

HISTORIC BURLINGTON COUNTY PRISON MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

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September 13, 2004

Dear PMA Members:

I am getting this, my last newsletter of 2004, out a month early because I wanted to include the invitation for a wine and cheese happy hour fundraiser we have planned for on October 1. I hope you can make it.

Proceeds will be applied to two projects which we hope to complete within the coming months. The first is an exhibit of Robert Mills' original plans for the Jail. As unbelievable as it sounds, the plans, written in the man's own hand, surfaced recently in a desk drawer at the Mount Holly Library. We don't yet have possession of the actual documents; the Freeholders, through the County Solicitor's Office, are in the midst of working out their transfer. I feel certain, however, that we will ultimately have them. When we get them, we will need to have a proper case in which to store and display them. Hear more about it at the Happy Hour.

The second project involves our beloved graffiti. Some of you remember all the debates of years past relative to the preservation of the graffiti. There was ultimately no way that all of it could be preserved. We had photographs taken of the graffiti that had to be removed. We are now in the process of having them put onto a computer disk for a possible future computer exhibit. We will also have them made into large photos to be put into an album which will be displayed.

Things were hopping at the Jail this summer. On August 18, the exercise yard was the setting of a barbeque held by the Burlington County Military Affairs Committee, which acts as a liaison between our local government and the local military bases. The Mt. Holly Elks provided the food for about 150 soldiers,

sailors, airmen and Marines. They had a ball and loved our old Jail. I had the pleasure of guiding many of them around the Jail, including the commander of Ft. Dix.

We will have a booth manned by PMA Trustee Carole Melman at the Cultural and Heritage Commission's Articulture event on Sunday, September 19, 2004 at Smithville. We will display some photos of our graffiti as our contribution to this local arts festival. Carole will be there from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and will be very appreciative of any help any of you may want to extend her that day.

Our newspaper excerpts this time are from 1941. I felt a sort of apprehension as I read through the year, knowing the horrible catastrophe which would come in December. I was simply amazed at all the local people we had in the Pacific on that day. In fact, I know for a fact that we had even more than the paper mentioned; for example, PMA member Jean Bowers' late husband, Joe, was also stationed on a ship docked at Pearl Harbor that day. He survived because he happened to get up early that morning and went ashore to have breakfast.

Don't you just love the advertisement for the "lean brisket" ? 6 cents a pound! The store owner was the father of retired superior court chancery judge Myron Gottlieb.

We also took special note of the reference to the vegetable garden in the exercise yard which the prisoners tended over the years. We tried to revive it this year with a few tomato plants. Visitors were charmed by our little "tomato exhibit". Unfortunately, our exhibit died upon being sprayed with weed killer by some overzealous groundskeepers! Well, there's always next year.

I look forward to seeing you on October 1. Look for our next newsletter in the spring of 2005. Wishing you health and happiness as we go into our fall and winter season, I remain,

Cordially yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janet", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

JANET L. SOZIO

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MOUNT HOLLY HERALD

January 3, 1941

Advertisement

WE KNOW MEATS! Gottlieb's.
Cor. Mill & Pine Sts. Mount Holly.
Lean Brisket or Plate Beef 6¢/lb. Pure
Pork Sausage 2lbs/35¢. Meaty Scrapple
3lbs/25¢.

January 3, 1941 Among 113 New Jersey residents who successfully passed October Bar Examinations are Sidney W. Bookbinder, of Burlington....
Arrested after police had fired a shot that deflated his automobile tire and caused the car to overturn on Route 25, near Burlington Monday, James T. Johnson of Bordentown was arrested...police, who chased Johnson, said that his car barely missed several other machines before he was stopped (*Note from Janet: Route 25 was Route 130. Automobiles were referred to as "machines".*)

Friday, January 3, 1941 Burlington County's political cauldron, which almost boiled over during the final days of the closing year, simmered down yesterday afternoon as four members of the Board of Freeholders attained an on the surface harmony which brought little change in the personnel of the County Board as it reorganized at the court house here. Phillip S. Irons, Mt. Holly insurance broker, was appointed Clerk of the Board of Freeholders. Lester A. Drenk was

appointed Solicitor of the Board...it was voted to authorize the Director of Institutions to hire an investigator to collect delinquent payments to county institutions. The salary will be \$1,500 per year. Mario Farias, Beverly Councilman, has been serving in this capacity on a six months appointment.

January 3, 1941 Samuel Force, 27, of Riverton, gave two people a shock Tuesday night when he walked away from the Burlington County Jail after being committed there for non-support of his wife. The first who was shocked is Warden John Conroy, who received his big surprise when he found that Force had escaped his guard. The second was a Philadelphia woman who came to Mt. Holly later in the evening, to bail out Force. She nearly fainted when Conroy told her Force was charged with failing to support his wife. "I had expected to marry him next week!" the woman said. Although he effected a clever escape, Force's freedom was short-lived, for he was apprehended Wednesday by Philadelphia police.

January 24, 1941 Several hundred Burlington County residents who in previous years have not paid Federal income taxes, will this year be required to make their contribution to the nation's National Defense Fund. Income tax returns must be filed by March 15. Who must file a return? Every single person having a gross income of \$800 or more...

January 31, 1941 More than half of last year's total commitments to the Burlington County Jail comprised disorderlies, it was revealed yesterday by Sheriff F. George Furth. A final tabulation of figures from 1940 jail records show that 610 of the total 1,086 committed during the year were sent to the jail on disorderly charges...the average daily population in the jail during the last year was 45. During the 12 months, the highest daily population was in January, with 56. The high number of disorderly commitments during the year raised the County costs considerably, but Sheriff Furth estimates that more than \$2,000 was saved the County during the year by voluntary work of the prisoners in the court house grounds and in painting the interior of the jail...the average cost per meal for feeding prisoners is 7½¢.

February 28, 1941 The budget for Mansfield Township for 1941 will total \$37,659.68 and the tax rate will be \$3.99. The actual budget for 1940 was \$34,520.36 and the tax rate was \$3.66. The increase for 1941 is due to items over with the Township Committee has no control.

March 21, 1941 Burlington County's population last year was 97,013, according to official 1940 Census figures, just announced. Figures for the County follow: Burlington City 10,905, Mansfield Township 1,642, Mt. Laurel, 2,189, Pemberton Borough 906, Riverside

Township 7,072, Springfield Township 299, Woodland Township 1,347...

April 4, 1941 Completing his first year as County Prosecutor of the Pleas, Daniel Lichtenthal will celebrate his 36th birthday tomorrow. The observance can call for a little celebrating on Dan's part, too, because he has turned in a fine record during his first 12 months. Crime in Burlington County has not been marked by sensational cases, but the prosecutor has had plenty to keep him busy. More than 500 individual cases have passed through Lichtenthal's office since last April 5. Not many offenders have gone to a jury trial, however. Following the theory of his predecessor, Senator Howard Eastwood, Lichtenthal has endeavored to save the taxpayers as much as possible by keeping jury trials to a minimum. This is accomplished through complete investigation of cases and by persuading offenders that they will be much wiser to plead guilty and take the consequences.

April 18, 1941 Cleanup of sanitary conditions at the ancient Burlington County Jail recommended several months ago by the Grand Jury and a citizens' investigating committee appointed by the Freeholders, started this week. Using prison labor, Freeholder Frederick Norcross, head of the Buildings Department, started work that he said would result in entirely new sanitary equipment in the lockup. The program closely followed bitter criticism of the jail's sanitary condition, made last Friday night at a meeting of the County Municipal Association. Mayor

John C. Ward of Palmyra said that in his opinion "the jail is antiquated, unsanitary and not large enough for the demands made on it. Further, I have on occasion been requested by those in charge to release prisoners I had committed in order to relieve the overcrowded condition. Also, as Chairman of the Palmyra Venereal Control Board, I had been advised by County officials that there were no facilities to provide for the isolation of syphilitics who refused treatment as provided by the Health Department." The Freeholders appropriated \$5,000 to remodel the sanitary system. There will be new washbasins, five sanitary wash tubs placed in cell blocks, six showers or new tubs, new toilets and other revisions.

May 16, 1941 New Egypt residents were given a demonstration of the new dial telephone Wednesday, when Bell Telephone Company officials exhibited the phones to be put into use here.

May 16, 1941 Did you know that Pemberton was once New Mills and the first Methodist Church in West Jersey was built there? That Juliustown derived its name from Julius Ewan, an early settler? That Jobstown was named after Jobe Lippincott, who kept the first tavern there? That Medford was once known as Shinntown...it was named Medford by Mark Reeve, after he had visited Medford, Mass., and liked the place...Reeve is believed to have been the first storekeeper.

July 4, 1941 Possibility of a Federal Grant to provide funds for a sewage disposal plant in Mt. Holly was discussed at a special meeting of a Chamber of Commerce committee Wednesday. Appropriation of \$150 million of federal funds to provide sanitary and other facilities for towns in National Defense areas, was made in a bill passed by the House in Washington recently.

August 8, 1941 Harold T. "Piney" Parker, Mt. Holly attorney, has a big smile for the photographer as he displays the 50 pounds, 9 ounces, white marlin - the first of the season - he caught off Atlantic City last week.

August 15, 1941 All but one of 99 voters approved the proposal to change Medford Lakes form of government from councilmanic to commission. The growth of the colony here during the "depression years" has been phenomenal, according to officials. When the colony began in 1927 there were 9 cabins with a population of 34. In 1941 there are 259 cabins with a Summer population of 1,105. The number of year round residents is increasing every year.

September 5, 1941 Discouraged with life, fearful that the future held nothing for him, and tired of fighting against odds, Fred Smith tried to get away from it all Tuesday. Smith, 36, a prisoner at the County Jail, attempted to hang himself with a piece of baling wire. Vigilance of a fellow prisoner saved his life and he is now recovering at the Burlington County Hospital. A native of Elizabeth, Smith was arrested in Cinnaminson recently, and

sentenced to 30 days on a disorderly charge. He had served 16 days when he attempted to commit suicide.

October 3, 1941 Expenditure of less than \$5,000 for plumbing improvements to the ancient Burlington County Jail has obviated the necessity of building a new jail or an expensive annex for several years, county officials believe....elimination of the high cost of water which has worried county and jail officials for many years, is thought to have been secured through installation of a new water line from mains in Grant Street common near the jail. Inspection of the water supply pipes disclosed that large quantities of water had been lost for a long time. Several pipes, near the much talked of "subway" section had been apparently leaking underground for years. *(Note from Janet: the "subway" is the hallway in the basement. Prisoners slept in bunk beds which were put up along the wall when there were not enough cells to go around.)*

October 31, 1941 Sane, humanitarian administration of the county jail – coupled with strict enforcement of regulations – is the policy of Undersheriff Raymond Johnson, whose deputy job during the past six years has been centered in operating the jail. "The prisoners are human beings and should be treated as such, and they should be given clean and sanitary quarters in which to live. But it must be remembered that they are sent to jail for punishment for some crime...they have a penalty to pay

...at the same time, whenever it is possible to help them to rehabilitate themselves, we try to do it with the few facilities that we have in the jail." The vegetable and flower garden – seen by few citizens but an important part of the outdoor activity of the jail during Summer months – is maintained by the prisoners, carrying out Johnson's program of "keep them busy". Six years after he entered the office as a deputy, Johnson hopes to spend the next three years as Sheriff. He is a republican candidate in next Tuesday's election. A Riverside resident, Johnson is married and a father of a son.

November 28, 1941 Increased guard service to avoid future escapes from the jail has been put into operation this week, Sheriff Johnson revealed yesterday. Through a checkup system, day and night wardens will be required to make periodic visits to all parts of the building. Under the new program, "stations" will be laid out in various parts of the jail where wardens are expected to visit at stated intervals. Carrying a watchman's clock the guarding warden will "punch" a card in the clock at every station.

December 12, 1941 War struck close to many Burlington County homes this week, as numerous families expressed anxiety for sons who are in the Pacific war zone. Bertram Geary, 32, second class electricians mate aboard the USS Kaula, was with his wife and 2 children at Pearl Harbor during the Japanese bombing on Sunday. No word has been

received here regarding their safety. Lt. John Haines and his wife, former residents of Tabernacle, are safe at Pearl Harbor, according to a radiogram received yesterday. Lt. Haines has been in the Navy since 1917. Mr. & Mrs. Clyde Bozorth, of Mt. Holly, are in the Phillippines. Bozorth, 30, is a salesman for a tobacco firm. No word has reached here of their safety. A Burlington County woman, Sister Marion, has not been heard from since the bombings Sunday. For the past 12 years she has taught primary grades in the school at St. Anthony's Convent, Honolulu. Sgt. Frank Mushinski, 31, son of Stella Mushinski of Hainesport, was stationed at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. He has been in the Army several years. Elliott Jones, 21, son of Basil Jones of Vincentown, was in the Marine detachment aboard the USS Erie when his parents heard from him 10 days ago. A former student at Pemberton High School, Jones was 21 Wednesday. His father is a warden at the Burlington County Jail. Mrs. Ralph Spinelli, of Burlington, was informed that a bomb had struck the USS Pennsylvania on which her son, Joseph Spinelli, 19, is stationed. The ship was in Pearl Harbor at the time of the sudden attack by Japanese bombers.