

THE MOUNT AMWELL NEWS

Hunterdon 300th



The Hunterdon County Tricentennial Committee has planned an extensive amount of events celebrating the 300th anniversary of the creation of Hunterdon County. (<http://www.hunterdon300th.org>)

Thanks to Mount Amwell Project members George Muller and Peter Kinsella who are members of the committee for getting us involved. Events of particular interest are summarized below.

HUNTERDON COUNTY ORGANIZATION RE-ENACTMENT, Weds Jan 1st. This event features period costumes, and witty dialogue taken directly from 18th century meeting minutes of the Board of Chosen Freeholders. David Reading will portray Col. John Reading in costume as he reads the Act creating Hunterdon County in 1714. Refreshments follow. Hunterdon Historic Courthouse, Main Street, Flemington. 1pm. A reservation and ticket are required.

HUNTERDON SETTLEMENT PATTERN SERIES LECTURE: THE BRITISH MIGRATION Saturday April 5th. David Reading will discuss the history of the English Migration into Hunterdon County and the Reading family's early history. Main Branch of the County Library, County Complex, 314 Route 12, Flemington. 2pm. A reservation is required.

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TOUR OF GOVERNOR JOHN READING'S HOME April 6th. Raritan Township Historian and Mount Amwell member Dick Stothoff will host a special tour of Governor John Reading's home on the south branch of the Raritan River. River Road, Flemington. 2pm. A reservation is required.

THE HISTORY OF THE SWACKHAMMER CHURCH AND CEMETERY. Sat May 3rd. Warren County Historian John O'Brien as will provide a brief history of this Lebanon Township Church and then tour the historic cemetery. The Mount Amwell Project is considering taking ownership of this plot. Swackhammer Church and Cemetery, 110 Anthony Road, Lebanon Township. Continuous tours run between 10am and 2pm

HISTORIC MENU, TAVERN TOUR AND LECTURE AT THE STOCKTON INN. Sat May 10th. David Reading provides a lecture on the early history of Stockton. 12pm - 3pm Limited seating. A reservation and cost of meal is required.

COL. JOHN READING, SR. AND THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF HUNTERDON. Sunday Sept 28th. Mount Amwell member and historian Marfy Goodspeed will lecture on Col. John Reading. Refreshments follow. Main Branch of the County Library, 314 Route 12, Flemington. 2pm. A reservation is required.

JOHN READING, SR. AND HIS SON, THE GOVERNOR Saturday Oct 25 - Join Governor John Reading descendant David Reading lectures about his famed relative. Refreshments follow. Main Branch of the County Library, 314 Route 12, Flemington. 2:30pm A reservation is required.

Most reservations and tickets can be obtained on line by going to the Tricentennial Committee's website's Events page, www.hunterdon300th.org/events.html, and clicking on the link on the specific calendar date of the selected event.



1: Slacktown cleanup crew left to right: Marge Rowland, Karen Hullick, Bud Hullick, Matt Davis, John O'Brien, Jeff Chiu, Bob Leith, Dave Reading, Jennifer Pastushok, Jeff Williamson, Leslie Leith, Alania Wright, Joan Chiu

Slacktown Cemetery Cleanup

On October 3, 2013 the Mount Amwell Project presented to the Kingwood Township Committee our plan for actions regarding the Slacktown Cemetery on Locktown Road. This plan had been requested by Mayor Phillip Lubitz at our first visit to the committee meeting of August 3rd, 2013. We expressed that there was a two phase approach; long term we would pursue the identification of legal owners, and seek long term legal arrangements for the purposes of identifying entity responsible for maintaining the cemetery as a cultural and historic asset. Second, in the near term we would support a volunteer group clean-up in accordance with local residents concerns. We stated that the MTAP will NOT sponsor a near-term cleanup, but WILL support a volunteer group to do it. The Near Term Cleanup would consist of trimming large trees, removing small trees, clearing ground vegetation weeds, shrubs, etc., setting loose, leaning stones, repair & paint family plot fences, clear public access points (specifics to be determined) but leave the Lilac screen bordering Locktown Road. We requested that the township pick-up the debris from the clean-up. The committee verbally approved our plan and agreed to pick-up the

debris. A date was set up for November 16th for the cleanup.

The group restoring the Swackhammer cemetery in Lebanon Township agreed to pitch in and help MTAP members Dave Reading, Bob and Leslie Leith do the cleanup (see picture for the entire group). Many small trees and a large amount brush was cleared. Setting stones and repairing the iron fence was not done and remains to be finished. The township true to their word chipped and cleared the debris the following Tuesday (11/19/13).

The cemetery property of 1.25 acres was purchased by the Kingwood Baptist Church in 1832 from John Sebold. The Church sold 0.4 acres to John Risler in 1841. John Risler sold the 0.4 acres to the Kingwood township school district No. 9 in 1842.* The remaining approximately 0.6 acres apparently stayed with the church until at least 1925 when the last burial was recorded. We believe the property can be legally claimed by the same Baptist organization that recently sold the Locktown Baptist church. If so, it may be possible to obtain a quit claim deed making the property available to the Township or any other legal entity. A full report on the cemetery will be available on the MTAP web site in the very near future.

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2: Bray, Rittenhouse, Brewer Family Plot Before



3: Family Plot After Cleanup



2: Pegg, Sebold Family Plot Before



5: After Cleanup



6: Jeff Williamson & Alania Wright



7: Bob & Leslie Leith

Swackhammer Cemetery

The process of acquiring the Swackhammer Cemetery in Lebanon Township by the MTAP is underway. Attorney Steven P. Gruenberg of Scholl, Whittlesey & Gruenberg in Flemington has been retained to handle the transfer of a "Quit Claim" deed from the New Jersey Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. He reports that Dick Cushing, attorney for Lebanon Township is "supportive" of our efforts and has sought the opinion of the tax assessor for an opinion of the tax exempt status of the property. Attorney Gruenberg has also been in contact with the Synod's attorneys and they have indicated that they will prepare the necessary paper work, but the execution of the final transfer will require an approval by MTAP Board of Directors. This acquisition will ensure that the restoration efforts done to date will be protected by the authority of a recognized and legal owner. For an article on the cemetery see "Transformed by Faith" in the *Sunday Democrat*, Dec, 15th, 2013, pg A-3

Carman Cemetery

On November 26th, Pete Kinsella, Dave Reading, Bob Leith, and Kerry Rhea visited the Carman Cemetery near Flemington. Pete and Kerry are members of the Raritan Township Local Historian Committee which has an interest in restoring this abandoned and severely over grown plot. The MTAP would support clearing the cemetery if the ownership issue and permission are resolved. Pete will pursue this with the Raritan Township attorney.

Family Protection Act

The New Jersey Assembly passed the "Family and Private Burial Grounds Preservation Act" on December 3, 2012 and sent it to the Senate where it was referred to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee. The bill (A1580) was inspired by the tragic destruction of the Hendricks/Hendrickson family cemetery in Holmdel, NJ in 2010. If you wish to track this bill's progress go to the following web site and register:

<http://legiscan.com/NJ/bill/A1580/2012>

Everyone is encouraged to contact Sen. Kyrillos and express their support for this bill.

Email: senkyrillos@njleg.org, Tel: 732-671-3206.

John Kuhl's Book

Hunterdon County in the Civil War by John W. Kuhl, who was our speaker in the 2013 fall meeting, is available from the Hunterdon County Cultural and Heritage Commission for \$15. It is an excellent and highly recommended.

Deceased

With great sadness we report the passing of Ruth (Reading) Meeker of Far Hills, NJ. She was an original member, always enthusiastic and generous.

New Members

We welcome new members Bob Leith and Mike Alfano.

Web site Members Access

The MTAP web site (www.mtamwell.org) includes a member's only page. Content includes current newsletters. To access simply click on the members page and enter user: member, password: mtap2008

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Board of Directors
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 Jennifer Ellsworth.....Director
 Richard B. Reading.....Director

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|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Carl Shuster, Ph.D. - life | John & Marielle Reading |
| Brian & Cindy Murphy - life | Romy Reading, Ph.D. |
| Jen Ellsworth - life | Sybil Albrecht Lewis-life |
| Bill & Marjorie Luken, Ph.D. - life | John G. & Susan Reading- life |
| Rick Hayes-Roth, Ph.D. - life | Leigh Braun-life |
| Ruth Meeker dec'd | Eugenia Klein-life |
| David & Jan Reading - life | Shawn &Theresa Reading |
| Chris Solliday - life | Jerry Rosco- life |
| Albert Reading -life | George Muller |
| Richard B. Reading IV – life | Bruce Hotchkiss |
| Audrey R. McAbee – life | Nancy Herman |
| Fred Lathrop-life | John Stevenson |
| Marfy Goodspeed - life | Sharon Lake |
| Stephen H. Case – life | Peter Kinsella- life |
| Mark Reading- life | William McCre |
| Richard Stothoff- life | Lorena Bennett |
| Susan Alexander-life | Bill Fenton |
| Charles William Poley, Jr. | Jean Pfliederer –life |
| Bob Leith | Mike Alfano |