

# PRISON MUSEUM POST

The Official Newsletter of the Historic Burlington County Prison Museum Association  
Incorporated in 1966

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## PMA CELEBRATES 50 YEARS WITH NEW AUDIO TOUR

Approximately 60 of our members gathered on June 2, 2016 at Robin's Nest Restaurant to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the incorporation of the Prison Museum Association. We marked the occasion with the unveiling of our new audio tour.



Our self-guided tour is good as far as it goes, and is more than sufficient for those who are primarily interested in whether or not the place is haunted. We wanted, however, to provide something more for the many others who are actually interested in history. About 100 people have taken the audio tour so far and the feedback has been positive.

Our state-of-the-art headsets are the same as those used for the tour of Grand Central Terminal in New York City. The tour includes 18 "stops", which can be taken in any order. The visitor can skip some stops altogether or spend more time at other stops by pushing a button on the headset which gives additional information. Thus, the tour can be as long or as short as the visitor wants.

The first thing people see when they enter the Jail is the big front door with a bunch of bumps on it and two big locks. Those taking the audio tour learn that keeping lynch mobs and potential inmate rescuers out is almost as important as keeping inmates in. The front door is original and is made like the doors of early forts - two layers of 1" oak planks, the grains running crossways and filled with iron bolts (the bumps). Anyone trying to chop through the door would hit a bolt and break his axe blade. The County bought the big lock in 1819 for \$20 - a lot of money in those days. Before that, the door was locked with a heavy solid bar which still hangs next to the door.



Audio tour users also hear about the architect's use of fireproof materials, the fireplaces, the covered bridge connecting the Jail and warden's house, the "night waste" buckets and outhouses, why the windows are different sizes, the imprisonment of debtors, the graffiti, aspects of the Exercise Yard, treatment of female inmates, and much more. They can learn about prisoners who were executed and those who escaped. They can discover how a place gets to be a National Historic Landmark. There are interesting comments about people from Robert Mills to colorful inmates to Ellis Parker. There are comments about how the Jail was saved from being destroyed and why Mills' plans for reformation of inmates ultimately failed.

We will spend the next several months promoting the audio tour and we want to start by urging our readers to stop by and try it out.

## **THANK YOU TO DONORS**

The promotion and preservation of the Old Jail is important because it provides a truly unique window through which American history, architecture, criminal law, government (local and beyond), penology and sociology can be viewed. We do this promoting and preserving mainly through the maintenance of our data base, the *Prison Museum Post*, the website and now, the audio tour.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the money we raise from admissions, gift shop receipts and donations. We gratefully acknowledge the generous donations in 2016 of PMA members Vickie Bush, Carl and Rosemary Livingston, Susan Mathis, Norman and Harriett Miller, Pam and Brooke Tidswell, Dolly Emmons, Stan and Ellen Fayer, Florence Gomez, Rhondi Schwartz, Rocco Minervino, Karen Suter and Philip Haines.



## **THANK YOU ANDY SAHOL FOR ELLIS PARKER DIARY**

We received a wonderful donation recently from Andy Sahol, the grandson of the great Burlington County Detective, Ellis Parker. Parker, a Quaker born in Wrightstown in 1871, started his career as a detective when, as a teen, he hunted down some varmints who stole his horse and buggy while he was fiddling at a barn



dance. He was hired by the Monmouth, Burlington and Ocean County Detecting and Pursuing Association in 1891. Over the next 40 years, he solved 98% of the murders in Burlington County and became internationally known as the "American Sherlock Holmes". Possessed with uncanny deductive reasoning skills, he was one of the first "profilers".

Bordentown resident and PMA member Andy Sahol is Ellis Parker's grandson and has a wonderful collection of Parker memorabilia, including a work diary kept by Parker around 1905 and interviews related to criminal cases done by Parker in the 1920s. Andy graciously provided us with copies and we gratefully acknowledge his donation.

He also introduced us to a truly great book about Parker: *The Cunning Mulatto and other Cases of Ellis Parker, American Detective, Told by Fletcher Pratt*. Pratt was a very prolific American writer of science fiction, fantasy and history. Born in 1897 in upstate New York and raised on the Seneca Indian Reservation there, Pratt came to New York City in the 1920s. With the rise of science fiction magazines in the late 1920s, he began translating German and French sci-fi books before becoming a staff writer at *American Detective* magazine. A collection of his articles was published as *The Cunning Mulatto* in 1935. The dozen anecdotes trace how Parker doggedly followed even the slenderest leads to solve such cases as "The Left-Sided Man" and "The Seeds of Madness".



Pratt went on to write numerous history books, including the enduringly popular *Ordeal by Fire*, a narrative history of the Civil War. He died in Long Branch, NJ in 1956.

Pratt's work is direct and engaging: his articles on Ellis Parker's cases bring them to life like nothing we had ever seen and we hope to put them to good use in the future.

**Historic Burlington County Prison  
Museum Association ("PMA")**

P.O. Box 483, Mt. Holly, NJ 08060

PMA Office Fax: 609-261-5252

Museum/Gift Shop Phone: 609-265-5476

Email: [pma1811@verizon.net](mailto:pma1811@verizon.net)

Website: [www.prisonmuseum.net](http://www.prisonmuseum.net)

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Please help us preserve and promote the Prison Museum by joining the PMA. Our annual dues are only \$15(individual)/\$25 (family).

Membership benefits include a quarterly newsletter, event updates, 10% off gift shop purchases, and free admission to the museum.

Go on the website for an application.

## MOUNT HOLLY HERALD

*November 4, 1897* - The Mount Holly Herald (established in 1826) is published every Saturday morning (printed on Friday), from the office, 12 Main Street, opposite the Arcade Hotel, Mt. Holly, Burlington County, NJ. Terms: \$2.00 per year in advance. The Herald has a larger circulation than any paper published in Burlington County, consequently is the best advertising medium. Transient advertisements are inserted for 10 cents per line for the first and 5 cents per line for each subsequent insertion. For lengthy advertisements and those running for 2 months and longer, a reduction is made. Cards containing advertisement rates will be sent on application. Our facilities for doing job work are unsurpassed by any office in the county, as it is fitted up with three fast presses run by steam power and the latest styles of type. Our prices are as low as is consistent with good work and material. Address all business communications to William B. Wills, editor and proprietor of the Herald, Mt. Holly, NJ.

### *Advertisements:*

Eckard P. Budd, Law Office, 114 Main Street, Mt. Holly, near courthouse, prosecutor of the pleas for Burlington County. November 23, 1896

Aaron E. Burr, Attorney at Law, Moorestown, NJ. Detective work a speciality. June 20, 1896.

Dr. William M. Risdon, Dentist, 19 Main Street, opposite the Arcade, Mt. Holly, teeth extracted without pain by use of Estebrook's local anesthetic. October 17, 1896.

An Atchison, Kansas, woman goes once a month to court and takes out judgements for \$10 each against her two sons, the money being due according to an agreement, the consideration named in which is that the mother shall refrain from annoying the sons by her presence or talk. She says that the sons have defaulted in payments since last fall.

Bad cents around. Many bad cents are in circulation at different places throughout the country, and while no complaints have been made to the local authorities, they say that is probable that some of the counterfeits are in use now. The bad cents are excellent imitations. Most of them are dated 1696.



They are said to represent a good profit to the counterfeiters, for, it is estimated 110 of them can be made out of 10 or 12 cents worth of copper.

***Advertisements:***

Hood's sarsaparilla price \$1.00; 6 for \$5.00 "After I had typhoid fever, for a long time I could not get over the weak and languid feeling. I had no appetite and was taken with a terrible itching, burning heat on my limbs and hands. I was treated for a long time, but I did not get any better. I could not eat or sleep. A friend advised me to try Hood's Sarsaparilla, and I procured a bottle and began taking it. In a few days I felt better and could eat and sleep. I continued taking Hood's Sarsaparilla until I was entirely cured." (Mrs. R. Avery, Bergen, NY.)

"My little girl was almost blind, owing to a scrofulous trouble. We resorted to Hood's Sarsaparilla and today her eyes are perfectly well and she is the picture of health." (B. C. Allen, 221 West 61<sup>st</sup> Street, NY, NY.)

***Saturday, September 18, 1897 - Local Affairs:***

In consequence of a fall down stairs, Mrs. Bathsheba Bullock has been prostrated for several days. She is 85 years of age...

A family yow-yow on Budd Street last Monday resulted in Mrs. Rebecca Deck being held to bail for assault and battery on Mrs. Harry Myers...

On Friday last, a team of horses belonging to Thomas Carson, of Lumberton, ran away in Mt. Holly. They collided with Norcross' Grocery Wagon on Main Street and were brought to a halt without much damage being done...

The air was full of fever on Pine Street the other day, when Mrs. Edlemann and Mrs. Reeves got to talking about the war in Cuba. Finally Mrs. Reeves had Mrs. Edlemann arrested for assault. 'Squire Krayner heard the testimony, after which he discharged them....

The hog cholera has made its appearance in the neighborhood of Chesterfield. Within the past three past weeks, there has been a number of hog died, and still there is a number more reported on the sick list...

The annual meeting of the stockholders of the Mt. Holly Electric Light Company was held on Tuesday evening, when all of the old officers were re-elected and the usual of 5% declared payable October 1...

Last Monday seemed to be an off night with some of the residents of West Washington Street. A married woman and a single one started off on a lark. They met a couple of men who had no right to be out after dark, and all adjourned to the rear of the carpet mill, where they sat on the bank to listen to the katydids calling each other names. In the midst of all this lusciousness, the husband of the woman, who had been following up on his bicycle, suddenly appeared on the scene. With one blow he doubled up the married man and with his left he made the other chap take a header. The women fled just in time to avoid the rest of the cyclone. About this time, two other married women were having troubles of their own. They had been out in the afternoon for a few drops of dew, and in consequence, there was no supper ready for their husbands when they returned home from work. The result was two fights to a finish.

***Sporting Notes:***

At a meeting of the Mt. Holly Athletic Association on Wednesday evening, Walter T. Stewart was elected manager of the football team...

W.H. Thompson of Pemberton won third money at Bethlehem, PA on Tuesday with the bay gelding Millard Sanders. F.B. Shreve failed to get a place with Red Mantle...

The Florence baseball team is displaying considerable ginger at the close of the season. On Saturday last, they shut out the J.P. Seward Club of White Hill...

The Burlington baseball team had the chance of its life on Saturday. It came with the intention of defeating the Mt. Holly team, but the result was a shutout for Burlington. Mt. Holly scored 10 runs. The Burlington lads blamed Stecker for it all.

The open charge made in the Herald that Pemberton defrauded the State and County out of \$2,943 in taxes in 1896 has not been denied, nor can it be denied, for it is true; figures will not lie. The only explanation these officials can give for this swindle is that other townships do the same, which is the very



poorest excuse that can be given, but the same that Satan's imps always give for the commission of crime. But according to the reports of the assessors of adjoining townships at the recent meeting of the County Board of Assessors, it does not appear that other townships do anything of the kind. Now this is no laughing matter to be lightly passed over; it is a serious thing. Silence in the matter of this kind always means guilt. It is an indictable offense—with a penalty of fine and imprisonment... Another strange thing is that farmland in Pemberton Township is taxed just as high as it is in adjoining townships, if not higher. The farmers have never benefitted by this fraud, excepting a certain few, and these few happen to be large cranberry growers with the chief of them all at their head. No, the farmers are not benefitted by it; their taxes are just as high as they are in other townships, although the present accessor ran around and whispered confidentially in the ear of every farmer in the township: "I am going to reduce your taxes." The question of tax evasion in Pemberton Township cannot be ignored by silence or indifference. It, like Banquo's ghost, will not down. It is too glaring and open fraud, and the taxpayers demand that it be probed to the bottom.

### *Town Topics:*

The youthful warblers who have been giving open air concerts in the courthouse yard lately should get up a special program and invite the public to attend. It would be well worth hearing....

There is no excuse for a man remaining single in Mt. Holly anymore. Joshua Willits has only been a widower a short time, but he admits having already received several offers of marriage...

The Board of Education is discussing the advisability of inflicting a severe penalty on any boy caught whistling around school grounds that hackneyed tune "There'll be a hot time in the old town tonight." The teachers are becoming weary of it....

A well-dressed man who was slightly intoxicated collided with a female tramp on Madison Avenue last Wednesday morning, whereupon she drew off and banged him twice in the jaw. It quieted him instantaneously...

A day or two ago, Peter Donnelly, of Birmingham passed a monkey check on George Smith, of Bordentown, and got the money on it. The check was on the Freehold Banking Company, where Donnelly represented that he had money on deposit, but this proved to be false. Constable Richard Lamb, of New Hanover, arrested Donnelly at Mt. Holly on Tuesday.

### ***Mt. Holly Over A Century Ago.***

In the diary of Surgeon Albigeance Waldd, of the Connecticut line, November 19, 1777. Green's Division met at Mt. Holly, 5 miles East of Burlington, where we encamped till the evening of the 25<sup>th</sup>. Mt. Holly, so called from a little Mount Nigh, the town is a compact, pleasant village, having a great proportion of handsome women therein. Near this town is a wood, a hermit has dwelt these 27 years, living on bread and water. His bed is a hole dug in the ground about 1-1/2' below the surface, and covered at pleasure with a board. Over this is built a small bark hut hardly big enough for a man to sit up in. When he goes to bed he crawls into his hut and at the further end, slips into his hole which he calls his grave, drawing over the board and goes to sleep. He crawls night and morning on his hands and knees about 2 rods to a particular tree to pray. He says he was warned of God in a remarkable dream when he first came to America to take this course of life. He has many Latin and other books in his lonely cell, and is said to write considerably. He kisses every man's hand that visits him and thankfully accepts of what is given him, except money, which he refuses. His beard is done up in a loose club under his chin. He is small of stature and talks very fast. He talks but little English - chiefly German or Latin. He says he shall come out purified and live like other folks if he continues in this state until he is 80. He says he often wishes for death, being frequently afflicted with pains of body by this method of life. Much is said about the reasons of his doing penance in this manner, but chiefly that he murdered his own sister, and that he killed a gentleman in a duel while an officer in the French service. He was also in the German service among his Countrymen, the Germans.

***Local Affairs:*** A Springfield damsel who rode astraddle a horse excited a mild sensation on Main Street last Monday morning. She didn't seem to be at all annoyed by the attention she was receiving...



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