

PRISON MUSEUM POST

Official Newsletter of the Historic Burlington County Prison Museum Association

Volume VII, Issue II

April 1, 2008

NEW MEMBERS: WELCOME ABOARD!

We thank everyone who renewed their membership and welcome several new members, including Renee Cote, Ray Holshue, County Historian Joe Laufer, Theresa Montalto, Hon. Karen Suter, Carol & Art Plumer, Elizabeth & Lynn Johnson, Regan Young of Regan Young England & Butera, the Law Firm of CaplanHaines of Mt. Laurel, Christopher Stockton, Esquire, of Taenzer, Ettenson, Stockton and Aberant of Moorestown, F.O.P. Lodge 116, Nanci Henrich, Dave "the Barber" Mount, the Mt. Holly Historical Society, Corey O'Neal, Eleanor Rich, Burlington County Sheriff Jean Stanfield and United Transportation Union Director Dan O'Connell. We also thank our attorneys, ParkerMcCay of Marlton, for their continued support.

Don't forget to renew if you haven't already done so. If your name is not on the list, it means we did not receive your renewal.

**Historic Burlington County Prison
Museum Association ("PMA")**
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Board of Trustees:
Joan Boas (Secy.), Michael Bright,
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Gary Woodend.

Curator: Marisa Bozarth
Chief Volunteer: Ron Reed

Prison Museum Post Editor: Janet Sozio
Associate Editor: Marisa Bozarth

Please help us preserve and promote the Prison Museum by joining the PMA. Our annual dues are only \$10. Membership benefits include a quarterly newsletter, event updates, 10% off gift shop purchases, and free admission to the museum. For an application, call the PMA office.

We also want to take the opportunity to gratefully acknowledge very generous donations from PMA members William Doyle and the Family of Carole Melman and Glenn Kenny.

PARANORMAL AND GHOST HUNTERS NEWS

Well, it's official: We're haunted !! Several interested parties gathered at the Mt. Holly Library on March 12 to watch the Ghosthunters episode featuring our Jail. Ghosthunters is a weekly docu-soap which follows the exploits of TAPS (The Atlantic Paranormal Society), a group of paranormal

researchers from Rhode Island. It was so exciting to see High Street, the Prison, Jail Curator Marisa Bozarth and Chief Volunteer Ron Reed on national television. As those of you who saw the show know, TAPS detected a "presence" which had apparently been smoking in the women's wing. Contrary to wild and ugly rumors, it was *not* actually PMA President Janet Sozio running around in the Jail in the middle of the night with a flashlight and a cigarette. If you didn't see the show, you can catch it on a rerun. It airs on Wednesdays at 9 p.m. on the SciFi Channel. The number of our visitors has risen dramatically since the show aired.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Burlington County's Earth Fair will be held on Sunday, June 8 at Smithville Park. The event, sponsored by the Freeholders, is free to the public and features entertainment, environmental displays, demonstrations, live animals, nature walks, and lots more. The PMA traditionally has a booth at this event at which we hand out material about the Jail. We need a volunteer or two to man the booth. Please call the PMA office if you're interested in helping with this. It's easy and fun.

We are still in the process of planning our May 17 event, History and Government Day. Elementary school children will be invited to tour Mt. Holly's historic sites, which will all be open for free. We will provide maps. Relief Fire Company's old pumper will be on display. We need volunteers. Don't be afraid - it's not rocket science, and the volunteers usually have as much or more fun than the guests at these things. Join us!

The Freeholders have given us permission to have the Haunted Event again this fall. Plans already underway and will reported in the next Post.

NEWSPAPER EXCERPTS

As our devoted readers know, we have for the last year or so reproduced excerpts from local papers in 1897. We continue in this issue to go back in time to the Burlington County of 111 years ago. It's fascinating to see how little things actually change. Divorce and domestic violence were

uncommon. While the internet and other technology are often blamed for today's marital discord, the bicycle was cited as a cause in 1897!

We have something special for you this month. It's another old newspaper article, but it's twice as old as the excerpts we usually present. This one is from 1730, and was written by none other than Benjamin Franklin for his wonderful *Pennsylvania Gazette*. Like many of the articles we feature, this one has to do with a trial in Mt. Holly. This was no ordinary trial, however. Here the scales of Justice were not just a metaphor! The defendants were accused of witchcraft. The alleged Wizard and Witch were said to make sheep dance and hogs sing Psalms. If only Ben had given us some names and the location of the "experiment"! This has all the makings of a great re-enactment. We'll keep you posted.

THIS 'N THAT

We recently received a notice from our insurance company that on December 26, 2007, President Bush signed into law the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Act, pursuant to which the PMA has the right to purchase insurance coverage for losses arising out of acts of terrorism. The Board of Trustees is investigating whether this insurance will cover us when people faint at the Haunt after being terrorized.....

Mt. Holly resident Jan L. Bastien has written a book called *Ghosts of Mount Holly*, a history of the town's haunted happenings. Jan's book visits firehouses, taverns, cemeteries and our old Jail to exhume those bits of the past whose clammy fingers still cling to the present. The book will be available for sale in our gift shop in late May.

Museum Hours: Wednesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sunday noon to 4 p.m.
(No admission after 3:30 p.m.)

Admission Fee: \$4 for adults, \$2 for students and seniors over age 55, and free for children under age 5
The tour is self guided. Guided tours and groups rates are also available. Call for further information.

PRISON MUSEUM ASSOCIATION MEMBERS
2008

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A WITCH TRIAL AT MOUNT HOLLY

Printed in *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, October 22, 1730.

BURLINGTON, Oct. 12. Saturday last at Mount Holly, about 8 Miles from this Place, near 300 People were gathered together to see an Experiment or two tried on some Persons accused of Witchcraft. It seems the Accused had been charged with making their Neighbors Sheep dance in an uncommon Manner, and with causing Hogs to speak, and sing Psalms, &c. to the great Terror and Amazement of the King's good and peaceable Subjects in this Province; and the Accusers being very positive that if the Accused were weighed in Scales against the Bible, the Bible would prove too heavy for them; or that, if they were bound and put into the River, they would swim; the said Accused desirous to make their Innocence appear, voluntarily offered to undergo the said Trials, if 2 of the most violent of their Accusers would be tried with them. Accordingly the Time and Place was agreed on, and advertised about the Country; The Accusers were 1 Man and 1 Woman; and the Accused the same. The Parties being met, and the People got together, a grand Consultation was held, before they proceeded to a Trial; in which it was agreed to use the Scales first; and a Committee of Men were appointed to search the Men, and a Committee of Women to search the Women, to see if they had any Thing of Weight about them, particularly Pins. After the Scrutiny was over, a huge great Bible belonging to the Justice of the Peace was provided, and a Lane through the Populace was made from the Justices House to the Scales, which were fixed on a Gallows erected for that Purpose opposite the House, that the Justice's Wife and the rest of the Ladies might see the Trial, without coming amongst the Mob; and after the Manner of Moorfields, a large Ring was also made. Then came out of the House a grave tall Man carrying the Holy Writ before the supposed Wizard, &c. (as solemnly as the Sword-bearer of London before the Lord Mayor) the Wizard was first put in the Scale, and over him was read a Chapter out of the Books of Moses, and then the Bible was put on the other

Scale, (which being kept down before) was immediately let go; but to the great Surprize of the Spectators, Flesh and Bones came down plump, and outweighed that great good Book by abundance. After the same Manner, the others were served, and their Lumps of Mortality severally were too heavy for Moses and all the Prophets and Apostles. This being over, the Accusers and the rest of the Mob, not satisfied with this Experiment, would have the Trial by Water; accordingly a most solemn Procession was made to the Mill-pond; where both Accused and Accusers being stripp'd (saving only to the Women their Shifts) were bound Hand and Foot, and severally placed in the Water, lengthways, from the Side of a Barge or Flat, having for Security only a Rope about the Middle of each, which was held by some in the Flat. The Accuser Man being thin and spare, with some Difficulty began to sink at last; but the rest every one of them swam very light upon the Water. A Sailor in the Flat jump'd out upon the Back of the Man accused, thinking to drive him down to the Bottom, but the Person bound, without any Help, came up some time before the other. The Woman Accuser, being told that she did not sink, would be duck'd a second Time; when she swam again as light as before. Upon which she declared, That she believed the Accused had bewitched her to make her so light, and that she would be duck'd again an Hundred Times, but she would duck the Devil out of her. The accused Man, being surpriz'd at his own Swimming, was not so confident of his Innocence as before, but said, *If I am a Witch, it is more than I know.* The more thinking Part of the Spectators were of Opinion, that any Person so bound and plac'd in the Water (unless they were mere Skin and Bones) would swim till their Breath was gone, and their Lungs fill'd with Water. But it being the general Belief of the Populace, that the Womens Shifts, and the Gaters with which they were bound help'd to support them; it is said they are to be tried again the next warm weather, naked.

MOUNT HOLLY HERALD
August 7, 1897

Florence. Edward Woodworth lost a child on Monday by cholera infantum... John Spotts, the downtown grocer, lost a valuable horse by death last Saturday... Frisky Pembertonians persistently angling after giddy Florentines, is now in order... The Board of Health should endeavor to abate the smoke nuisance at the Threadworks. Old garbage and refuse are thrown out and when the pile is sufficiently dried to burn the engineer sets fire to it, and then result is that a nauseating smoke and smell pervades the town sometimes for several days at a time.

Palmyra. Get yourself in shape for the ball to be given on Saturday evening in the pavilion at West Palmyra. None but good looking girls will be admitted, and the ticket taker is a judge of girls...A legal fight will probably arise over the stone road assessment. By advice of counsel, Albert Wallace has refused to pay his assessment of \$18, and the township will have to bring suit in order to learn whether it is right or wrong... The efforts to have Delaware Avenue made a 500-foot street is being opposed so vigorously by some of the property owners that it is doubtful if the progressive citizens, led by R.L. Temple, will succeed in their laudable intention to benefit the town.

Beverly. Reverend Frederick Real, of the Highway Mission Tabernacle of Philadelphia, and a number of his followers, came up on the boat to Beverly on Saturday afternoon, and held a religious meeting in Beverly Park. After the exercises Mr. Real baptized in the river 16 converts. The exercises attracted a large number of people and created considerable interest among the passengers in the boats going up and down the river.

Riverside. Thomas Seaman and his wife have dissolved partnership because of their failure to agree, and a suit for divorce will probably follow. Thomas is a blacksmith, and his wife says he is too fond of society, but Thomas must be given the benefit of the doubt in this case.

Merchantville. James and Maggie Brian, just released from the Camden County Jail, created consternation at the fashionable boarding house of John Rowbotham, by entering the dining room and demanding to be served. When ordered out, they refused to go, and their language sent the women folks flying in all directions. Officer Linderman had an exciting struggle with the couple, and when he conquered them the woman had to be taken to Justice Longstreth's office in a hack for the sake of decency. Her clothes were in tatters. Each was sentenced to 90 days.

Advertisement. Citron Lice. It is asserted by some of our Burlington County Farmers that gas lime will prevent lice from troubling canteloupe vines. The lime should be spread over the patch before the lice make their appearance. If you wish you can try it. I can furnish the lime at Forklanding or Centreton. George M. Wells, Moorestown.

Saturday, August 14, 1897

State News. Captain William Kinsey, of Cape May, will engage in the business of catching sharks to supply food for the seals and the other captives in the New York aquarium... James Recca, an Italian of Stockton, Hunterdon County, was arrested by Constable Hann on a charge of unlawfully having a rabbit in his possession. He was given a hearing before Magistrate Kline, who fined him \$26.25. Recca paid the fine and was released... The American Association of Educators of Colored Youth elected their officers at Atlantic City on Thursday night. The convention next year will be held in Wilmington, Delaware... Harvey Baldwin of Delaware, on Monday instituted a \$6,000 damage suit in the United States Circuit Court against the Trenton Match Company. He formerly worked in the factory, and claimed that owing to the poisonous fumes from the phosphorus he contracted a disease which ultimately required the removal of a part of his jaw. Baldwin holds the company responsible for not provided the necessary appliances to purify the air... Between the hundreds of divorce cases pending in the Court of Chancery at Trenton, the wife beating industry of the capital and other cities south of Trenton, and the insidious attacks of the Mormon literature with which the state is being flooded just now, the marital relations of Jersey women and Jersey men are proving a severe strain. There are pending in the Court of Chancery at least 1,100 divorces. Of these 1,100 attempts to remove the yolk the wife is the applicant in about 1,000 cases. In nearly every other instance "there is a woman in the case" but cruelty and the bicycle figure to a large extent. Some wives want absolute separation from their husband; others only from bed and board, and still others separation and alimony. In the capital city police courts on Monday, was the scene for more divorce cases. Four wife beaters were arraigned and held for the higher court. Edward Cornell knocked down his 60-year old spouse and beat her horribly. She is now in a critical condition. Dennis Quinn knocked his wife senseless in the street, and she had to be carried home. He attempted to torture her, Mrs. Quinn says. Augustus Frost pounded his wife on the head with a shoe, and Joseph Mullen kicked his wife out of the house. During the last week six wife beaters were arraigned at Trenton, four at Burlington, two at Bridgeton, three at Bordentown, one at Lambertville, two at Princeton, several at Camden, and probably another dozen in other small towns.