

Hunterdon Historical Record



HUNTERDON
COUNTY
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

hunterdonhistory.org

**Sunday, Oct 14 - 9 am-2 pm
Society's Book Sale**

of Rare and Unusual Books
in conjunction with Main Street
Community Flea Market
See page 1289.
114 Main Street, Flemington

**Sun, Oct 28 - 1-3:30 pm
Take Me to Church Tour
led by church historians.**

Co-sponsors HCHS and
Calvary Episcopal Church.
Tour starts at the Doric House
114 Main, visits four churches,
ends at Calvary Episcopal
with refreshments.

Tour leaflet provided along with
a separate self-guided walking
tour of historic Flemington.

Walk or drive the 1.4 mile
church tour route in any order
except for first and last stops.
Suggested donation of \$5.00
goes to a local food pantry.

**Sunday, Nov 4 - 2 pm
HCHS annual fall meeting**

and lecture by
Historian Dennis Bertland.
Open to the public.
Refreshments served.
[See lead story at top, this page.]

For Citizens & Strangers: Early American Taverns in New Jersey

Architectural historian Dennis Bertland is the guest speaker for the Society's fall meeting on Sunday, November 4, at 2:00 pm. The meeting and lecture, which is free and open to the public, will be held at the Flemington United Methodist Church, 116 Main Street.

Dennis' presentation on tavern history in colonial America is based on extensive research he conducted for the Merchants and Drovers Tavern Association. His findings were used for an interpretive exhibit at the Association's tavern museum in Rahway, NJ. A book by Dennis based on his research and the script for the exhibition pends publication.

Over his forty-year career, Dennis has studied and written extensively



Saxonville Tavern near Raven Rock, NJ, 1939

about New Jersey's early architecture. His firm, *Dennis Bertland Associates*, is based in Stockton, NJ and specializes in historic preservation.

His talk will last about 50 minutes and be followed by questions. Refreshments will be served.

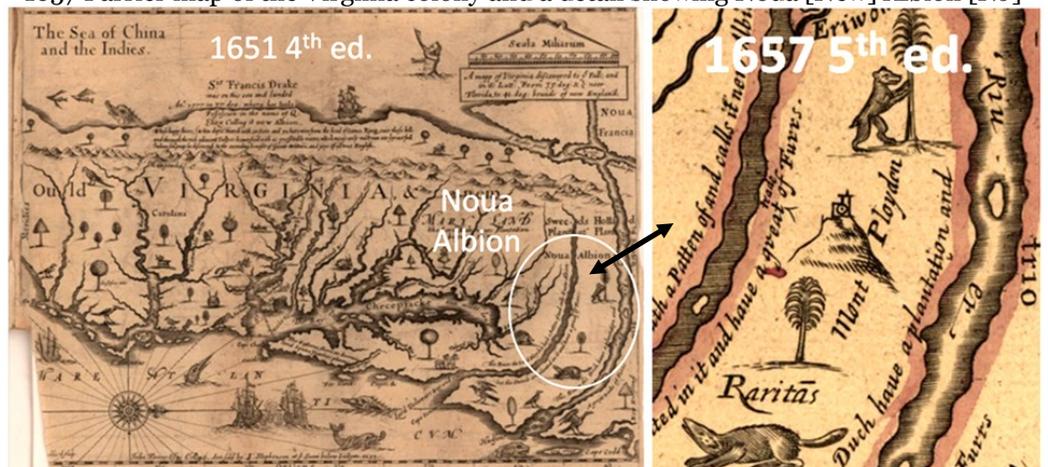
Indian Burial Vault Research in Hunterdon

By Gregory C. Herman, PhD

In late 2016, I began donating time to photograph the Society's American Indian artifacts collection amassed by Hiram E. Deats and John C. Thatcher in the late 1800s. This research in Hunterdon led to the rediscovery of some ancient stone mounds atop Cushetunk Mountain. The off-the-beaten-path site is described in James Snell's *The History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, New Jersey* (1881). A 1984 article in the *New York Times* titled *Searchers Seek Indian Crypt* refers to Snell's work

Continued on page 1292

1657 Farrier map of the Virginia colony and a detail showing Noua [New] Albion [NJ]



HUNTERDON HISTORICAL RECORD

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Lora Jones, John Kuhl, Stephanie Stevens
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Please send us your name, address, phone number, email address, and tell us if you would like to volunteer in the library, the archives, or the museum. Mail the information with your check to:

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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.

Bambara, Stephen. Postcards of Flemington Soldiers Monument and Hunterdon Medical Center; receipts of Isaac Rowe and Richard Sutphin; photographs of buildings on North Main Street Flemington including 6 North Main Street, home of the family of A.J. Bambara, M.D.; and photographs of the Bambara family, ca. 1942-1956. [See picture at right.]



Dr. A. J. & Nettie Bambara, 1 East Main St., Flemington, NJ, 1946

Bogert, Catherine. 8 bound manuscripts from the Sutton Farm, Sutton Road, Califon, NJ, ca. 1868-1925.

Canady, Leslie. Two Ruth Gibbs dolls with doll clothing.

Chiu, Jeffrey S. A collection of family genealogy notes, research, and reports by Joan Chiu, including 5 notebooks of material.

Conrad, Colleen. A large amount of material, 50+boxes, from the estate of her mother, Roxanne Carkhuff. Includes family trees, pamphlets, maps, photographs, genealogical research files, and historical subject files. Roxanne was a long time Trustee and Director of the HCHS.

Cooley, Henry Scofield. *A Study of Slavery in New Jersey* (2016 reprint, 1896). HCHS Purchase.

Cummings, Ken. A program from a musical production at the Clinton Music Hall, n.d., and an art work business directory of Hunterdon County.

Custer, Jay F. *Classification Guide for Arrowheads and Spearpoints of Eastern Pennsylvania and the Central Middle Atlantic* (2001). HCHS Purchase.

Dale, Frank Talbot. *The Ferryboat Business on our Delaware River* (2008). HCHS Purchase.

Dalrymple, Jeffery and Donna. A series of binders in scrapbook format documenting advertisements, descriptions, and sales records of Arthur Hanna Auctions, ca. 1971-2008.

Engle, C. David. *A Genealogical Study of John Blew (Revolutionary War veteran) of New Jersey and Pennsylvania* by Charles H. Engle, Sr. (1954) Gift of the author's grandson.

Friends of the Hunterdon County Library. A pamphlet concerning the 100th Anniversary of the Linvale, New Jersey Methodist Church, 1958.

Gesner, Michael. *William Barnes of Hunterdon County, New Jersey and his descendants* (2018). Gift of the author.

Heymann, Henry. 1844 Signature quilt with signatures and place names from Hunterdon and surrounding counties. [See picture just below.]

Hodges, Graham Russell. *Slavery and freedom in the Rural North, 1665-1865* (1997). HCHS Purchase.

Holland Township Historic Preservation Commission. *Early Life and Traditions of Holland, N.J., 1908-1915: a collection of newspaper articles, historical information and pictures* / compiled by Kathleen Phillips Sciarrello.

Kidder, William L. *Crossroads of the Revolution, 1774-1783* (2017). Gift of the author.

Kratzer, Al. Genealogical records of the Agin Family being the family tree of and compiled by Margaret "Sis" Elizabeth Agin. Photocopies of the original records held by the donor.



continued next page

Acquisitions continued

Levine Family, % Jeffrey Penn. Typescript family history of the Levine family, ca. 2002.

Matsen, John. 12 USGS Quadrangle Maps of various northern and central New Jersey locations, ca. 1953-1955.

McKaughan, Molly. Genealogical notes, family history, photographs of the Beaver and Honness families, ca. 1880-1946.

Phillips, Elaine. Books about Hunterdon and Mercer Counties N.J. and genealogical references for other locales. *Gift from the collection of and in memory of Kenneth H. Phillips.*

Plainfield Public Library, % Sally Weiner, Archivist. A group of photographs from the morgue files of the Home News Tribune concerning Hunterdon County, 1972-1988. [See picture at right.]

Sheets, John N. The book, *Between the "Sheets": Sheats-Sheets families of Hunterdon County, New Jersey* (2018). Gift of the author.



Flemington, 1947

Smith, Richard and Kathleen. Baby quilt, ca. 1915, made with fabrics from the Everittstown General Store. [See page 1294.]

Also, a collection of photographs assembled by E. Jane Rittenhouse of the Rittenhouse and related families of Frenchtown, Bloomsbury, and Everittstown, ca. 1875-1935. [See picture at right.]



Thomas Earl Rittenhouse, 1889

Society of Daughters of Holland Dames: Historical Records, 1895-2017. Donated by the Society.

Sperry, Kip. The book, *Reading Early American Handwriting* (1998). HCHS Purchase.

Stevens, Stephanie. A pamphlet concerning a resume book of the Flemington Trial by Gabriel Heatter, 1935.

Van Vleck, Jean. Trimmer, David and Margaret Family Bible (1803).

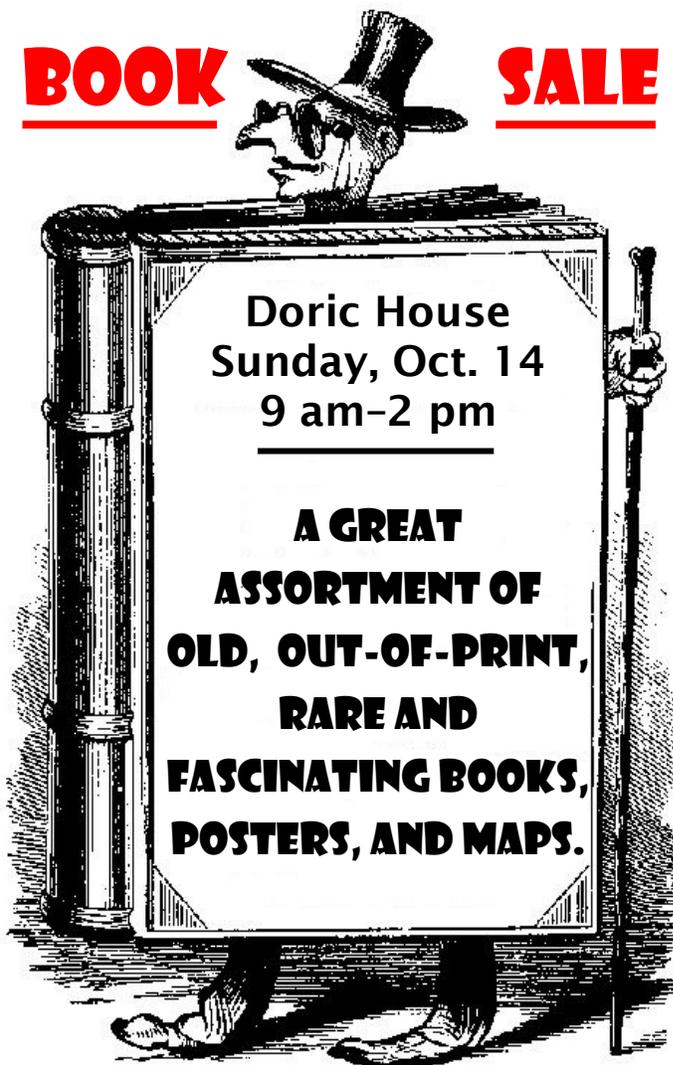
Welcome, New Members

- Alex Bartlett & Bob Sands, Ewing, NJ
- Jack Cullin, Spring Hill, FL
- Linda Haney, Miletus, WV
- Richard Ireland, Chevy Chase, MD
- Alonzo Paul, New Albany, PA
- Kathleen Schreiner, New Hope, PA
- Allura Weimer, Aurora, CO

Life Member
Peter Sepelya, Clinton, NJ

In Memoriam
William S. VanNatta, NJ

BOOK SALE



President Charles Fisher Says Don't Miss This Sale!

Come with cash or personal checks to the Doric House Plaza to shop a great collection of books, maps, and posters from our Archives. Bibliophile and Trustee Mary Ellen Soldavin has selected Collection duplicates or items unrelated to our mission that are infinitely appealing. Here are just a few of the great treasures awaiting you.

- * George Washington's Last Will & Testament, 1800
- * A Plan for the Conduct of Female Education in Boarding Schools, Private Families, and Public Seminaries, 1798, Erasmus Darwin (grandfather of Charles), 1798
- * The Gardener's Kalendar, 1760, Philip Miller
- * African Game Trails, Teddy Roosevelt, 1910, 1st ed.
- * The Marvelous Musical Prodigy, Blind Tom, the Negro Boy Pianist, 1876
- * A History of a Voyage to the Coast of Africa and Travels into the Interior of that Country, 1797
- * Gray's Anatomy, 1862, 2nd ed.

Murder at the Case-Dvoor Farm House

By Dave Harding

By the early 1800s, Philip Case had established himself as one of the more successful residents in the Flemington area.

He owned 65 acres of land, five horses, one top chair (riding chair) and his herd of cattle had doubled to 12 since the 1780s, according to Amwell Township tax rolls. His modest cheese- and butter-making operation was doing well, and his products were sold locally and shipped to New York City. He practiced diversified farming, and evidence exists he engaged

Cases did custom work, purchasing animal hides from various locations throughout the county. When local supplies diminished after 1800, New York agents supplied hides from wherever they could be found, including such faraway places as New Orleans and Buenos Aires, according to Hunterdon Land Trust's Historic Site Management Plan. Case sold leather locally and in New York and Philadelphia; animal hair, a byproduct of the tanning process, also was sold for use in making



Philip Case's 1798 home sited on today's Dvoor Circle.



The basement, scene of the grisly murder of James the slave.

in some progressive agricultural practices. For instance, at a time when fertilizer use was not widespread, Case spread gypsum plaster on his fields.

He also, no doubt, was enjoying his newly constructed home (present day address of 111 Mine St. and current headquarters of Hunterdon Land Trust). It was built in 1798 in the vernacular Georgian style, and more than 40 wagon loads of stone were carted to his property for its construction. The home featured a spacious center hallway, large cooking fireplaces in the kitchen and basement, and plenty of rooms for family and guests.

The house exuded elegance and style. But in 1803, it would become the scene of a crime – a brutal murder would occur in its basement.

Let's back up a bit. While agriculture was important to his family's livelihood, Case's main source of income was his tannery business. The tannery operated from 1783 to 1851 just east of the farmstead on the bank of the Walnut Brook. The

mortar and plaster.

The family hired local labor and purchased slaves to work in the tannery. Case was taxed for one adult male slave in 1786, 1789, 1802 and 1803, and likely owned several other African Americans.

On Friday, October 7, 1803, a slave, James, was asked to help a Mr. Petit "draw out dung." A second slave (Brown or Brom), who had just started working in the tannery, was told to help but complained of a pain in his side. An hour later, Brown agreed to help Petit, and joined James.

Later, after dinner, the two slaves were again working, when Petit heard a loud noise, and upon investigating, he found James and Brown fighting with dung forks. James poked Brown, warning that he "would run him through" if he did not stay out of the way," according to witness statements in the Coroner's Inquest on the murder.

Both men were very angry, but the forks were taken away and things seemed to

Continued next page

continuation...
calm down.

The two later headed down to the basement kitchen where another commotion erupted. Workers rushed to the scene to see that James had wrestled Brown to the ground. Brown "cried out he would not fight because of the pain in his side." The witnesses pulled James off Brown, but as soon as he was freed, Brown attacked James again only to wind up pinned on the floor a second time. The two were separated again. Brown waited for James to turn his back when he grabbed an iron trammel from the fireplace, and swung it. The blow crushed James's skull, and he crumpled to the floor. As the witnesses grabbed Brown, James drew his last breath.

On November 11, 1803, Brown was hanged in front of the Flemington courthouse.

Leave A Legacy

Help preserve Hunterdon's history by leaving a gift to the Society in your will or trust. That can be done by beneficiary designation or another form of planned gifting.

Deeds of Promised Gift also are available for completion now should you want to make sure some historical artifact you have is added to the Society's collection at some future time.

Your support could make a lasting difference in preserving Hunterdon's history. Private donations are vital to the Society's financial health since we receive no direct government or corporate funding.

For more information, please contact our Executive Director, Patricia Millen, at 908.782.1091 or hunterdonhistorypatricia@gmail.com.

Hunterdon's William Barnes and His Descendants

By Michael Gesner

Now on the shelf of the Society Library is the twelfth book authored and co-authored by Michael Gesner, one of the Society's research volunteers. William Barnes, one of his wife Janet's ancestors, and his descendants is the work's subject. Barnes' sons, John and William Jr., migrated from Hunterdon County north to Knowlton Township, Warren County (then Sussex County), New Jersey during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. This was a common change of habitat since many Hunterdon families made the same move.

The William Jr. line connects Janet to the Baylor, Kirkhuff (Carkhuff), Creveling and Weller families of Hunterdon and Warren Counties. At 678 fully indexed pages, the book attempts to trace *all* descendants, both male and female, down to the present day.

Twenty years in the making, Michael admits to cutting off his research early when there was undoubtedly more to be found. Persistent eye problems (and the uncertainty that conditions would improve) convinced him that he should simply publish what he had at the time. Too many researchers, according to Gesner, have spent their entire lives working on family history but fell short of publishing their findings before they passed on. "The book isn't

finished" is the common reply from non-published genealogists. The fact is, genealogies, published or *not*, are *never* finished, says Michael. After publishing some of his efforts, it was only *days* until an obituary surfaced, providing updated information on a family. In one instance, it was only eight hours until the book was obsolete.

The William Barnes book is available for purchase at the Society for \$45 plus shipping or from www.lulu.com, where the entire index can be previewed. Lulu is an excellent avenue for self-publishing as one book at a time can be printed. It also is economical; no longer is price an excuse for not publishing one's genealogy.

Since the printing of the Carkhuff/Kirkhuff Genealogy in 2010, a great deal of information has been added. So much, in fact, that a revision is in the works. It's been quite a struggle, admits Michael, but there is a strong possibility that a two-volume genealogy "may" soon replace the earlier research.

The Gesners want to make the next edition as complete as possible and urge all who descend from this family to send their current information to them at Michael and Janet Gesner, P.O. Box 532, Broadway, New Jersey 08808, or by email at mgesner@yahoo.com.

Indian Burial Vault *continued...*

and other efforts to locate the site.

The first recorded English contact with American natives in our area was in 1640-47 when Sir Edmund Ployden, a British citizen of Irish heritage, ventured into the province with 500 men to claim the region between the Delaware and Hudson rivers, then mapped as Noua [New] Albion. A journal account of this expedition was kept by Beauchamp Plantagenet, a member of Sir Edmund's expedition into lands along and northeast of the Delaware River that likely included northern reaches of Hunterdon. As chronicled, 23 "Kings or Chief Commanders" of the region included two Raritan "Kings" in the north next to "Hudson's river". One held a fortress on Mt. Ployden located "20 miles from the Sandhay Sea and 90 miles from the ocean, next to Amara Hill...". Plantagenet described Mt. Ployden as a "square rock, two miles compass, 150-foot-high, a wall like precipice, a straight entrance easily made invincible, where he keeps 200 for his guard, and under it a flat valley... to sow and plant."

The mountain fortress is depicted in the 5th edition of an early colonial map of the Virginia colony (Farrier, 1657) that includes Noua Albion [NJ], but lacks details on its location. Ployden's claim to the region, and consequently his namesake mountain, is missing on modern maps, but many have speculated that the "kingly seat" could be Hunterdon's Cushetunk Mountain, or Somerset County's Chimney Rock or Neshanic Mountain.

Some historians have openly cast doubt on Plantagenet's "extravagant" and "imaginary state of the Raritan King", but the Cushetunk mounds are described in Snell's work as "piles of stones in the forest arranged in such a manner as to leave no doubt that they had been placed there when the trees were small saplings to mark an Indian burial-place." He also reports that James Alexander (who purchased and surveyed large tracts of land in Hunterdon in the mid-1700s) found atop the most rugged parts of Cushetunk Mountain: "A large heap of

Drs. Michael Serfes and Donald Monteverde at Mound 5 looking north, April 2017.



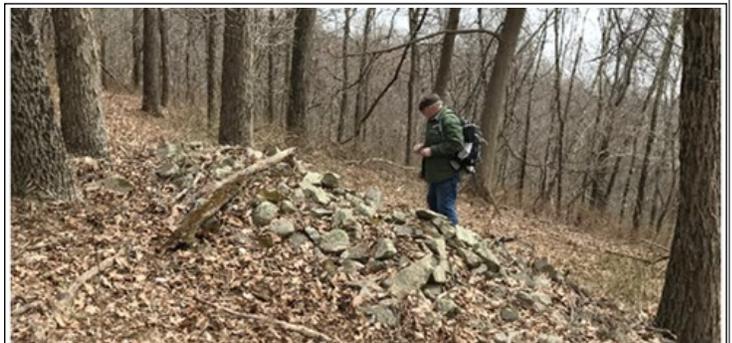
stones piled together with some regularity that formed a rudely arched vault containing the remains of seven warriors, with their arms, ornaments, and utensils around them. There were beads, arm- and wristbands of bone and copper, a number of pipes, leather leggings, and other articles of Indian dress. The general appearance was that they were all warriors of the same tribe, and to each one was affixed the symbolic characters showing the order in which they had succeeded each other. There was nothing in common in these relics with those of the then existing tribe to show that they were the same people. The trees seemed to have grown there since this vault was built, and the probability is that it was the resting-place of seven generations of kings who had roamed here long before the white people came." The stones were reportedly replaced, "fearing lest the Indians, discovering his invasion of this ancient sepulcher, would be incensed against him."

In 1956, Henry Beck (*The Roads of Home: Lanes and Legends of New Jersey*) raised the Cushetunk Mt./Mt. Ployden link by noting "the bold eminence" of the mountain, but he mistakenly identified Round Valley's southern rim as the likely site of the long-lost warrior kings. As he stated, "Presumably, the graves must have been opened. Recent wanderings and inquires have brought forth no trace of these burials." Norman Wittwer (*The Dawn of Hunterdon*; 1964) also pointed out that Professor Philhower, "who devoted more than half a century to the study of New Jersey Indians", thought that Round Valley fit the location of Mt. Ployden if Lake Hopatcong is the "Sandhay Sea" and the distance to Mt. Ployden was taken along water courses rather than a straight course.

Many of the stone mounds we mapped apparently have been disturbed by past foraging (note the crease in Mound 5 below). Whether these mounds are ancient Indian graves or not awaits confirmation by professional archeological work. But in my mind, this site, in conjunction with adjacent archeological sites about the headwaters of Rockaway Creek, points to the high probability of Cushetunk Mountain being Mt. Ployden and the resting place of the fabled warrior kings, among others.

To be continued...

Mark Zdepski at the apparently undisturbed Mound 3, looking east.



Curator Cornelius Releases Four New Collections

As many readers of the *Hunterdon Historical Record* are aware, I often use this space to highlight recent collection releases by the Archival Program of the Society. The program, which is conducted by the Curator and a dozen volunteers, is designed to collect, organize, preserve, and share the truly amazing historical material that the Society has amassed in our 133 years of existence. While the sheer amount of material in our collection can be daunting, the volunteers of the program continue to labor faithfully in an effort to bring the material forth to our membership and to the larger world. As we finish organizing and preserving each distinct unit or collection of material we “release” it to the membership and public. When a collection is “released”, it means that it is then available to the public to examine for research purposes.

Usually, collection releases are announced on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/hunterdonhistory/) and on our webpage, hunterdonhistory.org. I realize that not all of our membership gets their news from these online sources, so I still like to use this space to highlight recent collections.

Collection 200, *The Family Casket* Although the name sounds odd, that is actually the name of a small newspaper published in Whitehouse Station, Hunterdon County, from 1868-1874. We have just 14 issues of it, edited by A.J. Shampanore surviving here at the HCHS. The paper defined itself as, “An Independent Family Newspaper, Devoted to Agriculture, Science, Amusement, and Local and General Intelligence.” It published many stories on local events, family matters, and noted births, deaths, and marriages making it a prized source of information for genealogists of Hunterdon County. Because of its tiny circulation, not many issues have survived. Besides our 14, there are a few more in Rutgers University Special Collections. Beyond that, I think they are hard to come by. I thank archival volunteer Pam Bush for processing this interesting collection.

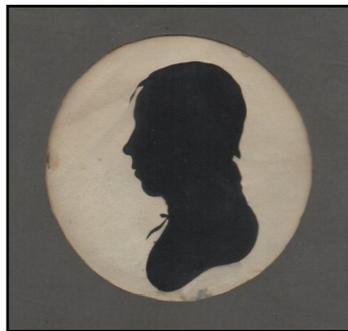
Collection, 202, *Peter Haward Letters* This collection mostly consists of 34 pieces of correspondence from Peter Haward, an English-born Hunterdon County resident, to his family and friends in England, ca. 1800-1854. In these letters he discusses recent family updates and shows an interest in sharing the latest American political news, often providing quotes from presidential speeches. Additional documents include Peter Haward's ledger, day book, notes on the construction of a schoolhouse and an agricultural memorandum. This collection is important because it provides interesting interpretation and valuable insights into 19th century American politics as well as life in Flemington, where Peter Haward resided

until 1858.

Collection 203, *The Van Syckle Family Papers* The genealogists amongst you will be pleased to note another release of a small collection of materials related to the Van Syckle family of Clinton, NJ. This is a family many people descending from Hunterdon families can lay claim to. It includes an original bound copy of the *History of the Van Syckel Family* (1880), newspaper clippings, ephemera, notes on the family history, and family correspondence. Records range from 1848 to 1932 with copies of all original materials. Of particular interest are six pieces of correspondence (four originals) to Dr. Sylvester Van Syckel of Clinton from his mother, sisters, and brother, along with transcriptions; a related genealogical list composed on December 20, 1934 documenting “Mrs. Lizzie McLenahan Queen's first cousins”; and bible pages outlining some other genealogical information. The Society thanks archival volunteer Chris Spangler for processing both this and the Peter Haward collections.

Collection 204, *The Mary E. Sheppard Papers* This collection consists of a small group of City of Lambertville business records, contracts, property tax records, deeds, Hunterdon County data books, records from the Hunterdon County Surrogate's office, programs, and other ephemera. The grouping is eclectic but interesting, and this collection would be of value to anyone researching the history of the City. Of particular interest is a series of detailed accounts of an investigation into the illegal sale of liquor in Lambertville in 1894, detailing where liquor was illegally obtained and consumed, from and by whom, and of what kinds. Other interesting records include a raffle ticket with the prize of five shotguns, a memorandum of agreement with the City of Trenton to house victims of scarlet fever, and others. This collection was donated by Mary Elizabeth Sheppard (1944-2012). Among many other things in her long and wonderful life, Mary was a Trustee of our Historical Society and also the Clerk of Lambertville for a time. This small collection is the first of many groups of records donated by Mary; I am sure that there will be more added to the processed ranks of available records in due time. The Society thanks archival volunteer Karen Riedeburg for processing this material.

These are by no means all of the materials our dedicated volunteers have worked on in recent months, and members and researchers can look forward to many more collection releases before year's end. In the meantime, please enjoy our recent additions and look for the new ones to come on our Facebook page and website.



Peter Haward ihouette, 1805

Spotlight on Collections: Rittenhouse Quilt

By Janice Armstrong

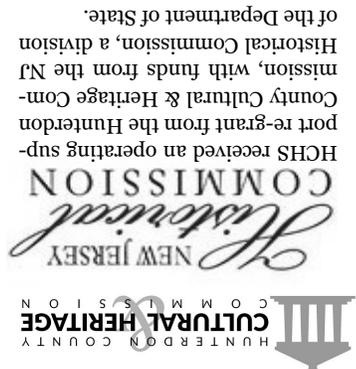
After a trip across the United States and Canada, the Richard Rittenhouse baby quilt has returned to Hunterdon where it was made. Florence Susan (nee Spragg) Rittenhouse created the quilt for her son Richard from small pieces of 19th century patterned fabrics left over from dresses made for her daughters. Many of the fabrics are thought to have come from the Everittstown General Store owned and operated by the Rittenhouse family.

Young Richard passed away in 1916 at the tender age of 15 months. The treasured quilt re-



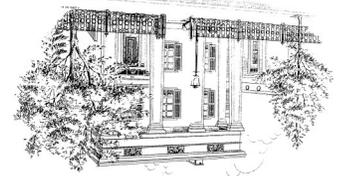
mained in the possession of E. Jane Rittenhouse, Richard's older sister, traveling to California and eventually Vancouver, Canada. Jane also took along a stuffed dog that was Richard's intended Christmas present. The toy resides in the Vancouver Museum today.

Jane passed the quilt on to Richard B. Smith, a distant cousin formerly of Bloomsbury, when she came to visit her childhood home in 1983. She passed away in 2004 in Vancouver. Richard B. Smith donated the quilt, along with documentation, to the Society, as Jane had requested.



Hunterdon's History
Sharing
Preserving
Collecting
Since 1885
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Hunterdon County
Historical Society
114 Main Street
Flemington, NJ



HCHS received an operating support re-grant from the Hunterdon County Cultural & Heritage Commission, with funds from the NJ Historical Commission, a division of the Department of State.