

# THE MOUNT AMWELL NEWS

## Executive Director David Reading selected as Member of the West New Jersey Council of Proprietors



At the annual meeting of the Council of Proprietors, Western Division of New Jersey held on May 2, 2017 in Burlington, NJ, Mount Amwell Project's Executive Director David Reading was elected to the Council as one of the four members representing Gloucester.

The council which was established in 1688 to allocate land distribution in the western New Jersey for the Proprietors has been in continuous operation for 329 years.

Council Vice-president C. Miller Biddle who led the nominating committee presented a short talk recounting the common history between his ancestor William Biddle and John Reading who negotiated with the Indians on behalf of the Council to purchase 150,000 acres in upper Burlington (now Hunterdon) County in 1703.



VP Biddle also presented David with a document awarding him a 1/32 proprietary share which is a requirement for council membership. David will also serve on a committee to draft new by-laws for the council as the organization is re-establishing itself as a non-profit organization.

The meeting was held in the Surveyors General's office at 39 W. Broad Street, Burlington (see photo). This office had housed the Council records that transferred to the NJ State Archives In December 2005. The West Jersey Proprietors retain legal ownership of their original records.



Council reviews 2016 meeting minutes

To learn more about West New Jersey history and the Council of Proprietors please see:

1. Joseph R. Klett, *Using the Records of the East and West Jersey Proprietors*, NEW JERSEY STATE ARCHIVES, © 2014
2. Marfy Goodspeed, *Goodspeed Histories* <http://goodspeedhistories.com/west-new-jersey-1688/>
3. Pomfret, John E. 1956. *The Province of West New Jersey 1609-1702*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.  
--- 1964. *The New Jersey Proprietors and Their lands*. Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand.

Cemetery News

Reading Burial Ground



Dave Vorhees lays a stone

**The Wall:** A considerable amount of work was done at the RBG in late December, January & March. The wall damaged by a fallen tree was rebuilt by Dave Vorhees and Dave reading in February and March. During the rebuilding it was discovered that the wall was of Scottish “dry stacked wall” construction. The technique uses no mortar but results in a very durable structure. It is estimated that this wall was built around 1810 making it over 200 years old. The finished repair is shown at right. A full report is on the web site.

The broken twin headstone base was epoxied on April 22nd. The detached headstone will be reset in June.

**The Trees:** Several trees were removed in late December and early January by Chris Olenick and his crew. A particularly large dangerous double truck tree about 80 feet tall was expertly removed by

Chris. See photo below. Eight other smaller trees were also removed. Many thanks to Chris for this work.



## Stockton approves ordinance for Howell Graveyard acquisition

The Stockton Borough passed the ordinance to acquire the Howell graveyard property at the April 10<sup>th</sup> monthly meeting. This allows the MTAP to proceed with the legal work necessary to complete the acquisition for Stockton. A partial text of the ordinance is provided below.

BOROUGH OF STOCKTON ORDINANCE TO AUTHORIZE THE ACQUISITION BY THE BOROUGH OF STOCKTON OF REAL PROPERTY COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE HOWELL GRAVEYARD, AND DESIGNATED AS BLOCK 2 LOT 10 ON THE TAX MAPS FOR THE BOROUGH OF STOCKTON, BY APPLICATION TO THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR AN ORDER VESTING TITLE UNDER N.J.S.A. 40:60-25.61

The Borough is hereby authorized to acquire title to the Property in accordance with law for public purposes, including the routine upkeep and maintenance of the abandoned cemetery, and further to authorize the Mount Amwell Project to undertake the statutory requirements on behalf of the Borough as are necessary and advisable to accomplish the acquisition by the Mount Amwell Project on behalf of the Borough of Stockton as are necessary and advisable to accomplish the acquisition for the Borough of the Property.

## Swackhammer

The New Jersey Cemetery Association (NJCA) admitted the Swackhammer as the first historic cemetery. From their website:

“The New Jersey Cemetery Association is a 70 year old not-for-profit organization representing more than 225 religious, municipal and non-sectarian cemeteries located in New Jersey. Our member cemeteries are represented by active, progressive superintendents and administrators who work to ensure that every individual's life is remembered and valued.

Our mission is to promote the advancement of practical knowledge in the operation and maintenance of cemeteries, to create and sustain high ethical standards in the conduct of business and to serve and support our membership. Our organization strives to keep membership current on legislative issues by monitoring proposed legislation in the state. We sponsor and conduct educational forums throughout the year to keep management and

supervisory personnel informed. These include the physical care of cemetery properties, financial, legal and accounting procedures and the endowment of funds for cemetery maintenance and preservation.”

Membership in the NJCA provides the Mount Amwell Project an important ally in seeking legal protections for historic cemeteries within the state. We are very appreciative of the work done by Judy Welshons, NJCA Executive Director, that made it happen.

Members the Swackhammer Churchyard Preservation Association (SCPA) at a meeting held on January 21<sup>st</sup> voted to dissolve and join the MTAP. The group brings many volunteers and supporters that will be a welcome addition to the MTAP. The group will have the primary responsibility to maintain the Swackhammer.

## Haypress

The final two trees marked for removal were taken down on May 1st. The Readington Twp. DPW picked up the cuttings and the site is ready for a general ground clean-up on May 20th.

### Web site

John Thomas who is on the board of directors for the Prospect Hill Cemetery in Flemington has promised to make available to MTAP a digital copy of over 6700 burials in the cemetery. The list will be in form that can be easily be put on-line in our database.

Pat Barber has obtained a list of newer burials in the New Spruce Run Cemetery. Patti Christie has entered the list in the database. Work on the database continues.

The MTAP site was hacked in March and down for more than a week. Everything has been restored and new protections put in place to prevent future attacks.

Visit the new Drupal web site at  
[www.mtamwell.org](http://www.mtamwell.org)

**Cemetery Cleanup Schedule for 2107**

**Haypress Cemetery, Saturday, May 20**  
15 High Street, Whitehouse Station. 9:00 - 2:00. 1st general brush clearing. Clear remaining trees, move debris to front bank. New volunteers are required to sign liability release form for Readington Township.

**Swackhammer Churchyard, Saturday June 15, 110**  
Anthony Road, Lebanon Twp. . 9:00 - 2:00. 2nd cleanup.

**Slacktown Cemetery, Monday, September 16,**  
Locktown Road, 9:30- 2:30. Repair & reset stones, remove stumps.

**Swackhammer Churchyard, Saturday, October 7,**  
110 Anthony Road, Lebanon Twp. 9:00 - 2:00. 3rd cleanup.

**Haypress Cemetery, Saturday, October 21,**  
15 High Street, Whitehouse Station. 9:00 - 2:00. Repair and straiten stones.

**Haypress Cemetery, Saturday, November 4**  
15 High Street, Whitehouse Station. 9:00 - 2:00. 2nd general brush clearing.

**New Members**

Welcome to:

Eric Reading of Alexandria, VA  
Susan Piagesi of Hackettstown, NJ

**Looking for Board Member Candidates**

We currently have two vacancies on our board and are actively seeking candidates to fill those positions. If you know anyone with the qualifications outlined below please contact dave.reading@mtamwell.org or 908-801-3125.

The Member, Board of Directors will have the following Duties/responsibilities:

- Participate on board meetings, committees, and attend events.
- Participate in fund raising activities; provide a personal contribution.
- Prepare in advance to make quality decisions by reviewing available materials or other methods.
- Represent the Mount Amwell Project as an ambassador for the organization to the community.
- Assist in identifying and recruiting other board members.
- Act in accordance with organization’s values and avoid/report conflicts of interest.

And possess the following qualification:

**Required qualifications**

- Is available and willing to attend meetings, serve on committees, and attend special events.
- Be committed to and understand the Mount Amwell Project’s vision, mission, and values.
- Is dedicated to developing and sustaining the organization.
- Has personal qualities of integrity, credibility, and reliability.

**Desirable qualifications**

- Have extensive professional experience with significant executive leadership accomplishments in business, government, or the nonprofit sector.
- Is a donor committed to the cause, or a community leader able to attract outside donor/investors.

**Terms of service**

- The Mount Amwell Project’s Board Members serve a two-year term and are eligible for re-appointment for additional terms.
- Service on the Mount Amwell Project’s Board of Directors is without remuneration, except for administrative support, travel, and accommodation costs in relation to Board Members’ duties.
- The member is expected to spend between 80 to 100 hours per year attending board meetings, committee meetings, and special events.

**The Mount Amwell News**  
**The newsletter of the Mount Amwell Project**  
 © Copyright 2017  
 Published Spring and Fall  
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 Jennifer Ellsworth.....Director  
 Richard B. Reading.....Director