

# Hunterdon Historical Record



HUNTERDON  
COUNTY  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

hunterdonhistory.org

## Genealogy Talks in June

HCHS is offering two virtual genealogy workshops in June with Betty DeSapio to help you build your research skills.

On Thursday, June 9 at 7 p.m. join us for "Evaluating Genealogical Sources" and learn to judge the reliability of information and how to seek the best possible sources.

Betty also will teach "Getting the Most from Genealogical Records" on Thursday, June 16 at 7 p.m. In this presentation, you'll look at genealogical records in a new light, learning how to harvest all the information they contain.

Betty DeSapio, PLCGS, is a professional genealogist and the Kingwood Township Historian. Betty holds four genealogical certificates from the National Institute for Genealogical Research. She is the owner of DeSapio Research Services LLC.

These Zoom programs are free to HCHS members; and cost \$10 per program for nonmembers. Pre-registration is required by emailing hunterdonhistoryadm@gmail.com.

## The Adventures of the Traveling Schucks

By Dave Harding



**Anton Schuck with his children Richard and Betty in his 1923 Stanley Steamer. Photo courtesy of Richard Schuck.**

On March 18, 1960, Anton Schuck and his wife, Bertha, climbed into their re-fitted Volkswagen microbus for a trip to the dark side of the moon. The first leg of their journey would take them from Stockton to Texas; from there they planned to drive every foot of the Pan-American Highway till they reached Santiago, Chile. In his 60<sup>th</sup> year, Anton could handle any auto emergency: He possessed an innate knack for fixing all things mechanical, and had decades of hands-on experience. He also had logged countless miles traveling by car across the United States, and into foreign lands.

As the Schucks fired up the bus and its tires spun onto the road, perhaps they considered that few couples – certainly none their age – had ever undertaken such a hazardous journey.

Only a natural disaster would stop them.

### A Self-Taught Man

But let's begin at the beginning: Anton – or Tony to his friends – was born on January 27, 1900 in Brendlorenzen, a Bavarian village. He emigrated to the United States as a youngster with his Uncle Sebastian and Aunt Agnes, who bought a farm up Quarry Road in Stockton.

He got his start as a teenager working in the local quarry and railroad. According to his grandson, Richard Schuck, Anton quickly gravitated toward the cranes and train engines. He earned a steam engineer's license and began repair work.

"The (railroad) workers would get paid on Friday, drink all weekend and wouldn't show up for work Monday morning," Richard said. "So, the railroad

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**Acquisitions**

Artifacts and documents about Hunterdon County history and the families who resided here are welcome additions to our collections. Donated materials may not be available for research until they are processed. The Society thanks donors for these recent acquisitions.

Anonymous. 1 Photograph: Jessie Van Doren Bartles, or Jessie Elma Van Doren (verso), portrait as a young child, ca. 2 years old, n.d.  
Bertland, Dennis. 15 boxes of project files for historical preservation research and research materials for State and National Registration nominations of historic sites by Dennis Bertland Associates, ca. 1980-2020.

Hurford, Mary Beth. 1.) Book; Sally A. Freedman, compiler. "Clinton, Flemington, and Lambertville." The Old Photographs Series, 1994. 2.) Newspaper; Hunterdon County Democrat, 24 January 1935. 3.) Folder; genealogical research and notebooks on the Gulick and Leigh families, ca. 1924-1926.

Keiderling, Kyle. 1 Manuscript. Personal correspondence of Mahlon Dickerson to William Kennedy (Vice President, NJ Council) and Samuel Pennington, (Speaker of the Assembly), accepting the nomination as Governor of New Jersey, 27 October 1815.

Kemper, Carol. 2 Boxes of genealogical research and records of the Johnson/Bray/Coit Families, ca. 1800 - 1926. Includes reports, typescripts, transcriptions, original correspondence, research notes, photographs, original legal and personal papers, news clippings, and the diary of Cornelia Adelaide Johnson Coit.

Kinney, John E. Family Bible of Ezra Dalrymple Lennard (1845-1919) and wife, Susan Martha Vanderbelt (1846-1910). Donation includes funeral programs, news clippings of family events, and two photographs. Gift of John E. Kinney, great-nephew of Anna Kinney Niece.

Kuhl, John. 1 Folder; materials concerning the Reaville Presbyterian Church, ca. 1988-2006, including news clippings, scrapbook pages, and church bulletins.

McKaughan, Molly. Two boxes of genealogical research and records of the Leigh, Huffman, Porter, Van Syckle, Potts, King, and Large families, ca. 1825-1943.

Includes correspondence, genealogical research notes and reports, unpublished family genealogies, photographs, and personal and legal original manuscripts.

Miner, Will. A Sanborn Map Company Atlas: Clinton and Annandale, NJ, 1938 [revised].

Readington Museum, c/o Stephanie Stevens. 1 Envelope: legal papers including wills, deeds, tax records, probate records, and mortgages from the Pickell and allied families, ca. 1867 - 1971.

Snyder, Doris Pierce. 1 Scrapbook; news clippings of Reaville, kept by Mrs. Doris Snyder, ca. 1934-1950.

**George G. Honness at Selwyn Hall, Pa., 1886. Donated by Molly McKaughan.***continued next page*

**Acquisitions** *continued*

**Library Acquisitions and Purchases:**

Glatfelter, Charles Henry. *Pastors and People: German Lutheran and Reformed Churches in the Pennsylvania Field, 1717-1793; Vol. II: The History* (1981). Donated by Pam Robinson.

Heatter, Gabriel. *Resume Book of the Flemington Trial* (1935); and *Word Pictures of the Hauptmann Trial* (1935). Donated by Russell Donhauser.

Kidder, William L. *The Revolutionary World of a Free Black Man: Jacob Francis, 1754-1836* (2021). Gift of the author.

Liddle, Kristin. *The VanDerveer Family and Some Lines of the VanderVeers of New York and New Jersey* (2020). HCHS Purchase.

Murrin, Mary, ed. *Religion in New Jersey Before the Civil War: Papers Presented at the Fourteenth Annual New Jersey History Symposium* (1982). HCHS Purchase.

Quinn, Dermot. *The Irish in New Jersey: Four Centuries of American life* (2006). HCHS Purchase.

Sands, Robert W., Jr., and Patricia E. Millen. *Washington Crossing* (Images of America, 2022). HCHS Purchase.

Waller, George. *Kidnapping: the Story of the Lindbergh Case* (1961). Donated by Russell Donhauser.

**Purchases for the Hiram E. Deats Memorial Library with funds donated in the memory of Mary Ellen Soldavin, by Karen and D. Bruce Harrison:**

Barth, Linda J. *The Millstone Valley Through Time* (America through time, 2014).

Cocheu, Lincoln C. *Couenhovens and Kinsfolks: Some Descendants of Wolphert Gerritse . . .* (1947).

Cohen, David Steven. *The Dutch American Farm* (1992).

Muser, Jeanette K. *Rocky Hill, Kingston, and Griggstown* (Images of America, 1998).

Taylor, Maureen A. *Hairstyles, 1840-1900: Includes Men, Children, and Unusual Coiffures* (2014).

Van der Veer, John J. *A Genealogy of this Branch of the Van Der Veer family in American from 1659 to 1912; A Genealogy of this Branch of the Conover Family in America from 1630 to 1912* (1912, reprint).

**Objects:**

Alexandria Historical Society, via Howard Thomas. Three quilts.

Runge, Ralph. A collection of Stangl molds, which had once been stored in a turn-of-the-century mill in Millville, NJ.

**Thank You Donors and Welcome New Members**

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**In Memoriam**

We wish to pass along to you sad news about long-time HCHS volunteer Fred Sisser III, 82, who passed away peacefully on April 5, 2022. Mr. Sisser began volunteering for HCHS sometime in the 1960s and continued with us until September 6, 2012. We extend our deepest condolences to his family.



## How Some County Railroad Plans Got Off Track (Part 2)

By John Kuhl

(Please see our Winter 2021-22 for Part 1 of this article.)

In 1890 and 1891 both Lehigh Valley branch lines from Landsdown to Pittstown to the southwest and Clinton to the north were completed. This sparked further speculation as to extensions. One was a new segment from Clinton to Glen Gardner thus completing the leg from the main line at Landsdown north to the Central RR at Glen Gardner. Another option was to run from Clinton northeast to Schooley's Mountain and Hackettstown. This was an echo of an earlier 1854 plan of the Central RR to run a branch from Clarksville (renamed Glen Gardner in 1873) up the valley of Spruce Run and across to Schooley's Mountain and Hackettstown. The grades on this plan also look formidable. Another later variation as reported by *The Hunterdon County Democrat* of 16 June 1895

was a plan to run a route from its main line at West Portal through Asbury and on to Lake Hopatcong. This would both eliminate the steep gradient of Schooley's Mountain and be a route with less competition.

Still in the minds of the Lehigh Valley in 1892 was a route from Pittstown west to Frenchtown, again to connect with that illusory line to Pennsylvania and the West. Depending on where the new line hit the Delaware, it might or might not connect with the Bel-Del because of the differences in elevation as the new line came down off the river bluff but remained high enough to allow clearance for water traffic and an easier climb to the heights on the opposite side. Another shorter destination on this route surfaced later on 20 July 1899 when the *Clinton Democrat* reported a proposed settlement at Oak Grove. Town lots around a shoe factory were being sold and the paper speculated that an extension of the Lehigh Valley from Pittstown to this new "City of Rome" would service this speculative enterprise. Lately, with land titles finally cleared, the large produce farm there on the Rome site is today operated by Susan Blew. None of these proposals ever made it. The branch lines from Landsdown were finally closed to passengers in 1937 and to freight by the end of the 1960s, thus ending all expansion ideas.

A whole new plan appeared in the *Clinton Democrat* of 24 Aug 1906 when a western railroad magnate was interested in building an electric road from Pittsburgh to New York City. It would run through Easton and across Hunterdon north of Clinton. This too, died.

The New Jersey Midland Railroad operated in the northeastern part of the state and never ran in Hunterdon. But the local Rockaway Valley RR figured in 1898 as the connecting link in a plan to run from

Paterson to Flemington and possibly on to Trenton. Rails were already up and running from Paterson to Whitehouse Station. At that point, they intended to cross over the Central RR at Lebanon and intersect the Lehigh Valley at Stanton Station. This would provide access from Flemington to Morristown, but the plan to reach Trenton was impractical.

By the 1920s railway fortunes overall seemed to have peaked and no more expansion plans appeared. Twenty more years brought only the visible onset of today's decline. Both the Central and the Lehigh Valley declared bankruptcy in 1970 and control passed ultimately to the federally created Conrail during which time locomotives of several different railroads including CSX and B&O could be seen on the old Lehigh Valley line. In time



Conrail, too, failed and control passed on to the Norfolk & Southern RR by 1999. Passenger service had never been any railroad's path to riches and with the growing competition of autos, buses, and airplanes, it has ceased to be of much concern to rail officials. Our old Lehigh Valley today hauls no passengers but is now a major freight line to Buffalo and the west with up to three 100-car freight trains hourly. The old Central is now the Raritan Valley line carrying only local freight and passengers to the east since its truncation at High Bridge. Today's Black River & Western runs from Lambertville to the LVRR at Three Bridges over remnants of two old lines. The main line Bel-Del and the Rockaway Valley are gone all together. Abandoned routes up the Lockwood Gorge, along the Capoolong from Pittstown to Clinton, and along the Delaware today remain only as attractive hiking trails. Hunterdon has not been the optimum place to build a railroad. There were no large population centers to boost revenue. Hunterdon's numerous waterways required expensive bridging and its rolling hills provided many difficult grade challenges.

Whether this complicated tale above has been helpful is for the reader to say. But the obviously over-optimistic and wishful dreams of our Hunterdon predecessors is by itself, an important part of interpreting our history, completed or not. It is a story of major disappointment for many. Towns like Cherryville never did get their railroads no matter how hard they campaigned. Many locals would never view puffing trains from the comfort of their front porch settees. Today's railroads are struggling and seem unlikely to ever regain their former eminence. But perhaps imaginative minds listening closely on a silent night just might hear the ghostly toots of a past railroad phantom. Hunterdon has surely been a player in it all.

## The Adventures of the Traveling Schucks

*Continued from Page 1*

decided to buy some trucks to pick up their workers on Monday, and they would need someone to fix the trucks, and my grandfather did. The rest is history.”

Anton purchased a garage in Stockton in 1927 and quickly gained a reputation for fixing anything. That same year, he married Bertha Klein, a graduate of the Women’s Medical College of Philadelphia with a nursing degree. She also worked in Liberia two years with a Lutheran mission.

According to *Stories from Raven Rock, New Jersey*, the couple honeymooned in Italy, Germany and France. They traveled by ship and took along Bertha’s sister, Frieda, and – in what could be considered a harbinger of future travels – a Jewett, a six-cylinder, 50-horsepower automobile.

As he continued working at the garage, Anton’s reputation for his mechanical ingenuity grew. He also nurtured his love for antique automobiles. “A 1903 auto car was his first antique automobile,” said his daughter, Betty (Schuck) Davis. “It was in bad shape, and he made new fenders for it. Then he got a 1907 Franklin. Dad ended up with 20-something antique cars.” In 1935, Anton became a charter member of the Antique Automobile Club of America.

Perhaps Anton’s most beloved car was a 1937 robin’s-egg blue Packard with a rumble seat in the back by the trunk, which Anton needed to remove because of damage caused by a previous owner. Frank Davis, Anton’s son-in-law, can still picture it. “It was gorgeous. Everybody just slobbered over that car.”

Nineteen-forty-four was a busy year for Anton. He purchased the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Johnson houses and farm, including the quarry, between Federal Twist and River roads. That fall, Anton and former Stockton Fire Chief Frank Pennett took a 2,000-mile hunting trip to Canada in a 1923 Stanley Steamer converted to run on coal. Anton had installed grates, a new fire box, electric blowers and a metal stovepipe that rose several feet above the hood near the passenger-side windshield. He attached a wooden box to the rear of the vehicle to hold 500 pounds of coal and out-sized (22-inches in diameter) wheels. Without fuel, the car weighed 2 ½ tons.

Anton loaded the box with coal, and the pair set off. About every 10 miles, they stopped the car to stoke the fire. The pair told the *Delaware Valley News*, they enjoyed the trip to Cumberland Bay, near Grand Lake, New Brunswick despite one bad moment on a lonely road in Maine when the heavy car rolled back down a slope and slid into a ditch. A truck came along and hauled the Stanley out.

### The Dark Side of the Moon

Anton took several trips out west through the years, but in 1960, he and Bertha decided to drive to South America. They dreamed of taking this trip for years. “Every time Tony would see a copy of the *National Geographic* magazine, he’d talk about it,” Bertha told a reporter.



**Anton’s 1903 auto car. Photo courtesy of Richard Schuck.**

They traveled south through Texas in a 1953 Volkswagen Microbus that Anton had re-fitted with two folding bunks, a gas stove and refrigerator, and a plastic bubble top. Frank Davis related that the couple hit a snag in Costa Rica when they discovered a portion of the road wasn’t completed. The Schucks managed to get the microbus loaded onto a boat for a journey of several miles to resume their drive south.

Driving through northern Chile, the couple was awed by the dark side of the moon. “It almost never rains. There was no grass, no trees, nothing growing at all,” Bertha told *The Hunterdon County Democrat*.

At one point, they started to drive the wrong way on a one-way street in Chile’s Antofagasta Province when they learned their adventure would come to an abrupt end. Half-way down the block, two policeman waved furiously for them to back up. “When we told them we were headed for the end of the highway, they said ‘Oh, oh!’ and told us about the earthquakes. Not long after that we boarded ship for the return trip, the quakes hit the area where we were,” Bertha related. The couple, and the microbus, boarded a freighter for the trip home. All told the trip took 120 days, and they drove 11,000 miles.

The following year, the Schucks logged 10,883 miles on a trip to Alaska. A stop in Canada’s Banff National Park was a highlight, the couple told a reporter. Anton’s mechanical skills came in handy when he had to replace the Volkswagen’s engine near Pittsburgh and its transmission in Minneapolis.

Anton died on January 25, 1969 at the age of 68, but he had passed on his skills to his son, Richard, who quickly gained a reputation as a mechanical whiz who could tune a car like a violin. Bertha passed June 13, 1987.

“My grandparents were amazing people,” Richard said. “They really lived the American dream. People said my grandfather was a man of few words, but when he did talk, you made sure to listen.”



## Spotlight on Collections: Julia Fulper's Wedding Dress

It was perhaps the biggest social event of Flemington's 1901 summer season. Julia Higgins Fulper and Philip Insley Craig would marry on June 10 at 7:30 p.m. in the First Baptist Church. Trenton decorator G. W. Phillips adorned the church with daisies, ferns and palms, creating a stunning vision of green and white. Prof. Norman Landis, traveling down the street from the Flemington Presbyterian Church, flexed his fingers to play the organ for the 600 guests, all craning their necks for that first glimpse of the bride. And what a vision that bride presented, robed in white satin, en train, her trimmings of Duchess lace, with tulle veil and orange blossoms.

One hundred and twenty years later, that dress would be the subject of a mystery.

The email arrived July 6, 2021. Stephanie Murphy wrote, "I'm the great-great-granddaughter of Julia Fulper (of Fulper Pottery) and Philip Craig. I'm hoping you can help me solve a family mystery! We have a newspaper article from *The Hunterdon County Democrat* in October of 1977 highlighting a Daughters of the American Revolution fashion show where Julia's wedding dress was modeled. We're hoping to track down the dress. I know it's a long shot . . ."

Attached to the email was the article about the fashion show. It stated that after the wedding, someone wrapped the gown in a green homespun tablecloth. Julia and Philip's daughter, Charity Higgins Craig, donated the gown to Ann Cronce, owner of the Flemington Bridal Salon. The dress was the highlight of



**Julia Fulper on her wedding day.**



**The Murphy family gather at the Doric House. Second from left is Stephanie Murphy.**

that year's D.A.R. fashion show held at the Ryland Inn. The article included a photo of the dress's model gazing at a photo of Julia Fulper on her wedding day. Combing through our PastPerfect Museum software revealed a surprising number of finds: two Julia Fulper autograph books, two photograph albums and an embroidery she made in 1885. Then began the arduous process of digging through our paper files. (Remember, we've been around since 1885.)

Well, you know that old story about how you won't find something until you're looking for something else? One day, while working in our Archive Building on our flag collection, a folder full of Excel spreadsheets led to a stunning discovery: a donation from Ann Cronce at the request of Charity Craig of a wedding dress. The perfectly preserved dress rested in an acid-free box with a wedding invitation, photograph and dried flowers.

Texting the news to Stephanie elicited one of the happiest responses anyone could receive: "My mom hasn't stopped gasping!"

Fast forward to a cloudy December 9, 2021. Seven descendants of Julia Fulper – including Stephanie and her parents Anne and Craig Murphy – arrived at the Doric House Museum from Seattle and various places around the country to connect with their past. The family gathered around our dining room table, exploring the keepsakes Julia left behind. The unboxing of the dress elicited further gasps of delight as HCHS Trustees President Janice Armstrong carefully spread the dress across the table. Beaming, Stephanie knelt at the table by the top of the dress so family members could photograph her.

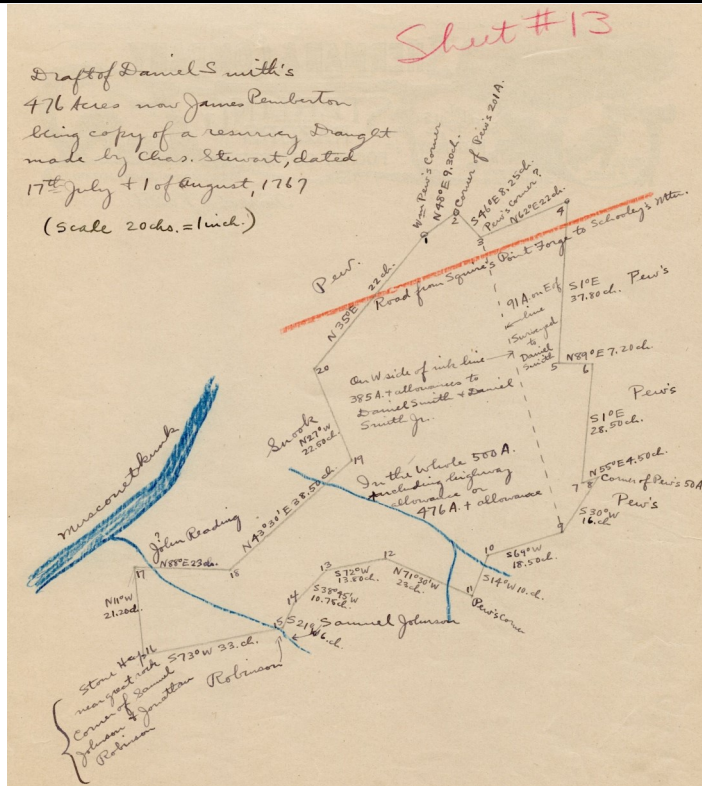
"This was overwhelming; it made me cry," Stephanie said. "We live on the West Coast and we're not near family so to have something really tangible, and it's still here, and we're finally able to see it, just warms my heart."

# From the Desk of HCHS Curator Cornelius

The theme of this edition's newsletter article is IN and OUT. As we have noted in recent articles, the rate at which donations have been coming IN to the Society has been excitingly high. I believe that I have noted both the quantity and quality of the donations to the HCHS Archives; and I would like to do so again in this article. Probably the largest recent donation we received is from Dennis Bertland. Dennis is an architectural historian and a consultant for historic preservation, and his firm Dennis Bertland Associates has been providing high quality research for clients in New Jersey for almost 40 years. Dennis has donated 15 boxes of project files of historical preservation research and research materials for State and National Registration nominations of historic sites completed by Dennis Bertland Associates, ca. 1980-2020. These materials will be a great research aid for scholars of historic preservation and specific sites in and around Hunterdon County.

Several interesting collections were received for all our genealogy fanatics. Carol Kemper donated two boxes of genealogical research that contained records of the Johnson/Bray/Coit Families (ca. 1800 – 1926), including reports, typescripts, transcriptions, original correspondence, research notes, photographs, original legal and personal papers, news clippings, and the diary of Cornelia Adelaide Johnson Coit. Molly McKaughan donated two boxes of genealogical research and records of the Leigh, Huffman, Porter, Van Syckle, Potts, King, and Large families, ca. 1825-1943. This diversified collection includes correspondence, genealogical research notes and reports, unpublished family genealogies, photographs, and personal and legal original manuscripts.

There have also been some historically valuable single item donations received. Everyone likes Sanborn Insurance maps, and we are fortunate that Will Miner chose to donate his copy of the Sanborn Map Company Atlas: Clinton and Annandale, NJ, 1938 [revised]. Honestly, though, because I am a history geek a donation by Kyle Keiderling is my personal favorite. It is a single piece of correspondence.



**From The D. Stanton Hammond III Collection #242**

In a letter to William Kennedy (the Vice President of the NJ Legislative Council) and Samuel Pennington (Speaker of the NJ Assembly), Mahlon Dickerson graciously accepts the nomination as Governor of New Jersey, 27 October 1815. Under the provisions of the first NJ Constitution (revised in 1844), the Governor was elected by the Legislature on an annual basis. Dickerson, A Democratic-Republican, served from October of 1815 to February of 1817. He was a major political figure in the first part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in NJ, and we are fortunate to have this acceptance letter from him in our collections.

So much for the IN; now for the OUT. I am both pleased and relieved to have finally completed the arrangement and description of our newest collection release, Collection No. 242, the D. Stanton Hammond III Map Collection. This collection contains a series of maps drawn and traced by D. Stanton Hammond, ca. 1912-1959. The drawings and tracings

are re-created from county surveys and other land records. They illustrate the change in land titles of individual properties over time. The bulk of the maps are from the Northern portion of Hunterdon County, NJ, especially Tewksbury and Lebanon Townships. There are larger and smaller maps from other areas as well. This collection would be of interest to anyone who wishes to research property land ownership in Hunterdon County, and to study the chains of property distribution over time.

Many people who have conducted research in the Garden State for genealogy or history are familiar with the name of D. Stanton Hammond III. He is the gentleman who is chiefly remembered for his genealogical maps that documented change in land ownership over time. In addition to the unique maps in this collection, you may be familiar or have even used his "Historical Map of Old Bergen 1660-1764", or the "Hunterdon County, NJ, 1688-1795" series of maps, and other maps from Gloucester, Cumberland, and Burlington Counties. Some of those are famous and are published and sold by the Genealogical Society of NJ. Take note, however, that this collection is not the same as the one you may be used to using for Hunterdon County! Some of the research in this archival collection may be used in his later works, but these maps and tracings are generally earlier works than his published material. Some of them are so "hyperlocal" they are difficult to identify. These drawings and maps in the Stanton Collection are unique materials local to the Hunterdon County area. We hope you enjoy using them!



# Wishes Fulfilled Thanks to Your Generosity

By Roger Ahrens

In our winter 2021-2022 newsletter, we asked members to help provide three much-needed items that could not be included in this year's budget: storage boxes for the 900 glass plate negatives in the recently donated Stryker Collection; a wireless, portable color printer for the Library; and a one-year subscription for video-editing software. The response to that "wish list" appeal has been simply overwhelming, and we couldn't be more grateful for the membership's generous donations.



**Asher Stryker and friends in Sergeantsville.  
From the Asher Stryker Photo Collection.**

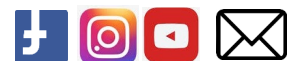
At our February Board meeting, one of our trustees challenged the other Board members by contributing the cost of two storage boxes. Nine others accepted the challenge, each buying two additional storage boxes.

The challenge was repeated at our spring meeting, and numerous members contributed either one or two more storage boxes. The mail brought additional donations, and a former trustee and a long-time friend each made large donations for this project. In all, over \$3,600 in donations was received, which will allow us to buy all of the needed boxes and plastic sleeves to preserve the Stryker Collection, and a scanner that will allow us to print these treasured negatives.

Two other members made individual donations to cover the purchase of the wireless, portable color printer for the library. Another member donated to buy the video-editing software.

Words cannot express our gratitude for these "wish list" gifts that will help us preserve our collections and better serve our members. Thank you, all!

HCHS received an operating support re-grant from the Hunterdon County Cultural & Heritage Commission, with funds from the NJ Historical Commission, a division of the Department of State.



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