

1885

HUNTERDON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

100 Years of Service

1985

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Centennial Newsletter Series

WINTER 1985

Old Photo Fun at Annual Meeting Sunday April 14

On Sunday, April 14, at 2 p.m. at Flemington Methodist Church in conjunction with our annual meeting and elections, we will feature a session a bit different from our usual. Central to the success of this informal program will be your participation. Bring in your old photographs and share them with others for an hour. Nothing stimulates reminiscing like an old photo and you may well go home knowing much more about your own photo. Hard images, paper prints, people subjects, shots of places or things; all are welcome. Copying facilities will be available at no cost to you and at absolutely no risk to your photograph, should you decide to allow the society a copy for our files.

Only recently have early photographs received the universal attention they truly merit from archivists and historians alike. Inaccurate or falsified captions, ignorance of early technical limitations, careless storage and handling, poor or non-existent archival indexing; all have characterized the mistreatment of this precious historical resource. Nothing can be more intensely personal than that old image of an ancestor. No other source can be more revealing or less subject to error than that old photo of a building or thing long since disappeared.

Practical photography began with the Daguerrotype developed in France in 1839. On highly-polished, silver-plated copper sheets, these were reverse images that were complicated to make and expensive to the buyer. This process was effectively superseded by 1860 but many of other type images are today mistakenly called daguerreotypes. Less costly were the ambrotypes which arrived on the scene by 1855. These were thin glass plate negatives backed with a dark material to show up the reverse image as a positive. Concurrent with the ambrotype was what is popularly known as the tintype. This was a japanned or laquered metal plate that was lighter, cheaper, and more durable. Color tinting was sometimes applied by hand to these "hard" images. Paper prints were possible in the early 1850's by the wet plate process but did not come into their own until the Civil War. Starting with playing-card size prints called carte-de-visites, larger sizes normally 8 x 10 inches, and the stereo cards of the war scenes, the chain of development after the war ran to cabinet photos slightly larger than the CDV's to the postcards so popular after the turn of the century on up to the prints we know today. Five to ten second exposure time would not allow the early artist to freeze

(Continued on next page)

JOIN OUR NEW CENTURY CLUB

It is with great pleasure that we announce the creation by the Trustees of the Society of a Century Club Membership for the year 1985, in commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Hunterdon County Historical Society. We would be honored to have present, past and future members help us to celebrate this momentous occasion by becoming Century Club Members for 1985, cost of which would be \$100. They will receive a beautiful print of the Society's headquarters, the Doric House, as a commemorative gift. What better way to augment the financial needs of the Society in its constant striving for the acquisition and dissemination of historical and genealogical knowledge, and in the preservation of the historic past of our beautiful county?

Our Society has for several years refrained from raising membership dues, even though costs for operating the Doric House headquarters, and publication and postal rates have been rising ever higher, and continue to rise. It is with great reluctance that the Trustees are requesting our loyal members to accept the increases in membership dues, as follows:

<i>Annual</i>	<i>\$12.00 per year</i>
<i>Family</i>	<i>\$14.00 per year</i>
<i>Life Membership</i>	<i>\$200.00</i>
<i>Student Membership</i>	<i>\$3.00 per year</i>
<i>Contributing Membership</i>	<i>\$25.00 per year (no increase)</i>
<i>Sustaining Membership</i>	<i>\$50.00 per year (no increase)</i>
CENTURY CLUB	\$100.00

We are justly proud of our Newsletter, one of the finest publications of its kind among historical societies. We are the repository of priceless historical and genealogical material in our Library; our newspaper collections are of inestimable value; and foremost at this one hundredth anniversary is the memory of the Honorable Hiram Deats, without whose love for Hunterdon County's history, his painstaking research, and his foresight in maintaining this unparalleled genealogical and historical records collection, the Society simply would not exist today.

Please consider these issues, and may we have your kind cooperation at this time of rising costs. If you have any questions or considerations to offer, please be sure to let us hear from you.

Centennially Yours,

Kenneth V. Myers, President

HUNTERDON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HUNTERDON HISTORICAL NEWSLETTER

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even the slightest of motion and resulted in the stiff poses often seen. Lighting, indoors or out, was another real problem. Yet, some of the results are to this day, truly remarkable.

Dig out those old photos and they really don't have to be that old, either. Bring them in and help us have a good program.



Recent Acquisitions

The Society acknowledges these recent donations to its collections.

Oak Grove Grange Records, circa 1910 donated by R. Douglass Kollmar.

The Ringo Family Series Family Name Index, Vol. XIII, gift of James J. Ringo.

Our Dierdorff Ancestors In Early America by R.F. Dierdorff, gift of the author.

Wannamacher/Wanamaker Families of Pennsylvania: A Genealogical Dictionary by Jean Gurney Rigler, gift of the author.

Johnson J. Updike Family Bible printed by I. Collins & Co., 1814; 1914 Wanamaker Diary from John Wanamaker's in Philadelphia, Pa.; *Gulliver's Travels*, with inscription to Hugh Thatcher 1894 Xmas gift donated by Lewis Thatcher.

Framed photographs of Abraham S. Case [1860-1931] and J. Martin Stangl, donated by Mrs. Merrill B. Batcheler.

Historic Whitehouse, a coloring book by Susan A. Marino to benefit Old Whitehouse Memorial Park, gift of Virginia Everitt.

The Conrad Peterman Family Including A History Of Clinton R. and Sallie S. Peterman Family, by Clinton L. Peterman, gift of the author.

Three manuscript items regarding William Dubon, drafted into the service of the United States 18 May 1864, donated by Mrs. Helen Hoff.

Five photographs of the Centerville store and Centerville vicinity donated by Mrs. Marvin Saxe.

Three items, "Sesqui-centennial of German Valley Settlement by Germans," Reunion of the Centerville School, 1935", and "Programme of the Hunterdon County Fair, Wednesday, September 26, 1883" donated by Mrs. Lorena C. Vincent.

Two books of Records of the Croton Baptist Sunday School, 1891-1892: 1894 Wm C Fields, Secretary, donated by Stephen Zdepski.

The Matthes-Apgar House by Marfy Goodspeed, gift of Mr. & Mrs. David Hay.

One Town Around: A Pictorial History of West Portal & Vicinity by Paul J. Hagaman with Sandy B. Terp and John A. Vanderbilt, gift of Mrs. Paul J. Hagaman and Family.

Dunham Genealogy: Deacon John Dunham of Plymouth, Massachusetts, 1589-1669, and His Descendants, gift of Misses Marion and Helen Waldron.

GUY R. BELL TRUST

The Hunterdon County Historical Society was named a beneficiary in the will of Guy R. Bell, Jr., of Flemington, who died July 21, 1984, at the age of 55, leaving no close survivors.

Mr. Bell was born in Flemington, the son of the late Guy R. and Dorothy Stout Bell. He was valedictorian of the Flemington High School class of 1947 and graduated from Princeton University in 1951. He was a reader and editor for New York publishing houses and had also been employed by the Episcopal Church Center in New York City. He became a member of the Hunterdon County Historical Society in 1967 while residing in New York. His only sister, Louise Bell, who was county librarian, died in 1965.

Sharing the estate equally with the Society were the Flemington Public Library and the Colonel Lowery Chaper, Daughters of the American Revolution. Mr. Bell's will stipulated that money received by the Historical Society be placed in the Guy R. Bell Trust, honoring his father, the income from which is to be used to maintain the Society's headquarters, the Doric House in Flemington. The appraised value of the estate was approximately \$150,000.

The three beneficiary organizations have acquired, as part of their shares, some of Mr. Bell's possessions. The Historical Society selected the family Bibles, family papers and photographs, several pieces of furniture, Fulper and Stangl pottery pieces, cut glass made at the Empire Glass Company in Flemington, a framed lithograph map of Flemington, and yearbooks from Flemington High School. The amount of cash each organization receives will be adjusted by the value of items acquired.

A Link To The Past

The Society's Own History

A century ago headlines in the *Democrat-Advertiser*, a weekly newspaper published in Flemington, called the readers' attention to news regarding the recent inauguration of Grover Cleveland as President of the U.S. succeeding President Arthur. A local news item related that Lambert Humphrey a wife of the Union Hotel attended the inauguration ceremonies. It was also reported a number of patriotic citizens had their houses decorated with flags and bunting in honor of President Cleveland. It was March 1885 and a stereopticon exhibition was being given by Mr. Fred Stothoff in the Court House for the benefit of the A.M.E. Zion Church. Admission was 10 and 15 cents. J.F. Mulligan advertised his quarry at Annandale for sale. The three lime kilns, dwelling house, barn and six acres of land "will sell at a bargain with easy terms" according to Mr. Mulligan's notice.

Later that year, in September this notice appeared: "A meeting for the formation of a Historical Society for Hunterdon County will be held in the Grand Jury Room in Flemington on Friday, September 11th at 2½ o'clock p.m." The meeting was held and the Hunterdon County Historical Society was organized by sixteen residents of the County, who had previously conferred informally on the subject. By occupation there were four physicians, two ministers, two merchants, four farmers, two teachers and two lawyers.

The call having appeared in the County papers, the following gentlemen were present: Dr. Nathaniel B. Boileau, Dr. George H. Larison, Dr. Henry Race, Dr. George N. Best, Rev. Cornelius S. Conkling, Rev. George S. Mott, Elias Vosseller, Jacob Servis, Joseph C. Exton, John W. Lequear, Richard H. Wilson, Asher W. Carrell, Prof. Isaiah N. Leigh, Edward M. Heath, William T. Shrope and Walter N. Hayhurst. Dr. Boileau called the meeting to order and called on Dr. Larison to state the object of the meeting. In a few pertinent remarks Dr. Larison explained the Society would devote itself to gathering up the fragments of history in the County that were fast passing away beyond reach.

Dr. Boileau was chosen Chairman and John Lequear Secretary. The chair appointed Dr. Larison, Dr. Race and Rev. Conkling a Committee to report on a permanent organization. Messrs Shrope, Exton and Heath were appointed to the Nominating Committee. A recess was called for the Committees to confer. On reassembling the Committee presented a constitution which was read and adopted. The purpose of the newly formed Society would be to, "collect all possible important historical facts relative to the same for future reference." The constitution provided for an Annual Meeting to be held in the County seat and three quarterly meetings which, when season and weather permitted, would be convened around the county in groves or such other outdoor places as the history of

the occasion might render appropriate.

The Nominating Committee presented its report and officers were elected. The President was Dr. Larison, vice presidents, Dr. Race, Elias Vosseller, Professor I.N. Leigh and Egbert T. Bush. Five members were elected to the Executive Committee, Rev. Conkling, Edward M. Heath, William T. Shrope and Dr. Isaac S. Cramer. A duty of the Committee was to select four persons to first prepare papers for presentation at the quarterly meetings. It was agreed that at the quarterly meeting Dr. George N. Best, Dr. Race, Professor Leigh and John W. Lequear would present papers. Rev. Conkling, Dr. Larison and Mr. Heath were appointed a Committee to confer with the County Freeholders regarding a place in the County building for storage of papers and relics the new Society would be gathering. The following gentlemen paid their first dues, \$1 each and became the founding members of the Hunterdon County Historical Society.

Dr. Nathaniel Britton Boileau, Jutland, [1833-1901]
 Dr. George Holcombe Larison, Lambertville [1831-1892]
 Dr. Henry Race, Pittstown, [1814-1901]
 Dr. George Newton Best, Rosemont, [1847-1926]
 Rev. Cornelius S. Conkling, Stockton, [1810-1888]
 Rev. George Scudder Mott, Flemington, [1829-1901]
 Elias Vosseller, Flemington merchant, [1836-1917]
 Jacob Servis, Lambertville merchant, [1826-1892]
 Joseph Capner Exton, Clinton farmer, [1841-1917]
 John Waterhouse Lequear, Frenchtown farmer, [1848-1906]
 Richard H. Wilson, Delaware Township, [1828-1895]
 Asher Williamson Carroll, Locktown farmer [1847-1923]
 Professor Isaiah N. Leigh, [-1910]
 Edward Mason Heath, Locktown teacher, [1837-1916]
 William T. Shrope, Frenchtown attorney, [1830-1906]
 Walter Forwood Hayhurst, Lambertville attorney, [1856-1942]

The Reform Club in Flemington was the place chosen for the first quarterly meeting convened at 10 a.m. on December 20th. Dr. George N. Best's paper, "The Scope and Work of a local Historical Society." was the first paper read before the Society. He explained that the word *History* contains much history in itself and that it is derived from the Greek, "to inquire" from which it passed to mean "to know, to be acquainted with." Before the advent of printed words, and afterwards, too, a large part of historical knowledge was transmitted orally from one generation to another. Dr. Best observed that history is of two general kinds: narrative and causal. Narrative is a record of events as they transpired. Causal history traces the connection between the events and deduces certain conclusions therefrom. "Most of the work of this Society must be of a narrative kind and its value will depend largely on the care exercised in collecting the facts," he said.

As to the scope of the work he suggested as lines of investigation the collecting of relics — battle flags, muskets, parchments, implements, furniture, etc., used by the aborigines and early settlers — for a museum in which each member could take an active interest, lend a helping hand and become informed in so doing. He suggested also, pursuing biographical,

ecclesiastical, educational history, social forms and customs, science, and botany. Dr. Best closed by saying, "Whatever you do, do it well. Quality, and not quantity is the criterion. Let the archives of this Society show, when you are gone, that you were painstaking, truthful and did honest work." He cautioned, however, "not to be so absorbed in doing good work that you do nothing." Dr. Best filed a copy of his paper in the Society Archives, as did most of the Society's speakers for a number of years thereafter.

In discussion during the business meeting, Elias Vosseller suggested contacting the publishers of the fifteen newspapers published in the County to solicit copies for the Society. They followed through on his suggestion and the Society began receiving complimentary copies of each of the newspapers then published in the County. The practice continues today although whereas then there were fifteen and now there are three. Back issues of each paper were needed to make the files complete. The publishers aided in this search by turning over what they had and also by placing notice in their papers for readers' back issues to be placed with the Society. Another of the members thought there might be parchment deeds lying in the hands of people throughout the county. Realizing their vast importance to the study of the County's history he urged everyone to request they be donated to the Society. Messers Hayhurst, Vosseller, Shrope and Exton were appointed custodians of the relics and papers contributed.

The morning portion of the meeting was adjourned after the second paper, "A Paper On the Early Settlement and History of the Baptist Church in Hunterdon County" was presented by John W. Lequear. Those assembled enjoyed a noon meal and in the afternoon Dr. Henry Race presented the paper he had prepared, "Jane McCrea." These papers, and others which followed over the years, were printed in *The Jerseyman* and/or in pamphlet form.

Following their initial idea of meeting around the County, the second quarterly Society meeting was held on March 6, 1886 at the Methodist Episcopal Church in Frenchtown. Society President Dr. Larison's opening remarks mentioned that the history of the county was fast passing away beyond reach but the historians must dedicate themselves to gathering up what they can even though, "this might prove dry & uninteresting." Again, the members and guests were urged to gather deeds and other relics of the past and put them in the Society where they could be put to good use. Interest in preserving the past was growing and each meeting brought new members to the Society. The Minutes of this second quarterly meeting say that ladies as well as gentlemen were cordially invited to become members. Egbert T. Bush, Rev. W.F. Filson, Jackson B. Sherman, Jesse Sinclair, Rev. D.M. Matthews, A.B. Haring, Charles S. Woolverton and Stacy B. Emmons had become members since the December meeting and Hugh E. Warford, S.E. Manners, John Hardon and George W.

Sherman joined at Frenchtown.

On Wednesday, August 11, 1886, the third quarterly meeting of the Society was held in conjunction with the Holcombe Family Reunion. The site, Holcombe's Grove at Mt. Airy, provided some shade and an occasional cool breeze on an otherwise hot and sultry day. The official minutes of the Society report only half the members were present and the combination of the two meetings "seems to make too much for one day." Papers were read by Jacob Servis, "Early Marriages In Old Amwell," and Stacy B. Bray, whose topic was "Daniel Bray Procured Boats for Washington." Seven new members were added to the rolls including three Holcombes.

The meeting was adjourned at midday to "partake of an abundant supply of eatables furnished by the Holcombe Family Association." In the afternoon Col. Ferdinand Holcombe spoke of the family, relating the beginnings of Lambertville and how John Holcombe descendants owned most of the land on both sides of the Old York Road as far as Mt. Airy, up the Delaware at then over to Mt. Airy, embracing nearly 5,000 acres of the best land in Hunterdon County. Dr. George Holcombe Larison, the Society's first president, presented a biographical sketch of Jacob and John Holcombe of Tiverton, Devonshire, England who came to this country circa 1700. John's first purchase of land in New Jersey was 350 acres in 1705 northeast of Lambertville, for which he paid \$1.40 an acre. Jacob settled across the Delaware in Bucks County. Dr. Larison pointed out that it was possible to distinguish from which brother one descended because Jacob dispensed with the final "e" on the name.

John Dilts and his wife were introduced to the gathering. Mr. Dilts, in his 91st year, was a descendant of John Holcombe. The couple were celebrating their 65th wedding anniversary. The Lambertville Cornet Band gave a concert to the assembled crowd of reportedly 3,000 and played "Auld Lang Syne" in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Dilts' anniversary.

In September, the second Annual Meeting of the Society was convened in Flemington. Election of officers was held and Rev. Cornelius S. Conkling was elected President for 1886-1887. The business meeting included officers' annual reports, elections, and induction of new members. The presentation of papers was interrupted briefly for a dinner break at noon.

The Minutes note that on Saturday, May 25, 1887, the Society met at Baptistown and "the day was unfavorable; dark and gloomy with occasional showers. Attendance was quite good considering the weather." By this time meetings had settled into a regular pattern of business meeting and two papers in the morning followed by luncheon and two papers.

The Society's first interstate meeting was held in conjunction with the Bucks County Historical Society in July 1887. Mr. William W.H. Davis, President of Bucks County Historical Society and Rev. Conkling, President of Hunterdon gave introductory remarks

and papers were read relating to the history of both counties. The meeting was held outside at Deer Park near New Hope, Pennsylvania and musical entertainment was presented by the Stockton Cornet Band.

The Flemington Presbyterian Church was the site of the Society's next meeting in October 1888. New members elected were Hiram E. Deats, John L. Connett and Henry F. Bodine. The Society officers talked about securing a suitable place for keeping its collection and appointed Elias Vosseller and Edward M. Heath to look for one.

From the minutes of the April 1889 meeting we learn that a list of books, pamphlets, and papers belonging to the Society had been published in the *Hunterdon Republican*. Society Librarian, Elias Vosseller expressed regret that the late Senator Eli Bosenbury's collection of paintings went to Plainfield because Hunterdon County Historical Society had no suitable place for them. The members recognized that if the Society was to continue to collect and grow and be a viable part of the community, a permanent headquarters would be necessary. A vote of thanks was extended to Edward Thomas of Milford for procuring and presenting to the Society photographs of pastel portraits of Col. Thomas Lowrey and his wife, Esther. Attendance at this meeting was not large due, according to the Minutes, "to the gloomy and threatening aspects of the weather in the morning and the heaviness of the roads from rains in a part of the county prevented many from attending."

One of the largest Historical Society meetings was held in Sandy Ridge Church on Wednesday, July 30, 1890. Several new members were elected during the morning business meeting. Committee and officers' reports were received and encouraging news was announced by Society Librarian, Elias Vosseller as he reported, "A suitable room for storing the historical collections of the Society has been tendered the Society by a son of the late Hiram Deats of Pittstown." That brief report introduced Hiram Edmund Deats who devoted the next seventy-three years to furthering the goals of the Society. He, in fact, came to be widely referred to as "Mr. Hunterdon County" for his knowledge of and interest in the County's history.

The fifth annual meeting, in 1890, was convened in the Flemington Presbyterian Church. Mr. Vosseller, Corresponding Secretary, reported having correspondence from Mrs. Sarah A. Winans of Benton Harbor, Michigan, a daughter of John Atkinson, formerly a Methodist minister in Flemington, then [1890] age 93. An active correspondence between Mr. Vosseller and Mr. Atkinson's recorded his recollections about the early history of Flemington and the Fleming, Atkinson and Alexander families. The Atkinsons had built the first mill at Rockafellow's Mill in 1742.

The Columbian Liberty Bell Committee appealed to Historical Societies and Museums for filings from objects of historical value, especially those that had any bearing on the struggle for freedom, to be cast in

the bell. Our Society responded giving a brief account of the Amwell Skirmish in which Cornet Francis Geary, a member of the 16th Regiment Queen's Light Dragoons, a British cavalry regiment, was killed on the evening of December 14, 1776. The British were then encamped near Pennington, and Geary's unit was attacked returning from a raid on the village of Flemington.

A Committee was appointed to examine the grave of Lt. Geary, located near the skirmish site on the road between Ringoes and Copper Hill. Reports had circulated for years about the circumstances of Geary's death and burial and it was deemed time to ascertain the facts. Dr. Larison, E.M. Heath and Elias Vosseller agreed to examine the grave and report back at the next meeting. May 18th at 10 a.m. was the date fixed to open the grave and note its contents.

The Committee and other interested persons — A.L. Case on whose property the burial site was located, Theodore Bellis, William H. Bartles, John L. Connett, Mrs. Vosseller, Jacob Servis, Henry F. Bodine, Flora, John and Charles Case, and William Lewis and Bloomfield Burd from the neighborhood met at the gravesite at the appointed time. The grave was opened to the depth of 2½ feet where the thigh and other bones were found and the silver buttons from his vest bearing the figure "16" and the letters "Q L D" signifying the 16th Regiment, Queen's Light Dragoons. Other pieces of bones, a number of teeth, some bits of cloth were found. He had been buried laying on his right side with face to the south. No ball was found in the skull or the grave. Perhaps that is evidence to bear out the tradition which said the ball entered Geary's forehead and passed entirely through his head. The Committee removed from the grave the silver tops of four buttons. Filings were taken from them and forwarded to the Liberty Bell Committee.

Jacob Servis's parlor provided the setting for the June 15, 1891 meeting of the Society. He lived at 14 Union Street in Lambertville and operated a dry goods establishment adjoining his home. Fifteen members responded to roll call that morning. Mr. Vosseller advised the membership of correspondence from Mrs. Winans with news of the death of John Atkinson, at age 94. A report was presented on the opening of Cornet Geary's grave. The Committee suggested contacting members of the Geary family and possibly erecting a marker at the burial site.

Members and guests adjourned to the front porch of Mr. Servis's store for a group photograph. Everyone enjoyed a "bountiful repast generously set by the hosts. Dinner hour passed with social enjoyment, wit and humor abounded, and the health of our host and lady were drunk in a glass of cold water from a glass brought from Germany in 1709." The day was extremely hot and sultry but everyone enjoyed themselves. Guests included Mr. R.R. Parry and Alfred Paschall publisher of the *Bucks County Intelligencer*. After dinner Mr. Servis invited all to ascend to an upper room and examine his



Pictured above are members and guests attending the June 15, 1891 meeting at the home of Jacob Servis at 14 Union Street in Lambertville were photographed in front of Mr. Servis's store by "Moffett of Church Street". Of the 31 people pictured, only 11 have been identified and we welcome assistance. Standing in the first row beginning on the left, Richard R. Parry, George S. Mott, George H. Larison, Hiram E. Deats, unidentified, Elias Vosseller, John W. Lequear, unidentified. In the second row of those standing or sitting on the porch, third from the left is Egbert T. Bush, seventh is Henry Race, ninth is Isaac S. Cramer, tenth is George N. Best, fourteenth is William T. Shrope.

The Elias Vosseller family is pictured below. Mr. Vosseller, far right, was the Society's first librarian from 1885 until 1891 and served as the first Corresponding Secretary from 1886 through 1923, thirty-eight years of service. From left to right: Elizabeth Van Fleet Vosseller (twin), Mrs. Vosseller, Harold Vosseller, and his wife, Edith, their son, Bertha Weller (twin), Mr. Vosseller.



extensive collection of rare, ancient and valuable articles; perhaps exceeding any private collection in the County. Sadly Mr. & Mrs. Servis died within the year, less than a week apart. He made no provisions in his last will and testament for the disposition of his important collection, perhaps assuming his widow would pass the collection to the Society. Since the Society did not receive any of these artifacts Mr. Servis prized so highly we fear they were simply discarded by someone who did not recognize their historical value.

The deaths of members Hugh E. Warford and Cornelius S. Conkling were reported at the October 1891 meeting held in Flemington. The Obituary Committee had prepared sketches of their lives which became part of the Minutes of the meeting after reading. Rev. Conkling was one of the founding members of the Society and had been President in 1886.

The next Society meeting was held in Milford in June 1892. John W. Lequear presented a paper on the Rodman Tract once owned by Thomas Lowrey, the Rio Grande Mill and other reminiscences of the border between Kingwood and Delaware Townships. Dr. Race's paper about Thomas Lowrey and his wife, Esther, was presented by Elias Vosseller as Dr. Race was unable to attend.

W. Thomas of Milford offered \$100 toward the erection of a fireproof building in Flemington for the preservation of the Society's papers and archives, evidently still stored in the County building under the arrangements made when the Society was formed.

It was not until 1896 that Librarian Hiram E. Deats reported the Society's treasures had been moved from there to the Deats building. A vote of thanks was extended to Theodore Bellis for his assistance in the move. Miss Emma Ten Broeck Runk from Lambertville and several others became members.

John L. Connett and Walter F. Hayhurst had been appointed a Committee to look into the law and manner of having the Society incorporated. They reported at the July 1898 meeting what steps were required and a resolution was passed authorizing the Secretary to prepare the necessary notice for a meeting to incorporate the Hunterdon County Historical Society under An Act To Incorporate Historical Societies. The notice was published in the local newspapers and members received notices setting Saturday, October 29, 1898 at 10 a.m. as the time of the meeting. At a well attended meeting the Society was incorporated with the corporate purpose to "discover, procure and preserve whatever relates to any department of the history of Hunterdon County, natural, civil, genealogical, literary, or ecclesiastical."

It was resolved that all officers balance their books of records and accounts to the date of the incorporation, file the same with the Librarian and open new books of records and accounts for the newly incorporated Society. These books were the beginning of the open-ended manuscript collection, Archives of the

Hunterdon County Historical Society, the Society's link with its past. All members of the old Hunterdon County Historical Society were made members of the new Society.

At the Summer 1900 meeting in July there was again discussion about making provisions for a storage room for the Society's newspapers, which at that time were packed in boxes. The trustees inspected the boxes containing the Society's collections, then stored in the basement of the Deats Building. Donations to the Society's museum collection were often brought to meetings for presentation. Dr. Isaac S. Cramer presented the Perryville Tavern sign for the Society's collections and John J. Park donated the sign from the County Tavern at Whitehouse. Mr. Parks had discovered the sign nailed over an attic window. The key to the old Hotel which formerly stood in front of the Presbyterian Church in Flemington was presented by Franklin C. Burk.

At the 1901 Annual Meeting a business meeting was conducted in the morning and several papers were presented in the afternoon. The Recording Secretary was authorized to procure a suitable seal with the design being an Indian stone axe with the date of organization above and the date of incorporation below and the name of the Society around the edge.

Officers were elected and Miss Emma Runk became second Vice President. She has the distinction of being the first lady elected to office in the Hunterdon County Historical Society. She continued to serve in the office until 1905 when she became the first, and only, female President. After one term she retired to serve on the Library Committee for a number of years. She compiled and published three genealogies of Hunterdon County families.

Interest in the Society's activities continued and by 1905 the members numbered 44 in three classes — resident members living in Hunterdon County, corresponding members outside the County, and honorary members were those who had rendered distinguished service to the Society. The average annual expenses \$35 included subscriptions for *The Jerseyman* which was sent to each member. This was a journal Mr. Deats published devoted to local history and news of the Society meetings. Papers read at Society meetings were often printed there and members contributed additional essays. The library consisted of 500 books and pamphlets and there were few items in the manuscript collection except parchment deeds. The average meeting attendance was 25-30 and the really active interest was limited to about a dozen members.

John W. Lequear and William T. Shrope, two of the founding members, passed away the following year, 1906. Mr. Lequear had presented numerous papers at meetings and had an excellent historical collection. Dr. Leiby volunteered to see if he could obtain the Lequear material for the Society. Unfortunately for the sake of historians researching after his death, Mr. Lequear's collections, except for copies of the papers he read at

Society meetings and filed in the Society's Archives, are not preserved. Apparently Dr. Leiby was unsuccessful in securing yet another founding member's lifetime collection. Mr. Deats announced the Society had been successful in purchasing Squire Shrope's scrapbooks for the collections at a cost of \$16.50. Mr. Shrope had clipped articles from Frenchtown area newspapers and pasted them in notebooks for a number of years.

By 1906 nine of the fifteen founding members had died. While alive their interest in history was evident by their writings and private collections. What happened to the collections after their deaths? Except for the Race-Emley Papers now in the Society manuscript collection, the disposition or whereabouts of none of their collections is known today. As historians we must note their failure to preserve beyond their lifetimes the history they collected and preserved during their lives, learn from their oversights, and realize we must make a commitment to preserve for future generations the prized family heirlooms, historical artifacts and manuscripts we have collected. A bequest in Mr. Deats' will provided that his collections go to the Hunterdon County Historical Society.

Announcement was received in January 1906 of a bequest of \$10,000 from Dr. William H. Bartles to the Village of Flemington to provide a home for the Public Library and the Historical Society. A motion was passed to petition the Village to accept the bequest and appoint a committee to look after the interests of the Society in this matter. Messers Hayhurst, Kline and Kuhl were named to that Committee.

Renewed attempts were made in 1907 to contact relatives of Cornet Francis Geary. Through Gertrude Nye at Sage College in Ithaca, New York, Elias Vosseller corresponded with Sir William Geary, great, grand-nephew of Cornet Geary. It was Sir Geary's desire to mark Geary's grave and the Society made arrangements with Robert Reardon & Son, local monument makers, to secure a small stone monument with appropriate inscription. During the summer this was set in place at the gravesite in conjunction with a brief ceremony. One of the silver button tops removed from Geary's grave was sent to Sir William.

In 1908 Mr. Deats suggested the Society publish *The Jerseyman* formerly published by him. The Society agreed to take the matter under consideration. Publication of his local history journal ceased with the 1905 issue. In other business Hiram E. Deats and John L. Connett replaced the Committee previously appointed to look after the Society's interests with regard to Dr. Bartles' bequest.

The 25th Annual Meeting of the Society was held January 9, 1909 and business was conducted as usual. No mention of the anniversary was made and evidently no special events were planned to celebrate 25 years. The Society had actually been in existence 24 years, but on reading further in the Minutes to the 26th Annual Meeting on January 8, 1910, we conclude

the 25th anniversary passed without historical note or commemoration.

The meeting was convened at 9:30 a.m. by President John L. Connett with members Connett, A.T. Connett, Hiram E. Deats, Elias Vosseller, Egbert T. Bush, Mrs. James A. Kline, Rev. C.S. Woodruff, Dr. I.S. Cramer, Dr. O.H. Sproul, Miss Mary E. Dunham, L.D. Hagerman, Augustus Dilts, William Bellis, Dr. Cornelius W. Larison, Dr. E.D. Leidy, and several guests present. Recognizing the need for additional funds to carry out the work of the Society when in its new home, it was agreed to begin a canvas for new members. Membership then stood at forty-one. Postcards of the Geary Monument were distributed to each person who attended the meeting.

Our senior member, Frank E. Burd, attended the 27th Annual Meeting on January 14, 1911 as a visitor but became a member of the Society that day. Membership in the past two years had risen to forty-six, having taken in six new members and losing by death Cornelius W. Larison and two by resignation when they moved outside the County.

The Building Committee reported having met with the Town Council to discuss details of the Historical Society room. The expected date for completion of the building was March 1 and it would be ready for occupancy soon thereafter. Appreciation was expressed to William H. Bartles and Hiram E. Deats "for their munificent generosity in providing a home for the Society and we desire to express our appreciation for the gift to our Boro which has assured to us this permanent and comfortable home." The land on which the Library building was erected was a donation from Mr. Deats. The Hunterdon County Historical Society was to have a permanent headquarters at last!

The Society Room at 1 Maple Avenue was the site of the 29th Annual Meeting on January 11, 1913. At the business meeting in the morning it was voted the Board [of Trustees] consider dividing the Board into classes to serve three years each and make Bylaws changes for this action next year.

The number of members stayed at just under 50. Although new members were joining, the founding and earlier members were passing away and occasionally a member would remove from the area and resign. Total membership reported at the 1914 Annual Meeting was 47.

Recording Secretary Hiram E. Deats noted in the Society Minute Book the 35th Annual Meeting in 1914 was adjourned, there being no quorum due to the large number of members who were ill.

An exhibit of Indian relics had been arranged from the collections of John C. Thatcher, James A. Kline, Hiram E. Deats, Clarence Britton Stephen S. Dean, and Marion Deats for the 1916 Annual Meeting and remained on exhibit for a month. The Minutes noted a large number of visitors and sixteen members attended the meeting. The Librarian (Hiram E. Deats) reported cataloging of the Society's books was pro-

gressing and Miss Elizabeth Van Lieu had been paid \$3 for this work. She was the Society's first employee for then as now, volunteers were important to the continued operation of the Society.

One of the papers read was "Early Land Ownership In Northern Hunterdon County," prepared by D. Stanton Hammond. In 1916 he was supervising principal of a school in Englishtown. However, Dr. Hammond had been teaching in Hunterdon County several years earlier and made the acquaintance of Mr. Deats who encouraged him to investigate early land ownership. His interest did not wane with the presentation of his paper in 1916 but he continued researching Hunterdon County land titles for over 50 years and in 1966 published the Hunterdon County Map Series. The series is seven maps showing early land ownership in Hunterdon County. In 1978 Dr. Hammond presented his collection of manuscript maps and related materials to the Hunterdon County Historical Society in memory of Hiram E. Deats because, "Mr. Deats was responsible for getting me started on this mapping project. If it were not for his interest and encouragement I would not have begun the project which I have enjoyed through the years."

The 33rd Annual Meeting, January 13, 1917, was not well attended. The morning business meeting with election of officers was held and Committee reports were received. On a rare humorous note, Elias Vosseller's Annual Report said, "Your Corresponding Secretary lives on Easy Street as far as the duties of his office are concerned. He turns the correspondence over to the Recording Secretary (Mr. Deats) whose efficiency surpasses his own. Yet he enjoys the fat salary and all the emoluments of his office and the other does the work. I have heard of such conditions in political matters, but you would hardly suppose it prevailed in such bonafide bodies as Historical Societies." There were 150 inquiries of a genealogical nature which were answered.

Mr. Deats said efforts were organized during the past year to copy cemetery inscriptions and copying will continue during the next year. Publication in the *Hunterdon County Democrat* was planned when the marriage records then being printed were completed. Interest in publishing the work was gratifying to him.

At the next Annual Meeting, in 1918, Mr. Deats reported, "two church cemeteries and twelve family burying grounds had been copied. There had been a revival of interest in family reunions noted. The Philhower Family held a reunion in the Fall (1917) in Tewksbury which would possibly result in the publication of a family history. The marriage records being published in the *Democrat* will appear in book form." Although Mr. Deats announced plans to follow with a volume containing marriage records obtained from church, township, Bible and other records and he continued to gather records which are in the Society's collections, the second volume never appeared in print.

Frank E. Burd from Pattenburg was elected Presi-

dent for 1918, an office he continued to hold through 1922. Miss Mary E. Dunham, a member of the Library Committee for several years, was elected a trustee and second Vice President. A resolution was adopted asking for the establishment of a State Department of Public Records and copies of the resolution were forwarded to Governor Walter E. Edge, Senator George F. Martens and Assemblyman Agans.

On January 11, 1919, Messers Deats, Hoagland, Kline, Nevius and Miss Mary E. Dunham arrived at the Society room for the 35th Annual meeting. A large number of members were ill and their being no quorum present, the meeting was adjourned.

President Burd called the 1920 meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. in the Society Room and the minutes of 1918 and 1919 were read and approved, officers were elected and Committee reports were received.

The notation by Mr. Deats, our Recording Secretary, in the Minutes under 37th Annual Meeting, January 8, 1921, reads, "All such organizations seem to be suffering from the upset conditions caused by the war. No notice or bills for dues were sent out for the year."

The next year, 1922, Society President Burd was one of eight members present. Reports from officers were received, trustees were elected and other business as usually came before the Society was handled. One paper, "Flemington Water Supply," was read by Theodore Bellis.

Only Mr. Deats and James A. Kline appeared at the Society Room for the next Annual Meeting and the following year, 1924, with no quorum present the notation in the Minute Book reads, "adjourned to meet at the call of the President." Thus the official record of the Society continues through 1935. Mr. Deats always appeared for the Annual Meeting, many times being the only person who did. As Recording Secretary he noted in the Minute Book there was no quorum. During those years he carried on behalf of the Hunterdon County Historical Society answering correspondence, continuing to collect anything pertinent to the history of the County and/or its people, and encouraging others to investigate historical aspects of the community. He recorded deaths of members as they occurred and noted new members received, but these were few. Two persons became members in 1928, Maud Little Wilson and D. Howard Moreau, and Egbert Trimmer Bush was elected President.

The fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Hunterdon County Historical Society passed without any mention of the occasion in the Minute Book. No special activity to commemorate the event had been planned. The Annual Meeting was called for January 12, 1935 and the notation in the minutes reads, "Clear day, but 'the trial of the Century,' the Hauptman case is on, and no one appeared. Adjourned as normal."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

The *Centennial Newsletter Series* will run through the Winter 1986 issue and we will be writing about the history of Hunterdon County Historical Society, the Society's collections and "Mr. Hunterdon," Hiram E. Deats.

Book Review

ONE TOWN AROUND, Paul J. Hagaman, 1984, Published by the Estate of Paul J. Hagaman, P.O. Box 240, Asbury, NJ 08802. 176 pages, photographs. \$15. Available from Hunterdon County Historical Society. May be picked up at Society headquarters or ordered by mail for which add \$1 postage.

Just as travel via our superhighways is radically changing Hunterdon today, so did the coming of the automobile bring an equally profound change to the character of its villages at the turn of this century. Gone is the wide variety of small-time commerce that each little town was proud to call its own. Gone also are most of the people who could recall its heyday. Fortunately, some of the record of this era is preserved in a new book by the family and friends of deceased West Portal resident, Paul J. Hagaman.

ONE TOWN AROUND presents an engrossing visual tour of northwest Hunterdon as it appeared some 75 years ago. The area within the rectangle from Bloomsbury, up along the Morris Canal to Change-water, down to Clinton, and across to Little York, comes alive from the past through more than 350 photographs. West Portal is featured, of course, as are the railroads, the canal, and finally Hunterdon's long defunct "Crown Jewel", Bellewood Park at Pattenburg. The collections of Mr. Hagaman and of John A. Vanderbilt form the basis of this book but other views were borrowed where necessary. The work is all the more valuable because many of these images are no longer available to most of us, and for the lamentable fact that the area covered has never yet received its full historical dues.

No text is provided but the captions are more than adequate, leaving the pictures to speak for themselves in a way not subject to the errors and distortions of the written word. Some few of the photos are limited by the condition of the originals but the copy artists and the printer have done well and the total effect is a pleasing one. The printing was limited to 1000 copies which will doubtless soon be sold. The books may be obtained through the Society at \$15 each plus postage and handling if mailed, or direct from Mrs. Sophia Hagaman, Box 240, Rte. 173W, Asbury, NJ 08802.

NOTES and QUERIES

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

RITTENHOUSE, SEARCH: Des info re Christopher Search, who m Priscilla Rittenhouse, liv Hunt. Co. 1736-1756; their s William, & grs William. Need proof of marriage, Priscilla's death & date. ADD: Barbara Search Miller, 35 Mountainbrook Rd., Wilbraham, MA 01095.

NACHBAR/NEIGHBOR, TRIMMER: Seek info whereabouts of 17th, 18th century German Bibles of Trimmer family. Exis confirmed by Chamber's *Early Germans of NJ* (1895). Johannes Trimmer [ca 1700-1749] son, Matthias [ca 1723-1793] m Anna Nachbar/Neighbor & settled German Valley, NJ. Wish to corres/w interested Neighbor fam members. ADD: Dr. Robert Trimmer, 23357 Delany La., Elkhart, IN 46514.

ELY: Newsletter "Ely Heritage" published quarterly. Details available from Theresa Ryan, Editor, 501 N. Paradise Rd., Aberdeen, MD 21001.

WYCKOFF: Wish to contact anyone with genealogical information prior to 1800 concerning the Wyckoff family. ADD: Mrs. D.J. Graham, Box 6, Broadway, NJ 08808.

ALMAS, BACHER: Seek info re Christian Almas, Hessian soldier Rev War, m Magdalena Backer, d/o Jacob Backer, prob of Hunt. Co. & their chil: Henry, bapt 1784 Zion Luth Ch, New Germantown; David b 1786 NJ; Adam, b 1788; Anna Justina. ADD: Lorrie Minshall, Box 5014, Caledonia, Ontario, Canada NOA 1A0.

CARTER, HOFF, LAWSHE: Jacob Lawshe liv Alexandria Twp., on Lawshe-Lomping farm. Next farm belonged to Henry Carter. Henry Lawshe, s/o Jacob, m Sarah Hoff Carter in June 1821. 1850 census enum Henry Lawshe; w Sally, Thisby Carter, female, age 74, prob Sarah Hoff Carter's mother. Des any info re Sarah's par, fam. ADD: Ted Lawshe, 55 Nob Hill Rd., Cheshire, CT 06410.

ANDERSON, BRINK, HART, HOWELL, LEQUEAR, LOTT, READING, ROBESON, SCUDDER, SINCLAIR, TITUS: Des corres/w anyone working on Brink, Lequear, Robeson, Scudder, Sinclair. Can help anyone working on Anderson, Hart, Howell, Lott, Scudder, Titus & many more from Hunterdon. Need someone to research at Courthouse. Anyone interested? ADD: Mrs. Eugene Smith, 1504 N. University, Decatur, IL 62526.



NEWSLETTER INDEX FOR SALE

The new index to the *Hunterdon Historical Newsletter* covering Volumes 1 through 20, 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.