

Vol III Issue 2

HISTORIC BURLINGTON COUNTY PRISON MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR!
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP SOCIAL - SATURDAY, MAY 21 at 10 A.M.

May 13, 2005

Dear PMA Members and Other Friends:

Many heartfelt thanks to those of you who renewed your memberships. Enclosed are your membership cards. If your name is not on the attached list of members, we did not receive your renewal, and this will be the last newsletter you receive. If you have misplaced your membership renewal form, and still want to renew, give us a call.

The meeting on May 21 will be purely social. We figure that all the business conducted at the February meeting was enough to last us the year! Weather permitting, we will meet in the exercise yard, where we will ceremonially plant our garden exhibit. In the event of inclement weather, we will meet in the PMA office. Either way, coffee and donuts will be served.

The Joel Clough confession should be printed by the meeting date. All in attendance will receive a free copy.

Attendees will also be able to see the wonderful job which the Parks Department's Buildings and Grounds workers did on the walkway, which had been in substantial disrepair. They could have just patched it up, but instead did the right thing and practically rebuilt it. Now it is dry and safe, and the odor of decay is gone. The quality of the workmanship is impressive.

Marisa Bozarth has practically completed the graffiti photo album. We are still working on the podium for it, but the album will be available at the meeting to those who want to take a peek. The album is "G" rated; we didn't include any of the more salty graffiti. We're considering a second, "R" rated album for adults only, which we expect would be a big draw!

The gift shop is humming along. We were able to find some more copies of the Mount Holly pictural history book, which had sold out. We also have for sale some very nice Mount Holly souvenir throws featuring historic sites.

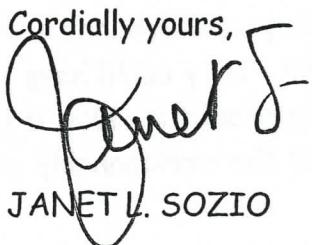
The big news is that the County has given the okay for the Haunted Prison in October of this year. More to come on this in the next newsletter.

I thought I would do something a little different this time with the historical portion of the newsletter. Instead of newspaper excerpts, I am giving you excerpts from an Atlas of Burlington County which was printed in 1876. The Pemberton Township Historic Trust reprinted it in 2002 and they sell it at their historical train station in Pemberton. Most of you would undoubtedly find this quite interesting and should pick up a copy. It includes maps of each town in the county at the time, with names of landowners. It also has drawings of various farmhouses. I bought a copy last year at their booth at the Earth Fair. (By the way, the Earth Fair will be held this year at Smithville on Sunday, June 12. We'll have a booth and would appreciate any help any of you would like to give us in manning it.)

The Atlas provides a narrative description of each town and its history. I was amazed to find that many early Burlington County residents lived in caves! The Atlas indicates that with the exception of Bordentown, all was pretty well in Burlington County a hundred years after the United States was founded. Poor Bordentown appears to have suffered a reversal of fortune around that time, although the reason is not clear from the Atlas. I was particularly interested in the section on Willingboro, where I grew up. My late grandmother attended the brick schoolhouse referred to in that section.

Hope to see you on May 21. Until then, I remain,

Cordially yours,


Janet L. SOZIO

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Marybeth Baron, Esq. & Richard Baron
Joan Boas
Attendant Marisa Bozarth
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Any Tumaian
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EXCERPTS FROM THE NEW HISTORICAL ATLAS OF BURLINGTON COUNTY, 1876

BASS RIVER TOWNSHIP

There are two hotels in the place, three or four stores, one blacksmith shop, and two saw mills. All those living in the southern part follow the sea for a livelihood, being fishermen, oyster men, &c. A large portion of this township is sterile and barren, and covered with a dense growth of scrub oak and pine. As the ground becomes cleared, there is no doubt that other industries will spring up, and places now thought worthless may be cultivated to great advantage.

BEVERLY TOWNSHIP

This small but compact township was organized from the Township of Willingboro on the 1st of March, 1859, to accommodate the increase of population arising from its favorable location. It has only been about 30 years since the old ferry wharf disappeared, to give place to the present large landing pier. Steamers are also constantly plying between it and Philadelphia, and in the summer and fall they are crowded with Philadelphians who spend the season in Beverly. It has a permanent population of about 3000, and is quite a business place. About a mile north of Beverly is the village of Edgewater, which is a collection of fine dwellings and country seats. Delanco is a small town on the Delaware River, and also, with Edgewater, is a station on the Camden and Amboy Division of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

BURLINGTON TOWNSHIP

Burlington City, the chief town, is beautifully situated on the banks of the Delaware, nearly opposite the town of Bristol in Pennsylvania. Being on the direct line of travel between New York and Philadelphia, Burlington is a thriving town, and does a great deal of business with both, but principally with the latter, with which it has frequent daily connections by rail and water. There is a bank, a public library and a public reading room of the Board of Trade, and a preparatory college in Burlington, and several weekly papers are published. Burlington is also the terminus of the Burlington and Mt. Holly Railroad, which has several trains running every day, each way, between those places.

BORDENTOWN TOWNSHIP

Bordentown Township was formed from parts of Chesterfield and Mansfield. The City of Bordentown is on an elevated plateau, has many fine buildings, and is a thriving business place. The Bellevue Female Seminary was started here in October, 1842. It is also the terminal point of the Delaware and Raritan Canal. The present year (1875), large works are in process of erection for a sewing machine factory, which will employ many hundred men, and will give a new impetus to its growth.

CHESTER TOWNSHIP

The original Township of Chester was one of the first established in Burlington County. It then embraced Cinnaminson. It was, like the other river townships, settled very early, probably soon after Salem and Burlington. Moorestown, its principal town, is a village of churches. Part of the British troops, on the march from Philadelphia to Monmouth, passed through Moorestown on June 19, 1778. While there, the troops plundered the people wherever they could find any valuables. Many efforts were made to conceal valuables, and sometimes very laughable expedients were resorted to. One individual had just succeeded in burying his goods, when he saw the gleam of approaching bayonets. Fearing the damp appearance of the dirt just filled in might betray the place, he dashed some water over it, and then throwing down some corn on the place, he called his hogs, who soon trampled it, and he saved the goods.

CHESTERFIELD TOWNSHIP

Chesterfield, one of the original townships, was curtailed in 1852, by taking from it Bordentown Township. Crosswicke and Recklesstown are the two principal places in the township. Near the town there is a bed of bog iron ore, which in former times was extensively worked, and the ore transported to furnaces.

CINNAMINSON TOWNSHIP

Riverside and Riverton, as their names would indicate, are small towns upon the river front, which have sprung up since the railroad was built. They are railroad stations, and many of the Philadelphia merchants and wealthy citizens have taken advantage of their easy access, and built country houses at those places. Cinnaminson is a well-built place, and has quite a number of business houses. There are good schools in this township, and being so near and in such easy communication with the City of Philadelphia, the youth of both sexes, who desire education in the higher branches, can attend school there.

EVESHAM TOWNSHIP

The Township of Evesham contained at one time, besides what are now its present limits, Mt. Laurel, Medford and part of Lumberton. Medford Township was taken from it in 1847, and Mt. Laurel in 1872. The first settlement made in Evesham was made by William and Elizabeth Evans, who emigrated to this country from Wales in the 1860s. When they first settled, the country around was an unbroken wilderness, and they had no neighbors but the Indians. They were obliged to dig a cave to live in, as there were no facilities for house building. They built their cave dwelling near what is now Mt. Laurel, and William died in it about 1728, and his wife a few years after, having prospered in their affairs and acquired large tracts of land.

FLORENCE TOWNSHIP

Florence Township was organized in 1869 from Mansfield. Florence, the principal town, occupies a very handsome site on the Delaware River. Kinkora, a couple of miles north of the town of Florence, is more of a manufacturing place than the latter. On the river, there is considerable business done sawing lumber, and there is a shipyard of considerable importance.

The village of Three Tuns is a very old settlement, but has not attained to any size or importance.

MANSFIELD TOWNSHIP

This, which was one of the original organized townships, has been largely reduced by the formation of Florence and Bordentown. Columbus, the principal town, is a place of considerable importance. It was originally settled by members of the Society of Friends. Amongst the first, if not the first, was Thomas Scattergood, a member of that society, who came from England. He purchased 160 acres of land on Craft's Creek. Scattergood's wife came with him to his new home. They lived in a cave on the south bank of the creek, where he reared nine children. He was noted for his kind and liberal treatment of the Indians, who were always on good terms with him.

MEDFORD TOWNSHIP

Medford is the principal town, and is one of the oldest settlements in the County. Until 1800, Medford was but a very small place and was called Upper Evesham. In 1840, it had only attained the dignity of a good sized village, and was then laid out but with one street. At present, the town of Medford has made great progress in population and improvements. The one street has increased to a dozen, and from a village of a few score it has an incorporated town of nearly 1000 inhabitants. Crossroads is a small village in the northwest part of the township. Within the past few years it has doubled in size and population. One of the most enterprising of its citizens and an example of a man triumphing over every difficulty, is Dr. Still (colored), who, from a poor, friendless boy, has become a finely educated physician, with an extensive practice, and now one of the largest real estate owners in his section. Chairville is a couple of miles east of Medford. It was so called on account of a large chair factory there. The factory has gone, but the name remains. It is a small place, and is only enlivened once a year by the arrival of the cranberry pickers. Taunton, in the southwest portion, is a collection of houses belonging to Joseph Hinchman, who has large cranberry meadows in the neighborhood. The place is a very beautiful one, and being a sort of oasis in the midst of a pine and scrub oak barren, is extremely attractive.

SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP

This is one of the original townships. The population in 1840 was 1632, and in 1870 it had only increased to 1766. Of all the townships in the county, this is perhaps the most essentially agricultural, there being no manufactures of any kind carried on, except wagon building and repairing, and pursuits immediately connected farming.

WESTAMPTON TOWNSHIP

Timbuctoo, Unionville and Smithville are small settlements that have not made much progress in the past 50 years. The first is a settlement of colored people, and contains about 150 persons. It is about two miles from Mt. Holly. Unionville is a small place about a mile from Mt. Holly, on the Jobstown Turnpike. It was formerly called Turpentine by the old settlers. Smithville is in the southeastern part of the township, on the north branch of the Rancocas. It is a manufacturing village, and was formerly called Shreveville, after one of the original settlers, who put up the first mill.

WILLINGBORO TOWNSHIP

This is one of the original townships. It was reduced in size, by the organization of Beverly Township, in March 1859. The population in 1870 was 750, the greater part of which is concentrated in the town of Rancocas, on the Beverly Turnpike Road. This town is of comparatively recent growth. There are many fine business houses and several churches. There are two school buildings, one of which, a brick building, is used for the town meetings whenever they occur. On the site of the Franklin Park Academy, at Rancocas, there formerly stood the mansions of the last royal governor of New Jersey, William Franklin, the son of Benjamin Franklin. It was destroyed by fire about 1839. Close to the present town was an Indian graveyard, and traces of it can be found to the present day. Being favorably situated at such convenient distance between Burlington, Beverly and Mt. Holly, and having cheap water carriage for freight, there is no doubt that Rancocas will, at no very future day, become a large town. It is admirably situated to become a great distributing point.

WOODLAND TOWNSHIP

This township is the largest in extent and the smallest in population of any in the County, having an area of 73,459 acres, and a population in 1870 of only 389. Its settlement is of comparatively recent date, and most of its surface is covered with an unbroken growth of pine and oak thicket. The only place of any size is Shamong, a station on the line of the New Jersey Southern Railroad. In some of the more ancient maps, this whole section is put down for the student of geography as "Barren Desert".

MT. LAUREL TOWNSHIP

This township was part of Evesham until 1872. It contains about 13,000 acres, and is level or undulating, with the exception of a few hills in the southeast part. The inhabitants are chiefly of an agricultural class, and much of the township is in a high state of cultivation and very productive. There are no large towns in its limits. Fellowship is a small place in the western part. Mt. Laurel and Colemantown are villages in the southeast portion. The former is quite a brisk little place, with several business places, meeting house, church, school, &c.

NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP

Mt. Holly, which is the County Seat of Burlington County, is one of the earliest places settled in it. It was called Bridgtown in its first settlement, but was afterwards called by its present name from the hill in the northern part of the town, upon which grew a dense grove of holly trees. From the beginning of the present century until within the past five years, the growth of Mt. Holly has been very gradual. In the time of the Revolutionary War there were fully 200 buildings. After the County Courts were removed here, it increased considerably in population, and some fine residences were erected. Mt. Holly has considerable pretensions as a manufacturing town. It has a very large and complete cotton factory, two large machine works and foundries, several canning mills, saw and flour mills, and other manufacturing establishments. It has, besides, two national banks and a banking and trust company, and supports two weekly papers.

SHAMONG TOWNSHIP

The population of Shamong Township in 1870 was 1149. The principal towns are Shamong, Fruitland, Tabernacle, Atsion and Flyat. Tabernacle is a small village in the extreme northern corner, and contains a hotel, a few stores, &c. Shamong is on the Bread and Cheese Run in the northwest part. It has improved in population and wealth considerably within the last few years, especially since the running of the New Jersey Southern Railroad.

SOUTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP

The principal towns in this township are Vincentown, at the junction of Stop the Jade Creek and South Branch of Rancocas Creek, and Red Lion, near Bear Swamp River, in the southern part. A very curious character died near Vincentown January 19, 1778. His name was Francis Furgler, and for 25 years before he died, he had his residence in a thick forest, and slept in an old log hollowed out for that purpose. He was an uncommunicative and taciturn man. He was found dead, with a small crucifix and a brass fish by his side. He died at the age of 66 years, and his remains were buried in the Friends' Burial Town at Mt. Holly. Since the railroad was built to Vincentown it has assumed more of a business aspect, and several branches of manufacturers have been started. The population is now about 1500.