her town which will be very much missed and so very hard to replace, if ever.

— John W. Kuhl

**2005 Dues Are Payable**

Membership dues for 2005 are payable immediately. If you haven't paid up, take a few minutes to write a check and mail it to HCHS, 114 Main Street, Flemington, NJ 08822.

**HOW TO JOIN**

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

Please enroll me as a member of your Society

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

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTES AND QUERIES**

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

**BELLIS, VANDEVENTER:** Seek info re Adam J. Bellis, b. 4 Nov 1810, who m. 4 Aug 1832 Catherine D. Vandeventer, b. 16 May 1813, d. 4 Aug 1832. ADD: Merrily Bellis Sargent, 1057 Monroe St., Galesburg, IL 61404 [e-mail: ralph@galesburg.net]

**ANDERSON:** Seek info re William Anderson, b. ca. 1700, maybe in NJ or Scotland. Did his people come to America before the Mayflower? ADD: Mary Ann Lupa, 353 S. Stott St., Genoa, IL 60135

**HORN:** Seek info re family of Charles Horn who resided in Hunterdon from 1778-1782? to 1800? ADD: Patricia Stahles, 3 S. 664 Delles Rd., Naperville, IL 60563.



# NYC Mayor Hunterdon Native

by John W. Kuhl

Those of us in our society who have been involved in answering such correspondence are always amazed at the volume of requests we receive from all over the country as people write to search out their Hunterdon County ancestors. From 1713 the county embraced all the land in West Jersey north of the middle of Trenton on up to the New York state border. Morris County was split off in 1738 and from this in 1753 was taken Sussex County—from which, in turn, Warren County was created in 1824. Finally, Mercer and with it Trenton, was set off in 1838. Even given its final diminished area, thousands of families can claim Hunterdon origins from within its present borders.

Of these, the rich and the famous achieved success in many categories, the military, civil pursuits, the arts, and of course, business. In the Larison's Corner cemetery is a huge monument erected by the John D. Rockefeller Association to honor the family origins of that magnate of the Standard Oil Company and many other related endeavors. The original immigrant ancestor, Johann Peter Rockefeller, settled in southern Hunterdon by about 1723 and is buried on his old farm near Rocktown in West Amwell Twp. Another Palatinate German, Henry Wanamaker, settled in Kingwood Twp. Among his great, great grandchildren was the eminent retail merchant, John Wanamaker, whose name is still recognizable to today's department store shoppers.

Although maybe not quite so well known to us today, another man from Hunterdon, George Opdyke, made it big in the commercial, financial and political fields. This Dutch family emigrated to New York in 1663. Branches of the Opdykes later moved to Hunterdon where George was born in Kingwood Twp. the sixth of nine children to George and Mary (Stout) Opdyke on 7 December 1805. Young George grew up on his father's farm at Baptistown and by determined effort at age 16 had gained his certificate to teach in a local district school. Described as decisive, prompt, and fearless in the discharge of his duties, he had no trouble keeping discipline (sometimes by physical means) in his school classes, even with students older than himself. Two years later he was clerking in the town's general store and finding that he had a knack for business. Soon coming to the opinion that local opportunities in no way matched the size of his ambition, he relocated in 1825 to Cleveland, Ohio when that city was still nothing but an outpost settlement. He and his partner in the frontier trading post there each cleared \$500 their first year but Opdyke said: "This place is too slow, let us try elsewhere". They searched along the banks of the Mississippi as they floated downstream in a flat boat but found nothing to suit them until reaching New Orleans. There in the dry goods business he established the foundation of his fortune and there too, he acquired that "finished Southern courtesy of manner" for which he was known throughout the remainder of his life.

George made a trip back to New Jersey in 1829 seeking to marry Elizabeth Hall Stryker, the daughter of Peter Stryker and Keziah Davis. George was described as 5' 11" tall, thin and



Carte-de-Viste of George Opdyke by photographer Chas. Fredericks & Co. 587 Broadway NJ (John W. Kuhl Collection)

tough with handsome features. Though they were farmers of Hunterdon County, the Strykers were an old, prominent Dutch family with aristocratic and social pretensions. The same age as her prospective husband, Elizabeth had twice before refused George's advances but given his new success, finally accepted and the two were married on 26 September 1829. She became a loving, helpful wife who bore him six children: Emeline in 1833 (married Edw. Strobell of N.Y. C.), Mary E. in 1834 (married Geo. Farlee of N.Y. C.), William S. in 1836, Charles W. in 1838, George F. in 1840, and Henry B. in 1841. All lived at one time in New York City but the latter three sons eventually removed to Plainfield, N.J.

New York City became the focus of Opdyke's operations in 1832 when he entered the dry goods and clothing business there. He was a partner in the house of W.I. Peake & Co. and in the clothing firms of Henry & John Paret and Carhart, Whitford & Co. He expanded his operations by becoming a director in one of the largest banks in New York City and was also appointed presiding officer of an insurance company. In the Fall of 1868 he formed his own banking company, George Opdyke & Co.

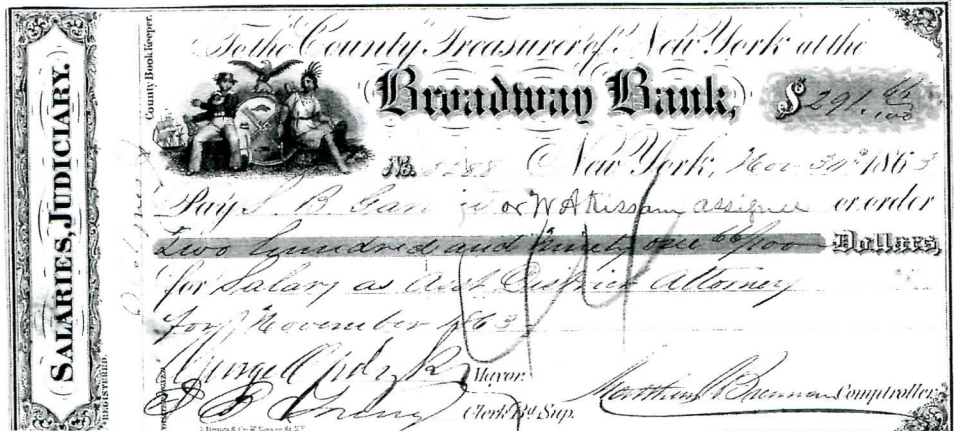
*(Continued on page 954)*



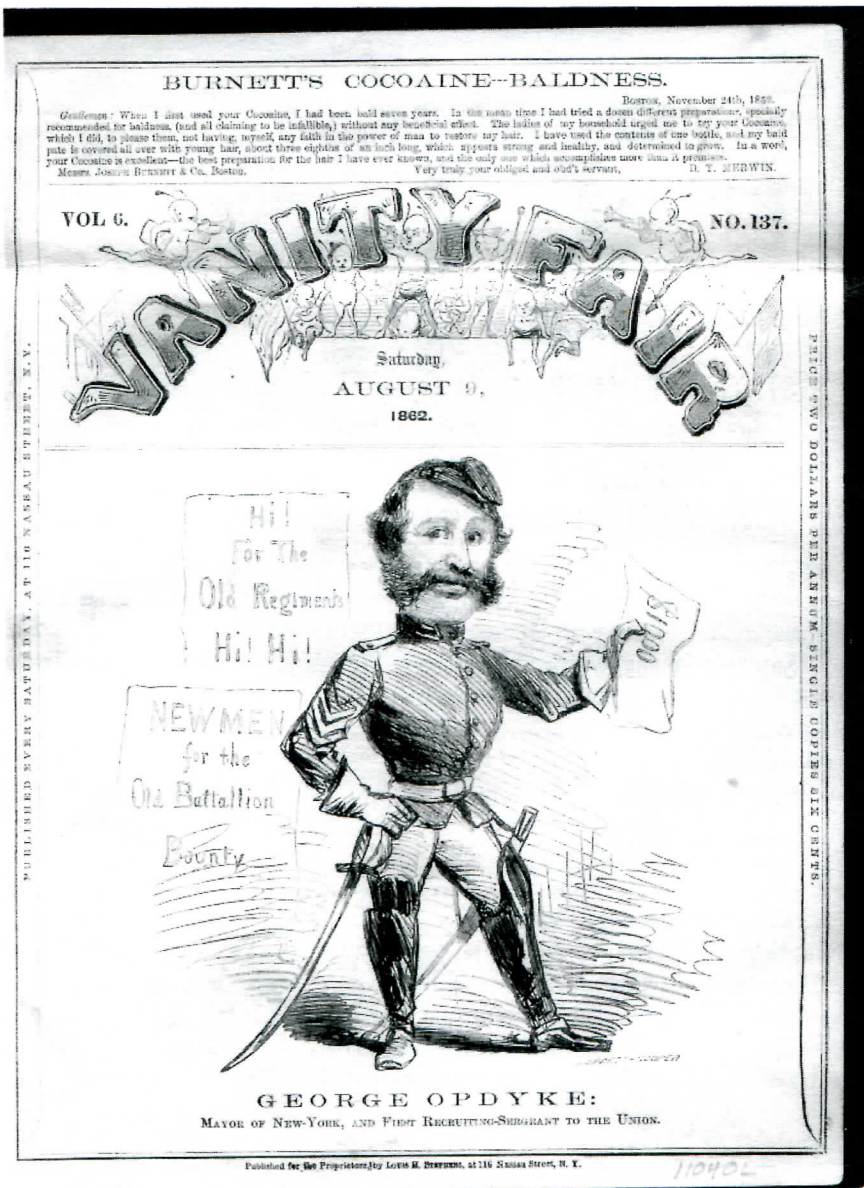
## NYC Mayor Hunterdon Native (Cont'd. from pg. 953)

Surviving the scare of the business panic of 1873 by sheer determination and honorable principles, he covered the accounts and notes of his customers and was ever thereafter successful in all his commercial ventures.

The family had moved from New York City to Newark, N.J. in 1837 when the first railroad was opened between those two cities. It was said that no matter how busy, George invariably left his work behind at the end of the day. On arriving home he would devote most of the evening hours to his family, discussing with them, aspects of the children's education and experiences. It was at this time that on his own, he expanded his classical knowledge, becoming



City of New York check written on the Broadway Bank - For Judicial Salaries & signed by George Opdyke as Mayor. (John W. Kuhl Collection)



a deep thinker on many topics. A number of his highly regarded works were published and his thinking on theories of political economy was especially sought by many of his contemporaries. Though up to now, a lifelong Democrat he especially opposed slavery, bringing him into conflict with fellow party members. In 1848 he became a delegate from New Jersey to the Buffalo convention that organized the Free Soil Party and he thus became one of the first pioneers of the Republican Party. He ran that year as a candidate for Congress from New Jersey under the banner of the Free Soil Party but was defeated in his heavily Democratic home state. In 1853 he moved his residence back to New York City. Continuing his support of the Republicans, he campaigned for General Fremont in the 1856 presidential election and two years later was himself elected to the New York State Assembly. In 1859 he ran for Mayor of New York but was defeated by Fernando Wood and the majority Democrats.

Undaunted, he became one of the delegates to the Republican National Convention at Chicago where both his political and financial support were instrumental in gaining the nomination for Abraham Lincoln. When Civil War broke out in 1861 his resolutions proposed to the New York Chamber of Commerce of which he was an officer, were the first public action taken in that city in support of the national government. George would continue throughout the war to aid as best he could, the war efforts of the federals. His stance on the war is epitomized in a front page

Caricature of George Opdyke — On front page of New York Vanity Fair of 9 August 1862 (John W. Kuhl Collection)



## NYC Mayor Hunterdon Native (Cont'd. from pg. 954)

cartoon from an 1862 issue of New York's *Vanity Fair*. At the same time, he gained powerful enemies by opposing as much as he could, the corrupt political machine of the Democrats within the city. It was in spite of this that he was elected Mayor in late 1861 and served as such during 1862 and 1863, including the time of the disastrous draft riots in July of 1863.

These draft riots were triggered up front by reaction to a new Federal draft levy for troops from New York but they were every bit as much a function of politics, economics and racial hatred as they were about just opposing the government's efforts to draft soldiers into the army. It was class warfare at its worst that erupted into a cruel and vicious struggle. Starting on 13 July mobs rampaged through the city, looting and burning homes and stores, destroying offending newspapers, killing policemen and soldiers, lynching blacks from lamp posts, and destroying armories and government offices, especially those involved in the draft process. Opdyke refused to leave the city, calling together what local police, militia, and Federal forces he could gather. His own home at 79 5th Avenue was attacked twice and Mrs. Opdyke escaped only by fleeing through an adjoining house. At the height of the riot, the Board of Alderman unanimously voted \$2,500,000 to appease the mob but Opdyke refused to approve the ordinance, saying that the rioters must be suppressed, not conciliated. Chaos reigned on for three days until Union ships streamed into the harbor and trained their guns down open streets. Two brigades of army soldiers arrived from the south to relieve exhausted police and militia. Only point blank fire into the mobs put them down and relative peace was finally restored. Hundreds on both sides had been killed and the financial losses ran into the millions. But Union efforts had prevailed.

His interest in politics continued after the war when George was a delegate to the New York Constitutional Convention of

1867-8 and the subsequent Constitutional Commission of 1872-3. His special interest was work on canals, public education, and in efforts to reduce political graft and plundering. As he aged he gradually backed away from his financial interests, leaving that field of operations to his sons. His interest in public questions though, continued to the end. Weakened by an attack of pneumonia, his health gradually failed with what his obituary called disorders of the stomach. and he finally died at his home, #1 East 47th St. in the city on 12 June 1880 at the age of 75. By conviction a Unitarian, he had long attended the Reformed Church of which his wife was a member. His funeral services were held from the Collegiate Reformed Church, 5th Ave & 48th St. Never an extreme church proponent, his view was that nevertheless, "you or I cannot do better than to follow the teachings of Christ". His wife would live on until 1891 when she died at the home of her son, Henry B. Opdyke on Farragut Road in Plainfield, N.J.

Son Charles would write of him with ample justification in *The Opdyke Genealogy* printed in New York in 1889:

'In our time and country, "self made men" are not rare among merchants, scholars, or statesmen. George Opydke was a notable instance of eminence in all three of these classes at once. That at the same time he excelled also in simplicity, in purity, and in humanity, made him a marvel to all who knew him.'

Not many, if any, home-town boys from Hunterdon ever achieved a wider range of success or contributed more to their country.

### Sources

1. *The Op Dyck Genealogy* Chas. W. Opdyke, NY 1889
2. *Srope Scrapbooks* Vol. 3-144 & 58-441 Hunterdon Co. Hist. Soc.
3. *History of Hunterdon & Somerset Counties* James Snell 1881
4. *New York Times* 13 June 1880
5. *National Encyclopedia of American Biography* NY 1897.
7. *The Gangs of New York* Herbert Asbury 1928/1998

## Financial Statement — 2004

### Receipts

Membership dues .....	8,445.00
Interest .....	7.88
Raymond James Account .....	33,000.00
CD Interest .....	12,262.85
Dividends .....	2,627.87
Sale books, films, maps .....	1,960.00
Sale Gazette CD .....	3,111.25
Video sales .....	64.00
Newsletter sales .....	126.00
Donations .....	568.00
Xerox fees collected .....	921.25
Large Foundation .....	8,500.00
Cult. & Herit. Comm. ....	2,000.00
Miscellaneous Receipts .....	87.50
<b>Receipts .....</b>	<b>\$ 73,681.60</b>

### Expenditures

Accounting/Carro .....	1,885.00
Book purchase/printing .....	725.00
Fees & Dues .....	00.00
Insurance .....	5,189.00
Printing, newsletter/other .....	804.57
Postage .....	1,789.00
Office supplies .....	1,076.06
Utilities .....	8,219.15
Meeting expenses .....	300.00
Cleaning services .....	660.00
Employee wages .....	35,186.00
S.S./NJU .....	3,000.00
Mileage .....	350.00
Metal Shelving .....	577.00
Retirement Luncheon .....	198.00
Volunteer recognition .....	570.00
Honorarium .....	75.00
Bldg. maint., Ehrlich, Security System .....	4,232.00
New furnace and Chimney Repair .....	6,990.00
<b>Expenses .....</b>	<b>\$ 71,786.87</b>



## Ron Schultzel Retires

The Society's Manuscript Curator, Ron Schultzel, retired at the end of October. We were sad to see him leave but happy he'll be enjoying life and spending more time with his wife, Bonnie. For the past four years he had been commuting from Dingman's Ferry, PA — a two-hour trip each way in traffic, all kinds of weather, and while we are sorry to have him leave us, we understand that we were fortunate to have him for as long as we did!

Ron was hired to start working with the Society's manuscript collections in July 1994 as an assistant to Reverend George Kreutler, the Society's first Manuscript Curator. George died suddenly in June 1994 and Ron started working in July, completing the processing of fourteen collections during his time with HCHS. He cataloged manuscripts, loose and bound, photographs, maps, museum artifacts, assembled shelving to hold them, assembled rolling shelves when we needed to consolidate space, and willingly did a few "janitorial" jobs — replacing light bulbs, mowing our minuscule lawn, etc., and assisted research patrons in the Deats library.

He was processing a very large collection of Hiram Edmund Deats' papers, including a good bit of revenue stamp material, which came to the Society through Deats' daughter, Helen Prince, from her daughter Mary Fletcher. The Society has employed Donald Cornelius, an archivist with the New Jersey Archives, to work part time continuing the processing of collections of manuscripts already donated to the Society and those to come in the future.

The trustees and library volunteers who worked with Ron attended a farewell luncheon with him before he retired, at which he shared the following with us:

"We are more than the keepers of dusty manuscripts, faded yellowed newspapers and microfilm reels, We are about people, who were they? what were their stories? where did they come from? where did they go?

It helps us understand where we came from and ultimately where we are going.

Our files are filled with a million stories and maybe one of them is yours."

Thanks Ron for all your good work! Please come back and visit often.

## Membership Report

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

Sherry F. Baer, Haymarket, VA	
S. R. Birkenmeier, Flemington, NJ	*
Randy Block, Flemington, NJ	
Dorothy K. Bradshaw, Englewood, FL	#
Louisa B. Cole, Neshanic Station, NJ	*
Donald F. Cornelius, Ewing, NJ	
Bruce M. Gray, San Diego, CA	
William Harle, Lawrenceville, NJ	
Lorraine M. Herr, Naperville, IL	
Kathleen Johnson, Katy, TX	

Martha A. Koblish, Morristown, NJ

Fred Lathrop, M.D., Flemington, NJ

June Wardell Mason, Cortez, FL

Mildred Nelson, Phillipsburg, NJ

Doris Patterson, Ewing, NJ

Sharlie Prosser, Vancouver, WA

Edward A. Schomp, Alexandria, VA

\*

Sue & Rick Vaiculevich, Annandale, NJ

Robert J. Van Derbeek, Exton, PA

William E. Vogel, II, Lambertville, NJ

Alan R. Wambold, Sheboygan, WI

We thank the following members for their continued and upgraded support.

Jan Nutter Alpert, Holland, MI

\*

Helen Barrass, Flemington, NJ

\*

Robert Dils, Dolores, CO

#

Mrs. Rhoda Dils, Somerville, NJ

#

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Dils, Somerville, NJ

#

Robert J. Ellwood, Phillipsburg, NJ

\*

Robert and Linda Haver, Hamilton, NJ

#

Lora Jones, Annandale, NJ

#

W. C. and Nancy McWilliams, Flemington, NJ

\*

Dr. George Moore, White Stone, VA

#

Robert Peabody, Milford, NJ

\*

Bruce Sinclair, Cliffwood Beach, FL

@

Dennis Sutton, Port St. Lucie, FL

#

# Contributing

\* Sustaining

@ upgraded to Life membership

*Mrs. Shirley V. Favier, Membership Chair*

## 1860 Alexandria Farm Map Reproduced

In 1860 Alexandria Township encompassed Holland Township, Frenchtown and Milford. The map reproduced in color, for purchase in three sizes also depicts Little York, Finesville, Hughesville and Mount Pleasant.

The map features 30 engravings of farm homes and other structures of note, many still in use. Properties shown on the map achieved this distinction through paid sponsorship of the map and received a larger engraving suitable for framing. Many of the names on the map will be familiar: Hawks, Bellis, Pursell, Fine and Anderson. (See right)

Archival copies of the map are available from the Holland Township Historic Preservation Commission in three sizes:

Small 24" x 32"	\$ 85.00
Large 36" x 50"	\$ 195.00
X-Large 42" x 55.5"	\$ 275.00

For more information or to purchase a map contact:

Peter Craig (908) 995-9544

Holland Township Historic Preservation Commission  
61 Church Road, Milford, NJ 08848



## 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.

*Walker-Gordon: One of a Kind*, by Edward E. Tindall, MS, DVM and C. Stanton Clark, 1998. Donated by Dr. Tindall, Stockton, NJ.

*Central New Jersey Chairmaking of the Nineteenth Century*, by William H. Mac Donald, 1959. Donated by Mark Zdepski, Flemington, NJ

State of New Jersey, *Index of Wills, Inventories, etc., In the office of the Secretary of State Prior to 1901*, S. D. Dickinson, Secretary of State, 1912, three volumes reprinted 2000. Donated by Ms. Marietta Pickell, Alameda, CA.

Charter authorizing the creation of *The Hunterdon County Chapter of the American Cancer Society, New Jersey Division, Inc.*, dated 15 August 1946; Minute Books of the Hunterdon County Chapter of the American Cancer Society beginning 15 August 1946-October 1958; Minutes of the Board of Managers, American Cancer Society, Hunterdon County Chapter, May 1969-February 1975; Minutes...1980-1982; Minutes...1982-1983; Minutes...-1984-1985; pamphlet, *The Challenge of Change*. Donated by the Hunterdon County Chapter, American

can Cancer Society, Flemington, NJ.

Microfilm reels of *Hunterdon County Democrat*, January-March 2004, April-June 2004, July-September 2004, October-December 2004; *Delaware Valley News*, January-December 2004. Donated by Hunterdon County Democrat, Flemington, NJ.

*Out of Hunterdon County Kitchens* compiled by St. Magdalen's Women's Guild, Flemington, NJ, n.d.; *The Gateway To Good Cooking: Ringoes Golden Treasury Of Old and New Recipes*, published by the Patrons of the Ringoes #12, November 1963; *Cooking For Company: A Complete Guide To Planning, Preparing and Serving Deliciously Different Meals*, by Ruth Mills Teague 1950. Program "First Night Flemington 1996 Guide." Donated by Linda Schottman, Flemington, NJ.

*New York World's Fair Views* 1939, by Quality Art Novelty Co., Inc. Donated from the estate of Mrs. Anna Elma Eick by John Eick, Hampton, NJ.

Computer, Gateway 2000, model EV700, with processor, keyboard and accessories. Donated by John Sheets, Lambertville, NJ.

*Descendants of Andreas Lantz: William Lance/Lantz Family History*, by Joan L. Schomer, 2005. Donated by the compiler, Green Valley, AZ.

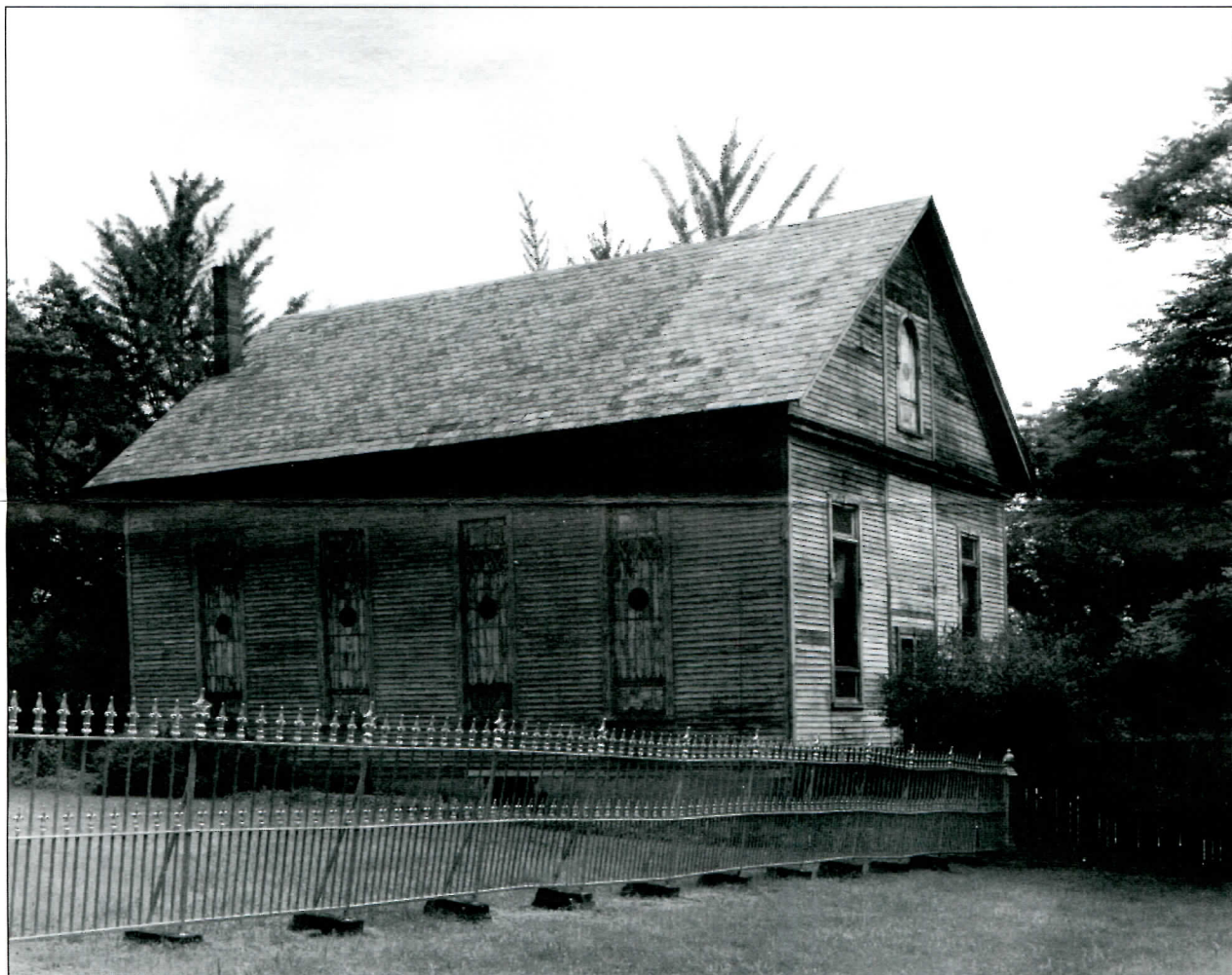






## *Images from the Past*

### **The Cokesbury Presbyterian Church**



The Cokesbury Presbyterian church on Water Street in the village of Cokesbury, Tewksbury Township, is one of Dr. Greenagel's photographs. The congregation was organized in April 1880 and the church cornerstone was laid in October of that year.

Some time before 1939 the congregation disbanded and the Presbytery of Elizabeth deeded it's interest in the adjoining cemetery to the Cokesbury Methodist Episcopal Church. The church is presently a private residence.

The tombstone inscriptions in the adjoining cemetery were copied by Genealogical Society of New Jersey trustee Isaac M. Philhower in 1945, and checked by trustees Norman C. Wittwer and Edwin W. Huff, Jr. in 1963.63.63. Subsequently the inscriptions were published in 2002 in *The Genealogical Magazine of New Jersey*, Volume 77, pages 79-84, 121-126.