

LOCAL 19TH CENTURY SHAD FISHERIES JUNE 30, 2 P.M.

Long before the white man ever set foot on New Jersey's shores, Indians, towing gravevine nets, caught millions of fat shad as each Spring this important food fish of the herring family swarmed up the fresh water river to spawn in the upper reaches of the Delaware River. Each shad roe would deposit thousands of eggs.

Shad, smoked over smoldering hickory, was preserved to supplement the Indians' winter diet. The appearance of the shad in the river was a welcome sight to early colonists whose meagre fare was almost exhausted after long cold winters. To the troops at Valley Forge, the fish brought much needed nourishment. In Hunterdon County, hucksters followed regular routes throughout the countryside to housewives eager for a change from the usual daily fare.

The early settlers were quick to copy the fishing methods of the native Americans. Hundreds of nets were set at scores of narrow places near the shores and islands to catch the migrating quarry. With such a rich supply of food and source of money, it was only natural, in the course of human nature, that disputes arouse and government regulation was necessary to settle the jurisdiction of the river and its islands and to establish a uniform standard for the fisheries of the river Delaware.

On 26 Nov. 1808 an act "to regulate the fisheries in the River Delaware" was enacted and supplemented in 1814 and 1819. The latter supplement required a bond to be filed with the county clerk describing the fishery, its owners and operators, and the number of men necessary for its operation.

Fortunately the guardians of the public records in Hunterdon County preserved these fishing bonds, therefore, we know there were over 40 fisheries from Trenton to the Musconetcong River in 1819. Jug, Good Hope, Roach, and Mud Bank to name a few — conjure interesting stories for the imagination.

On Sunday, June 30th, at 2 o'clock, at the Flemington Womens Club on Park Avenue, Phyllis D'Autrechy will tell the story of these 19th century fisheries through the use of slides taken at many of these fishing pools.

CIVIL WAR EXHIBIT JULY 21

Thousands of Civil War recruits from northwestern and central New Jersey assembled in Flemington in 1862 and 1863. Some were called by a sense of duty, others by a need for new ventures. The majority were called by their draft boards or by the opportunity to

pocket some of the bounty money available. Whatever their motives, these men were organized by the camp authorities at Flemington into regiments that went on to do most admirably whatever was asked of them. Many did not return.

In one of a series of special programs to mark our centennial year, the Society is sponsoring a Civil War exhibit to commemorate the contributions made by those citizen soldiers of some 120 years ago. Walk in their footsteps in the town park behind the Court House in Flemington from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, July 21st. This unparalleled display of Civil War material will encompass artillery pieces, a Gatling Gun, a variety of small arms, edged weapons, personal accoutrements, mementos, images, paper items, relics, and much more. The military records of all N.J. Civil War soldiers and the pictures of some 1200 will be available should you wish to research your own ancestor. The program will be presented by the reactivated 15th N.J. Volunteer Infantry of Hunterdon & Somerset Counties. This unit has exhibited similarly for the U.S. Army on special occasions at Fort Dix and Picatinny Arsenal but not locally since 1962 at the Flemington Fair.

The historical and monetary value of the display items are such that rain will force the cancellation of the program. There will be no rain date. We will hope for good weather. Join us on the 21st, spend a pleasant sojourn in the park and view the most comprehensive display of locally oriented Civil War items you will ever see.

1985 CALENDAR

- June 30** — Spring Meeting, HISTORY OF SHAD FISHERIES ON THE DELAWARE, Flemington Women's Club, Park Ave. 2 p.m.
- July 21** — Special Event, CIVIL WAR EXHIBIT, in the Park behind Courthouse. 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- September 11** — 100th Anniversary Dinner, Saunders Inn, Ringoes.
- October 10** — Sunday Evening Supper, Muirhead Inn, Ringoes — Open hearth cookery.
- November 24** — Fall Meeting, LENNI-LENAPE INDIANS, FIRST INHABITANTS OF HUNTERDON, Flemington Methodist Church, 2 p.m.

HUNTERDON HISTORICAL NEWSLETTER

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Membership Report

The Society welcomes the following new members:

- Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Adda, Jr., Ringoes, NJ
- *Mr. William C. Apgar, Jr., Newton, MA
- Mrs. Rolf Bibow, Lebanon, NJ
- Ms. Gale Hartvigsen, Pottersville, NJ
- Mr. George W. Hogland, Wichita, KA
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- Mr. & Mrs. K.W. Horsman, Ringoes, NJ
- Ms. Virginia C. Jansen, Columbus, OH
- *Mrs. Jack B. Killenger, Flat Rock, NC
- *Mrs. Robert Kinnear, Morrisville, PA
- Mr. & Mrs. Ted Lawshe, Cheshire, CT
- Michael Weis & M. Jane McIntosh, Ringoes, NJ
- Mrs. Michael Macauley, Chapel Hill, NC
- Mr. Walter Mamchur, Piscataway, NJ
- Mr. Richard Mehwinney, Washington, NJ
- Mrs. Donald A. Miller, Wilbraham, MA
- Mr. Richard North, Toledo, OH
- Mrs. Barbara J. Robinson, Platte Woods, MO
- Mr. & Mrs. Lewis Sanders, Lebanon, NJ
- † Mr. Harry Van Fleet, St. Petersburg, FL
- Mrs. Linda Walker, Cincinnati, OH
- Mr. William J. Weston, Milford, NJ
- Mrs. Ruth C. Wichman, Austin, TX
- *Mrs. J.R.P. Willett, Warrington, U.K.

* Life Member

† Century Club Member

Recent Acquisitions

The Society acknowledges these recent acquisitions for its collections.

THE CENTRAL RAILROAD OF NEW JERSEY'S FIRST 100 YEARS, 1849-1949, A HISTORICAL SURVEY by Elaine Anderson, gift of the author, High Bridge, NJ.

CLEANERS' BRIC-A-BRAC, No. III, published by the Flemington Presbyterian Church, 1889, gift of Mrs. H. Seeley Thomas, Flemington, NJ.

FOLKLIFE RESOURCES IN NEW JERSEY compiled by Peter T. Baris, David S. Cohen and Gregory Dowd, published by New Jersey Historical Commission, gift of the publisher, Trenton, NJ.

Fifteen photographs including several picturing Edward Mason Heath [1837-1916] one of the founders of the Hunterdon County Historical Society, gift of Mrs. M.F. Sherman, Manasquan, NJ.

Sixteen photographs of Uplands, 1912, owned by Mr. & Mrs. Charles S. Lee, gift of Roy C. Brown, Flemington, NJ in memory of his mother, Mrs. R. Saxton Brown.

Photograph identified on the reverse as, "Milford Bridge after the flood"; ten letters to Susan Rea, Quakertown, NJ during 1840's, gift of Mrs. Harvey G. Bloom, Clinton, NJ.

Flemington Fair memorabilia, programs, prize lists, gift of Mrs. M.T. Hoffman, Flemington, NJ. (Mrs Hoffman was Secretary of the Fair Association from 1946-1980 and Fair Manager from 1970-1980.)

1917 Commencement program, High Bridge High School; "Valkyrie" Somerville High School, June 1913; "The Item" High Bridge High School, Thanksgiving 1915, June 1916, June 1917 gifts of Miss Ida Ramsey, Somerville, NJ.

Records of Jacob Nauright, wheelwright and undertaker at High Bridge, gift of Mrs. Elizabeth Duckworth, Clinton, NJ.

Cool family letters (21) from 1816-1847; Holy Bible published by Mathew Carey, 1805, containing family records of Leonard Kuhl (-1793) gifts from Mrs. E. Wallace Peck, Rye, NJ.

FREEDOM PAPERS: 1776-1781, by M.M. Pernot, Editor, published by Butlington County Historical Society, gift from the publisher, Burlington, NJ.

KOOL-COOL-COLE FAMILY DESCENDANTS compiled by John W. Kuhl, Beverly B. Smith, William Smith; JOHN SMITH 1718-1791 DESCENDANTS FAMILY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER, #2, WINTER 1985, gifts of Mrs. Beverly B. Smith, Flemington, NJ.

Betty Vail Papers on the Gardner Family and Company, gift of Edgar Vail, Stanton, NJ.

SOME OF THE VLIET FAMILY OF NEW JERSEY WHO ARE DESCENDANTS OF JOHN VLIET OF PISCATAWAY, MIDDLESEX COUNTY AND JOHN VLIET OF SIX-MILE RUN, SOMERSET COUNTY, by Claire Ackerman Vliet, gift of Russell Vliet, Asbury, NJ.

Framed photograph of Elizabeth Van Fleet Vosseller; Christmas card sent by Elizabeth Van Fleet Vosseller, gifts of Mrs. Elizabeth Swartley, Englewood, NJ.

TWIGS AND SPRIGS FROM THE LAWSHE TREE, by Theodore Thatcher Lawshe, III, gift of the author, Cheshire, CT.

A Link To The Past

The Society's Own History

(Continued from Winter 1985, Vol. 21, No. 1)

Our senior member, Frank Burd remembers attending the 1911 Annual Meeting and becoming a member of the Society. Meetings were then held, he told me, over the town library. He recalled Emma Ten Broek Runk attended that meeting, too, and she and Mr. Deats discussed St. Thomas Church which was originally located on the opposite side — the south side of the road. She said St. designated South.

Mr. Burd married in 1914, moved several times, finally to South Bound Brook where he taught and was principal until he retired in 1947. He saw Mr. Deats occasionally who would say the Society was "quiescent." Mr. Deats would go to the headquarters for the annual meeting, being the only member present, would wind the clock and go home. The 50th anniversary of the Society passed with Mr. Deats noting "... 'the trial of the Century', the Hauptman case is on, and no one appeared. Adjourned as normal." Through the dedication and strong convictions of Mr. Deats that it was important to preserve local material, the Society and its collections survived awaiting a revival.

During the war years Mr. Deats noted in the Society's Minute Book the 59th Annual Meeting in 1943 was not attended by any members "owing to the gas and rubber restrictions on automobile travel" and in 1944 "... same conditions as last year." Routine work of the Society was being carried on by the Secretary-Librarian Deats. Letters and phone calls were answered and the Secretary made a weekly trip to the Society room to wind the Joakim Hill clock bequeathed to the Society by Miss Catherine Kuhl. The Society's books, papers, etc. were made available for research through the cooperation of Mrs. Annie Kuhl, Librarian, in the building the Historical Society and the Library shared.

In 1952 Mr. Deats recorded in the Minutes that he was continuing to file the County newspapers and answer genealogical queries and that he and John C. Thatcher discussed "projects." The following year, the 69th Annual Meeting was not held and he noted the staff of the Flemington library was now winding the clock and getting out material for inquiries. He was helping interested persons who came next door to his office in the Deats Building. The 70th meeting "was not held for the same reasons as the last 25 years."

After the Society's "quiescent" period there was a reactivation. John Thatcher, Frank Burd and Mr. Deats were probably the only holdover members and possibly Maud Wilson. Mr. Deats had faithfully held annual meetings which he alone attended and the minute books bear witness to his continued devotion. However, a new lease on life, long overdue, was coming for the Society.

The *Hunterdon County Democrat* carried a notice

on November 4, 1954 announcing the Society would meet in its room for the first formal meeting in a number of years. "... It is hoped that Saturday's meeting will bring forth a sufficient response from old as well as prospective new members to make possible an active working group which will carry forward the great work that Mr. Deats has done. All are invited to attend... and participate..."

The organization was reactivated at a well attended meeting. Trustees and officers were elected and plans made for regular meetings including papers prepared by members on topics of historical interest in the county as was customary when the Society first formed.

Mr. Burd recalled "the Society in the early days was different than today. Members were ordinary citizens interested in local history — Asher Carroll, William Shrope, Stacy Bray, Henry Race. They met around the County in local Churches; once they met in the hotel in Quakertown. The members prepared papers on local history and read them before the meeting which usually commenced in the morning, then broke for lunch and two more papers in the afternoon. In some instances they relied on memory and repeated what they had been told. I learned don't discard tradition as worthless, there is always some element of fact. That is where tradition is different from myth."

John C. Thatcher, D. Howard Moreau, Annie Sutphin Kuhl, Hiram E. Deats, Maud Little Wilson, Kenneth V. Myers and Amydell Case were elected to serve as Trustees of the reactivated Society. The Board organized with Mr. Moreau serving as president; John F. Schenk and Mr. Thatcher vice presidents; Mrs. Wilson corresponding secretary; Mr. Deats recording secretary; Mr. Myers treasurer and Mrs. Kuhl librarian.

Committees were appointed and twenty-one applications for membership were received, with dues of \$1 each for 1955 being paid. It was the feeling of the members in attendance that a thriving organization of at least a hundred members could be built. They agreed to invite others to join the Society, especially those persons who would work to build the archives and help preserve the splendid collection Secretary Deats had built through the years.

Donald Sinclair, assistant librarian at Rutgers University (1954) spoke on methods of preservation of old manuscripts and showed examples, including the use of microfilm and lamination by which fragile documents can be protected.

The 71st Annual Meeting was held on January 8, 1955 with 60 members present. New applicants for membership brought the total to 73. Additions to the collections in the form of books and old photographs were received during the meeting.

At the May 21, 1955 Spring Meeting, John F. Schenk, collector and expert on clocks and clockmakers spoke about the five best known early Hunterdon County clockmakers — John Laashe, Thomas Williams, George Rea, Richard Hooley and Joakim Hill. Hill,

last of the great craftsmen to work in this area, made over 77 clocks before January 14, 1811. Fifty-one members and guests attended and fifteen new members were elected.

By November 1955, just one year after the reactivation of the Society, memberships had increased to over 100. Kenneth Stryker, Lambertville photograph collector presented a program at the Fall Meeting, showing slides of the 1903 and 1955 floods on the Delaware River. A program was under way to reprint *Traditions of Hunterdon* and *Ancient Village of Amwell* by Cornelius W. Larison. The local history articles by the late Egbert Trimmer Bush which appeared in the *Hunterdon County Democrat* for a number of years were being considered for a future reprint project.

At the Annual Meeting in 1956 Mr. Deats expressed a desire to retire from active duty with the Society. He was having problems with his eyesight and his doctors had advised him not to read. In accordance with his wishes the members reelected him a trustee, but elected another member, Edward H. Quick, recording secretary. President Moreau reported on various publications of interest to historians and Dr. Charles Philhower, national authority on American Indians, presented a talk on the life, habits, customs, exploits and language of the Indians in Hunterdon County.

The Society continued to meet three times a year and membership showed a steady increase. At the Annual Meeting in January 1958 the dues were raised \$1 to \$2 representing the first dues increase since the founding of the Society in 1885. Norman C. Wittwer related the exciting history of the area around New Germantown (Oldwick) and illustrated his talk with photographs of the area.

The next year members learned of a threat to Hunterdon's architectural heritage when plans to expand Route 22 from Clinton to Phillipsburg showed the Brick Tavern at Pattenburg was in the path of the roadway. Fortunately, through the generosity of Robert Trubeck the building was saved. He bought and moved it out of the path of the roadway. Mr. Trubeck requested the Society provide a member to serve on a committee which would work on restoration plans once the building was removed to its new location.

Repainting of the Society's room was completed in time for the Annual Meeting in 1960. Used showcases purchased to display the John C. Thatcher Indian relic collection were installed and the artifacts arranged before the meeting, too. Librarian Annie Kuhl submitted her resignation due to ill health and members learned that the Green Sergeants covered bridge, spanning the Wichechoeke Creek, had been closed to traffic. Mr. Deats presented a history of the bridge, the last remaining covered bridge in New Jersey and everyone agreed to campaign for preservation of the bridge. Trustees Wilson, Myers, Case, Deats, Quick and Moreau were reelected and Norman C. Wittwer replaced Mrs. Kuhl as a trustee. Trustees Wilson and Wittwer and member Edith Jones were appointed to the Library

Committee. Mrs. Albert Blomquist presented a paper on the work of Mahlon Fisher, designer and builder of several Greek Revival structures in Flemington and illustrated her lecture with slides.

The Society observed its 75th anniversary with a luncheon on May 21, 1960 honoring Hiram E. Deats on his 90th birthday. The event was held in the parish hall of the Cherryville Baptist Church and catered by the ladies of the Church who served fruit juice, chicken salad, potato chips, peas, spiced cabbage, rolls, beverage and birthday cake and ice cream.

The Library Committee reported meeting with Donald Sinclair before the 1961 Spring Meeting to discuss indexing and cataloging the Society collections. The meeting was held in Centerville and the people who attended enjoyed a luncheon prepared by the ladies of the Methodist Church. A slide presentation by Eva Alvater on historic places in Somerset County was enjoyed by all.

The dedication of the reconstructed Green Sergeant's covered bridge and open house for the restored Brick Tavern in the Fall of 1961 gave our members pride in having had some part in saving these structures and preserving the County's architectural heritage. However, members learned at the Annual Meeting in 1962 of a threat to the John Reading home at Flemington Junction. Lipton Tea had purchased land at Flemington Junction to build a factory and demolition of the Reading house was possible. The members passed a motion directing that a letter be forwarded to the Company apprising it of the historic dwelling.

At the same meeting Mr. Moreau reported the records belonging to the Society were recently moved from the basement of the Deats building to the Museum room and he felt some planning should be started to employ a trained person to go over the material and set up an indexing system for the library, Deats collection and other historical manuscripts. Donald Sinclair, speaker for the afternoon meeting, discussed the Emley Papers, an interesting accumulation of documents left by one of the early residents of rural Pittstown area.

By the Fall of 1962 the Library Committee had employed Berthold Sorby to catalog the Deats papers and he was introduced to members when they met in the Society room in October. It was learned, following a conference Mr. Moreau attended with Company officials, that the Reading House, built in 1720, would most likely be saved by Lipton.

Mr. Sorby spent several months with Mr. Deats gathering together the material which Mr. Deats had stored for the Society. He assisted Sorby in moving by carrying some of the boxes himself. Mr. Sorby reported in January 1963 that the Society room was rearranged separating the museum from the library and cataloging was in progress. The Society, indeed the community as well, suffered profound losses in 1963, with the passing of Hiram Edmund Deats and D. Howard Moreau within a span of several months. Both these

men worked tirelessly for the Society. Mr. Deats had collected and preserved research materials relating to Hunterdon County, had authored or assisted with publication of thirty-six books, had collected early household items, agricultural implements, Indian artifacts. Mr. Moreau recognized the value of the cultural atmosphere of an active historical group and spearheaded a move to reactivate the Society in 1956 so that a renewed interest by the younger generations would carry on the work of preserving the County's heritage, building on Mr. Deats' earlier interest. It is a tribute to these two men that the Society remains active, its members continue their dedication to "gathering up the fragments of history" and preserving the artifacts and papers which are Hunterdon County's history.

To fill the vacancy on the Board of Trustees, a special meeting was called at which Marion Deats Abegg and Edith Jones were elected trustees. By his will, Mr. Deats, and the very generous interpretation of it by his heirs, the Society's collections were enriched, nearly doubling in size. Mr. Moreau provided financial support of the expanded project undertaken by Sorby before the death of Mr. Deats. Norman C. Wittwer was authorized to act in behalf of the Society with respect to the estate of Hiram E. Deats and he worked with Charles Deats, executor of his father's estate, sorting, classifying and selecting the books and papers to be brought to the Society.

Mr. Sorby was making progress on indexing the books, he reported at Annual Meeting in 1964 and acquisitions continued to come in. Bylaws changes were approved at that meeting increasing the number of trustees to nine and specifying terms of three years. Trustees Quick, Sorby and Jones were elected to one-year terms to expire in 1965, Trustees Myers, Abegg and Robert Trubeck's terms expired in 1966, and Trustees Wittwer, Wilson and Deats were elected to terms expiring in 1967. President Wittwer announced a cooperative arrangement between the Hunterdon County Historical Society and the Clinton Historical Museum whereby the Society loaned some its large agricultural items to the Museum.

Varied programs were presented in 1964. D. Stanton Hammond spoke at the Annual Meeting about genealogical mapping of Hunterdon County. He was well versed in his subject having begun his research many years earlier. He had been the guest speaker at a meeting in 1916 discussing Early Land Owership in Northern Hunterdon County. Members today may purchase his maps, the Hunterdon map series, which are very useful. James R. Marsh gave a historical discourse at the Spring 1964 meeting on the background of the red mill, now home of the Clinton Historical Museum. The Fall meeting was held in the restored German Baptist Church in Sand Brook and Mrs. Henry Vaughn-Eames discussed the restoration of the church and displayed old records and photographs.

Revised bylaws were adopted in January 1965

and it was agreed to print and circulate copies of them with a list of all members' names and addresses to each member. For the Spring Meeting in May members traveled to Pattenburg for luncheon and the speaker, J. Clifford Johnson, related the history of Bellewood Park, Hunterdon's one-time famous amusement park, and illustrated his text with postcards and drawings. Hunterdon County naturalist, Vincent Abraitys, spoke on Dr. George N. Best, physician and botanist active in the Rosemont area during the 1890-1920 period. Dr. Best was one of the founders of the Society.

SOCIETY'S NEWSLETTER FIRST PUBLISHED

It was during 1965 that the idea to begin publishing a newsletter was first considered. Marian G. Godown agreed to serve as Editor and the first issue appeared in the Fall of 1965. Frequency of publication was established at three times; Fall, Winter and Spring. Each issue, it was agreed, would announce the forthcoming meeting, give news of Society activities, list recent acquisitions and names of new members, have a Notes & Queries column for the genealogists and articles of local historical interest.

Berthold A. Sorby succeeded Mrs. Godown as editor and continued in the capacity until failing health forced him to give it up in 1974 following which Norman Wittwer became temporary Editor. Within the year Mrs. Vaughn-Eames accepted the job in which she remained until 1977 when the present Editor, Roxanne Carkhuff, took it on.

The Society's *Newsletter* has appeared, with few exceptions, at regular intervals since its inception twenty years ago. Periodically the original goals and plans for publication are reviewed and we have determined that noteworthy planning resulted in excellent goals to which we can still adhere. We want to publish a well balanced newsletter and include articles of interest for historians and genealogists. During the Bicentennial years, veterans of the Revolutionary War who survived and were enumerated in the 1840 census became the topic of a series. Written by Fred Sisser, III and Roxanne Carkhuff, it ran throughout 1983. Frequent contributor, Phyllis B. D'Autrechy, a certified genealogical records searcher, provides excellent articles on little used and/or unknown sources for genealogical information. Doubtless her articles have made it possible for descendants to learn new and interesting data about their ancestors. Whenever a book of local interest is published Kathleen Schreiner reviews it for the *Newsletter*. Recent contributing writers have included Kenneth Myers and John Kuhl.

The first issue was mimeographed and thereafter all issues have been set in type and printed since December 1969 by Bradford Press. The Society's photographic archives provides excellent illustrations for our publication.

HOLCOMBE-JIMISON FARMSTEAD DONATED TO SOCIETY

"COLLISION ON THE NEW HOPE BRIDGE" was the headline on the editorial page of the September 27, 1964 Philadelphia *Sunday Bulletin* which said once more the facts of progress and the accompanying traffic congestion collide with the possible destruction of historical and esthetic values in the proposal to build a new bridge over the Delaware River from New Hope, Pennsylvania to Lambertville, New Jersey. The conflict came over the location, whether the new bridge would be toll or free, and the land to be taken for the extensive toll plaza and interchange.

Historians claimed the oldest remaining house in Hunterdon County, built in 1711 and located near Lambertville, would come down if the bridge were placed where it was proposed. The old fieldstone house stood on the banks of the Alexauken Creek and near the gable on the east side of the structure was a 1711 marker. It was on part of a 1,250 acre parcel purchased by John Holcombe in parts between 1705 and 1734 and had remained in the Holcombe family until 1857. Milo and Rachel Jimison had bought the farmstead in 1950 specifically because of its association with Holcombe. Mr. Jimison's grandfather was Levi Holcombe and Mr. Jimison was a fifth-generation descendant from John Holcombe.

When final drawings for the bridge and its approaches were released, the Holcombe-Jimison house was not within the planned roadbed but the Delaware River Joint Toll Bridge Commission began negotiations to acquire all the Jimisons' property and the fate of the house and barns was uncertain. Mr. Jimison was anxious to avoid possible destruction and in his efforts to protect the house spoke with Mrs. Edna Horn who suggested he contact the Hunterdon County Historical Society. Mr. Jimison proposed to the Society that he and Mrs. Jimison give as a gift the Society the 1711 house and outbuildings and 20+ acres and insisted the deed of gift be excuted as soon as possible.

The agreement between the Society and the Jimisons for the gift is dated 9 October 1968 and granted life time use of the buildings and land to the Jimisons. Formal acceptance of the gift occurred during a luncheon at the Lambertville House a short time later.

DORIC HOUSE

Meanwhile the Society was facing a space crisis in its second floor room, forcing us to store some of the museum material. The collections continued to grow, indeed, practically doubled with the arrival of Deats bequest. Lack of work space hampered Mr. Sorby's efforts at cataloging and indexing and only six spaces were available for researchers to work in the collections. Enlarged quarters were essential if the Society was to fulfill its purpose of preserving Hunterdon County heritage.

As a result of careful thought, coupled with good fortune, the Trustees were presented with the opportunity to purchase the historically significant Doric House on Main Street in Flemington from the Flemington Methodist Church in the spring of 1969. The decision to act obviously could not be delayed. Based on the need for space, the importance of the building available and the faith that a thoughtful citizenry would help, the Trustees made a commitment to purchase the Doric House for \$35,000.

Acquisition of the Doric House would assure its preservation and the use to which it would be put would make the preservation more meaningful. The house at 114 Main Street, had been designed and constructed by Mahlon Fisher as his own home. The Church had owned the building since 1957 and before then it was operated as a restaurant famous for its fine cuisine by Mrs. Lucy Aalholm.

Fisher, a master builder of several Greek Revival structures in Flemington, began construction of the house in 1845 and he and his family lived in the house only a short time before moving to Stockton in 1848. He abandoned his trade and entered the coal and lumber business which, in 1854, took him to Williamsport, Pennsylvania. The Doric House derived its name from the type of pillars gracing the front of the house. The building has many refinements of detail — a graceful entrance hall with spiral staircase, wood carved decorations, and mahogany doors.

Mrs. D. Howard Moreau and Miss Helen Large, both Flemington residents, served as co-chairpersons of the Doric House Fund Drive. The Committee working with them were Judge Philip R. Gebhardt, Col. Frederick Herr, Hiram B. Ely, Jr., J. Kendrick Johnson, Edward J. Mack, Lee B. Roth, Theodore C. Merritt, S. Rodgers Benjamin, Ralph J. Muller, Bruce Hotchkiss, Lloyd B. Wescott and Kenneth V. Myers. Membership response to the Fund Drive was most generous and donations were received from local business firms, service clubs and other contributors, too. The Society is indebted to the devoted efforts of Miss Large, Mrs. Moreau and their committee for the successful drive which permitted purchase and restoration of the Doric House.



The Doric House and one-story wing after the second phase of restoration was completed.

Courtesy of Hunterdon County Democrat

Historic site designation from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection was received and the work of renovation, planned in three phases, was begun. The cement block wing, added about 1951, was sheathed with wooden siding, decorative flat pilasters and a classic cornice and a front display window and entrance were added in keeping with Fisher's Greek Revival style. The addition would provide ample library shelf space and a larger work area for patrons and the rest of the house would be utilized as a museum. Exterior repairs and painting were done in the second phase and the interior of the house was the third phase.

The Society learned that a small parcel of land, some distance from the buildings, at the Holcombe-Jimison property would be condemned for the new bridge approach. The *Newsletter* termed 1970 a "Year of Action" and indeed it was. The Society purchased an additional 3+ acres along the Alexauken Creek to protect the area surrounding the house there. Membership during the fund raising efforts increased to over 500 and restoration was moving along at the Doric House.

The first phase of work at the Doric House, preparing the one-story addition to become the Society library, was on schedule so that by May exterior work was completed. The furnace was installed and Mr. Sorby and the carpenters were installing book shelves. Some were constructed and others, from Mr. Deats' house at Flemington Junction or his office in the Deats Building, were adapted to available space.

Mr. Sorby scheduled November 1, 1971 for opening the library. Books and family name files were moved first, followed by bound and unbound manuscripts. Moving was accomplished with the assistance of the Kuhl brothers, John and Frank. It goes without saying that everything had to be packed, moved, unpacked and arranged so that patrons could use the collections with ease.

After a general discussion by the Board of Trustees, regarding scheduled hours, staffing, charges, and policy, it was agreed to open Thursdays and Saturdays 1-3 p.m., make no charge for use, but encourage donations, and staff with two volunteers when open. Mr. Burd and Mrs. Wilson shared responsibilities for the library before the move, each coming in an afternoon a week. They, with Mr. Sorby, would staff the new library until additional volunteer assistants could be scheduled.

The first meeting of the Board of Trustees held in the new headquarters on December 10, 1971 was attended by Trustees Wittwer, Large, Paulene Stothoff, Young, Richard Stothoff, Schenk, Sorby and Quick. During the year membership dues were raised to \$5 and a Family membership category (husband & wife) was added at \$8 per annum. The Bylaws specifying Annual Meeting date was changed to last Sunday in March because it was thought the weather would be better. The 1972 Annual Meeting and each subsequent

one, was held in March.

Articles of Agreement, dated March 14, 1845, between Mahlon Fisher and William Clark said, "William Clark shall . . . within the space of seven months from the first day of April next, in a good and workmanlike manner and according to the best of his skill, do all the mason work in and about a certain dwelling house that the said Mahlon Fisher is about to erect in Flemington — as follows — the cellar to be 28 by 32 feet. . ." This provided guidance in restoration of the house. The document described the number of rooms, placement of the kitchen in the basement, the walls of which rooms were to be finished to receive paper, etc. Green Thumb Project workers, retired skilled craftsmen employed part time under a Federal Program, began restoration of the basement as described in the Articles of Agreement. These men also did some work outside in the garden area to ready the front for decorative cast iron fencing from Joakim Hill's burial plot. This was a donation from John Schenk who preserved it when the caretaker of the Presbyterian churchyard removed it.

In early 1973 the James H. Ramsey Memorial Fund was established, following his death, with contributions the Society received to enlarge the Society's microfilm library. Trustees Carkhuff, Wittwer and Young were appointed to the Newsletter Committee to assist Mr. Sorby in preparing the Society's publication.

A House and Grounds Committee was also formed to oversee remaining restoration and decoration of the Doric House. Mr. Sorby became Curator of the Library and his duties were defined by the Library Committee. Trustee Wittwer was named Librarian and Kenneth V. Myers was elected President.

Work was moving along on the Doric House. With interior painting nearly completed furnishings of the Empire period were being solicited. A bequest from Miss Helen McCandless brought the Society her Copper Lustre and a cabinet in which to display the collection. Mr. Sorby's health had failed and he was not able to continue his work with the Society.

In an effort to inventory and catalog the manuscript collection, Mr. Wittwer recruited Joanne Renda, a recent college graduate from Readington Township, to work 2 days a week as a volunteer. Marjorie Congram, former Curator of the Marshall House in Lambertville, graciously volunteered to inventory the museum collections. Two, much needed and long overdue jobs were begun. Mrs. Congram's project was completed, but Miss Renda was unable to finish before she became employed elsewhere.

Mr. Jimison relinquished his life right on the Holcombe-Jimison Farm at the end of 1974. Kenneth M. Turi became caretaker of the Farm when Mr. Jimison moved and continues in that capacity today having done considerable maintenance and restoration work on the house.

After the Annual Meeting in March 1975 members and guests were invited to visit and tour the redecorated and furnished Doric House and refreshments were served there. Information on the restoration and photographs of first floor rooms were featured in *Hunterdon Historical Newsletter* Vol. 11, No. 1, Winter 1975.

BICENTENNIAL

Plans had been formulated in late 1974 by County Bicentennial Chairman C. Ryman Herr and Walter J. Young, the County's Cultural & Heritage Commission Chairman to coordinate their activities within the County in one office. The Trustees of the Historical Society offered to make space available for that purpose at the Doric House. The office was opened in January 1975, and Roxanne K. Carkhuff employed by the Commission to staff it. She resigned from the staff shortly before its office moved to the Flemington Choir School building in June 1981.

Ever-increasing demand for *The History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, New Jersey* made reprinting of the book a desirable Bicentennial project. James P. Snell compiled it a short time before its original publication date in 1881. It became the standard reference on county history for both counties and had long been out of print so the reprinting of 500 copies was a cooperative effort by the Commission and the Society. By March 1976 over 280 of the books were sold and the remaining copies were placed in the Society custody with the recommendation the funds from future sales be used for a revolving publication fund to continue a publishing program. Estimates for reprinting Beers, Comstock and Cline's 1873 *Atlas of Hunterdon County, New Jersey* were sought. Arrangements were made and in 1977, the second year of the Bicentennial celebration, another reprint was ready for sale.

The Bicentennial celebration brought increased numbers of patrons to the library for research and a regular schedule of hours for research was set up with volunteer library assistants on duty; each person taking a turn one day a week for two hours seemed to work well and this remains the manner in which we staff the library today. Additional time was and is available by appointment.

Plans were discussed to open the Doric House on a regular basis too. Staff requirements and security of artifacts were problems not easily solved. It was finally agreed to open the house by appointment until a staff of volunteer guides was recruited and instructed in the history of the house and the furnishings. No admission charge was fixed, but rather a donation basket box was placed in the foyer.

Kathleen Schreiner began the reorganization of the library and materials formerly under the custodial care of Mr. Sorby with the purpose of completing the library cataloging. In September 1976 the Trustees adopted for the first time a specific library policy for patrons. This was necessary because of the increased

number of persons using the facilities and the misuse by a few. A brief introduction to the Hiram E. Deats Memorial Library, and its restrictions; no eating, smoking or use of pens, no children under 10, and suggestions for handling of materials to insure their preservation were combined in a brochure for first-time visitors. Also, a Patron Registration form was devised for use by everyone using the Library recording their name, address, project and the materials used during each visit, designed to help us know what materials were most used, how many persons used the library and how often, what projects the patrons were working with so that we could refer others to them and them to others. It aided the patrons in remembering to cite their sources of information.

Newspapers from the Society's collection had been loaned to Rutgers for microfilming and the Library Committee recommended purchasing copies of some of the papers. Authorization was granted to spend about \$700, utilizing the James Ramsey Memorial Fund and Society funds, to buy microfilm copies of the *Hunterdon Republican*, *Clinton Democrat*, *High Bridge Gazette* and *Whitehouse Review*. Although the newspapers published in Lambertville were loaned for filming, this was not completed before the project funds were depleted and the newspapers were returned.

Newsletter Committee began planning and working on the 1978 issues which would feature the Hunterdon County Courthouse, built in 1828. The Freeholders, Sheriff Carpenter and Judge Beutel granted permission for the Society to meet in the courtroom on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the new Courthouse.

It was the recommendation of the Library Committee that we investigate steps necessary to provide proper storage of the manuscript collections. With the installation of a steel door on a basement room previously used for food storage when the Doric House was a restaurant we could create a reasonably fire-proof room. The door and steel shelving were installed. The CETA program, administered by the County, providing employees to non-profit organizations, made funds available permitting the Society to employ someone to inventory the manuscript collection. Following 90+ years of collecting, the Society was taking steps to discover exactly what had been saved. Mrs. Schreiner and Mr. Wittwer interviewed applicants and hired George Kreutler, a retired Episcopal priest from Lambertville. He began working in May 1978 and when CETA program ran out, was hired by the Society. Since 1981 he has worked part time, unfolded, flattened, filed in acid-free folders and boxes and made an inventory of thirty-seven collections, a total of over 50,000 items of manuscript material.

Plans for expansion of the manuscript storage facilities were begun by Mr. Wittwer and Mr. Kreutler in the Summer of 1981. By cinder blocking one basement window and installing another steel door another vault could be created in the basement. Authorization

to begin was soon granted by the Board of Trustees and the window was closed, necessary electrical work was donated by David Huff and steel shelving was installed in a portion of the room. This past month the steel door was installed by mason, Martin Waisem-packer.

Continuing the reprint program begun in 1976, the Society accepted the offer of the East Amwell Township Bicentennial Committee to use its plates and produce a second printing of *A History of East Amwell 1700-1800*. With some revision, addition of a full-name index and a dust jacket, the book became the Society's third reprint.

Looking to the Society's upcoming 100th anniversary, Librarian Norman Wittwer wanted to provide easy access to the Society's collections. He was custodian of the largest single primary source collection for the study of Hunterdon's economic, political and social history, unique material not available elsewhere and realized a retrieval system would allow its full research potential to be reached. To achieve this, a grant proposal was submitted to the Hunterdon County Cultural and Heritage Commission seeking funding to catalog and cross index each collection by subject, proper names and place names. Approval from the Commission was received and Mr. Kreutler and Roxanne K. Carkhuff, both working part time, began this project which continues to date with thirty collections indexed, of the thirty-seven which have been inventoried.

The tenant farmer who occupied the Jimison farmland gave the Society notice he intended to vacate the premises in January 1982. A subsequent tour of the property by the Trustees brought the realization that much cleanup work was necessary and the barn and outbuildings needed repairs. Men from the south part of the County took an active interest in the property — Messers Hoff, Horn, Hunt, Myhre, Tyndall, Carkhuff, Turi and Hazen and an Ad-Hoc committee to work on the property was formed. An open house at the farm in the Fall of 1982 brought nearly 500 visitors and the Holcombe-Jimison Restoration Committee was formed. The initial clean-up phase of their work completed, they developed a priority plan beginning with stabilization of the barn footing and foundation. As work continued the Society Trustees agreed the Committee should consider incorporating as a separate organization to assume responsibility for the property. They started working on bylaws and it was agreed to transfer the property to the Holcombe-Jimison Restoration Committee when they were incorporated and had received tax-exempt status from Internal Revenue Service. The Committee's intention is to establish a History of Travel museum on the site.

Sadly we learned of the passing of Norman C. Wittwer on December 25, 1982, who had been a trustee of the Society for twenty-five years, ten of which he served as President and the last eight years as Librarian of the Society, and Maud Little Wilson who died on

January 8, 1983 and had served as a trustee, member of the Genealogical Committee and Corresponding Secretary.

Through his dedication the Society collections increased and the library was organized, cataloging had begun, the library opened on a limited, but regular basis and the organization, inventory and indexing of the manuscript collection was begun during Mr. Wittwer's term as Librarian.

Mr. Deats relied on Mrs. Wilson as his eyes. She often related how she would pick him up at his home in Flemington Junction after his eyesight failed and bring him to the Society room so they could open the library. She read the mail to him and he would tell her where to look — in what books and folders — so she could answer the requests for genealogical information.

Work continues on the manuscript collections and the collections; library and manuscripts, are available for research on a regular basis. The Doric House is open by appointment in addition to Open House events such as the recent Flemington Festival of the Arts and the Welcome Wagon's Annual Christmas tour.

The reactivation of the Hunterdon County Historical Society more than thirty years ago began the most active period in the Society's one hundred year history. Membership is over 500 and members reside in nearly all fifty states. The Society bought, restored and maintains its headquarters, the Doric House, and received the Holcombe-Jimison Farmstead which it continues to administer. The cataloging, inventory, and indexing of the library, manuscript and photograph collections is a valuable research tool to our membership and patrons. Your Society welcomes your interest, time and financial support as it embarks on its second century.

Roxanne K. Carkhuff



The foyer of the Doric House showing the detailed decorations on the curving stairway. Glass artist William Iorio made the hanging lantern seen here. Courtesy of Hunterdon County Democrat



This view of New Jersey Civil War Rendezvous No. 3 also known as Camp Vredenburg at Freehold, N.J. is taken from a remarkable ambrotype in the collection of the *Monmouth County Historical Association*. Since all buildings at all the new camps were built under a common state contract, those at Flemington would be very similar to these.

“Camp” Flemington, 1862

The sporting gentlemen of Flemington thought it a damned nuisance. They were having to make the sacrifice. Their racing season would be a bust without the usual grand climax at the Fair. True, the fairgrounds had been opened one Saturday afternoon two weeks ago for the “accomodation” of all who wished to try their horses. But now, at the end of August, the Fair Directors were announcing the cancellation altogether of the 1862 Fair, worrying that “the omission of the Exhibition one year is not so much as the damage that will be done the grounds — But so it is, and we suppose we must quietly submit to the necessities of the times”.

The problem was that the grounds and the area around it were swarming with would-be soldiers, none of them yet too well organized or disciplined. The Civil War in 1862 had not proceeded to the optimistic expectations of either side. The North was clearly stronger but just could not get in that knock-out blow. As a result, N.J. Governor Olden had received back-to-back Federal calls in late July and early August for five and then eleven more regiments, 16,000 Jersey men in all. To expedite handling such unprecedented numbers and to take every advantage of local enthusiasms, state officials had established four new recruiting camps to augment the original facility at Trenton. The five

rural northwest counties stretching from Somerset to Sussex and Morris were combined into one district and assigned a quota of one three-year regiment under the first call. The boundaries for raising the two regiments under the second call would be shifted to include the entire congressional district running from the Delaware through Hunterdon on over to the Rahway area. Connected via the Bel-Del railroad to Lambertville and Trenton, and being somewhat centrally located, Flemington was designated the point of rendezvous. Colonel — soon to be Brigadier — Alexander Donaldson laid aside his duties as editor of *The Somerset Messenger* and arrived to begin organizing what the state was designating Rendezvous No. 5. Recruits for the first new regiment, the 15th N.J. Infantry, would be flocking in almost simultaneously, to be followed soon by those of the 30th and 31st regiments.

The site selected here was ground owned by Joseph P. Boss that bordered the south side of the Fairgrounds. If this was deliberately calculated to make use of the facilities of the six-year old fairgrounds, this was the actual result. There were as yet no buildings on this section of Boss’ land and state military authorities could not supply tents in the numbers and time necessary. The Fair Directors had alluded to official possession of their grounds too, by the military.

It was appropriated less officially as well. Young Josiah Grimes of the 15th (who would be dead in little more than a year) wrote home on 16 August: "Then, as we had not got our tents yet, we marched down and slept in the stalls on the Hunterdon County Fairgrounds. We slept . . . in an open building belonging to the Fairgrounds, laying crossways on shelves. I give it up towards morning and walked around the fairgrounds, found a lot of haystacks, went back, got Bill, and we went and slept between them in the hay."

It was politics for the most part, not experience or ability, that determined initial position and rank in this new army. Samuel Fowler was a distinguished citizen of Newton, a confidante of former Governor Haines, and possessed of clout enough to get command of the 15th regiment, as well as have *Rendezvous No. 5* retitled *Camp Fowler*. He never could get a handle on things though, health and age being part of the problem, and seldom with the regiment after it left Flemington. The Lt. Co., Edward Campbell of Belvidere, would become the unit's widely respected battle leader in the three years of hard fighting it would experience. Fowler lost out altogether. Within a few days of the arrival of the first recruits, *Camp Fowler* became *Camp Fair Oaks*, in honor of the recent battle of that name in Virginia.

Recruiting was being vigorously conducted throughout the five-county district as the deadline approached. Groups were forwarded to Flemington as they were gathered in their home areas. About 600 men had been assembled out at the camp by mid-August and were putting a severe strain on the available facilities. Water was a constant problem, as Grimes outlined. "They have a very bad water around here, and it is very rusty. The soil is a red color, made from the crumbling down of what they call red shell. The dust from it (as any present-day fair goer will agree) sticks to your shoes like mud. I got my canteen filled with lemonade for twenty-five cents yesterday; went a great deal better than water." With water supply tight, bathing was an unaffordable luxury. But the army found a practical remedy close at hand. "In the afternoon, marched to the Raritan River and went in swimming."

Never in the nation's history had so many men been simultaneously under arms. Not even army professionals had experience on this scale. Other than the aged, creaking top echelon of Mexican War vets, only a handful of officers had ever commanded more than the standard infantry company of a hundred men or so in any one location. Equipping all these recruits was an equally monumental and tedious undertaking. Fortunately the North's industry was rising to the challenge by mid-1862 and that of New Jersey was no exception. The factories in the Newark-Paterson area were working overtime, weaving material and sewing thousands of uniforms, converting old flintlocks to the newer percussion system, making pistols and swords, and turning

out tons of belts, saddles, cartridge boxes, plus all the other various leather accoutrements needed. In Trenton, Emerson & Silver was forging a variety of swords and at the old Locomotive Works, Burt and Hodge were just beginning to send out the first of many thousands of gleaming, new Model 1861 rifle-muskets with the city's name stamped boldly on their lockplates.

Distribution of all this proceeded in disjointed fashion. Locally, materials piled up at the railroad station in town as they became available from the factories and armories, not in any logical sequence. And, they arrived in quantities enough to equip not only the 1000 men of the 15th, but also for the 2000 of the 30th and 31st regiments, who were already beginning to trickle in. Storehouses at the camp were projected but not yet a reality, so Quartermaster Charles Scranton took over the former store of Farlee & Jones. Even this left them short of space. The only answer was to issue the gear as quickly as possible after receiving it. Locals got used to seeing partially outfitted groups marching in and out of town. A company might come in the morning for its hats and insignia, then be back in the afternoon or the next day for its uniform pants. A soldier's sweat has always been an expendable resource and all this incessant marching was after all, the officers reasoned, a part of their training. Some things never change. One amused recruit wrote home to Belvidere, "We . . . got our shoes and cape (overcoat) today, and they were given out without much regard to size, some were too large and others too small entirely and we had some fine fun with them." But by swapping, refitting, or as a last resort by some, the ancient process known more recently as midnight requisition or smallstores, all ended up with something functional.

With the 15th utilizing all camp facilities, some place had to be found to quarter the arriving troops of the 30th and 31st. Public buildings throughout Flemington were pressed into service, giving the town itself, the image of an armed camp. The fifty-year old two-story Brick Academy had just in 1862, been superseded by the newly constructed Reading Academy. The older building was slated now for use as a private school and as an auditorium for public entertainments and meetings of such organizations as the town band and the war-inspired Union League. A company of the 31st from Belvidere was settled in here and had rechristened it to their own liking. One of them, Wm. H. Warman, wrote home to the editor of *The Belvidere Intelligencer*. "After being examined and sworn in on Saturday, we were marched to Camp Fair Oaks, now Kearny (the camp's name had undergone another change, this time to honor the George S. Patton of the Civil War, New Jersey's legendary Phil Kearny, recently killed at Chantilly). . . for supper. . . We were transferred to 'Camp Belvidere', as it has been fitly appellated. Our camp consists of the Brick Academy and playgrounds, which is situated in the S.E. part of the

pleasant and healthy town of Flemington. We have spread our ticks filled with straw on the floor of the upper story; the desks and the seats being removed, it affords us very comfortable sleeping quarters. The lower school we use as an eating room, the writing desks being left, they serve the purposes of tables admirably; and the old playgrounds, which contain almost half a square acre, and which are enclosed by a fence, constitute our play and drill grounds. We have some fine sport, playing ball, & etc. have not had to drill but four hours a day yet and during the day have been privileged to go and do as we choose. . . Many are the tokens of love they (the citizens of Flemington) have already manifested toward us. One instance, especially, I cannot refrain from noticing. On Wednesday p.m., the good Baptist clergyman, whose church is just across the street from the camp, presented us with a large tin pail of excellent apple sauce, which tickled our palates. . ."

Others in the town also provided delicacies to complement the unaccustomed harshness of the bleak military ration. Reminiscing on the occasion of her 100th birthday in 1929, Miss Anne Stout recalled "Aunt Charity Higgins who flavored her motherly disposition with the spice of patriotism, baked a barrel full of saucer mince pies and sent it to the camp for the soldiers. The officers, however, confiscated the pastry and stored it away for later consumption. To the great delight of the defrauded privates, the 'long roll' sounded and in the bustle and confusion of breaking camp, slipped from the wagon to which it was being loaded and crashed downhill, scattering the pies broadcast. It is not on record whether or not Aunt Charity ever baked for the soldiers again."

Another building used by the army was the old session room of the Presbyterian Church (now the choir school property recently acquired by the county). The church had, since building it in 1844, used this for a Sunday School and for certain evening meetings, it being more centrally located in town. The soldiers living here did their cooking in the vacant lot opposite near a shoemaker shop operated by Jacob Jordy. This lot today provides parking space for the customers of the 1st Fidelity Bank (Hunterdon County National). Given the numbers of displaced soldiers in and about the town, it seems probable that many other buildings were similarly utilized.

A solution to the space problem was in the works. Construction contracts had been let for the erection of 112 barracks at the five different camps around the state. Presumably, Camp Kearny got its quota which would have been probably 21 of these barracks plus sufficient storehouses and cookhouses. Each of the barracks was to measure 16 x 50 feet and to bunk the standard company of 100 men. The 21st building would serve as headquarters. These were rustic in the extreme but would serve the purpose while doing a fiscal conservative proud. The N.J. Quartermaster-General stated that these "sheds were erected with a due regard

to economy, the cheapest quality of lumber used, and they were put together as loosely and roughly as possible, having regard to safety and their removal with the least possible waste and injury to the lumber".

The 15th had mustered in about 950 men by the end of August and had just allowed many recruits to leave for one last furlough when unexpected orders came for them to head south on a day's notice. Non-coms and officers spread out to recall all they could find. Most got back in time to leave on Friday, 29 August, and the rest followed the next day. They would spend time working on the fortifications ringing the Capitol and doing picket duty in the back areas until being considered proficient enough with their weapons and maneuvering to join the main army. They were brigaded in October with the 1st Jersey Brigade (1st, 2nd, 3rd, & 4th N.J. regiments) of 6th Corps fame and went on to chalk up one of the better regimental records of the war, paying dearly for it in the process. Of over 2200 Union infantry regiments in the war, only 11 lost more men in battle than the 15th N.J.



Major and then Lieutenant-Colonel Robert R. Honeyman of New Germantown (Oldwick) was the senior local officer and ultimately the field commander of the 31st N.J. Frail health hampered a promising military career and led to his early demise. This image is from a CDV in the collection of John W. Kuhl.

With the 15th gone and the new barracks nearing completion, the men of the 30th and 31st emptied out of their makeshift accommodations in town and took up residence at Camp Kearny. The last of the buildings were finished by 10 September and a major creature comfort finally amply supplied ten days later with the flow of the first water through a pipeline laid by John C. Hopewell from the reservoirs on Mullen Hill. The *Democrat* commented "this will be a great blessing to

our boys during their stay here. They have suffered much heretofore for the want of this article. They have had red shale and water to drink, and water and red shale for a change."

It wasn't that the men of the 30th & 31st were that much less patriotic-minded than their three-year counterparts in the 15th. It was just that they had only nine month terms ahead of them and that included all the winter and spring months when nothing much usually happened anyway. Besides, there was this sort of unwritten understanding that the nine-month units would not be given front-line duty. Their prospects appeared much less forboding. Jacob Wandling of the 31st was typical of many who admitted some obligation but saw little harm in making the process as enjoyable as possible. Sept. 4th - "In the night by being a little smart I got out of duty altogether and had another man standing for me. I made up my mind that it was an imposition to put me on Guard and resolved that all the Duty I done would be what I could not get rid of." Sept. 5th - "In the evening I asked for a pass down town as I wanted to go to the Post Office. It was refused which made me so mad so after supper Carter, Godley & I run the guards and went down. Had a great deal of sport, eat all the oysters we could, made some purchases and returned without any trouble." Sept. 7th - "The whole camp thrown into excitement by an accidental shooting affair. One man shot himself in the finger & another man quite seriously wounded in the leg. He fainted and was carried to the Hospital in the Fair Grounds." (The latter was Pvt. Theodore Hoffman of a Hunterdon company and this occurrence so prevalent that privates throughout the army were soon prohibited from carrying personal sidearms, a ban not universally observed however.) Sept. 8th - "played Euchre till dinner after which there was a call in our company for four men with arms and equipment. I was one of the volunteers. We were taken downtown to arrest a man accused of Treason. We caught him in his house and searched him but finding nothing let him go and went back to camp." (See footnote) Sept. 11th - "At night we got wind of a party that was a going out in the country with a hack full of women. I with another party went to follow them, could get no passes so ran the guard and went two in one sulky and four in a single seated buggy. We went to the Barley Sheaf but not finding them went on to a place called Rayville (Reaville) some five or six miles further where we found them and we took tea with them and after teasing them a while longer we went on to the place where a large Pic-nic was held but the crowd had all left and gone to the Hotel in consequence of the rain. We went there also and found a good looking set of girls, after seeing all the style there we left for camp and as it had rained considerable the roads were mussy. We stopped at several Peach Orchards on the road but we could not find any that was ripe. . . Did not reach camp till after two o'clock in the morning and was then raining like fun, add to this that we had to wait

half an hour to get through the lines and you can imagine how we looked and felt." Sept. 17th - "At night feeling very lonesome Colton and I ran the guards and went down Town to kill time, but the affair did not pay us, there was so many Officers there, so we thinking that in this case 'Discretion was the better part of valor' left for camp again, got in without trouble."

Wandling records the events of September 24th: "Early in the evening a fire broke out in Town & it seemed from Camp as if half the place was afire, of course all was excitement and confusion. Men run the Guards continuously in squads of from ten to a hundred in spite of the Officers who went around with loaded pistols threatening to shoot the first man who ran but was no use. There was not a hundred men in the whole camp in 15 minutes from the alarm, all were down Town. I among them although I was on Guard at the time. On reaching there it proved to be the two sheds of the two hotels which were afire, but for the exertions of the Blue Coats I believe half the town would have been burned. The girls of the two hotels were all taken in the street and such a scene of confusion I really believe was never seen before & much was carried out that was not taken back. It was morning before all the boys got to camp." *The Hunterdon Gazette* agreed with Wandling's assessment and praised the soldiers for having "worked with a will and with success that we cannot too highly appreciate" in preventing the spread of the fires. *The Lambertville Beacon*, noting that New Hope's fire engine had been hustled aboard a Bel-Del train and sent to Flemington's aid, termed it the work of an incendiary. The sheds behind Crater's hotel went up first and were destroyed along with six or eight horses plus harness and carriages. Also lost was Dr. Schenck's barn but Anderson's store and the hotel itself were saved. In the meantime a new blaze flared up in the stables of Danberry & Wanamaker behind THE COUNTY HOUSE. By this time, however, enough help was on the scene to quickly subdue it with small loss. The worst human casualty was Mrs. Mahlon Hart of nearby Rockafellow's Mills. Overcome by excitement as she observed it all, she collapsed and died on the spot.

Andrew T. Connett became a post-war success in the commercial, banking, and insurance circles of Flemington. In 1908 he recalled his impressions of the fire as an enlisted man in the 31st N.J.: "... created intense excitement and it was feared there was a movement on foot to burn the town. The fire extended to the rear of Anderson & Nevius store and the residence of Mrs. Sloan, where the Trewin building now stands. The writer with many others in camp ran the guards and came over to see the fire. The military authorities took charge and proclaimed a sort of semi-martial law, placing some of the soldiers on guard and to patrol the town. I was corralled soon after reaching town and think I walked my beat all night, watching out for suspected or suspicious persons. As showing the ex-