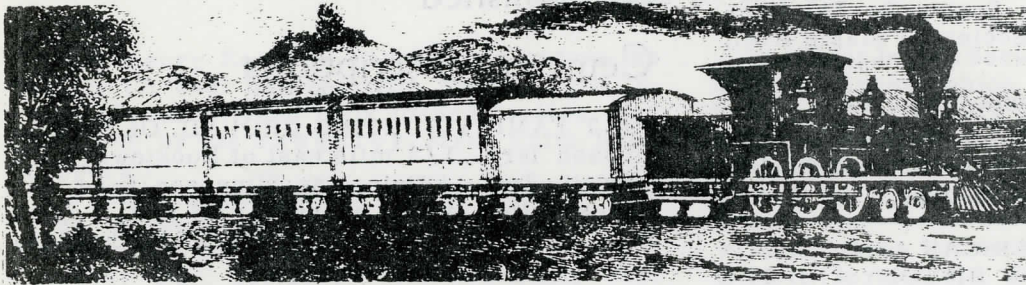




# Belvidere Delaware Rail Road Co.



## Hunterdon Historical Newsletter

VOL. 4, NO. 3

Published by Hunterdon County Historical Society

WINTER, 1968

## The Artillery Park at Pluckemin Topic of January Meeting

Clifford Sekel, Wagner College history graduate, will tell of his research and rediscovery of all-but obliterated Pluckemin Artillery Park sites at our Annual Meeting, at 2 p.m., Sunday, January 26 in the Flemington Methodist Church.

Mr. Sekel, has been intensively researching for his master's thesis on the Park and its academy, a forerunner of the West Point Military Academy.

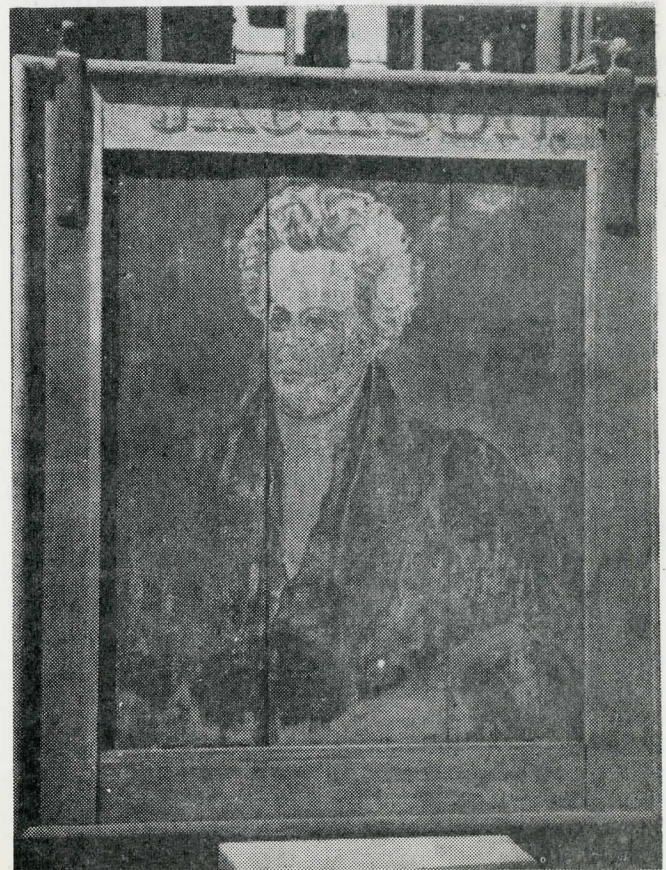
The speaker notes that the earliest recommendation for an officers' training academy was made by General Knox in May, 1776.

In December, 1778, Washington's Artillery Corps arrived at the tiny Somerset County hamlet of Pluckemin and set about establishing an officers' training academy. In the Academy on Feb. 18, 1779 was held the first anniversary grand ball of the Franco-American alliance followed by the famous fireworks display.

Mr. Sekel's intensive research has rediscovered the original Artillery Park sites. He hopes that the importance of the Park as a forerunner of West Point will gain support for a preservation and restoration project.

The speaker will provide us with a chronological distillation of some of his material to characterize the day-to-day activities in the nearly lost and all-but-forgotten establishment.

ANNUAL MEETING  
Sunday, January 26, at 2 p.m.  
FLEMINGTON METHODIST CHURCH  
2 Maple Ave., Flemington, N. J.



The old Perryville Tavern sign presented to the Society in 1900 by Dr. Isaac S. Cramer.

Illustrated in "Inn-Signia: Old New Jersey Inns and their Signs" by Melvin G. Williams. (N.J. Business Magazine. July, 1968)

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

Progress Report for 1968

Our 83 year old Society is belatedly coming of age! There is prospect of a new headquarters building in Flemington with ample museum and library space, lack of which are severe handicaps in our present location.

The most generous and most valuable gift in our Society's history has been deeded to us by Mr. and Mrs. Milo Jimison of Lambertville, N.J. - the 1711 Holcombe house and 20 acres of valuable recreational grounds fronting on the Delaware River and Raritan Canal, together with barns which will provide exhibition space for our growing collection of antique agricultural implements. The Jimisons are our first "Patron Members".

Restoration of William Bonnell's portrait of Mrs. Daniel Bray is underway. Our appeal for donations for his purpose has brought a sizeable donation from Mrs. Emily Nordfeldt of Lambertville. Further contributions are urgently needed.

An important gift of books, mss. and museum objects relating to Lambertville were given by Dr. Alfred G. Petrie. Valuable family mss. were received from Miss Elizabeth Grandin of Clinton.

Our Library now totals 3674 volumes; 150 volumes were accessioned this year. Over 100 volumes have been rebound. In 1969 we hope to microfilm and bind some of the rarer files in our extensive county newspaper collection.

Library researchers numbered 240. The Genealogical Committee answered voluminous genealogical inquiries and replied to many inquiries forwarded to us by the County Clerk's Office.

Unpublished Cemetery Inscriptions

HUNT FAMILY BURYING GROUND. On Stilford Closson farm, 1/2 mile east of Rocktown, East Amwell Twp. Adjoins the Simerson yard. Six stones, stone wall, about 10 x 25 feet. Copied Aug. 17, 1925 by H.E. Deats and Theodore Bellis.

- Hunt, Cornelia Apr.16,1826. 24-9-21.
, Emma. Apr.22,1809. 19-10-0.
, Jonathan. Nov. 18, 1822. 66-5-24.
, Mary, wid. Jonathan. Apr.20,1856. 77-8-10.
, Rachel. Aug.18,1813. 21-9-0.
, Sarah. June 17, 1812. 24-9-0.

New Members

AS OF DECEMBER 1968

- PATRONS: Mr. and Mrs. Milo Jimison, Lambertville, N.J.
LIFE: Herbert D. Stem, Milford, N.J.
ANNUAL:
Hunter Corbett, Hopewell, N.J.
John C. DeMille, Milford, N.J.
Mrs. George M. Grant, Glen Gardner, N.J.
Donald L. Sprague, Aurora, Ill.
Mrs. W.W. Brothers, Pocatello, Idaho.
Mrs. Sanford Groendyke, Clinton, N.J.
Herbert R. Anderson, Jr., Flemington, N.J.

Mrs. Frederick, Stothoff, Membership Chairman.

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)

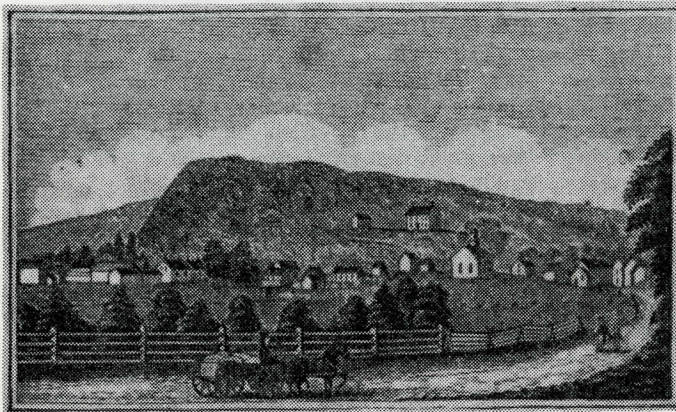
For which I enclose \_\_\_\_\_

.....
.....
.....

## Milford in 1760

By Dr. Henry Race: A Paper Read before the Society (?) See: Lambertville Record Nov. 19, 1890. (From a typed copy loaned to Mrs. Ray C. Wilson by his daughter, Mrs. Edith Race Shepperd).

We have a surveyor's draught, endorsed "Plan of the Society's line adjoining Byerly's Tract, made for Messrs. Stevens, Parker and Company Dec. 13, 1760. John Rockhill, Dep. Surv."



This engraving from "Historical Collections of the State of New Jersey" by Barber and Howe (NY:1844) shows Milford in 1844 from the south on the River Road.

The Christian Church is a substantial stone building in the central part of the village. Thompson's Hill appears in the background.

Milford contained 3 stores, 3 taverns, 12 or 15 mechanic's shops, 1 merchant and 2 saw mills, 2 churches and 45 dwellings. A fine bridge across the Delaware was built in 1841 at a cost of \$20,000. The lumber trade was carried on in this thriving village.

Forty years earlier, about 1804, Milford contained a grist and 2 saw mills, a blacksmith shop, a store and a few dwellings.

The Christian Church was built about 1827. As females were admitted to the ministry, Mrs. Abigail Roberts was the first preacher. A new building was erected in 1870.

The Presbyterian Church was erected in 1833. The Rev. Mr. Henshaw occupied the pulpit as missionary; the first pastor was the Rev. Joseph Campbell. A new stone building was erected in 1868.

The West Jersey Society's line and the Wissahawking Creek, which Rockhill calls "Witchehocking" is carefully drawn, with its branches from near their sources to its mouth at the river. Where there was a house, it is represented by a pen picture, with its occupant's name.

There were but two houses and a mill where Milford is situated. One stood in or near the south-west corner of Mr. Thomas' lawn and is designated "Ferry House." The ferry is plainly marked and in the same place as the present river bridge. The other, on the east side of the creek on the upper side of the road is marked "Breck's House."

The road then, as now, crossed the creek where the iron bridge stands. A structure marked "mill" is located in the bed of the creek some 30 yards above the crossing.

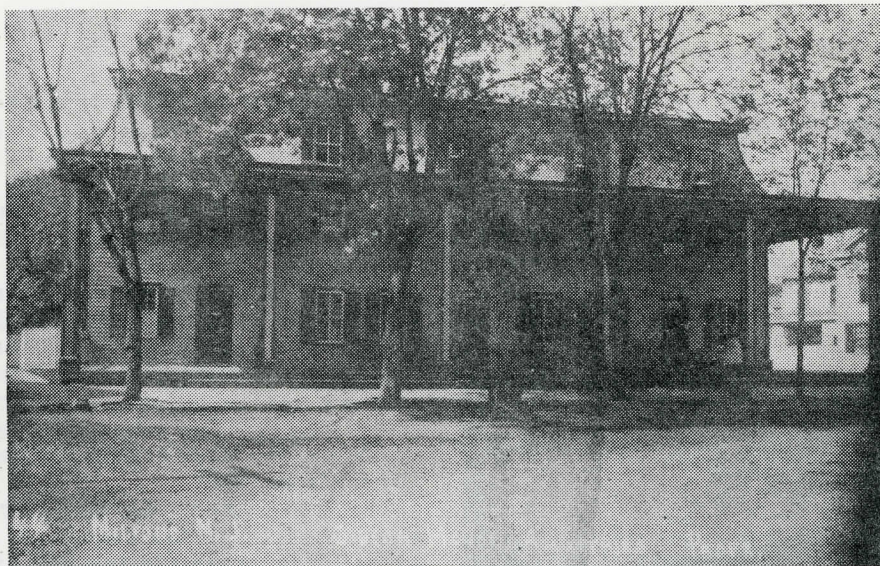
Down the creek, on the left side, just where it makes a short curve towards the river, is "Jacob Simcock's House." Halfway between this and the river, same side, is marked "Baker's House": all there was 129 years ago of what became the flourishing village of Milford.

Ten houses were pictured up the Wissahawking Valley, most of which are near the creek. First: "Maxfield's", nearly a mile above the mill. The others: "Rynesength's", "Van Est's", "Jacob Shry's", "Hunt's", "John Young's", "Wm. Sine's", "A. Roger Parke's", "Opdyke's", "Wm. Myers". A schoolhouse is on the south side of the creek, about 1/4 mile below Roger Parke's and some 2 miles above the site of Milford.

In 1770 or '71, the mill was burned. It belonged with 333 acres of land to Col. John Reid of New York. On January 28, 1771 Col. Reid wrote to John Emley of Pittstown, his agent:

"The bearer hereof, Captain James Gray has . . . undertaken a journey to the Delaware River on my account. He is a great Mechanick and understands the Construction of Mills. . . and has instructions from me to take a view of the Grist Mill which has unfortunately for me burnt in my absence and endeavor to form some estimate of the charge of rebuilding it again, and also to make inquiry in my Name how that accident happened."

March 14, 1774, Daniel McDonald contracted with Col. Reid's agent to pay 40 lbs. rent for the farm and "to build a Compleat Grist Mill where the Mill was formerly built. . . in the first year, for which the sd. Reid obliges himself to pay the sum of 160 lbs. N.Y. currency provided the sd. Mill is finished. . . and for Every Year sd. McDonald stays after the first Year to pay



The Gibson House, Milford. Built 1796-1797 by John Lowrey as a residence. His wife not liking the location, he then built the house lately occupied by Edward Thomas. (Now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth V. Myers. Ed. Note) The Hotel Register (1902-1916), Gift of the Rossiter Buzzard Est. has been rebound through the generosity of our Life Member H.D. Stem of Milford.

rent of 70 lbs. Pro. Money per Annum..." In addition to the foregoing, 25 lbs. was given to McDonald "for moving the Dam".

A letter from Col. Reid to John Emley dated "New York, 10 Nov. 1774" says: "Mr. McDonald is now with me and informs me that he has completed a New Mill Dam, that the Mill is also under Roof and finished except the Mill Stones and bolting Cloth which he wants money to purchase."

This mill and farm afterwards came into the possession of John Starke Robertson of New York, who with his wife Susanna, conveyed to Thomas Lowrey, July 18, 1795 for 2716 lbs., "all that tract of land and plantation. . . on the River Delaware, Alexandria Township, commonly known by the name of Burnt Mill Farm." (See Hunterdon Deed Book 11, p. 403.)

Previous to the advent of Col. Lowrey, the place was called Burnt Mills. He built a new mill by the river and several houses, and the village took the name of Lowreytown 'till about 1815 or '20 when it began to be called Milford.

### 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.

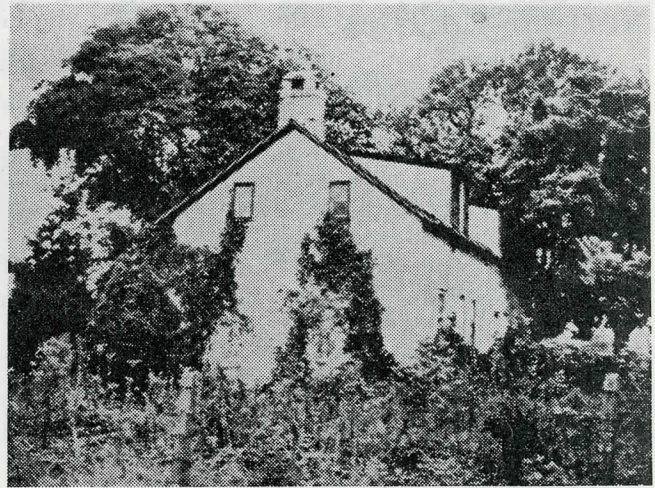
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

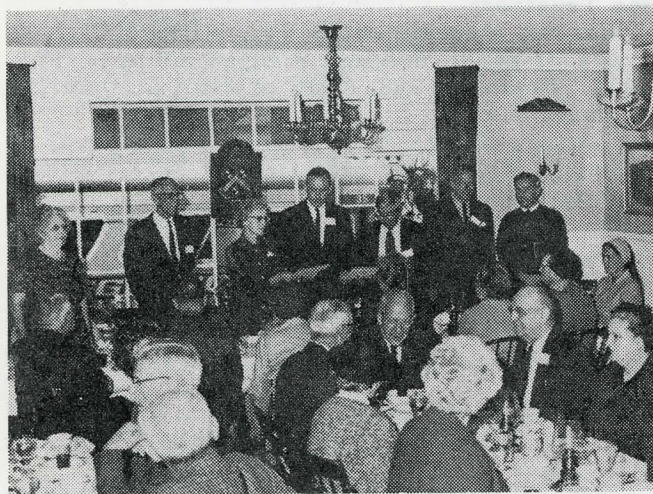
Witness \_\_\_\_\_



President Wittwer thanks the Jimisons for their generous gift of the 1711 House and land and commends their interest in historic preservation. Charles T. Deats, Vice-President (left) and B.A. Sorby, Librarian, look on. Mr. Jimison is a 5th generation Holcombe descendant.

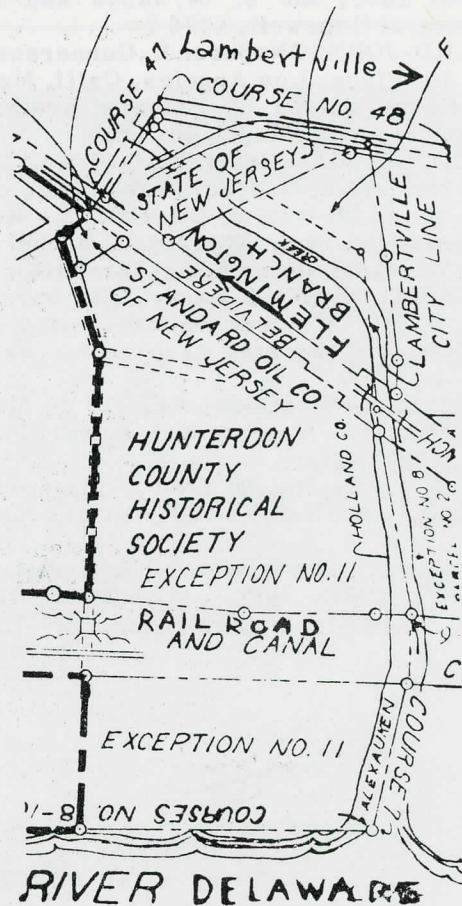


Hunterdon's oldest house. Built 1711 either by John Calow or John Wey. Bequeathed by John Holcombe in his will in 1743 to his son Richard, Washington's host in 1778 at the nearby Holcombe Headquarters House. Date stone in gable.



President Wittwer awards the Society's first "Patron" memberships to the Jimisions at the Lambertville House luncheon given in their honor, October 26, during the Society's charter bus tour of Trenton area historic sites.

The Holcombe coat-of-arms in the background belonged to the late Mildred Holcombe Allen (Mrs. John C. Allen, Sr.



## Notes & Queries

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

- MARTIN: Mrs. Lucille Biddle, 2311 Elisha St., Zion, Ill. Info. on Col. William Martin, b. Lebanon, N.J. Oct. 10, 1763. Rev. War Vet.
- TAYLOR: Mrs. Marian Kettle Russell, 26 Lincoln Ave., Le Roy, N.Y. Info. on Col. John Taylor of Hunterdon.
- ROBINS: O.T. Stryker, Cazenovia, N.Y. Parents of Hiram Robins, father of George T. who m. Susan Bray Rittenhouse, Nov. 18, 1863.
- FLEMING: Calvin Errickson, Erwinna, Pa. Info. on g. gr. John Fleming, s. of Wm. Fleming and Charity Hagaman, b. nr. Bloomsbury Dec. 11, 1838.
- BOWLBY-GARMAN: Olive Richardson, 16 N. Marengo Ave., Pasadena, Calif. M. recd. of Samuel Bowlby and Martha Garman, m. about 1818.
- KNOWLES: Marian Clearwater, 386 22nd St., Marion, Iowa. Is Jesse Knowles, mentioned in will of 1801, the s. of Jacob and Martha Knowles of Hopewell, 1776?
- EVELAND-JOHNSON: Susan E. Gunnerson, 3231, S.W. 9th Place, Los Angeles, Calif. Marriage certificate wanted of Harmon Eveland and Jenetta Johnson (March 30, 1800)
- HYDE-LE BEAUX: Gertrude Hoppock, 1 W. Highland Drive, Seattle, Wash. Info. on John Hyde (b. 1720) who m. Elizabeth Le Beaux of Lambertville, N.J. Their dau. Rachel (1741-1814) m. Jacob Holcombe (1741-1820).
- SWACKHAMER: Mabel Kaser, 523 Spruce St., Aurora, Ill. Wanted: children of Conrad Swackhamer who may have been a Rev. War vet.
- LAKE: Mrs. Beulah Greener, 118 S. Main St., Princeton, Ill. Wanted: ancestors of Garrett Lake (1767-1849)
- BRINSON: Stella Baird, 1720 McArthur Blvd., Oakland, Calif. Wanted: N.J. will of John Brin-ton.
- ALLEN: Adah M. Stewart, 1306 Enslin Ave., Modesta, Calif. Info. on David H. Allen, b. 1778 (?) and wife Beulah Price.



## Recent Acquisitions

### MANUSCRIPTS

Account Book: James Seabrook, tailor (Lambertville, N.J. ?) Ledger: c. 1812-48. Gift of Dr. Alfred G. Petrie.

Lamington, N.J. Presbyterian Church Records, 1746-1963. Microfilm. Purchase.

Flemington, N.J. Int. Order King's Daughters. Treasurer's Book, 1923-26. (Bessie W. Danley Est.)

MAPS: Lambertville, N.J. Property maps. NY: Sanborn. 1912 (Petrie Gift)

PRINTS: Flemington, N.J. Panorama. (Litho.) Morrisville, Pa. T.M. Fowler. 1903. (Gift of Newton S. Gottshall, Framingham, Mass.)

PHOTOGRAPHS: Album of Hunterdon County country schools. (Gift of Mrs. John Sharp, Audubon, N.J.)

BOOKS: N.J. State Commission for New Berne, S.C. 9th N.J. Vol. Monument. Phila: 1905. (Gift of John C. Allen, Sr., Lambertville, N.J.)

Milford, N.J. Presbyterian Church. Yearbook, 1968. Church House 100th anniversary. (Gift of the Trustees)

Warren Manufacturing Co., Milford, N.J. 50 years of paper making: a brief history, 1873-1923. Boston: 1923 (Gift of John C. DeMille, Milford, N.J.)

Cawley, James S. Historic New Jersey in pictures. Princeton: 1939 (Gift of Milo Jimison, Lambertville, N.J.)

Sandy Ridge Baptist Church. Sesquicentennial book, 1968. (Gift of the Pastor, the Rev. G. M. Thompson)

Hunterdon County Public School Directory, 1968-69. (With history of Wurts Law Office Bldg.) Gift of N.A. Gathany, Superintendent of Schools.

Binding: rebinding of the Gibson House Hotel Register, Milford, N.J. (Gift of Herbert D. Stem, Milford, N.J.)

Records and photographs: New Jersey Historic Sites Evaluation, Hunterdon County Section. A Hunterdon Historical Society project, 1963.

As the Society's copy was not deposited in our Library per the original agreement and as this material has been badly needed for historic sites research, the Freeholders had copied 257 data sheets on 47 historic sites together with 44 negatives and photographs to replace our lacking file of this data.