

1885

HUNTERDON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

100 Years of Service

1985

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Centennial Newsletter Series

WINTER 1986

So You Have An Old House! Now What Do You Do?

"If walls could talk, imagine what they could tell us." Walls *can* provide some information—about the basic architectural style and approximate date of construction of a building. However, there is much history about any house that walls can not provide. Phyllis B. D'Autrechy, the guest speaker at the Annual Meeting, will explain how to learn more about your "old" house.

Mrs. D'Autrechy is the author of *House Plans*, a 23 page pamphlet published in 1982 by the Hunterdon County Cultural and Heritage Commission, which tells what sources are likely to yield data about a house and where these sources are located. She works with the County's archival (pre-1900) records in her position with the Cultural and Heritage Commission which has custodial care of these documents. Her job is to inventory the various record groups generated by County Clerks, Surrogates, and other County officials, to microfilm selected groups and arrange them in acid-free folders and boxes for permanent preservation.

Her familiarity with these sources and her more than 30 years as a genealogical records searcher give Mrs. D'Autrechy an excellent overview of what is available to assist you in piecing together a history of your house. Join her at 2 p.m. on Sunday, April 6, at the Flemington Women's Club for an interesting afternoon. Refreshments will be served after the meeting. Society meetings are open to the public.

House Plans for Sale

If you own an old house or are contemplating the purchase of one and want to know about its history and who built and/or lived in it or have an ancestor whose property you wish to locate, *House Plans* by Phyllis B. D'Autrechy is what you need to begin research.

Packed into this 23 page pamphlet you will discover all you need to know to research a property. Many will find the glossary very helpful. A checklist of 8 sources in the County Clerk's office, 8 in the Surrogate's office and 23 others in depositories elsewhere is invaluable. A detailed explanation of how to plot a deed is also included. To order a copy send \$1.50 to *House Plans*, Hunterdon County Cultural and Heritage Commission, County Administration Building, Flemington, NJ 08822.

Pierson Reading's 1818 Patent

Pierson Reading, who gave his address as Trenton, New Jersey, obtained the first patent on horse drawn hayrakes in the United States and perhaps in the world, on August 1, 1818. The Patent Department fire in 1836 burned all patents and records, except for an index kept in the State Department where his name was found.

Arnold B. Skromme is writing a book, "Inventors and Their Inventions of Forage Harvesting Machines" which will be published by the American Society of Agricultural Engineers. He wants to give New Jersey and the Reading family all the recognition he can but needs to obtain a copy of the original patent or a description of the rake or some newspaper account showing Reading actually built and tested the model with success. Patents in those days were very impressive, with large blue ribbons, and seals. Generally the patents were kept by descendants long after other items were thrown away. If Mr. Reading made some of these rakes and sold them, perhaps he had an advertising leaflet that appeared with a woodcut, showing and describing his rake. A copy of this or some newspaper account of his rake would be very valuable to Mr. Skromme.

If any readers know of this patent or know of any direct living descendant of Pierson Reading, please contact Mr. Skromme with the information. Write to Arnold B. Skromme, 2605 31st Street, Moline, IL 61265 or telephone him at area code 309-764-2186.

1986 CALENDAR

April 6	Annual Meeting Phyllis B. D'Autrechy Want to Know More About An Old House?
June 29	Spring Meeting Plans to be announced
November 23	Fall Meeting Richard Porter Historic Sites: Criteria and Nomination Procedure

HUNTERDON HISTORICAL NEWSLETTER

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NOTES AND QUERIES

Address correspondence to Genealogical Committee. Listings of ten lines free to members, non-member rate is 25 cents per line.

DILLS/DILS/DILTS: Des corres/w anyone researching Morris Dils/Dilts, liv Hillsboro Twp., Somerset Co. where he d. 1812; and/or Peter, Philip or John William Dills. All originally from Lebanon Twp., Hunt. Co. ADD: Fran Reynolds, 106 Dawn Dr., Linwood, NJ 08221.

CASE: Des info re Peter Case (ca. 1770-1816) who m Lucretia Burr, remov to Hampshire Co, VA (now WVA) ca 1799. Issue: Jacob b 1794, Othaniel b 1795, Peter, John, Sarah, Lucretia, Elizabeth, Mary, and 2 infants d young. Peter and Wm. Case owned lumber mill in Hampshire Co ca 1806-15. ADD: Roxanne K. Carkhuff, P.O. Box 334, Ringoes, NJ 08551.

BICE, HERDER: Seek anc, desc/o John Bice, m Hunt. Co. 23 Sept 1815 Anna Herder. They liv Kingwood Twp. 1831, moved bef 1849 to Solebury Twp., Bucks Co., PA. ADD: Darryl B. Lamson, 703 Darlington Rd., Beaver Falls, PA 15010.

APGAR, BUNN, CRAMER, HAZEN, HOFFMAN, HOOVER, MULLEN: Corres invited with those researching 1750-1830 period on the following, all lived in Morris, Hunterdon, Somerset Co area: William Hazen, Henry Hoffman, Peter Apgar, Jacob Mullen, John Bunn, Michael Hoover, George Cramer. Postage refunded. ADD: Anne Willard, 13700 Lyman Lane, Red Bluff, CA 96080.

SEAVERNS/SEVERN(S)/SEVERANS/SEVERANCE, VANDERGIFT: Seek anc/o John Severns (descendants used other spellings) w m. Joice Vandergrift Hunt. Co., NJ 28 July 1747. Both from Bucks Co., PA. ADD: Carolyn Stine Broome, 300 Rainbow Dr., Carrboro, NC 27510.

ALPAUGH, MEYERS: Seek par, anc/o George V. Alpaugh (1814-1896) and wife Hannah P. Meyers (Myers) (1822-1916) m. 4 Mar 1848 Little York, NJ by Elder Summerbell of Milford Christian Church. ADD: T. W. Brundage, 312 Paani Pl., Paia, Maui, HI 96779.

CASE, THATCHER: Case family picture album contains a photograph ca 1880 of a young lady identified as *Cousin Kate Thatcher*. Cases in OH and NJ are pictured in album. Can anyone identify Kate? Her mother may have been a Case. ADD: Mrs. Ernest L. Case, 17933 Fairview Ave., Beloit, OH 44609.

CENTURY CLUB MEMBERS

In commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Hunterdon County Historical Society a Century Club was initiated in 1985 for Persons contributing \$100. They each received a numbered print of the Doric House.

Mrs. F. Elizabeth O'Grady, New Providence, NJ

Mr. Stephen Case, Summit, NJ

Mr. and Mrs. Samuel H. Christie, Jr., Warren Twp., NJ

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Mrs. Hermia M. Lechner, Flemington, NJ

Mrs. Louise Dean North, N. Plainfield, NJ

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Mr. William A. Burroughs, Trenton, NJ

Miss Helen E. Waldron, Oldwick, NJ

Miss Marion C. Waldron, Oldwick, NJ

Lt. Col. and Mrs. James A. Horn, Stockton, NJ

Mr. Adam Siodlowski, Oldwick, NJ

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 Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Linn Creighton, Flemington, NJ
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Mrs. Frederick Stothoff
 Membership Secretary

ACQUISITIONS

West Jersey Society Papers, 1761-1792, Robert Morris, Agent. Financial records, legal documents, correspondence, surveys, etc. Concerning land in South Jersey and Pennsylvania. Donated by Mrs. Louis M. Bauman, Pittstown, NJ.

Bible with family records of William C. Marsh (1851-1940) and his wives Ella Holcombe (1855-1886) and Mary Higgins (1854-1945) gift from Katherine H. Bamber, Flemington, NJ.

Miscellaneous items of 19th century clothing donated by Mrs. Horace Smith, Ringoes, NJ.

Oversize map case, card catalog and 5 drawer legal file donated by AT & T through Herman Kapp, Flemington, NJ.

Frank Ellsworth Burd Collection consisting of manuscripts, genealogical files, short stories, historical essays, obituary card file, Bibles, gift from his daughter, Mrs. James Grover, Stockton, NJ.

THE HERITAGE OF THE HUNTERDON COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION by Kenneth V. Myers, gift of the author, Milford, NJ.

THE PALATINE FAMILIES OF NEW YORK, 2 volume set, by Henry Z. Jones, Jr., purchased.

ALLEGERS SEARCHING FOR FAMILY AND KIN, compiled by Daniel E. Alleger, gift of the compiler, Gainesville, FL.

SCHAMP-SCHOMP and LANE FAMILIES OF HUNTERDON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY, arranged by William Francis Smith from research by Mrs. Cora D. Lane and Mrs. Estella Victoria Schomp, donated by Mr. Smith, Bethesda, MD.

Three medical diaries kept by Sarah Cottman; three travel diaries kept by John Hall Capner (1755-1827) or Thomas Capner (1769-1832) donated by David Brackett, Port Angelos, Washington.

HUNT AND ALLIED FAMILIES AND SOME OF THEIR DESCENDANTS Vol. IV, parts 1 and 2, donated by Rowena Robinson Billos, NJ State Chairman, Genealogical Records Chairman, New Jersey State Society, DAR.

Bible record (xerox copy) from "Mrs. Christina Snyder's book presented to her by her father William R. Slack, 1864" family record of William R. Slack (1814-1898) and his wives Join C. Slack (1810-1840)

whom he married in 1833 and Fany Lawshe (1807-1893) whom he married in 1842. Copy donated by Dorothy Snyder Gerber, Gillette, NJ.

A GUIDE TO GENEALOGICAL SOURCES IN NEW JERSEY by Anna L. Rudner, published by National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in the State of New Jersey, donated by Mrs. Rudner, Lincroft, NJ.

Issues of miscellaneous newspapers, 1852, 1898, 1906, 1916 donated by Frank Cregar, Flemington, NJ.

Miscellaneous 19th century Hunterdon County newspapers, donated by Edward Quick, Ringoes, NJ (1892-1985).

Autograph book, 1906, owned by Jacob Case (1892-1985); photograph album; Bible containing family records of Jacob C. Williamson and Susan Ewing, married 1849 gift, from Mr. and Mrs. Francis Strouse, Flemington, NJ.

50+ early views of Oldwick and vicinity on postcards, photographs and maps gift from Marion and Helen Waldron, Oldwick, NJ.

Assorted pieces of antique lace from the estate of Ruth Trask Farrow donated by Rev. Charles Stires, Amagansett, NY.

Post Office oath of A.L. Alpaugh, 1920, Oldwick; scrapbook kept by Mrs. Leila Alpaugh Harscholl containing art cards donated by Marion and Helen Waldron, Oldwick, NJ.

Scrapbooks about the Hauptman trial and other 1935 events and Centerville and vicinity donated by Mrs. Harold Vincent, Centerville, NJ.

Miscellaneous volumes of THE READING ECHO donated by Robert Larason, Lambertville, NJ.

Four volumes, ledgers, journal and bill registers, kept by William C. Apgar, 1900-1911, Frenchtown, donated by Hollis Burke, Frenchtown, NJ.

Microfilms of records from the United First Presbyterian Church of Amwell at Larison's Corner, Ringoes, New Jersey containing Trustee minutes, 1818-1973; Session minutes, 1863-1977; Church registers, 1868-1934; treasurers' books, 1810-1917 donated by the Church, Rev. John F. Potter, pastor, and Mrs. Jane Bellis Duffy, Clerk of Sessions.

Hunterdon County Democrat on microfilm, 6 reels covering the period February 1984 through July 1985, from Democrat Press, Mr. and Mrs. Seely Thomas, Flemington, NJ.

Willcox and Gibbs sewing machine with numerous attachments and original instruction book, bill of sale dated December 3, 1888, purchased by Robert Craig, New Germantown, grandfather of the contributors, Marion and Helen Waldron, Oldwick, NJ.

Framed lithograph, 29½" by 24½", dated 1864, The Lord's Prayer, gift of Marion and Helen Waldron, Oldwick, NJ.





Thomas Jones' tavern, currently McIntyre law offices on Center Street in Annandale.

Courtesy of Hunterdon County Democrat

He Got Involved

On Monday the 24th of June about midnight near my back door, a great many men fell upon my neighbor, John Shurts, Jr., with clubs and beat him furiously.

I heard Shurts cry, "Murder," so I ran to the cellar kitchen stairs with my loaded gun. By the time I got there they had gotten into the entry. Then I sat my gun down and tried to relieve Shurts by pulling them away. Then some of them struck at me with clubs so I took my gun and told them that if they didn't leave the house and stop hitting me that I'd blow their brains out. But they grabbed the gun, twisted it out of my hands, and beat me on the head and body with their clubs. They even threatened to kill me.

Twice I broke away from them and attempted to escape into the house but they prevented me until the third time when I was finally able to break away from them and get into the house where I locked the door and fled upstairs.

The thugs immediately broke open the outside door and several inside doors in search of me. They threatened to kick my wife if she didn't tell them where I was. She answered that she didn't know where I had gone and then cried out, "Don't kill me. You have killed my husband." The men chased her and the children out of doors. I heard the children screaming and crying, "You've killed my daddy. Don't kill me."

The men must have gotten tired of looking for me because they finally left and then my wife told me that they'd taken our money and also broken the barn door.

Sounds like the plot of an X-rated movie or a hit

T.V. show, doesn't it?, but it isn't. This is taken from testimony given on 8 July 1776¹ by Captain Thomas Jones, inn keeper of Lebanon Township against John Vought, Joseph Lee, Thomas Swindle, William Hunt, John Dey, George Cyphers, Peter Cyphers, Jonathan Hunt, George Cyphers, Jr., John Seal, Jr., James McCord/McGourd and "sundry others."

Just two days after the attack on Captain Jones, the Provincial Congress and Council or Safety of New Jersey noted that "certain disaffected persons, in the County of Hunterdon, have confederated for the purpose of opposing the measures of the Continental and Provincial Congresses, and have even proceeded to acts of open and daring violence; have plundered and robbed the house of Captain Jones; have beaten, wounded and otherwise abused the friends of freedom in said County, and now publicly declare, that they will take up arms and engage in behalf of the King of Great Britain."² It was ordered that the men who were mentioned in Capt. Jones' affidavit and others were to be arrested and kept under strong guard in the jail at Trenton.³ John Vought, Joseph Lee and George Cyphers were eventually tried for treason at inquisitions held in Lebanon Township at the inn of the same Captain Thomas Jones.

Phyllis B. D'Autrechy

1. Miscellaneous Record #5716. Office of the Clerk of Hunterdon County, Hall of Records, Main Street, Flemington, NJ
2. *Minutes of the Provincial Congress and the Council of Safety of the State of New Jersey*. Trenton: Near, Day and Narr. 1897, p. 477
3. Phyllis B. D'Autrechy. *Some Records of Old Hunterdon County, 1701-1838*. Trenton Printing Company, 1979, pp. 211-212.

A LINK TO THE PAST

Hiram Edmund Deats [1870-1963]

"Historian, philatelist, educator, elevator of the standards of rural living. For more than half a century you have given unstintingly of your time and talents to the betterment of agriculture, of culture, and indeed of every aspect of life in your home county of Hunterdon. To specify any of your manifold activities is to ignore more, yet your State University cannot omit to recognize the part you played, as a sustaining force behind the County Board of Agriculture in its formative years, in bringing the benefits of Extension work to the men and women, boys and girls, of your county. As a collector and preserver of historical annals, you have rendered invaluable service to posterity. As a leader in every move of civic betterment, you have earned the undying gratitude of your fellow man. By direction of the Trustee I confer upon you, honoris causa, the degree of Master of Arts."

Citation presented by
President Lewis Webster Jones,
at the Commencement Exercises of
Rutgers University, 1952

Hiram Edmund Deats's life is closely entwined with the Hunterdon County Historical Society's history because he was so keenly interested in the County's history. He was *Mr. Hunterdon!*, the leading authority on the history of New Jersey and his native Hunterdon County. He served the Society in every office except President, played a key roll in building its collections during his term as Librarian from 1891 until 1963, and alone kept it going through its "quiescent" years. Directly and indirectly he touched our lives and continues to do so through these collections and his writings, and those of others who were encouraged and inspired by him.

Regretably I never had the opportunity to personally meet Mr. Deats, to see that twinkle in his eye everyone noticed, and to enjoy his wit. I've met him through his prolific correspondence, his diaries, using the collection he carefully put together for "HCHS" and the numerous stories and anecdotes I always have time to hear. He was a remarkable man who had many interests and found time to pursue them meaningfully.

His genealogical notes, newspaper clippings, accounts, etc. attest to the fact that he worked with a systematic plan and could be counted on to follow his plan. Last year I began making notes for this issue by examining the inventory of his Deats Papers in the Society's manuscript collection. He didn't disappoint

me. In his usual organized manner, he had made 20 plus pages of autobiographical notes, probably in 1924 on the occasion of being made a Fellow of the American Genealogical Society. He also kept a daily journal for sixty-eight years recording his activities each day.

The first eight pages of Mr. Deats' earliest journal contain notes on natural history and are dated February 9, 1886. Subsequently, on January 1, 1888, he began keeping a daily record until his eyesight failed so that he was no longer able to see what he was writing. In these ninety-five books he jotted how he spent his day, who visited at home and in town, news of town (Flemington) including, in some instances, newspaper clippings. He recorded the weather and sometimes the high and low temperatures and the events of the day, be it a Historical Society meeting, fire in town, funeral, visitors. In many instances when he attended a funeral he pasted an obituary from the newspaper in his journal. It is not unusual, especially in the earlier volumes, to find a menu from a restaurant where he dined, a railroad or theater ticket or program.

Mr. Deats was a prolific correspondent and copies of his letters were kept and filed. Here, too, he related what he was doing, his philosophy on a variety of matters, etc. Drawing from his autobiography, his diaries and correspondence, and reminiscences of his friends, we gain insight into the creation of his legacy to us — his historical and genealogical collection, and glimpse life from his point of view.

"I was born in the village of Brookville, now a part of the Boro of Stockton, in Delaware Township, Hunterdon County, New Jersey, son of Hiram⁴ Deats (John³, William², Adam¹) and Elmira⁸ Stevenson (John⁷, Joseph⁶, John⁵, Thomas⁴, John³, Thomas², Thomas¹) on May 20, 1870."

His ancestors on both sides were early settlers in Hunterdon County. Adam Deats settled in Amwell Township, Hunterdon County about 1740. He was the first Elder elected in the German Reformed Church of Amwell in 1749. John³ Stevenson purchased 600 acres in Bethlehem Township, Hunterdon County in 1727. Two years later the Kingwood Friends Meeting started at his house. "Father's family have been Baptist since 1764. My family are all members of the Cherryville Baptist Church which my Father helped start in 1848. Mother and most of her ancestors were Quakers."

His father, Hiram, was a successful manufacturer and supplier of agricultural implements. An improved plow had been patented in 1828 by John Deats. Writing to someone in 1923 Mr. Deats said, "The Deats plow was invented by my grandfather, John Deats, in 1828, and made 1831-1835 by my father, Hiram Deats. My cousin took over the business in 1885 but sold out some years later. The old model has not been made since 1890. People who used it in their boyhood days frequently asked me if I am related to the Deats Plow. It is pleasant to know they appreciated it."

The Agricultural Museum of the State of New Jersey was actually born in 1929 when Hiram E. Deats donated a Deats plow and other agricultural implements to Dr. Jacob Lipman, dean of the New Jersey College of Agriculture. After decades of collecting, the Museum was organized in the Fall of 1985 and its board of trustees and director have selected a building site and employed an architect.

His mother was a school teacher of Quaker background who tutored him almost from infancy. As a youngster he developed interests in archeology, nature, science, history, philately, numismatics, genealogy, book-plate collecting, literature and the arts.

"In May 1876 we moved from Stockton to the farm 2 miles north-east of Flemington. My grandmother, Hannah Willson Stevenson, then living in LaSalle County, Illinois, came on to spend the summer with us and from her I heard many family traditions. From this I developed an interest in genealogy which has lasted. Perhaps the strongest item was the story that some of our ancestors came to America with William Penn which was not entirely accurate, but they were Quakers and came about that time.

"In November 1879 we moved to Pittstown 8 miles west of Flemington as Father had to resume management of the machine shops there after the death of my brother. In the winter of 1879-80 we were living at Pittstown and James P. Snell was working on his *History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, New Jersey*. While he parked at our house for a few days I ran errands for him, borrowing old records from neighbors. This gave me an interest in local history which has persisted.

"We moved back to the farm at Flemington Junction on July 5, 1884," and young Eddie Deats walked the family cow the eight miles from Pittstown to the Junction.

It was on the farm that Hiram Deats spent his last years. He died in 1887 leaving the major portion of his estate, investments and real estate, to his son, Hiram Edmund. His widow, Elmira, received \$27,000 and for the aid and benefit of orphan and needy and destitute children he left \$40,000. His son, Hiram Edmund, "during his natural life the use of the brick building recently erected by me on Main Street . . . at [his] death . . . to the children of Hiram Edmund Deats." Following graduation from Peddie, he supervised the operation of the large farm at Flemington Junction, and other real estate and investments he received from his father's estate.

"In 1888 I took J. C. Sunderlin, Flemington photographer, around the county to take pictures of buildings and to borrow old Daguerrotypes to bring home and copy. They may be seen in C. W. Opdyke's *The Op Dyck Genealogy*. This gave me a chance to learn something about photography since Mr. Sunderlin had begun his life work in the days of Daguer, but unlike many, always kept up with new methods."

Jottings for the year 1888 from his journal relate continued interest in his stamp collection and he was making preparation to enter Peddie Institute at Hightstown, in the Fall.

"1/12/88 — Too busy to write . . . I have been rearranging my collection of revenue stamps."

"1/19/88 — Mamma gave her consent to the purchase of Mr. Sterling's collection at five minutes after three o'clock p.m. I expect I will be derided by all the newspapers now, henceforth, hereafter and forevermore."

"1/20/88 — Went to town with Mother this forenoon. Mr. B. gave me a check for \$2,000 and I signed a note for one year for \$5,000 and she endorsed it and I gave it to Mr. Sterling in payment for the collection.

. . . Anthony Kilgore's collection of Indian relics judged 'not as good as mine' that cost me less than \$15."

"2/22/88 — Had my photograph taken at the dedication of the Methodist church . . ."

"3/6/88 — Went to KR's party last night. Started off at half past seven and I left at 2:15 a.m. The first hour was rather dull as the crowd had not arrived but an hour later nine girls and nine boys all ready for fun. Played cards, dominos, checkers, backgammon and snaf (?) . . . then out to lunch. Miss Lizzie Reading asked permission to escort me out for refreshment which was readily granted. Cake, oranges and coffee . . . talked and ate . . . commenced games mostly those in which there is considerable kissing. We kept that up until 2 o'clock without intermission . . . to bed at 3 and up at 6:30."

"3/10/88 — Bought Hunterdon County map for 70 cents and about 20 old books for \$2."

"3/22/88 — Tabby had four kittens tonight, 2 black and white, 2 grey and white."

"4/8/88 — Oak Grove (Fairgrounds) Sunday School organized. We had considerable fun electing officers."

"5/15/88 — Got measured for a new Prince Albert coat and vest to be finished next week."

"5/18/88 — Went to Stockton to see where explosion was . . . powder house containing 2500 pounds dynamite and powder blew up yesterday . . . planted peach trees."

"5/20/88 — I find I am 18 years old although I don't feel it."

"5/29/88 — Had my hair cut, was shaved . . . bought a new derby hat and a necktie."

"5/30/88 — Attended the Memorial Day parade in town."

"6/19/88 — Went to Peddie and engaged a room."

"7/14/88 — Finished getting hay in today . . . 94 loads in all . . . both barns are full and we have the best crop in years."

"7/31/88 — Fred Bodine and I went to Philadelphia and bought my bicycle."

"8/4/88 — . . . Bicycle came today."

"9/10/88 — . . . packed my trunk."

"9/11/88 — . . . took train to Hightstown . . . got to Peddie 2:45."

"9/17/88 — . . . my roommate came in, but I don't like him for a cent."

"9/18/88 — . . . made a bargain with Ernest to trade roommates."

"9/19/88 — Ernest came down tonight and Ludlow went out . . ."

"9/21/88 — reception for new students 8-11 . . . introduced myself to Miss Eva Taylor. I managed to stay by her side most of the evening . . . I enjoyed myself very much and venture to say that Miss Taylor did also . . ."

"10/2/88 — lessons very hard . . . had exam in geology and probably got 45 percent"

"10/10/88 — flunked geology . . . had sociable tonight."

"10/16/88 — met Miss Taylor again and had an excellent time. We indulged in ice cream and soda crackers. I spent 40 cents."

"11/6/88 — Voted in Chapel for president, vice president . . . results Harrison 76, Fisk 45, Cleveland 15."

"11/14/88 — had a lecture by Rev. Mr. Swain tonight 'Concerning Waste'. He said nothing about the most important waste — a girl's waist."

"12/25/88 — No one to dinner but Aunt Em, Ma and I . . . had an excellent dinner."

"12/30/88 — Wrote Eva . . . spoke to Mr. Smith about coming before the Church next Saturday and being baptised."

"2/17/89 — Mr. Peddie (Thomas B.) died yesterday."

"4/7/89 — Went to Cherryville . . . was baptised."

"7/12/89 — I am now interested in obtaining information in regard to the history of our family."

"7/22/89 — In Buffalo . . . visited Historical Society . . . I was much interested in the latter and would like to see Flemington get a building for our Society."

"8/8/89 — Chicago — visited Chicago Philatelic Society."

"8/5/89 — Hunting up history at Uncle James' . . ."

"8/6/89 — Went to cemetery . . . saw Grandma's grave."

His railway tour included stops in Iowa, St. Joseph, Missouri, Kansas City, where he visited Willard Parker and dined with him and Mrs. J.H. Higgins and Ella.

"8/14/89 — re Mammouth caves . . . fully up to my expectations . . . I can remember it . . ."

"9/10/89 — Returned to Peddie."

"1889-90 — New Year — at Eva's home . . . saw old year out and new year in . . ."

"3/31/1890 — This volume is my first attempt at a diary and in my own eyes at least it is a success. And now

precious book, farewell until memory fails me and I must have recourse to your pages. Good Bye Monday March 31, 1890 10:18 p.m. Hightstown, Peddie Institute."

"In 1890 I joined the New Jersey Historical Society, becoming a Life Member and have served as a trustee from 1908 to date (circa 1924). The same year I joined the Hunterdon County Historical Society in which I have held every office except President, and am now Secretary, Librarian and acting Treasurer. Like most small local Societies, we have been for some time in what Grover Cleveland called 'a state of innocuous desuetude.'"

"1891 — 25 in Senior Class at Peddie . . . 9 ladies, 16 gentlemen . . . J.C. Sunderlin photographed campus, junior and senior classes, societies, etc."

"6/24/91 — 23rd Annual commencement . . . speech on Development of the Postal System . . . good on platform . . . did not get nervous . . . did not forget more than once and then only for a second. Took some photographs with my Kodak. Ride in the evening with Eva to Princeton . . . had the best rig in town from Schables. Put up at Nassau Hotel and had supper and a fine time."

"6/26/91 — Went home . . ."

Frequently throughout his journal entries he complained of headaches probably indicative of his vision problem. Following his graduation from Peddie in 1891 he wrote, "eye trouble made me give up going to college and I went back to farming." He left Peddie on June 26, and the next day began executing his plans for an office *in town* to which he went almost daily, when not traveling, until his death. He "never had any business in the sense the word is commonly used, except family and care of real estate to rent." He kept his accounts on rental properties and money at interest, and pursued his varied interests at the office.

"6/27/91 — Made arrangements to have an office in the room on the northwest corner of the second floor of the Deats building after July 10."

"6/29/91 — Ordered carpet (for office) from Nevius Bros."

"6/30/91 — Will Bodine and I took the train to NY . . . bought desk, chairs, couch, gas fixtures, etc. for my office in town. Dinner at the new Columbia restaurant . . . 4 page menu, varied . . ."

Having admired the tall clock in Mr. Deats' office, John Schenk inquired about it one day, learned it was acquired at a country auction and received a lesson in bidding psychology. Mr. Deats told him that in those days it was customary to open bidding on such items very low, maybe \$5 and raise the bid in small increments of 50¢ or \$1. The bidding started in the usual manner but very shortly he jumped the bid to \$75 topping the previous bid and so stunning the opposition that bidding stopped and the clock was acquired far below its real value.

"7/1/91 — Engaged Sunderlin to take photographs of house before any alterations are made."

"7/2/91 — While in town Mr. Vosseller and I went down to the County building to see the collections of the County Medical Society . . ."

"7/7/91 — Henry Harrison, the artist, came . . . brought along the portrait of Papa. By lamplight it looks perfect . . ."

"7/8/91 — Mama had her photo taken preparatory to preparing a canvas for her portrait."

"7/10/91 — I went down to the Capner place with Mr. Connett and Mr. Vosseller. We looked over old coins, old books and old stuff of all sorts. It is the awfulest lot of stuff I ever saw in one place . . . going over later to describe and value the coins . . ."

"In (April) 1891 I began publication of *The Jerseyman*, an amateur journal, devoted to airing the pet opinions of the Editor and others. But it contained four genealogical papers. I also joined the New Jersey Society Sons of the American Revolution, National number 194."

Mr. Deats kept careful records of funds out at interest and investments in his "Securities" books. Notes of historical interest appear throughout his written records. He held certificate #31, dated August 1, 1891 for five shares of Capital Stock in the Flemington Hosiery Company, valued at \$100 each. On the page of the book devoted to that investment he wrote, "Factory burned after some trouble. Settled for \$286.90, rec'd from A. C. Hulsizerr May 1, 1893. No dividends were paid."

"In 1892 I began an intensified search for data on my Mother's family, the Stevensons, who came to Hunterdon County in 1727. It was decided that *The Jerseyman* should hereafter be devoted to local history and genealogy of Hunterdon County. This brought from the President of the National Amateur Press Association a report that 'Deats' *Jerseyman* has degenerated into a quarterly devoted to local history and genealogy.' He had his gens mixed but I am still a life member of the N.A.P.A. That same year I began helping Rev. T. F. Chambers gather data for his *Early Germans of New Jersey* published in 1895."

"4/8/93 — Bought William Fulper's stamp collection today . . . \$6."

"5/21/93 — (day following 23rd birthday) discussed date of wedding tonight."

"9/13/93 — Shaved myself this a.m. to see whether I had forgotten how yet. Have not done it in a year."

"9/25/93 — Having difficulty finding a ring that is satisfactory."

"9/26/93 — Told Will Bodine that I shall be married tomorrow . . . he was much surprised . . ."

"On September 29, 1883, Eva and I were married. She was a daughter of James⁶ Taylor (James G.⁵, Grover⁴, William³, William², Edward¹) and Elizabeth⁷ Ely Perrine (James W.⁶, William I.⁵, James⁴, Henry³, Peter², Daniel¹) of Holmdel Township, Monmouth County."

The bride and groom left the following day via train to Buffalo through New York City. They stopped off at Niagara Falls, a traditional honeymoon spot, but continued on to the Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Jackson Park, designed by Frederick L. Olmstead, was impressive! Mr. Deats' philatelic collection was one of the principal ones on exhibition. They returned home to Flemington Junction at the end of November after a two-month trip.

The first of their four children, Elsie May Deats, was born July 31, 1894, died April 4, 1902. Her father's journal notes,

"7/31/94 — Baby came at 7:45 . . . a girl 8 pounds . . . Eva was in bed only a little more than an hour and had an easy time of it. Had to go to town to attend Flemington Stoneware Co. organization . . . elected treasurer."

"Marion Elizabeth Deats, was born October 1897, (A.B. Mt. Holyoke, A.M., Syracuse, member of Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Xi, Phi Kappa Phi) married September 8, 1926 Dr. Fred A. Abegg, Genetecist, Bureau of Plant Industry, U.S. Department of Agriculture, has two children.

Charles Taylor Deats, born January 12, 1899 (E.E., Lehigh) with American Telephone and Telegraph Co., Long Lines Division since 1922; married Elsie Walker Dayton and has two children."

"1/12/89 — Telephoned Dr. Leidy 6:10 a.m. He came 6:55 and a baby boy came an hour later. Dr. stayed to breakfast and I rode to town with him."

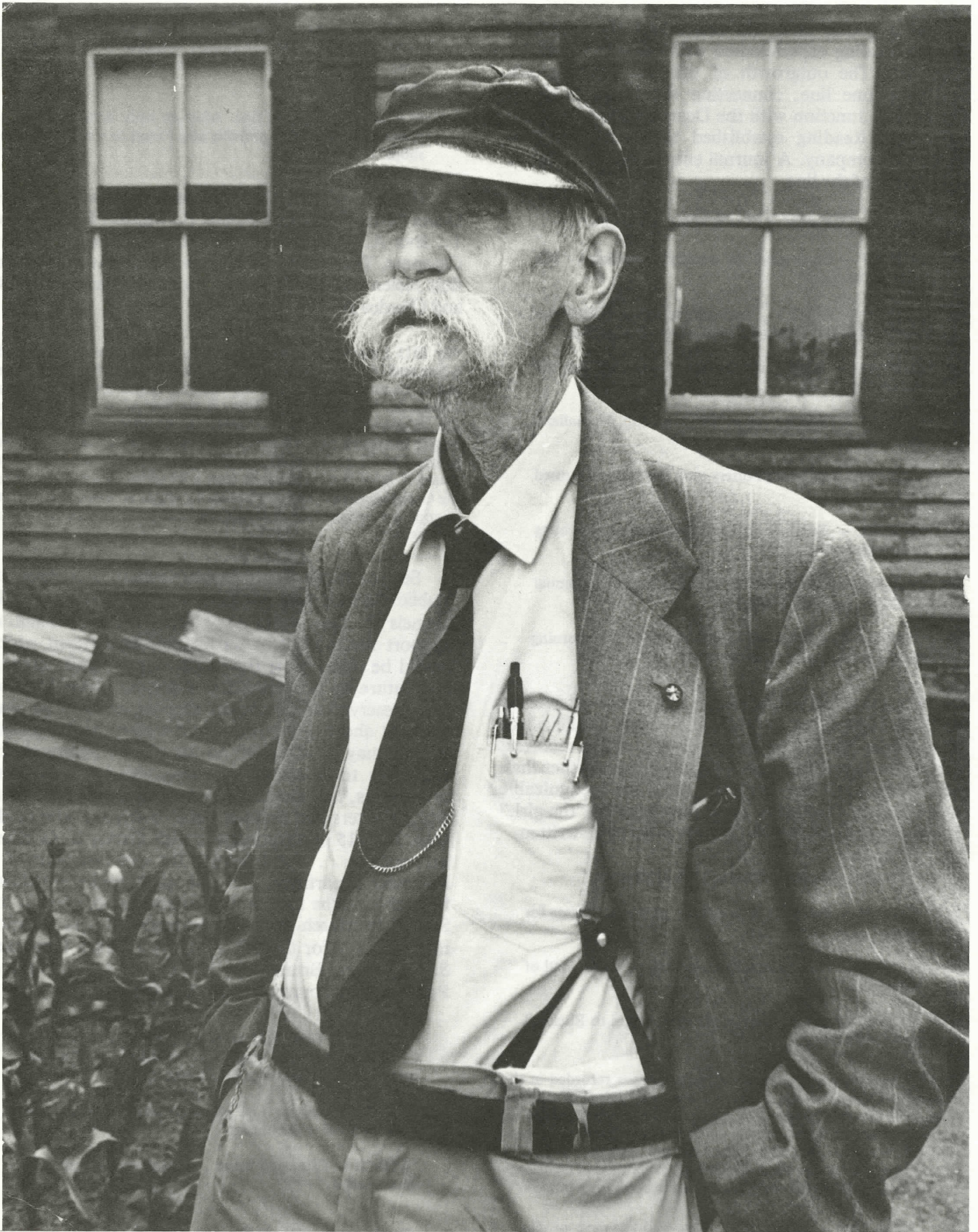
"Helen Taylor Deats, born July 16, 1900 (A.B. Mt. Holyoke) married October 6, 1923 Ralph Adams Prince and has two children."

Charles T. Deats now lives in Plainfield a short distance from his son George, and Helen Deats Prince resides in Deland, Florida.

"In 1895 I began helping Col. J.G. Leach of Philadelphia gather data for the Reading Genealogy published in 1898. My farm contains land from the "Third Indian Purchase" of 1709 and some from a tract of 300 acres reserved by the Indians from the former purchase, as a camp ground, but bought from them in 1709 by Col. John Reading, Surgeon General of West New Jersey. My house was built in 1780 by a grandson of Governor John Reading.

"Dr. John R. Stevenson of Haddonfield, New Jersey, and I met in 1897 and I joined forces with him on the Stevenson genealogy which ran serially in *The Jerseyman* 1898, 1900, and rewritten, I published in book form in 1902.

"On March 1, 1898 I was appointed a cooperative observer for Hunterdon County by the U.S. Weather Bureau and still [1924] continue. During 1898 I became a member of the [Raritan Township] Board of Education."



Hiram Edmund Deats at his home in Flemington Junction, 1960

Michael Ciavolino, photographer. HCHS Collections

As a young man, Ed Deats and his neighbor, Asa B. Reading experimented with electricity and the telephone. The outgrowth of this was Flemington's first telephone line, connecting the Deats home at Flemington Junction with the Deats building in town. Later Mr. Reading established the borough's first telephone company. A journal entry notes the date of completion of the line.

"12/4/99 — Set poles — 17 — at home end of line."

"12/20/99 — Oscar took the poultry to market — 168 pounds of turkeys."

"12/22/99 — To NY . . . took my collection of Revenue Stamps To Scout Stamp & Coin Co. to sell at auction."

"12/24/99 — Rigged up the Christmas tree for the children."

"12/25/99 — Went to the office in the a.m. No callers. Bertha and Ella out."

"12/27/99 — Old Smith Pottery took fire at 8 and burned down."

"12/31/99 — Took down the old calendars and hung up the new ones . . ."

"1/1/1900 — Sent out HCHS bills and notices of Annual Meeting . . . answered letters."

"1/5/00 — My Dinsmore typewriter came this morning and the girl is greatly pleased with it."

He had a girl in the office, sometimes referred to as EKB, more often as "the girl," whom I believe was Miss Kline. His bound Letter Books, which recorded each letter from him, were kept by someone other than Mr. Deats until January 1903 when his recognizable script begins. Doubtless, these were kept by "the girl." It was not unusual for 20+ letters a day to be written.

"1/11/00 — Elected to Bucknell Bd. of Trustees."

"1/13/00 — Bought 2 wagon loads of *Home Visitor* for \$9.50."

"1/15/00 — The misses Kilgore gave me a wagon load of old papers."

"1/22/00 — Sorting papers, etc. Sent boxes to Bucknell and 4 to HCHS."

"In 1910 I began copying on cards the marriages recorded in the Hunterdon County Clerk's office as I was getting tired of running down there so often to hunt for a date. I then made a second set of cards arranged alphabetically of the wives. These were consolidated into one list. The Editor of the *Hunterdon County Democrat* wanted to use them and did so. I reprinted in eight page forms from the same type and it was issued in book form in 1918."

"5/21/1910 — Saturday . . . clear and hot most of day. Spent day at office . . . worked on school matters again. Tonight I read until late. Saw Halley's Comet, first time."

"5/20/10 — Clear and pleasant . . . spent day at office . . . worked on school matters mostly. This is my birthday but I guess everyone forget except Becker, who sent me a postal card."

"12/25/12 — Clear & fine. After an early breakfast we distributed Christmas presents and I went to work in the shop."

A note slipped into the page is headed, "The Deats Family" and lists Helen T., Marion E., Charles T., Eva A. T., Hiram E., Fritzie MacAfee, Tommy Catapuss, Teddy Bear, and Snow Ball Deats. It records that Helen got 19 Christmas presents, Marion got 18 and Charles got 20.

"By 1915 I was getting tired of running out to graveyards to find a date and I began copying the whole yard if it could be done alone in two or three hours. Later my children helped and occasionally I could get someone else to help. A number of these were run in the *Hunterdon County Democrat* in an attempt to get more people interested but it was not very successful. I had 100 copies octavo, of 72 pages reprinted from the type, but have not yet issued it, hoping to make it at least a hundred pages. Meanwhile the Genealogical Society of New Jersey began an intensified effort to copy gravestones and my energy in that line has been turned to helping them."

Senate Bill No. 315 to establish a State Department of Public Records and Archives was introduced in 1913 Francis B. Lee wrote Mr. Deats a letter soliciting support for the bill to set up the Department which would be responsible for preserving the past, present and future by providing for acquisition, organization and preservation of ancient records of the state and material about government and history of the people so they may be accessible to the public. Although the campaign to establish this department was to take seven years, Mr. Deats worked throughout those years writing letters and making visits to anyone who could help. In 1915 correspondence with Carlos E. Godfrey he wrote, ". . . still hoping for establishment of a historical department . . . we must create sentiment favorable to the idea among historical societies in the State." In March he wrote numerous letters enlisting their support for the bill — to New Jersey Historical Society, New Brunswick History Club, Founders & Patriots, and County Historical Societies.

"1/23/17 — Took 3:45 train to Trenton . . . met Dr. C. E. Godfrey and took him to dinner & discussed proposed investigation of public records . . ."

"4/13/18 — Volume 1 of Marriage Records printed and I got some off to the binder."

"5/20/18 — Clear and warm . . . 48 years old today but do not feel it."

Each year the Bill was reintroduced and the campaign for passage renewed. However, it was not until 1920 on March 20 that the Bill passed the Senate

20-0. In one of his letters to a friend Mr. Deats had written, "I plan to use friendship and politics; so far as necessary to have Carlos E. Godfrey appointed director of the Public Records Office which is to commence operation 1 July 1920." Godfrey was named Director and began to work. One of the first priorities was to determine the status of County records. Deats inventoried material stored in the basement of the Hunterdon County Clerk's office for him.

"In 1920 I finally realized that in the past I had neglected many opportunities to copy family Bible records and so whenever I was in any house that I thought should have an old Bible, I would start talking of ancestors. In this way many old Bibles that would have remained unknown, in the possession of families unrelated to the people named in the Bible, came to light. The best "haul" I ever made from one house was seven. Another yielded four, enabled me to answer inquiries that had been on my desk a long time. Those four Bibles were in the attic when the present owners bought it."

In another 1922 letter, he wrote, "Yesterday I got the bible of Daniel Moore, near Sand Brook, two wives, 20 children, with dates of birth and marriage of the two wives. This will be of use to someone. And the bible was going on the rubbish heap, before a sale. I happened there just in time."

He met Russell B. Rankin through the New Jersey Historical Society or Sons of the American Revolution and they corresponded frequently on matters genealogical. Deats wrote him in 1921, "We have lost sight of each other in recent years. The war changed my line of work and I am just getting back in the old rut, working on Bellis, Kuhl, Sutphin families of Hunterdon. I am trying to complete my set of Jersey Genealogy clippings for HCHS . . . am not finding as many as I would like. Have you any duplicates you want to sell, trade, swap, give or otherwise convey?"

In another note to Rankin he said, ". . . Am taking every chance to copy Bible records and also making a little progress with tombstone inscriptions. Have 32 pages printed. Have enough copy ready for about 60 pages more . . . Big Job. Wish I had tackled it when I began, say 30 years ago."

In March 1922, he wrote "Dear RBR" to Rankin and signed it "HED." In reply to one of Rankin's suggestions Deats wrote, "I see your suggestion as to grouping names, by families, to each cemetery. I have done that to a certain extent, but not as far as you have in mind. However, the style does not matter as much, as it does to get them copied, and then get them in print, so they are available for general use."

Rankin's reply said, "In a book of tombstone inscriptions such as you are preparing why would it not be better to arrange the names alphabetically under the heads of families as far as possible, thus grouping a man and his wife and children together under his name?" In the next letter from HED to RBR, "The indexing as you suggest . . . seems to be making a family tree instead of recording the names of the people actually buried there."

In a February 1923 letter to RBR, Mr. Deats wrote, ". . . am trying to make a series of maps from which to make lantern slides showing changes in boundry lines of Hunt. Co. for school use . . . I also send a wire brush, the kind to use in cleaning dirt and moss from tombstones. I put your name on it, so the other fellas cannot claim it. One is usually enough as one fellow can go ahead, clean away grass and weeds, and brush the stone where necessary and the other come along and copy. Then if they get tired they can change jobs. That is the way Bellis and Ewing worked with me. One is 72 and the other 74, and it was amusing to see the interest they developed."

Mr. Deats believed in his arrangement of tombstone inscriptions and retained it for his *Tombstone Inscriptions From Hunterdon County Cemeteries*. Readers who have had occasion to refer to the publication are familiar with the format he employed.

In 1925 the Genealogical Society of New Jersey launched its publication, *Genealogical Magazine of New Jersey* with Russell Bruce Rankin its Editor. The premier issue included a listing of tombstones from an Ocean County cemetery arranged in the format Mr. Rankin had encouraged Mr. Deats to adopt. There are advantages with each one, the greatest one being the information from the tombstones had been printed.

From correspondence over the years the following excerpts relate his activities.

1923 — "Flemington Water Co. pump at the river near me burned yesterday morning. A neighbor saw it and phoned here, . . . all my men went down but could not save it. But they did save the house and barn. It is an old grist mill, built 1754, rebuilt 1837. The first owner of the mill site was William Penn. When we bought the property for water use, I traced the title."

" . . . have been copying Oldwick M.E. inscriptions. Yard appears to have been given up as most of the dates are old."

"In my many visits to historical correspondents I find that as a rule only one member of the family is interested to any extent . . . any Hunterdon family is grist for my mill."

1924 — "Most of the year laid up for repairs and have not accomplished much. Just getting so I feel good again. Am working outdoors as long as weather will permit. Corn and stalks are in, ice pond filled with water and a supply of wood ready to cut. Have to go to the woods two miles away for fence post material." (December to Lincoln Berry)

1925 — "If I did not like the job, I would not want to do it for any price (genealogy). I am busy trying to get the office work straightened out. For the last three years I have had no stenographer and having been sick so much am behind with most everything . . . Have started income tax report. Have already found that the farm shows a loss of over a thousand, while another farm rented to a tenant on shares, shows net income of about 4 percent. Not very encouraging but it seems we would rather stick to the land, even if we do not make anything. If it were not for income from funds salted down, we would be in the soup."

"I have started sorting genealogical notes and filing by families rather than under name of correspondent so that I hope to find

more data for you in the course of time." (January to Lincoln Berry)

This explains the creation of the Deats Genealogical Files now in the Society's collection. The surname files contain correspondence and genealogical research regarding inquiries about specific families. This collection continued in use following Mr. Deats' death and the Corresponding Secretaries annually add their genealogical correspondence to them. A successful Society project was launched in 1979 to xerox the yellowed and brittle carbon copies of his correspondence, file everything in acid-free folders and place the surname folders in hanging files. The collection has grown to over 1,000 surnames.

Always with an eye to locating and obtaining historical records Mr. Deats wrote in 1929, "Asher Carrell bought all old books sold at neighborhood sales as long as I can remember and I have been buying for some 45 years. John W. Carrell asked me to look at the stuff — amounts to several wagonloads — Kingwood Minutes 1816-1845, 1879-1906; Kingwood collector's book, 1861-1900 which went for \$2; fly leaf of a volume of sermons contained John Reading's family record . . . " Whether or not he was successful in securing these municipal records is unknown. He did, however, get the volume of sermons.

Later that year he wrote "sent to the Public Record Office from the HCHS collections the Tewksbury Minute book, 1755-1846; Amwell minute book, 1798-1822; vital statistics, that is births, deaths and marriages from East Amwell, Kingwood and Tewksbury Townships for the period 1849-1875."

He spent a good deal of time doing research on various families in the County Clerk's office and wrote, "I have two high stools of my own over there to use when I am working and would have taken a table were there a place to put it . . . Board of Freeholders' minutes are stored on shelves in the third floor of the Courthouse and they have now disappeared and they are looking for them." (These Minutes were soon located and have recently been microfilmed and an index prepared by Phyllis B. D'Autrechy, of the County Cultural and Heritage Commission.)

One day while passing the Court House Mr. Deats observed the janitor in the act of burning some papers. He stopped, inquired and learned that one of the County's early lawyers, Nathaniel ("Nattie") Saxton had left a treasure trove of early and interesting documents in the Court House attic. The Freeholders then were lacking in appreciation of our heritage and had ordered the papers burned. The Saxton Papers were rescued from incineration and became part of the Society's manuscript collection.

Deats' file of correspondence with Dr. Carlos Godfrey contains copies of Godfrey's letters to Hunterdon's Freeholders, one of which says in part, "No county records in this State are in such deplorable condition as Hunterdon's."

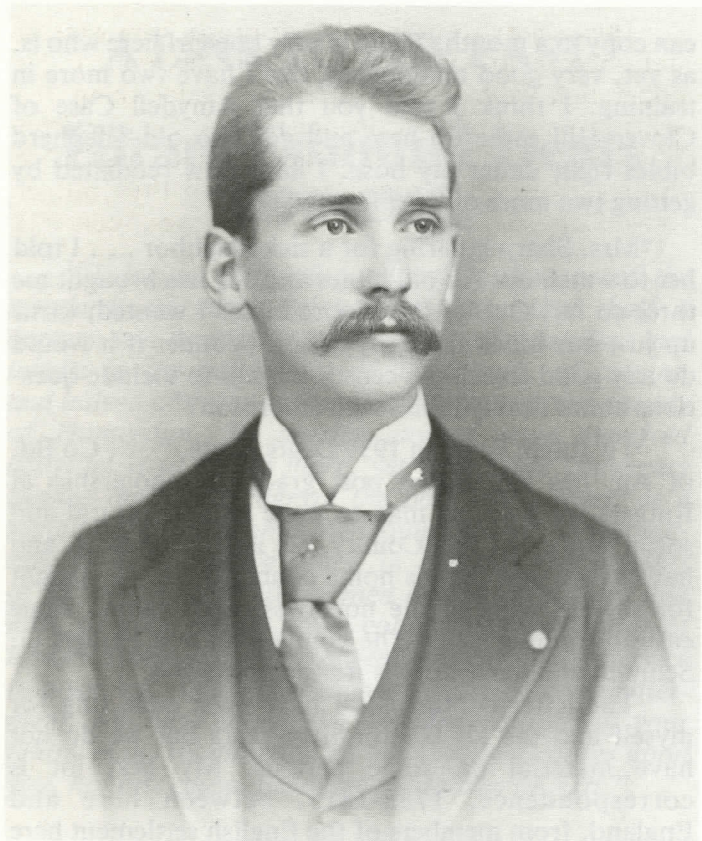
The County records and their proper care were of vital concern to Mr. Deats. Perhaps because of his cooperation with Dr. Godfrey in undertaking the earlier inventory of these documents, Dr. Godfrey kept Deats informed of progress in the Public Record Office with regard to Hunterdon's records and their proper storage. In May 1927 eight large boxes, contents uninventoried, which had been packed and nailed up for nearly 50 years by reason of lack of space in the Hunterdon Clerk's vault, were shipped to the Public Record Office. That office found the boxes contained all the Miscellaneous Records from 1714 to about 1870. On completion of the new Hall of Records in 1929, they were returned to the County Clerk. The shipping receipt showed that these records weighed 2,110 pounds. The WPA created a card index to this record group in the 1940's and work is now under way by Mrs. D'Autrechy to transfer the documents into acid-free folders and boxes to further insure their preservation.

In January 1929 the Clerk and Surrogate moved into the new vault and offices and the reconstructed Hall of Records was formally dedicated on June 15, 1929. Godfrey had written to Deats then that, ". . . the two levels of this vault, after allowing for a progressive increase in population and business, is sufficient in size to accommodate records for the next 40 years; and the Surrogate's vault for a much longer period."

Less serious considerations sometimes appear in his correspondence. Frequent mention of ice cream might indicate it was likely Mr. Deats' favorite warm-weather dessert. He explained that "we tie the cow in the ice house Friday night and Saturday morning we have quarts of ice cream. Chocolate one week and vanilla the next. At least that is the story I tell the children." In a July 1934 letter to Mrs. Robinson, he wrote, "Yes, it is hot, but our ice cream cow is working full time. Our eldest daughter and her two children, living in Salt Lake City, arrived Tuesday for the summer. She was lucky enough to get in one of the air conditioned Pullmans on the Union Pacific but they came through weather as high as 110 degrees without discomfort. I have cut my work to the minimum while this weather lasts and put collars and neckties away for the summer and am not going anywhere this summer."

Had one girl here from Virginia who spent about ten hours copying things from my notebooks. She graduated at our High School 38 years ago . . . she had such a good brain I remembered her well. She went to college and then taught school. Now she is married and has time to take up search for ancestors. She grasps the subject better than anyone I have met for some time. It is a pleasure to help such folks. Most of them expect me to hunt up the stuff for them. She spent three days in our public record office after I made rough suggestions as to method."

Elizabeth Satterthwaite and he corresponded frequently for a number of years. She was a professional genealogist living in Trenton, whom he



Mr. and Mrs. Hiram E. Deats, April 1894

Photographed by John C. Sunderlin



The Deats home at Flemington Junction.

called upon to visit the Public Record Office for photostats of documents he desired. Their correspondence during 1935 gives insight into Mr. Deats' feelings regarding the excitement caused by the Hauptmann trial and may, in part, explain why such a man, who collected all matter of historical material, sought or kept little about the trial. He served on the Grand Jury which indicted Bruno Hauptmann.

"Have started abstracts of stuff in our Surrogate's office since 1804. The town is full of folks, as you can read in the papers, but most of them ain't (sic) my kind . . ." (Jan. 23, to Mrs. Satterthwaite)

" . . . trial has reached its end today, with judge Trenchard delivering his charge to the jury in the morning. More people in town today than ever before, good time to go for a ride . . . will be glad when this influx has ended and we can resume a normal life."

" . . . We got our icehouse filled with 16" of ice last week. If our ice cream cow does not go dry, our supply of ice cream for next summer is assured. Next job is figuring income tax report, but I know in advance I will have very little if any tax to pay this time. Too much vacant property and too many tenants who are behind in their rent . . ." (Lincoln's b'day — Mrs. Satterthwaite)

"Monday . . . Gen. Soc. N.J. met at Fairmount Pres. Ch. and copied stones Long Valley Inn, for turkey dinner. Returned to the job and finished at 5:20."

"I took my whole graveyard tool kit along, and the crowd had some fun at my expense, when I unloaded the flier. Before the day was over, they had borrowed and used nearly everything I had taken along. A big piece of pumice stone, very useful in rubbing over a moss covered white marble, after first brushing it with a wire brush. It usually brings out the lettering so it can be read 30 feet or more away . . . I got the idea from a stone cutter, who used it to get the old lettering on stones brought in to be reset." (Deats to Pitman, October 1936)

I have accompanied the GSNJ "tombstone hounds" on "tombstone hunts" and used pumice stone, wire brush, trowel, grass clippers, mirror, clipboard and well-sharpened pencils from their wicket baskets without realizing Mr. Deats had some influence on the contents of that basket.

Deats' correspondence with Lewis D. Cook probably started when Mr. Cook began investigating his ancestral lines, possibly Cravens, Hunts, Lannings, etc. in Hunterdon County. In 1939 he was working on the Historic American Building Survey in Hunterdon County and Deats wrote him in February regarding the 1790 tax ratable Deats possessed, ". . . not finished carding/indexing this old document. I am planning to print it in some form, as I find it very useful . . . unexpectedly got six Smith Bible records this week."

He was always on the lookout for Bibles from which to copy family records, it became a contest to beat anyone else engaged in copying, too. Mr. Deats wrote his old friend, Russ Rankin, "I am planning a new society . . . to be called BIBLE RECORDS, UNLIMITED, INCORPORATED. I have obtained clues to more bible records the last two weeks than I

can copy in a month. There is only one girl here who is, as yet, very good on copying, but I have two more in training. I think I told you that Amydell Case of Clover Hill came up here and got two old Shepherd bibles right under my nose. I have now retaliated by getting two more on next farm to hers."

"Mrs. Sharp is caring for a sick neighbor . . . I told her to watch out for old bibles and she has brought me three so far. One of the Moore bibles I wanted, turns up just one block from my office. Wonder if it would do any good to ask the census bureau to include questions about family bibles with records in?"

To Julian Bond in 1939 Deats wrote, ". . . Co Bd. of Ag. has supplied a post graduate scholarship at Rutgers for a young man to write an agricultural and social history of this County. He is from Illinois, and has written one for his home county there. He taught for several years in the northwest and wanted some eastern training . . ." The young man was Hubert G. Schmidt and the history is *Rural Hunterdon*.

The letter continues, "I have been collecting for myself and the HCHS for fifty years but we do not have material on some periods. My best lot is correspondence, 1785-1815, between here and England, from members of the English settlement here and their relatives in England. It was engineered by John Hall who was a C.E. He was chief mechanic for Thomas Paine in his bridge building work. Tom was usually thought of as either an atheist or a patriot but I like to think of him as an engineer. I got this collection of letters from the attic of the house that John Hall left when he died in 1820 to his nephew, John Hall Capner. Some of the papers had previously gone to other descendants, I think to the Steele family of Pottstown, Pa., who were the heirs of John Hall Capner who had no children. When Moncure D. Conway was gathering material for his life of Thomas Paine, he had before him John Hall's daily journal from which he made many extracts. It was not in the material I secured in 1892 (The Capner Papers) nor in a later lot left to the HCHS by Asa Steele when he went to France during the war, with the proviso that if he never called for them, they should remain our property. I have now amalgamated the two lots, and secured loan of other letters from other descendants of this bunch of settlers, but we really do need John Hall's journal. I am hoping that it may have come to you. If so, Hubert Schmidt, the student who is doing this job, I suppose can come down and read it."

"For some years I have been working up the genealogical end of this English settlement, but did not feel competent to do the social and economic parts which Schmidt seems fitted for."

On the occasion of Mr. Deats' 90th birthday celebration, Schmidt recalled in a letter to D. Howard

Moreau his work on the history, writing, "He (Deats) had another desk in the room, where he put visiting researchers. When writing *Rural Hunterdon* I spent, as I recall, 80 mornings at that desk, with Mr. D. breezing in occasionally to bear away completed documents and bring in others. He expected a proper respect for the documents and was always gratified when I found some nugget of useful information. But there came a time each day, 12:30 I think, when he'd pull out his big silver watch and announce that it was time to quit. Uncompleted documents would usually be sent home with me. Fairly early in our acquaintance, I was trusted with a key to the office and allowed to open up our sanctum sanctorum. Work to keep me occupied would be piled up on the empty desk. I would take quite a ribbing if I was not already at work when he appeared and even more if I forgot my key. . . . My 80 days were spent over more than a year, one or two days each week."

" . . . I still remember with gratitude the sage counsel and encouragement which I received when I was discouraged or nervous. I remember, too, the canny way in which he brought in documents for my work in an order which was of help. He had always the instinct of a historian. Many times we talked over my findings and how to use them, and I found that the discussions were of real value. My early columns in the *Democrat* and my two pamphlets on flax culture and slavery, were largely a result of his encouragement . . ."

Mr. Deats had made himself a clipboard and then began making them for his friends. In a March 1939, letter to Russell B. Rankin, he wrote, "Went to Coldsmith's stationery department store . . . found clips like I got from Grammes, and 15 cents each instead of the 18 cents . . . will make another board for you, with clips attached. Got nicked machine screws with nuts to fasten them on. Better than screws. . . ."

"Visited New York Public Library. Dr. Lydenberg was glad to see me . . . turned me over to Carruthers, in charge of the photo dept. who took me around to see the making of microfilm and photostats. Showed me the finished job, in both Recordak projector, costing \$185, and the Argus of Science Service. For newspaper reproduction . . . I saw too much to remember but the chief thing is that both L and C say for manuscripts the photostat is preferable, though costing more. They will photostat Kingwood Baptist Church book at their expense, keeping the negative set and make a positive set for me, costing about \$18 for the whole book."

"I showed him the Ecker bible record and he read it right off. . . . Then I went to Schulte's bookstore . . . one of my regular hangouts and Philip Pesky (nice name, but not appropriate) and he also read it. Will

send a photostat to Dr. Hinke for translation. Perhaps he can tell from it what part of Germany Ecker came from. It seems each province had its own particular style of chirography. I have a letter from Dr. Hinke. He has not worked on any NJ German Ref. but on all of NY and a lot of PA. I may send him original of Alexandria Ger. Ref. . . ."

Several weeks later Deats wrote Rankin, "I am going to drop the microfilm business for the present as I have not enough spare cash for purchasing a reading machine and films."

Mr. Deats was elected a trustee on the Peddie Board of Incorporators at the age of 22, shortly after he was graduated and continued to sit on the Board until his retirement in 1962. He wrote Rankin, " . . . Had Peddie Board meeting at Hotel Vanderbilt where Dave Knott, Prop. fed us all . . . I had to leave before meeting finished to get home before dark."

"Hutchinson (Elmer, librarian at Rutgers) wants some help on pedigree of newspaper publishers in Hunterdon. Got a chart which includes Charles George who started *Hunterdon Gazette* in 1825 . . ."

In the late 1930's the WPA had conducted a project to survey County Archives. When he received a printed copy of Bergen County's *Historical Records Survey, Inventory of County Archives* Mr. Deats thought Hunterdon should have a printed one, too. He said, in a January 1940 letter to Rankin, " . . . I hope Hunterdon can have one . . . will have to get busy talking to our Freeholders. Have a rather intelligent and useful board now . . ."

"Been spending . . . time looking after the addition to Public Library. Hist. Soc. is coming into its own, with exclusive use of large second floor room . . . W.C.T.U. gave Hist. Soc. their old chairs, and my janitor has overhauled 45 of them . . . I am hunting for tables . . . I held the annual meeting this morning, by my lonesome . . ." Four days later he wrote Rankin again that he had spent four more strenuous days in the Library and was getting income tax "figgers" together.

"Work on the library here going slowly, but end is in sight," Mr. Deats wrote Rankin in March. "One of my office tenants talks of giving up, so if he does I will have two vacant rooms next to my own office, and can do HCHS sorting there . . . but \$240 a year makes a hole, so I hope I can rent it . . . "On March 23, 1940 "H.E.D." to "R.B.R." he announced, "Yesterday I finished at Library . . . HCHS furniture back in, cleaned, and set up, but only one book case filled. Going to take my time on the rest, and work for Ed Deats a while. Thu. in dust, I developed a cold in the "Ed," and went to osteopath this morning to get it kneaded out. Feel better this P.M."

The Society's Bible Records Collection is largely the result of Mr. Deats' continued effort to locate and copy them. In an August 1941 letter to Howard L. Hughes "... been taking my vacation afternoons, hunting and copying bibles. Got about 45 so far." Whenever he copied a Bible he always made an extra copy to send to the Genealogical Society of New Jersey.

"8/22/43 — Family reunion with all except Fred (Abegg, son-in-law) here. Ma figures this is our 50th anniversary which is due September 27. As I do not care for formal celebrations it suits me. I greatly enjoyed the day with all the children and grandchildren here. They really are a fine lot of youngsters."

"9/27/51 — Me and Ma married 58 years today and started on a two month wedding trip to World's Fair."

"11/11/1951 — ... Donald C. Young is my successor as weather observer."

"12/6/1951 — I hoped we could take care of Ma ... but we could not and she went to the nursing home today."

In the June 19, 1952 issue of the *Hunterdon County Democrat* the "Periscope" column carried this note, "on 6/7/52 Hiram E. Deats related to Mr. Jones, president of Rutgers, 'You probably don't know it, but I'll bet you did something tonight that you never did before.' What's that asked President Jones. 'Conferred degrees on a man and his grandson during the same ceremony,' chuckled Ed Deats who was so honored with George Deats."

In his daily journal Mr. Deats noted the passing of his wife, whom he usually referred to as Ma,

"7/28/52 — Eva Taylor Deats died at Union Forge Nursing home July 28, 1952 at age 81. She was born in Monmouth County 25 August 1870. Graduated from Peddie Institute in 1890 and taught school for three years before marrying Hiram Edmund Deats. She was a founder of Col. Lowrey Chapter DAR and Regent for 45 years. Also president of the Flemington Women's Club."

"8/25/52 — ... Eva would be 82 today, had she lived."

D. Howard Moreau, publisher of the *Hunterdon County Democrat*, played a major role in the reactivation of the Historical Society in 1954 after many years of "quiescence." A well-attended Annual Meeting marked a new beginning!

"11/6/54 — HCHS Annual Meeting ... 55 degrees-25 degrees Meeting HS 2 p.m. ... 7 members and 21 visitors came and all 21 applied for membership. Messers Hammond, Burd, Sinclair, Hubert Schmidt ... elected officers ... I am Recording Secretary, a job I have had for more than 50 years. Home at 5 — rather tired ..."

"12/31/55 — ... Had to hustle to get errands done. Phonograph came 'ready to put together'. As no directions for assembly came they are really studying it. Good Bye '55"

"1/6/56 — On the way home I stopped to watch the new traffic signal at E. Main and Rt. 69 start working. It did and I enjoyed half an hour talking with the foreman."

"1/9/1956 — ... my left eye seems to be going bad, like the right one. Francis Strouse came at 6 p.m. to take me to dinner and meeting ... 100th anniversary of Darcy Lodge. I was called to the platform ... presented with a framed certificate as being the antiquarian of the Lodge."

"1/10/1956 — Annual Bank meeting. elected director ... starting my 65th year (as director) ... with two reading glasses I can just see what I have written above."

"1/12/1956 — Doctor diagnosed hemorrhage in my eyes."

"1/14/1956 — Marion took me to town ... got things ready for Hist. Soc. meeting this afternoon. Ed Quick Recording Secretary to succeed me. Charlie Philhower made a wonderful talk on Indians of Hunterdon County."

"1/15/1956 — ... think my vision is a little clearer tonight" is the final entry in his daily journal.

He soon began to depend on Maud Little Wilson who, as she said, became "his eyes." She transported him to and from home to his office and the Society rooms. She also opened his mail and read the letters to him. Then he explained where she might find the information the correspondents sought and she answered the letters.

For the occasion of Mr. Deats' 90th birthday the Society hosted an Anniversary Luncheon celebrating its 75th anniversary and his birthday. The event was held May 21, 1960, the day following his birthday, in the Parish Hall of the Cherryville Baptist Church. The Ladies Service Guild prepared and served luncheon for about 125 friends who shared this pleasant event. Dessert of birthday cake and *ice cream* doubtless pleased the guest of honor.

Various anecdotes about Mr. Deats, were related in letters to Mr. Moreau, Society President, in the weeks before the Luncheon. One from Derrick Williamson says, "Deats' list of things to do is in itself unusual. At the early part of the century Old Poppy Stout had a taylor shop in the back part of the Deats building, on Main Street. He received cloth samples attached to small cards. Deats, who rarely throws anything away, collected the cards and for years used one each day for his daily memo. He refers to it as a "memolandum" in the fashion of Amos and Andy ... The last item on the card for the last day of each month is always the same: 'Change All Calendars'." He related other amusing stories about Mr. Deats, who, he said, always had a sign in his hat, "This isn't your hat you damn fool — this belongs to H. E. Deats!" His sign on the rear door of the Deats Building read, "If you can't close this door, please don't open it."

Williamson said Mr. Deats always pretends to be annoyed whenever he is pressed for details on historical matters, but his eyes twinkle as he prepares to answer "foolish question number two hundred and sixty



Deats Building, Main Street in Flemington. Mr. Deats had his office above Nevius and Pedrick Clothiers.

three." He usually had something to chuckle about. His spontaneous little twists of phrasing were amusing. He observes Birthington's Wash Day, for instance, and Daylight Wasting Time.

His "wisecracks" have become almost classics. Many were drawn from his favorite radio show, Amos 'n Andy. Charles Correll, who portrayed Andy, coached home talent performances long before radio fame, and Hiram E. Deats had been one of his budding actors. The show was a favorite with Deats.

Hubert Schmidt, too, recalled Mr. Deats' pasteboard note cards, measuring about 2" x 6" with rounded corners. "Mr. D. took a card each morning, writing his reminders for the day crossways of the card . . . adding other items during the day. As each errand was accomplished, he would check it off. Sometimes he would have a dozen lines on his card when he arrived at Flemington with the milk and eggs, etc., in his fliver. The card was carried spectacularly in his shirt or jacket pocket. It and his red bandana were his earmarks. . . . At the end of the day he filed the card chronologically under its date. He told me that he had cards reaching back many years. . . . On his daily morning expeditions, Mr. D. delivered his milk, answered tenants' complaints, collected rents, sometimes attended a meeting . . . often visited the *Democrat* office and invariably settled down at his desk in his little office at the head of the stairs in the Deats Building."

"I think of Mr. Deats often. I remember his mustache, the little crinkles about his eyes, the ever-present chuckle. My memory often wanders through the big old house in Flemington 'Junk' where the 'Levi

Alley' runs (If Mr. Deats ever said, 'Flemington Junction' or 'Lehigh Valley,' I've never heard it)," wrote John Cunningham. "The first time I met him, I thought, 'Why this man has never been off this porch!' Mr. Deats made little effort to disabuse that notion. He talked of 'fellers' and 'Virginny' and 'Philadelphia.' It was hard to tell whether he was Amos and Andy or one of the Real McCoys. Then, I knew he was kidding, and in the process, testing me. Never off the porch? Why, this man lived a hundred lifetimes in 90 short years."

The guest of honor was presented with a gold plaque engraved with his birthday message and his response was characteristically informal, modest and punctuated with humor. "I can't remember that I ever had another birthday party," he said, and went on to recite a poem he had first recited at age 5 before an audience in Stockton,

"You'd scare expect one of my age
To speak in public on a state."

He recalled the summer of '76, "only 84 years ago" as his introduction to genealogy when Grandmother Stevenson visited his family at Flemington Junction and talked about her ancestor, John Stevenson.

The unique and historically valuable items saved by Mr. Deats included artifacts, letters, accounts, journals, diaries, official records, bound newspapers, etc., were gathered from old attics or bought at auctions. A cataloging fund was established by the Historical Society in 1962 and contributions solicited to catalog HCHS collections and those Mr. Deats was

passing on to the society. Berthold Sorby was employed to survey and catalog, and work got underway. While he and Mr. Deats were removing boxes from the Deats Building to the Society room, Mr. Deats suffered injuries in a fall.

He became a patient at Union Forge Nursing Home where he died two weeks later on March 16. The funeral was held on Wednesday, March 20, 1963, just two months short of his 93rd birthday and he was buried in the family plot in the Cherryville Baptist Churchyard. Flemington National Bank Directors were honorary pall bearers.

Most people grow old. Mr. Deats simply added another day of experience each day. He was a true individualist, a man who charted his life ahead as a young man and lived according to his plans. He called his love of routine "old maidishness" but it was far more than that. He compartmentalized his time so as to be farmer — businessman — historian — collector — private citizen — weather observer and did exceedingly well in each capacity. He loved life and behind a gruff exterior, his fellow man.

Roxanne K. Carkhuff



Daniel Stanton Hammond, standing, and Hiram Edmund Deats, September 30, 1961, on the occasion of Mr. Deats last prowling with the GSNJ tombstone hounds copying inscriptions at Flemington Baptist cemetery.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The following new members have joined the Society during its Centennial year. We extend to them a warm welcome.

Susan J. Batke, Pittstown, NJ
 *Mrs. Alberta Rutgers Conover, Aurora, CO
 Mrs. Mary Sherman Davis, Seattle, WA
 Arthur R. Godown, Flemington, NJ
 William C. Hartrum, Toms River, NJ
 Mrs. Ann P. Hector, Dumont, CO
 Darryl B. Lamson, Beaver Falls, PA
 William H. Likins, St. Paul, MN
 James C. Monfort, Los Altos, CA
 Mrs. Emma Newton, Flemington, NJ
 John J. Rittenhouse, Louisville, KY
 Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Shapiro, Pottersville, NJ
 Nancy D. Schiffhauer, Grand Island, NY
 Fred G. Wille, Clinton, NJ
 Howard Wolverton, Jr., E. Orange, NJ

* Correction from Fall 1985 issue

HOW TO JOIN

Hunterdon County Historical Society
 114 Main Street
 Flemington, New Jersey 08822

Please enroll me as a member of your Society

Annual	\$12.00 per year
Family	\$14.00 per year
Contributing	\$25.00 per year
Sustaining	\$50.00 per year
Institutional	\$50 and up per year
Life	\$200.00
Patron	\$1,000.00 or more
Student	\$3.00 per year (18 years of age or less)
Century Club	\$100.00

In celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Hunterdon County Historical Society.

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

Name

Address

.....

NEWSLETTER INDEX FOR SALE

The new index to the *Hunterdon Historical Newsletter* covering Volumes 1 through 21, may be ordered by mail from the Society or picked up at the Headquarters during Library hours, Thursdays and Saturdays 1-3 p.m. Member Marion O. Harris prepares annual revisions of the index to include the previous volume entries. The Society offers the Index for sale for \$5 plus \$1 postage for mail orders.