



# Hunterdon Historical Newsletter

VOL. 5, NO. 1

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SPRING, 1969

## Wurts' Law Office Historical Marker Dedication and Preservation Of Flemington's Greek Revival Heritage—Topics of June Meeting

A state historical marker at the ~~Samuel~~ Wurts Law Office Building near the County Court House will be dedicated at 2:30 P.M., Sunday, June 1.

The Hon. Wesley L. Lance of Glen Gardner, eminent Hunterdon County attorney, former County Judge and member of the State Legislature will dedicate the marker.

Following the dedication the Society's Spring Meeting will be held in the Court House.

Freeholder Kenneth V. Myers, our Society's long-time Treasurer, will speak on "Preservation of Our Architectural Heritage" and will trace the history of both the 1791 and 1828 court house buildings.

Mr. Myers will focus attention on the importance of preserving Flemington's handsome Greek-Revival architecture, the work chiefly of Mahlon Fisher, local master carpenter-builder-designer. Mrs. Frances Blomquist's research paper terms Fisher "A Provincial Genius."

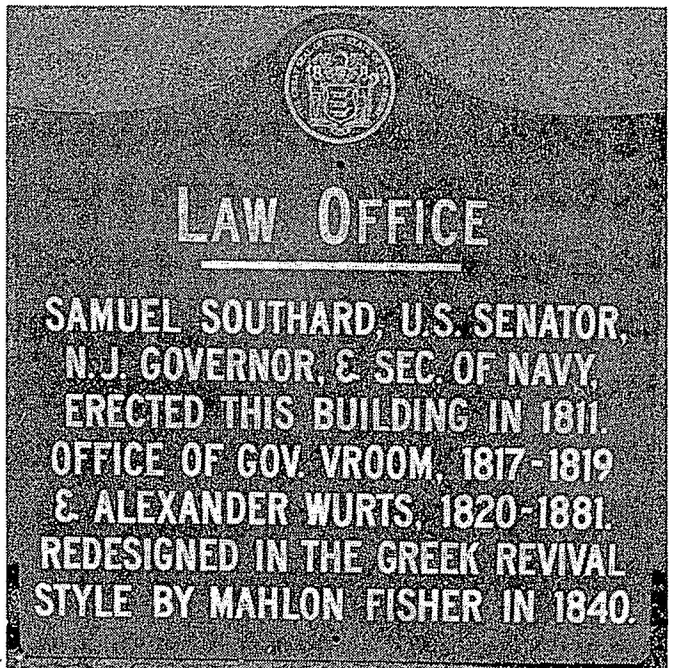
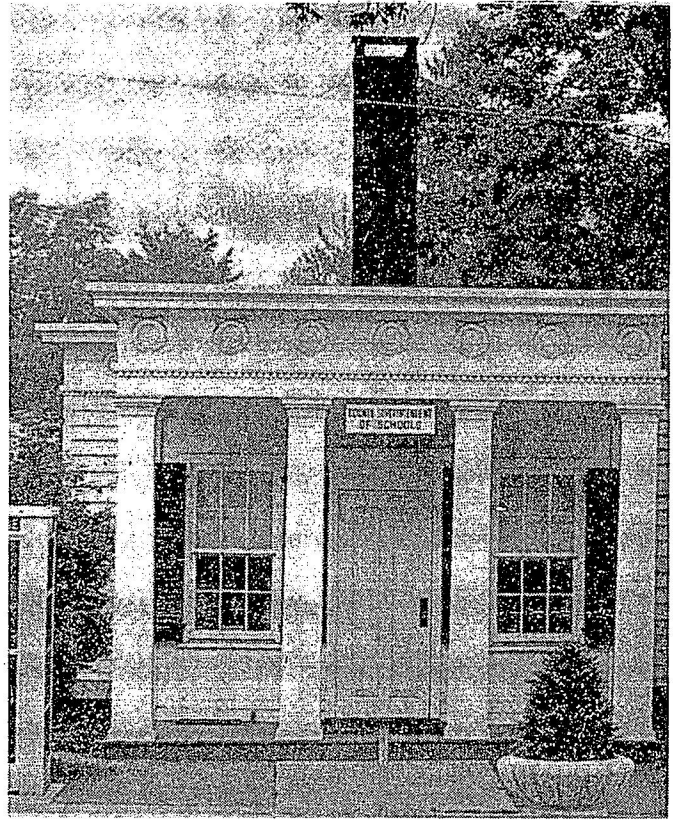
In additions to the Wurts Law Office, Fisher's work includes his own home, the handsome Doric House owned by the Flemington Methodist Church; the Reading-Large House; the Dorf House; the former Merritt Company Building, 21 Mine Street. Mrs. Blomquist is inclined to attribute the 1828 Court House to Fisher but no documentation of this attribution has been found so far.

Architectural preservation is a timely subject in view of an Urban Renewal proposal which could radically alter Flemington's present distinctive architectural character.

### SPRING MEETING

SUNDAY, JUNE 1, AT 2:30 P.M.

Wurts' Law Office & County Court House  
59 Main Street, Flemington, N. J.



### HUNTERDON HISTORICAL NEWSLETTER

Published Fall, Winter, Spring By The Hunterdon County Historical Society, 1 Maple Ave., Flemington, N.J.

Edited by the Publications Committee.

The Library of the Society is open Tuesday and Thursday, 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, by appointment: Tel. 201-439-2126.

A MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR STATE AND LOCAL HISTORY AND THE LEAGUE OF HISTORICAL SOCIETIES OF NEW JERSEY

## Your Society Faces a Space Crisis

Your Society is making record progress in the acquisition of books, manuscripts and museum objects. The number of researchers using our resources grows by leaps and bounds. The space problem is acute!

Limited as we are to one room, without prospects of obtaining more space in our present location, it is inescapable that we shall be forced to store our museum material or to place it on loan to other institutions.

Library researchers are limited to 6 seats, yet we often have twice that number working at the same time.

Necessary preparation and cataloging work of our material is handicapped by lack of work space.

Thus far your Trustees have been unsuccessful in obtaining a building with more spacious quarters. Recent negotiations for the acquisition of a nearby historic house for that purpose have been unproductive so far.

A gift of furniture from the estate of a late member of our Society was given to another County institution as the heirs felt we were not in a position to accept it.

ENLARGED QUARTERS FOR YOUR SOCIETY ARE ESSENTIAL if we are to fulfill our obligation of preserving HUNTERDON'S HISTORIC HERITAGE!



## Unpublished Cemetery Inscriptions

MATTISON FAMILY BURYING GROUND. On former Mrs. Lambert B. Hoffman farm, in village of Three Bridges, N.J. About 50 feet square, enclosed by a brick wall. There are also 14 other graves, marked by unlettered field stones. Copied May 1, 1918 by H.E. Deats.

- Mattison, Ann. June 4, 1844, 76th yr.  
 , Catharine, wf. Joseph, Dec. 13, 1810. 68-10-2.  
 , Euphemia A., wf. John B. Oct. 10, 1810-Sept. 14, 1885.  
 , George. 1846-1907.  
 , John B. Feb. 19, 1852. 68-7-5.  
 , Joseph. Mar. 11, 1823..80-3-22.  
 , Joseph L. July 29, 1890. 86-0-22.  
 , Lemuel, son Joseph L. & Rebecca. Apr. 30, 1854. 10-4-0.  
 , Mary, wf. John B. Apr. 28, 1838. 51-2-28.  
 , Mary Ann, dr. Joseph L. & Rebecca. July 7, 1843-Jan. 20, 1854.  
 , Peter A.V.C., son Joseph L. & Rebecca. Apr. 30, 1846-May 10, 1848.  
 , Rebecca Emmons, wf. Joseph L. Mar. 22, 1882. 77-3-28.



### HOW TO JOIN

Please enroll me as a \_\_\_\_\_ member. Annual, \$4.00 per year; Contributing, \$10.00; Sustaining, \$25.00; Institutional, \$25.00; Life, \$100.00; Patron, \$1,000.00; Student, \$1.00 (18 years old or younger)

For which I enclose \_\_\_\_\_

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## Mahlon Fisher: Provincial Genius

Abstracts From a Paper  
by Frances Blomquist  
Read Before the Society

No one who passes through Flemington can fail to notice Main Street's five Greek Revival buildings. According to Hiram Deats, Fisher had been a common carpenter whose brother Jo was a cabinet maker. Mahlon built the Doric House for himself and the present Large House for a grandson of the colonial governor Reading. Later Fisher and Reading went into the lumber business together in Williamsport, Pa.

Deats added that the Wurts Law Office was built for Alexander Wurts. Fisher also built the house at 21 Mine Street, the former Meritt Company Office Building.

Fisher, the son of Joseph Fisher and Elizabeth Leonard, was born Feb. 8, 1810. He married Mary Ann Stires Jan. 30, 1834.

Recorded building agreements from the County Clerk's Office contain 5 references to Mahlon Fisher as a contractor of buildings.

No. 24, Oct. 3, 1843, a frame house for Turins Sargeant.

No. 32, Nov. 14, 1845 a contract with William Clark for all masonry work for a house "Fisher is about to erect in Flemington." (THE DORIC HOUSE)

No. 41: an agreement to sell a house already built and owned by Fisher on Spring Street. (UNIDENTIFIED)

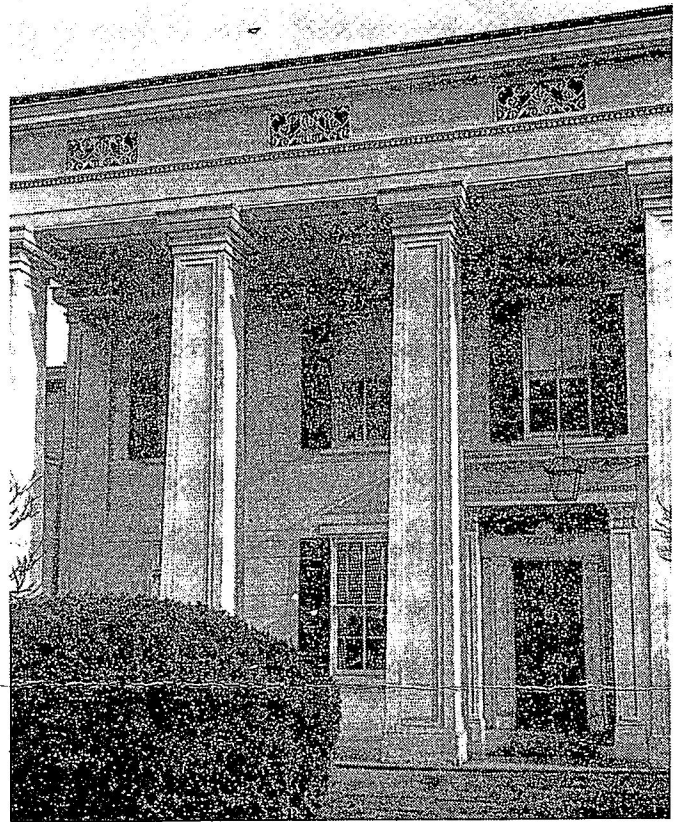
No. 43 1/2: Feb., 1847 an agreement to build a house for G. Evans in which reference is made to the Doric House "where (Fisher) now resides".

Fisher sold the Doric House in 1849 for \$3,-200.

Other buildings attributed to Fisher:

THE FLEMINGTON COURT HOUSE, dated 1828 (Mrs. Blomquist states "it is undoubtedly his earliest work in the neo-Greek style.")

THE DORF HOUSE, 153 Main St. Erected c. 1845 for John G. Reading. (Recorded HABS No.



THE DORIC HOUSE, built c. 1845-46 Mahlon Fisher's home. See Building Contract 832 in our Library. Now owned by Flemington M.E. Church.

N.J.-731) Portico based on Stuart and Revett's "Antiquities of Athens)

THE ALEXANDER WURTS LAW OFFICE, 59 Main St. Mrs. Blomquist does not give date of construction but refers again to Stuart and Revett as inspiration for design.

THE FORMER MERRITT COMPANY OFFICE BUILDING, 21 Mine St. Once the home of Richard S. Kuhl, Flemington attorney. Mrs. Blomquist attributes the design to the Stuart and Revett drawing of the Temple on the Illysus called "Callirrhoe." She assigns no date of erection.

THE READING-LARGE HOUSE, 119 Main St. Referred to in Building Agreement 43-1/2 Dated Feb. 13, 1847 which states that the interior of G. Evan's house shall not be inferior to the finish of the 2nd story of said Reading's house. Built for James N. Reading c. 1847.

"One of the most elaborate of the Greek Revival dwellings. . .by Fisher" No. .N.J.-396).

## Flemington Hospitality:

### The Women's Rest Room—An Historic Building

By Elias Vosseller. Hunterdon Democrat: July 26, 1923.

The Flemington Rest Room for Women and children with its beautiful front modelled after a Grecian Temple is a building of some historic interest.

It has accommodated three eminent New Jersey lawyers, two of whom reached nation-wide recognition. After them it was used as a office by five well known physicians, the last of whom was Dr. G.B. Tompkins.

Then the Farmer's Co-operative Association occupied it. Later it passed into the possession of the Woman's Club. They had felt the need of a Rest Room for our Borough but could not see their way clear to finance it.

The Retail Merchants' Association with the cooperation of the American Legion Post 159, agreed to guarantee the rent and salary of a care-taker, under the direction of the Woman's Club.

The Club fitted up the building for its present purposes...the comfort and convenience of visitors to our Borough.

Samuel S. Southard, who built the little building, was born in Somerset County and graduated from the College of New Jersey, now Princeton University, at the age of 17. He spent 5 years as private tutor in a prominent Virginia family. He read law and was admitted to the bar in 1809. In 1812 he came to Flemington and while living in "Fleming Castle" built the house part of which is included in Miss Mary Killgore's residence, and the Rest Room next to it, for his law office.

Southard was president of the Board of Trustees of the Presbyterian Church. He helped organize the Hunterdon County Bible Society in 1816 and became its first president.

He represented Hunterdon in the Legislature in 1815. He moved to Trenton in 1817 which at that time was in Hunterdon County. He was County prosecuting attorney. In 1815 he was placed on the bench of the N.J. Supreme Court. In 1820 he was elected to the U.S. Senate. Later he was Attorney General and Governor of New Jersey.

Southard was Secretary of the Navy under both Monroe and John Quincy Adams. He was U.S. Senator for New Jersey from 1832 to his death in 1842. He was acting Vice President

following General Harrison's death in 1841 when John Tyler became President.

Peter D. Vroom, a Columbia College graduate occupied this building from 1817 to 1819. From 1826 to 1829 he represented Hunterdon in the Legislature. He was then elected Governor and afterwards went to Congress in 1853-1857. He was U.S. representative at the Prussian Court in Berlin. He was one of the great lawyers of New Jersey and practised until his death in 1874 at the age of 82.

Alexander Wurts, a Princeton graduate, occupied this building 1820-1881. He was a member of the Assembly in 1822 and again in 1828 to 1832 when he was Speaker of the House. He was President of the Convention to revise the the State Constitution in 1844. He was then elected State Senator. In 1853 he declined an appointment to the State Supreme Court. In 1865 he was again elected State Senator. For many years he was Hunterdon County Judge.

Because of his undoubted integrity and his legal acquirements he was often consulted on legal questions of much importance.

### Form of Bequest

(This form is recommended for use in making a bequest of personal or real property, in a Will or otherwise, naming your society as beneficiary)

ITEM: I bequeath the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to the Hunterdon County Historical Society, Flemington, N.J.

ITEM: I bequeath to the Hunterdon County Historical Society, Flemington, N. J., without restrictions title to and full possession of historical materials and objects, (real estate, account books, diaries, Family Bibles, documents, papers, photographs, programs, newspapers, clippings, books, records.) etc.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_



## THE PASSING OF A LANDMARK: A NEW ERA

Deats Family Home for Over a Century



Minneakoning Farm, Flemington Junction. Home of the late Hunterdon Historian, Hiram E. Deats, until his death in 1963 in his 93rd year.

Located on part of the old Reading estate. The enlarged mansion house incorporated an earlier house (left wing). Mr. Deats' father, Hiram



Deats, originator of the famous Deats plow, retired here in the 1870's.

Now owned by Proctor and Gamble, T.C. Merritt of Flemington is removing most of the buildings to his historical village "Turntable Junction."

### Bray-Bonnell Restoration Fund

Further contributions are urgently required to preserve Mary Woolverton Bray's portrait by William Bonnell. Mrs. Bray (1756-1840) was the wife of Capt. Daniel Bray "Who Brought the Boats to Washington" during his assault on Trenton across the Delaware.

### For Sale

Postage 25 cents

Stevenson, J.R. Thomas Stevenson of London and his descendants.

Flemington: 1902, 8 vo., 180 p.  
Unbound. . . . . \$10.00

### Welcome New Members Total 365

- \*Stephen H. Case, Bronx, N.Y. ✓
- \*John H. Holcombe, Califon, N.J. ✓
- \*\*Hunterdon County Library, Flemington. ✓
- Wayne V. Jones, Houston, Texas ✓
- Mrs. Roene M. Lund, Paragon, Utah ✓
- Edward J. Mack, Flemington, N.J. ✓
- Mrs. Wm. B. Maxwell, San Antonio, Texas ✓
- Mrs. Raymond A. May, Roselle, N.J. ✓
- Lily Strawn Painter, Oakland, Cal. ✓
- Mrs. A.F. Pearson, Green Valley, Ariz. ✓
- Mrs. Gordon A. Wahl, Niagra Falls, N.Y. ✓
- \*Contributing \*\*Institutional

### Officers

- President . . . . . Norman C. Wittwer
- Vice-President . . . . . Charles T. Deats
- Vice-President . . . . . Frank E. Burd
- Secretary . . . . . Edward H. Quick
- Treasurer . . . . . Kenneth V. Myers
- Assistant Treasurer . . Mrs. Frederick Stothoff
- Corres. Secretary . . . . Mrs. Ray C. Wilson
- Ass't Corres. Sec. . . . . Edwin W. Huff, Jr.
- Trustee . . . . . Mrs. Fred A. Abegg
- Trustee . . . . . Edwin K. Large, Jr.
- Trustee . . . . . Richard Stothoff
- Trustee - Librarian . . . . B. A. Sorby

## Notes & Queries

Address correspondence to Mrs. Ray C. Wilson  
and Edwin W. Huff, Jr.

- HULCE (Hulst), James Martin. Born "N. J." Mar. 4, 1791. Died Sept. 15, 1875. Bur. Millstone, Hillsborough Ref. Churchyard. m. Mary Hoagland (1791-1871). 10 children: Albert, 1815; Wm., 1817 christened at Readington; Maria, 1819; James, 1821; Sarah, 1824; John, 1826; Catharine, 1828; Martin, 1830; Ellen, 1832; Henry, 1835; all christened at Hillsborough Ref. Church.  
Wanted: ANCESTRY OF JAMES MARTIN HULCE (Hulst). (E.W. Huff, Jr., Neshanic Station, N.J.08553.)
- THATCHER-ROOKS: Wanted. m. of Hillman Wm. Thatcher (b.1882) and 1st wife Catharine Rooks, dau. Jacob & Ann Rooks, b. c. 1822; d. before June 11, 1853. m. before 1847. (Miss Nellie Thatcher, 6446 Regular St., Detroit, Mich.)
- CAVENAUGH: Wanted. m. recd of John Cavanaugh to Elizabeth Horn, Jan. 2, 1779, in Hunterdon Co. NAMES OF PARENTS? (Mrs. D.L. McCrary, 630 Pasadena Ave., S. St. Petersburg, Fla. 33707.)
- KITCHEN-QUICK: Wanted verification of b. of Joseph Kitchen, b. Oct. 20, 1763, Amwell; also m. to Catherine Gulick (Catrina Gulick), 1793-94. (Randall Grimsley, 1833 Yakoma Road, Baltimore, Md.)
- LEONARD-DUCKWORTH: m. date of Chas. Leonard and Mary Duckworth, in Hunterdon Co. Also: burial place of John Leonard. (Mrs. H.W. Holman, Center Point, Iowa 52213)
- BONNELL-QUICK: Proof of m. of Sarah Quick to Chas. Bonnell, Nov. 25, 1835. Also: births of children. (Mrs. Geo. C. Lewis, 812 Summit Grove Ave., Bryn Mawr, Pa. 19010)
- EVERITT-WISEMAN: Info. About Wm. Everitt of Hunterdon who m. Jane Wiseman in Savannah, Ga. May 12, 1812)

## Recent Acquisitions

### MANUSCRIPTS

Day book, Mahlon Field, tavern keeper, Locktown, N.J. April 1, 1852-58. (Earliest recorded use of name "Locktown"? Apr. 1, 1852.) Gift of Hunterdon Co. Democrat Hugh Capner correspondence relating to N.J. Copper Co.; other deeds, accts, mortgages of various parties, 1843-47. Gift of Hugh Thatcher.

John McMullen Civil War discharge and appt. at Corporal. Father of Charles McMullen, co-owner with Al Muller of Flemington glass factory. Gift of Mary Lyon Gill via Ryman Herr, Sr.

DEED: John and Sarah Runkle to Trustees, School Dist. No. 5 at Stanton (formerly Mt. Pleasant) Aug. 29, 1848. Land for school house. Gift of Ryman Herr, Jr.

PHOTOGRAPHS: daug. Catharine & Solomon Holcombe, father of Ferdinand. Gr. pts. of Edith B. Marsh. Gift of Mrs. Samuel D. Bamber.

Hunterdon Board of Freeholders, Clerk, Collector, and Counsel, 1898-99. Gift of Mrs. Herbert Van Pelt.

FAMILY TREE: Apgar family. Gift of Cowles Herr.

BIBLE RECORD: photo. William Everitt of N.J. and Jane Wiseman, Savannah, Ga. m. May 12, 1812. Gift of Mrs. Mary G. Campbell, Covington, Ga.

BOOKS: Fulper Bros, Flemington. Illus. sales cat. pottery for sale, c. 1880. Gift of Hugh Thatcher.

Flemington High School "Echo" year book 1930-64. Gift Hunterdon Co. Democrat.

N.J. Legislative Manual, 1875-1962. Gift of Hunterdon Co. Democrat.

Spruce Run, N.J. Zion Ev. Luth. Church. 175th anniv. book. Gift of Dr. F.B. Emery, Concordia, Kansas.

Knoxville, Tenn. Cavalry Cemetery. Tombstone inscriptions & death records. 1869-1967. Gift of Miss D.L. McCrary, St. Petersburg, Fla.



## For Sale

Sales tax-add 3% Postage add 10¢

- LARISON, Cornelius W. The Ancient Village of Amwell. 1955. 22 p. \$1.00  
MOTT, Ed. S. First Century of Hunterdon Co. 1967, 60 p. illus. \$4.00  
DEATS, Hiram E. Hunterdon Co. Militia, 1792. 1936, 10 p. \$1.50

- Deats: Marriage records of Hunterdon Co., 1795-1875, unbound, 337 p. Flemington, 1918 \$10.00  
Deats, Tombstone inscriptions from Hunterdon cemeteries, 72 p. unbd. \$5.00  
Stevenson, J.R. Thomas Stevenson of London and his descendants. Flemington, 1902. 8 vo., 180 p. unbd. \$10.00