

# PRISON MUSEUM POST

*The Official Newsletter of the Historic Burlington County Prison Museum Association*

Volume X, Issue III

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## DID YOU RENEW?

By now you should have renewed your Prison Museum Association membership. If your name isn't on the current attached membership list, we haven't received your dues. If you have paid and your name isn't on the list, please call us and leave a message at 609-518-7667. We apologize for any problems anyone may have had in reaching us for the last month or so. We have experienced some technical difficulties relating to our office's temporary move to the Mt. Holly Library. We are now pretty much settled, and our phone and answering machine are working.

As you know, we are fast approaching the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Jail and everyone will surely want to go down in posterity as a card carrying member this year and next! So please join.

Unlike many organizations which expect members to donate a great deal of time and money, the PMA asks of most members only to help promote the Museum by spreading the word about it. Tell your clients, business associates,

friends, relatives and colleagues about us. Post the advertisement of the Haunt, leave copies of our brochures and the Post in your offices. Presentations about the Jail are available for school, senior citizen, Rotary and other organizations.

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

## THANK YOU

We wish to thank Rocco Minervino, The Melman Kenny Family, Barbara Westergaard, and Florence Gomez for their generous donations. We want to also thank everyone who donated a

few extra dollars to cover rising postage costs.

## INTERESTING VISITORS

The Museum continues to attract a wide range of people from far and wide. This summer a very nice 84 year old gentleman from Florida visited the Jail and enthralled us with his story. While researching his family over the internet, he found that his father's father had been incarcerated in our Jail. Further research uncovered the fact that his grandparents were immigrants who settled in Burlington in 1907. A year later, his grandfather assaulted his grandmother. A newspaper article reported that the grandmother appealed to a Judge Smith in Burlington, beseeching him to order her husband to provide her and their son passage back to Europe. The Judge replied that he would not break up a family, and thereupon directed the husband to buy a fancy dress for his wife to make amends for beating her. Shortly thereafter, she donned her new outfit and was about to go out in it when her husband, a barber, flew into a rage and attacked her with a shaving blade. Only the intervention of her 12 year old son saved her. This boy was our visitor's father, who always wondered how his father got a terrible scar on his hand. He never knew because his father never spoke of his parents or what had happened.

Our Jail held thousands of people during the 150 years it was in use. The history of the Jail includes not only the stories of the people who built, maintained and operated it and the stories of the many varied people who were incarcerated in it, but also the people who were indirectly affected. This is what makes our National Historic Landmark all the more special.

## HAUNT UPDATE

We are gearing up to start building the Haunted Event within the next couple of weeks. If you know anyone who would be interested in helping with the construction and/or acting, he or she should call 856-857-8053. We ask that PMA members "serve time" at the Jail on the evenings of the event to monitor the crowd and oversee ticket and concession sales. Leave a message

on our office answering machine (609-518-7667) to let us know if you will be able to help. Someone will call you back for scheduling.

## NEW WEBSITE

The PMA has had a very busy summer. We have moved into our new temporary office at the Mt. Holly Library. We have embarked on a project to revamp our website. Many thanks go to PMA Board Member Carole Melman for the countless hours of time she has spent and continues to spend on this project. We hope to complete it by mid-September.

## OUTREACH TO SCHOOLS

This summer, the PMA participated in a teacher expo in Cherry Hill which was attended by teachers in the Burlington/Camden/Gloucester County area. Many of the teachers in attendance were unaware of the existence of our museum, confirming our belief that much needs to be done to promote the site, even within our own county. Maintenance of the building, acquisition of artifacts, creation of exhibits and development of events is all very important. Unless the public, especially residents of our county, knows of it, though, it's all for naught. The PMA continues to be committed to a mission of promoting the site.

We are especially committed to putting the word out to area schools that the Prison Museum is a wonderful resource for instruction on history, art, architecture and sociology. If educators want further information on what is available, either by way of a tour of the Museum or a presentation made at their site, they can call the County Parks Department at 609-265-5858 or the Prison Museum Association at 609-518-7667.

## THIS 'N THAT

We are doing something a little different with the old newspaper excerpts this month. We usually print excerpts from the late nineteenth century. This month we are going back a little further, to the 1820s and 1830s. It is amazing to think that our country was only about 50 years old at the time. Our Jail was still relatively new as well.... Work continues on the Warden's House. What a hot summer it has been for the workmen!.... We are currently focused on the Haunt, which will be here before we know it. As soon as it's over, though, we will be jumping right in to plans for the Bicentennial celebration and hope to be able to report some preliminaries to you in our winter issue. Anyone wishing to serve on the bicentennial committee should contact us at the office number ...We hope to have our model steamship, described in the last issue of the *Post*, refurbished and ready to unveil as an exhibit at the bicentennial along with a new book...More in the next issue, which we will put out just before the Haunt starts in October....Please remember to help us promote the Museum any way you can, and call us to help at the Haunt. It's easy and fun.... Hope to see you there.

**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.

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## MOUNT HOLLY MIRROR

**November 11, 1826**

*We copy the following advertisement from a Bedford paper:*

Caution: Whereas it has become necessary to publish my wife NANCY, who has without any just cause left my bed and board. When I married her, she promised among other things, to be obedient, and to be true to my bed etc., which promises she appears to have entirely forgotten. In order to remind her of it, I lately gave her a few strokes with a small switch. Instead of this producing reformation as I expected, it only called forth ill language, and she left my house bag and baggage, threatening to run me in debt all she could. I therefore hereby caution all persons against trusting my said wife Nancy on my account, as I will not pay any debts of her contriving. John Pitman.

**January 21, 1836**

Since the new arrangement of the Mails, we can make no kind of calculation as to the time of receiving our exchange papers. The State Gazette, of the 8<sup>th</sup> inst., was not received, by us, until the evening of the 16<sup>th</sup> - 8 days from Trenton, that is nearly two and a half miles a day.

**April 6, 1837**

Resolution of special meeting of Board of Chosen Freeholders on Surplus Review: Board to loan out on mortgages.

**July 27, 1827**

Melancholy Accident - On Thursday afternoon the 14<sup>th</sup> inst, between 4 and 5 o'clock, Mr. John Southwick, son of Allen Southwick of Vincentown, while fishing with a net, and while endeavoring to cross a small stream just about Vincentown which runs into the Rancocas, and which was deeper than he expected, was carried by the force of the current into the Rancocas, and drowned.

He had hold of the net while crossing the stream, and being carried away by it, the net caught in a snag at the bottom of the Rancocas, and he continuing his hold on the net, probably with the hope of being drawn out, was kept continually under water, and thus was drowned; it being impossible to draw the net from the snag.

August 10, 1837

Notice

Articles of separation having been signed between me the subscriber and my wife Mary, and all property of which she was possessed at the time of the intermarriage between us, and other property having been placed at her separate and exclusive control released from all right in me to interfere in the disposition of it; the public are hereby warned not to trust the said Mary Bennet on my account, as I shall not be legally liable for, and will not pay any debts she may contract.

Samuel Bennet

Dated July 3, 1827

January 22, 1823

To: Sportsmen  
From: The New York Censor

A challenge - New York vs. Virginia

I offer to bet 100 gallons of whiskey, to fight my dog Grumbo, (a native of New York) with any man's dog living in the state of Virginia - to meet on the public ground in Pittsburgh, and time in May next.

**September 17, 1823**

Catalog of Fruit Items  
40 variety apples  
9 variety cider apples  
8 variety pears  
6 variety plums  
9 variety peaches

**October 19, 1825**

Fire. On the evening of the 10<sup>th</sup> inst. a large and valuable four story fire proof store, No. 49 Front Street, NY, occupied by Messrs. Wardell, Van Buren & Co. grocers, was destroyed by fire, with most of its contents.

**April 22, 1822**

#### **MUSKRATTING**

Salem (NJ) March 20

We are informed that one man in this county, caught two hundred and ten in two nights; and another, Mr. John Hildreth, took in one night, one hundred and expects to make up the round number of two thousand during the season - which at the present high price of about forty cents a piece, will bring the sum of eight hundred dollars; a good winter's work for a Farmer.

**May 22, 1822**

#### **LAWYERS**

According to the Asiatic Researcher, a very curious mode of trying the title of land is practiced in Hindostan. Two holes are dug in the disputed spot, in each of which the plaintiff and defendant's lawyers put one of their legs, and remain there until one of them is tired, or complains of being stung by the insects in which case his client is defeated. In this country, it is the client, and not the lawyer, who *puts his foot in it.*