



Old Sussex Almanack

The Newsletter of Sussex County Historical Society

Published Quarterly

Fall 2013

President's Message

Welcome to the Fall 2013 *Old Almanack Newsletter!*

We are now entering the fall season. As William Shakespeare said "That time of year thou mayst in me behold, when yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang upon the bough which shake against the cold . . ." A season when the SCHS has planned many activities for members to attend in both fall and winter; beginning in the fall with a tour of the "Old Newton Burial Ground" and lecture *Graveyards, Ghosts and Gallows*, and finally, book signings on *Authors' Day*. Then in winter, December's Open House features Abraham and Mrs. Lincoln with photographic opportunities. I encourage all members to support and attend these programs and special events.

November and December are very special months in the history and building of our nation. On November 11th, World War I ended, 1918 (Armistice Day) and in 1921 the Unknown Soldier of World War I was buried at Arlington National Cemetery, after lying in state at the Capitol rotunda in Washington, D.C. While on November 6th, 1860, Lincoln defeated three candidates for president of the U.S.

On November 22, 1963, President John Fitzgerald Kennedy (JFK) was assassinated in Dallas, Texas, while riding in a motorcade, and pronounced dead at 1 p.m. Governor John Connally of Texas, who accompanied Kennedy, was severely wounded, but recovered. Vice-president Lyndon

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Hangings in Newton, Sussex County, NJ

Unknown to many people, Newton, NJ was the Sussex County vicinity where hangings were held to deal with capital offenses of the times. Ten known hangings took place. These executions were performed in different sites around Newton including the old Courthouse, the Newton Green, Trinity Street, the old Sussex Railway Station and Drake's Pond. Some of these areas took on local epithets. The site of the execution of Mary Cole was known as "The Mary Cole Field." Spring Street which lead to the Railway Station and Drake's Pond was known as "Gallows Road."

Unfortunately, the first two men to be hanged for a crime in what is now Warren County was for breaking and entering into the home of John Maxwell (no relation to Henry) located in Greenwich Township in March of 1781. The crime at the time was a capital offense. These two were hanged in the Village Green, Newton in May, 1781. Two years later, the truth was revealed that a party of Tories terrorized the area and committed the crime.



In December "Cutlip" drunken student Main Street daughter "I

ing cattle today, and now I am going to butcher your mother." The little daughter was the only witness to this deed, and it was on her evidence that the father was convicted. Gottlieb was hanged by Sheriff James Hindshaw in the lower section of Newton known as Kerby Hollow. The crime was committed in a house on Main Street, near the entrance to the Old Newton Burial Ground, which was still standing in 1882.

A more famous hanging occurred on June 26, 1812, when Mary Cole, convicted of murdering her mother, Agnes Teaur, in Lafa-

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Sussex County Historical Society



82 Main Street, P.O. Box 913
Newton, NJ 07860
973-383-6010
www.sussexcountyhistory.org
Email: sussexcountyhs@gmail.com

HOURS

Friday: 9 am-2 pm;
2nd Saturday of the month:
10 am-2 pm; or by appointment

SCHS Officers *President*

Peter Chletsos
Vice-President

Nancy Madacsi
Treasurer

James Wright

Recording Secretary

Wayne McCabe

Corresponding Secretary
Peter Lubrecht

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PURPOSE

The purpose of the Society is to promote public knowledge and interest in the history of Sussex County, New Jersey, and surrounding areas, by compiling, publishing and disseminating information; collecting, preserving and studying historical, genealogical and archaeological records, documents, papers and artifacts; maintaining a museum for public exhibits; promoting the preservation and protection of buildings, cemeteries and other sites of historic interest; and cooperating with other organizations of similar interest.

Calendar of Events

FALL & WINTER PROGRAMS

Graveyards, Ghosts & Gallows

Saturday, October 26, 2013

Professor Jeff Williamson and "Grave Matters"

Graveyard Tours: 11:00 am & 3:00 pm

Presentation: 1:30 pm *The Victorian Way of Death and What Grave Stones Tell Us.*

AUTHORS' DAY

Saturday, November 30, 2013

10:00 am—4:00 pm

Book signing and sale by local Historical Authors

A Civil War Christmas

Saturday, December 7, 2013 // 10:00 am—3:00 pm

With **President and Mrs. Lincoln**

Musical Entertainment by "Cracked Walnuts":

11:00 am—1:00 pm

**MEET, GREET AND HAVE YOUR PICTURE TAKEN
WITH THE PRESIDENT**

**All Events are at the Sussex County
Historical Society Building**

82 Main St. Newton, NJ

(Unless Otherwise Noted)

973-383-6010

Please Call for Reservations

All Events Free to Members

Board of Trustees Meetings

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees is held every month on the third Monday. Upcoming meeting dates are:

Monday, November 18, 2013 at 7:00 pm

Monday, December 16, 2013 at 7:00 pm

Monday, January 20, 2014 at 7:00 pm

SCHS Member are Welcomed to Attend Trustee Meetings

Civil War Christmas

The Sussex County Historical will celebrate the holidays with a "Civil War Christmas and Open House" on Saturday, December 7th, at 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Highlights of the event will include musical entertainment by "Cracked Walnuts" and a visit by President and Mrs. Lincoln! We will be offering an opportunity to have your picture taken with the President.

We would like to offer a little insight into how the holidays were celebrated during this period and share vintage recipes and a pattern for a holiday ornament from the 1863 *Godey's Lady's Book*.

Our research found that, as today, people put aside their cares and worries and made Christmas a special day. People attended church services and spent time with their families. Gift-giving at Christmas had become a tradition in our country by the mid-nineteenth century. The Christmas tree, also an established tradition, was put on display and decorated with candles and homemade ornaments, in homes as well as churches.



The more active members of the family might go to a local pond to ice skate. The women probably spent days preparing a large holiday dinner, often consisting of boiled turkey with oyster sauce, roast goose with apple sauce, roast ham, chicken pie, stewed beets, coleslaw, turnips, salsify, winter-squash, mince pie, plum pudding, lemon custard and cranberry pie. (Godey's Dec. 1863). One article in the New York Times describes how the women of Washington, DC prepared holiday dinners for the sick and wounded.

The evening's entertainment might consist of singing Christmas Carols, a custom that even reached to soldiers on both sides of the Civil War, who ceased their fighting to observe the holiday. The sorrow of separation from loved ones, however, comes through in this stanza from a soldier's poem, written on Christmas night, 1862:



There's not a comrade here tonight
but knows that loved ones far away
on bended knees this night will pray:
"God bring our darling from the fight."

(William Gordon McCabe of the Confederate Army. His entire poem may be found at the *Civil War Trust*, <http://www.civilwar.org>)

An 1864 article describes General Sherman's rather less sentimental message, to President Lincoln, giving him the Christmas gift of the recently seized City of Savannah!

Advertisement from the 1861 December issues of the New Jersey Herald show a variety of goods offered for sale as holiday gifts, books, toys, alphabet blocks and games at the Newton Bookstore. Blairstown held a Holiday Festival at the Mechanics Hall. Tickets for the event, which included tea, were forty cents. Restaurants such as the Mountain House advertised Christmas Eve oyster suppers. Christmas night balls were held at the Anderson House in Newton and the West Vernon Hotel in West Vernon. There was an advertisement for New Year's Eve public balls offered at the Stephen Smith Hotel in Hamburg, New Jersey.

vette Township, was executed by Sheriff Ephraim Green in an open field near where the Sussex Railway section now stands, which was witnessed by thousands of people. The body of her murdered mother was reportedly hidden beneath the hearth of her house. Her husband, Cornelius A. Cole, was acquitted of the murder. It was reported that upon seeing her husband smile at the gallows, Mary Cole said, "Ah, I could tell something that would change that smile into tears."

On June 30, 1820, Peter Brakeman was executed by Sheriff William Darrah for killing a peddler, Francis E. Nichols for his money. This hanging was public and took place near Drake's Pond. A reported 8,000 – 10,000 people witnessed this hanging. Another hanging was performed in a meadow on the lower side of Newton on January 25, 1822, when Wilhelmus Van Auken was tried and convicted by Justice William Russell for murdering his wife, Leah, in Montague in the spring of 1821.

On January 27, 1862 *The New York Times* printed this headline: "An Execution in New-Jersey.; JOHN CRUVER SUFFERS THE EXTREME PENALTY OF THE LAW FOR MURDERING ALLEN SKELLINGER." This published article reported the execution of John Cruver for shooting and murdering Allen Skellinger in Sandyston Township on September 19, 1861. Cruver was executed on January 23, 1862 by Sheriff Charles Arvis. The execution took place in the courtroom and was witnessed by 200 spectators. The Sheriff refused the request of any woman to witness this hanging.

The next three executions were held behind the courthouse in the jail yard. By the late 1800's, hangings were a private affair conducted in a 20-ft. by 20-ft. square area near the old jailhouse on High Street. A 300-pound stone dropped on a pulley system when a lever was released jerking the convicted person up off the platform breaking the neck. The Sussex County Historical Society obtained this execution gallows from the Freeholders in 1968 for the museum.

John Hughes was executed by Sheriff William E. Ross on July 2, 1875 for the vicious murder of his wife in Ogdensburg on January 7, 1875. Hughes was known as a "bully" who killed his wife with an axe and then attempted to cover up the murder by burning the evidence. The New Jersey Herald headlines read: "A Demon Chops His Wife's Head to Pieces with an Ax, Her Brains Run Out on the Floor, The House Fired to Cover the Crime, The Brute Arrested and Lugged in Jail." Judged before Justice Albert Reed, after 3 days the prisoner was convicted of murder in the first degree. He was hanged in front of about 60 witnesses in the jail yard. Frederick Crill was hanged on April 24, 1880 for shooting and killing his daughter, Eliza Babcock near Hamburg. He was the first to be executed under a New Jersey law that excluded witnesses, except those given permission by the court. This new ruling caused much disappointment among the public.

The last individual to be executed in Newton was Alexander Kish on October 27, 1904 for the murder of his wife, Gertie, in a dispute over money. He was imprisoned with another inmate, George Jaggers, who was scheduled to be executed for the killing of Mary Bevans on Old Mine Road in Sandyston. However, a week before his date of execution, Jaggers committed suicide by drinking carbolic acid and chloroform.

Information for the above piece was gathered from articles in the *New Jersey Herald*; *The Magazine Sussex*; *The Furnace* Newsletter of the Warren County Cultural and Heritage Commission; and the *New York Times*

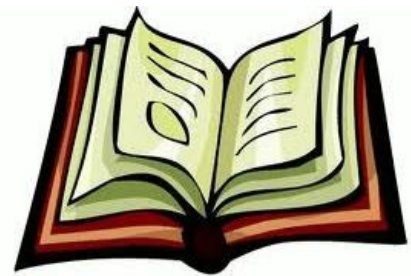
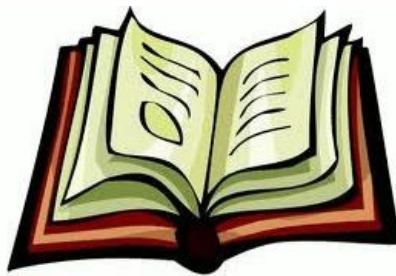
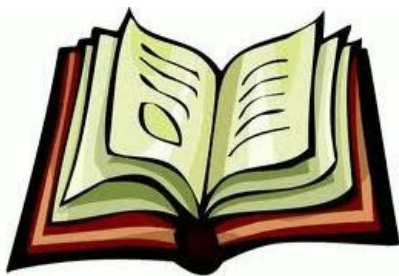
Authors' Day

The SCHS will be sponsoring an Authors' Day on November 30, 2013. Local authors will be available to sell and share their products as well as other offerings from the History Press. The event is an opportunity to purchase books for the history buff in your family. The society will be represented by three authors who are members of our board of trustees:

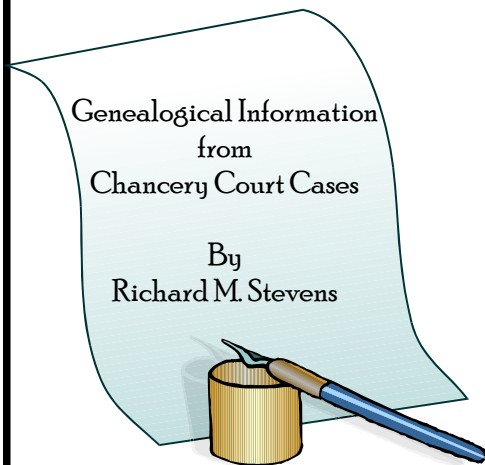
Peter Lubrecht has authored a new work: *Germans in New Jersey – A History*. German immigrants and their descendants are integral to New Jersey's history. When the state was young, they founded villages that are now well-established communities, such as Long Valley. Many German immigrants were lured by the freedom and opportunity in the Garden State, especially in the nineteenth century, as they escaped oppression and revolution. German heroes have played a patriotic part in the state's growth and include scholars, artists, war heroes and industrialists, such as John Roebling, the builder of the Brooklyn Bridge, and Thomas Nast, the father of the American cartoon. Despite these contributions, life in America was not always easy; they faced discrimination, especially during the world wars. But in the postwar era, refugees and German Americans alike—through their Deutsche clubs, festivals, societies and language schools—are a huge part of New Jersey's rich cultural tapestry.

Wayne McCabe, Sussex County Historian, will have two new books released; *A Penny a View: An Album of Postcard Views of Andover Borough and A Penny A View: Hamlets and Villages of Sussex County -- Swartwood*. *The Sussex County Gazetteer*, another of his works, will be reprinted this year. McCabe's prior works include *Sussex County (NJ): Images of America* and *Newton (NJ): Images of America*.

Kevin Wright has authored a new work entitled *A History of the Andover Ironworks: Come Penny, Go Pound*. Soon after Philadelphia began to exploit New Jersey's largest hematite deposit in 1758, Andover Furnace and Forge began producing the best metal in the world. Its product was so desirable that the newly formed American military wrested control from Loyalist owners in 1778. This frontier industrial outpost endured thirty-five years before labor costs, competition from cheap imports, careless consumption of woodlands and difficulty in transporting its products finally extinguished its fires. Today, repurposed eighteenth-century stone mills and mansions at Andover and Waterloo testify to the combination of rich ore, abundant water power and seemingly endless forests that long ago attracted teamsters, woodcutters, charcoal burners, miners, molders and smelters to the Appalachian Highlands of New Jersey. Local expert Kevin Wright tells the hidden story of the facets and personalities that once made Andover iron so widely coveted.



THOMAS J. OLIVER VS JOHN LEWIS ET AL
(FILE G11-914) COMPLAINT FILED 7/19/1873



Samuel Oliver's wife Charity had inherited a large farm on Demarest Road at the west edge of Sparta Twp. When he died in 1872, the only real estate in his name was a house on a one acre lot, that had been conveyed off the Homestead Farm to George M. Dailey in 1864, and then bought back in Samuel's name in 1868 (T5-229). Samuel died intestate, with no surviving children, so his brothers and sisters inherited the one acre lot, subject to Charity's dower right. This action was brought to have the lot sold, since it obviously could not be divided. The original complaint listed Samuel's two brothers and two living sisters as the heirs. There was no opposition, and a Decree for Sale had been issued. Then somebody realized that there was a fifth heir, the daughter of Samuel's long-deceased sister Catharine Gordon. A petition was filed to amend the complaint; the Decree for Sale was vacated, and another Master's Report made. There was still no opposition, and on 9/28/1874 the lot was sold to Charity Oliver for \$305. Even though she was the buyer, there still had to be another Master's Report to determine how much she should be allocated for dower. She agreed to receive a lump sum payment, which was set at \$35.29. The Order for Distribution was filed on 2/20/1875. Over three years later, a Report of Distribution was filed. Over 60% of the proceeds was taken for legal costs and fees. Each of the five heirs received less than \$17. I see no excuse for this court case: none of the heirs was minors, and all lived in New Jersey; certainly, the heirs could have received more by just selling their interests to Charity.

Genealogy:

SAMUEL OLIVER: married to Charity(2); deceased without issue on 11/5/1872.
 CHARITY OLIVER: wife of Samuel Oliver; 66 years old in 1875; living in Sparta Twp. in 1875.
 MARY ANN LEWIS: sister of Samuel Oliver; wife of John Lewis; living in Sussex Co. in 1873.
 WILLIAM OLIVER: brother of Samuel Oliver; living in Sussex Co. in 1873.
 JANE SLAGHT: sister of Samuel Oliver; wife of Michael R. Slaght(6); mother of Samuel O. Slaght(7); living in Sussex Co. in 1873.
 MICHAEL R. SLAGHT: husband of Jane Slaght(5); father of Samuel O. Slaght; deceased about 3/1/1873.
 SAMUEL O. SLAGHT: son of Michael R. Slaght(6) & Jane(5); living in Byram Twp. in 1873.
 THOMAS J. OLIVER: brother of Samuel Oliver; living in Byram Twp. in 1873; living in Roxbury Twp., Morris Co. in 1874.
 CATHARINE GORDON: sister of Samuel Oliver; wife of David Gordon(10); mother of Jane(11); deceased about 1838.
 DAVID GORDON: husband of Catharine Gordon(9); father of Jane(11); deceased about 1838.
 JANE KING: daughter of David Gordon(10) & Catharine(9); wife of James H. King; living in New Jersey in 1874.

Pumpkin Pudding:

Take one pint of pumpkin that has been stewed and soft and processed through a colander: melt in a half pint of warm milk (one pint of rich cream will be better than milk), in another bowl mix a quarter pound of butter and the same quantity of sugar, stirring them well together Beat eight eggs until very light and add them gradually to other ingredients alternately with the pumpkin. Stir in a wine-glass of rose water mixed with wine. Add a large teaspoon each of powdered mace and cinnamon and some grated nutmeg. Having stirred the whole very

hard, put it into a buttered dish and bake three quarters of an hour. (*Godey's*, Dec. 1863.)

Washington Cake:

Beat together one and a half pound of sugar, three-quarters pound of butter, four eggs, well beaten, a half pint of sour milk and one teaspoon of saleratus (baking soda) dissolved in a little hot water. Stir in gradually one and three quarter pounds of flour, one wine-glass-full of sherry or brandy, and one grated nutmeg. Beat all well together.

Sussex County Historical Society Application Dues for 2014

Phone (973) 383-6010
sussexcountyhs@gmail.com
www.sussexcountyhistory.org/

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 913
Newton, NJ 07860

The Museum & Library
82 Main Street
Newton, NJ 07860

Below are the categories of membership:

- () Individual membership - \$20.00
- () High School/College membership - \$15.00
- () Senior Citizen (over 60) membership - \$15.00
- () Family membership - \$30.00
- () Life Membership - \$500.00
- () Business membership - \$100.00
- () Historical Societies from Sussex County - Free
- () Historical Organizations outside Sussex County - \$20.00

Please make your membership check payable to the **Sussex County Historical Society**. Your membership category from 2013 is indicated on your label. If you want to change your category, indicate that above. Dues and contributions to the society are deductible within the limits of the Federal Income Tax Law.

☐ Renewal

☐ New member

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email Address _____

Home phone: _____ Cell Phone _____

Check number: _____ Check Amount: \$ _____

President's Message continued

Baines Johnson (LBJ) was sworn in as the 36th President of the United States at 2:39 p.m., on board *Air Force One*, at Love Air Field in Dallas.

One final day, "a date which will live in infamy", is December 7th, 1941, Japanese warplanes attacked United States at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Subsequently, on December 8th, 1941, the United States entered World War II. We, as a historical society also have important dates.

I also encourage each member to volunteer and help on one or more of our committees - Programs and Special Events; Building and Grounds (includes the Old Newton Burial Ground); Museum; Library & Genealogy; and Membership and Development (includes communications/publicity and technology/website). Presently, we are in **dire** need of a member to manage our *Old Sussex Almanack* - our newsletter. If you are interested, email us at sussexcountyhs@gmail.com or call us at 973-383-6010 with your interested committee and we'll contact you immediately.

We are now conducting our Membership Drive. On page 7, you will see an application to renew your membership. The SCHS Board has voted to increase the costs for the 2014 memberships.

Please come visit your museum! I look forward to hearing and seeing all of you soon.

Dr. Peter N Chletsos, President SCHS

SCHS COMMITTEES

SCHS members are encouraged to get active in the Society. There is such a variety of opportunities that one is sure to capture your interest.

Come on out and volunteer on one or more of our committees -
Nominating; Finance; Programs and Special Events;
Building and Grounds: (includes the Old Newton Cemetery);
Museum; Library & Genealogy;
Membership and Development (includes communications, publicity, technology and website).

If you are interested or want more information, email us at sussexcountyhs@gmail.com,

Call 973-383-6010 and leave a message or drop by and visit.

Sussex County Historical Society

P.O. Box 913
82 Main Street
Newton, NJ 07860