

# THE MOUNT AMWELL NEWS

## Mount Amwell Project Members Participate in Hugely Successful Second Annual Cemetery “Cememar”

The Hunterdon County Historical Society’s Cemetery Committee, in partnership with Hunterdon County’s Tri-centennial Committee and the **Mount Amwell Project**, sponsored the third annual cemetery seminar at the Presbyterian Church in Flemington on Sept 19<sup>th</sup>.

After opening remarks by Charles Fisher, HCHS president, Marfy Goodspeed, noted Hunterdon County historian and lifetime member of the **Mount Amwell Project**, gave the keynote address, “Family Burying Grounds Matter” in which she masterfully defined family burying grounds and the personal and cultural need for their preservation. She closed with five steps to save them, (1) identify and locate, (2) inventory, (3) clean-up, (4) visit and celebrate, and (5) taking responsibility. A full version of the address can be found on Marfy’s web site, <http://goodspeedhistories.com/family-burying-grounds-matter/>.

Featured Speakers were Dr. Richard Veit & Mark Nonestied who spoke on “*New Jersey Cemeteries and Tombstones*” and included several preservation examples within Hunterdon County. Following lunch Dr. Veit and Mark Nonestied led a panel discussion on “*Meeting the Challenges of Preserving Old and Abandoned Cemeteries.*” The panelists were Marcia Karrow - Former NJ Senator, JoAnne Byrnes, Esq. - Attorney, David Reading - Executive Director **Mt. Amwell Project**, Frank Banisch - Professional Planner, and Don Shuman - Real estate developer and cemetery owner. The panel presented several ideas regarding preservation including working with planning boards of municipalizes, proposing local ordinances regarding developments, and advocating that local municipalities take ownership of abandoned sites (See Stockton Boro, page 2).

Several demonstrations were conducted outside in the Church Graveyard in the afternoon. John Kuhl & John Allen toured veteran’s graves of Revolutionary

War, War of 1812, and Civil War. Mike Gagliano & Michelle Kuhn -demonstrated the use Ground Penetrating Radar to locate graves, John O’Brien demonstrated cleaning and restoring headstones, and Leslie & Bob Leith presented techniques for lighting headstones for photos & other tricks for legibility.

## Stones Reset at Slacktown



**Figure 1: Gravestone of Daniel Bray son of Andrew Bray and Sarah (Rittenhouse) Bray**

As previously reported, The American Baptist Church of New Jersey signed the Quit-claim deed for the Slacktown Cemetery to Kingwood Township on April 15, 2015. Deed was recorded at the Hunterdon County Hall of records on September 30. The MoU with the MTAP was signed on September 3. During October and November several gravestone at Slacktown were reset including the one for Daniel

Bray shown in figure 1. This stone was done on October 8<sup>th</sup> by Dave Reading, Bob Leith, and Ray Simmonds (figure 2).



**Figure 2: Ray Simmonds and Bob Leith resetting gravestone of Daniel Bray at Slacktown Cemetery.**

Other stones reset were Elisha R. and Daniel Bray, Andrew and Sarah Bray, and Isaac Shepard (figure 3). The twins, Daniel and Elisha R. Bray, were born on September 5, 1818, children of Sarah (Rittenhouse) and Andrew Bray whose graves are next to the children. Andrew Bray was the son of Daniel Bray famous for his participation in Washington's escape from the British across the Delaware in 1776. MTAP member Marfy Goodspeed has an excellent posting on the Brays at:

<http://goodspeedhistories.com/andrew-bray-and-sarah-rittenhouse/>



**Figure 3: Isaac Shepard**

## Readington Township Authorizes Haypress Agreement

The Readington Township Committee at their meeting 2 November 2015 authorized the attorney to enter into an agreement with the Mount Amwell Project for the maintenance and upkeep of the historic Haypress cemetery. Excerpt from the minutes:

### ***“Contract Negotiations / Haypress Cemetery***

Alan Harwick, on behalf of the Historic Preservation Commission, stated David Reading approached the Commission with a proposal to use the services of the Mt. Amwell Project to voluntarily maintain historic cemeteries and preserve headstones throughout the area.

A **MOTION** was made by Mrs. Duffy to authorize Attorney Dragan to prepare a Maintenance Agreement with the Mt. Amwell Project, seconded by Mr. Broten with a vote of ayes all, nays none recorded.”

## The New Jersey Conservation Foundation Agrees to Allow Access to the Howell cemetery

The New Jersey Conservation Foundation has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the MTAP that permits the use of their service road to access the Howell (Rittenhouse) Cemetery for maintenance purposes. The MOU was negotiated with Tim Morris, Director of Stewardship and signed by Greg Romano Assistant Director. The Howell Cemetery is located behind the NJCF property in Stockton and accessing it by motor vehicle would have been very difficult without this agreement.

## The Stockton Borough Council will pursue ownership of Howell Cemetery under New Jersey Law

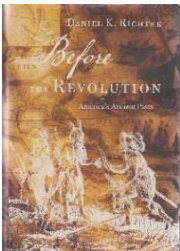
Bob Leith, Marfy Goodspeed, Sue Bennett, John Allen, and David Reading attended the Boro council's meeting on November 9<sup>th</sup> follow up on the written proposal that had been previously submitted. The response was favorable with the mayor agreeing to contact the owner of the farm adjacent to the site as a first step in the process.

## Recommended Reading: Early American History

Much has been written, spoken, and debated on the precepts of American history. That is, history before the revolutionary war and the creation of the United State as a nation. It is probably safe to say that this history is little understood, usually over simplified, and occasionally just wrong. The books described below taken as a group provide a fairly unbiased, non-revisionist examination of American history leading up to the founding. Daniel K. Richter gives us a broad vision of America in time and context starting with the early European settlements, David Hackett Fischer describes in excruciating detail the British migrations which formed the core populations of Anglo-America, and finally Thomas Slaughter helps us to understand the how and why of the American Revolution.

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### Daniel K. Richter explores America's ancient past

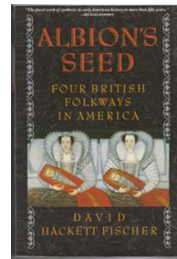


From the liner notes: *“Before the Revolution spans more than seven centuries and ranges across North America, Europe, and Africa. Richter recovers the lives of a stunning array of people- Indians, Spaniards, French, Dutch, Africans, and English- as they struggled with one another and with their own people for control of land and resources. Their struggles occurred in a global context and built upon what remains of what came before. Gradually and unpredictably, distinctive patterns of North American culture took shape on a continent where no one yet imagined there’re would be great nations called the United States, Mexico, or Canada...Richter’s epic vision reveals the deepest origins of American history.”*

Before the Revolution - America's Ancient Past, By Daniel K. Richter, Illustrated. 502 pages. Belknap Press 2011.

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### David Hackett Fischer's "Albion's Seed" details the four British migrations to America

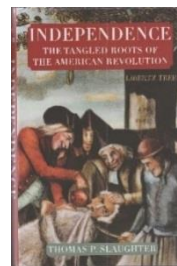


Fischer's work on British migrations to North America has been characterized as ambitious, brilliant, important, and incredibly interesting. High praise for his over 900 page examination of the four major waves of migrations beginning with Puritans to Massachusetts between 1629 and 1640, followed by Royalist elites and indentured servants to Virginia between 1642-1675, Quakers to the Delaware Valley 1675 -1725, and the so-called Scots-Irish to the Appalachian backcountry from 1718-1775. Although each of these groups spoke English, worshipped as Christian Protestants, and lived under British laws each had different sets of what Fischer calls "Folkways." The four different sets of folkways would define regional cultures in the New World and the three folkways of order, power, and freedom would become the cornerstones of a voluntary society in British America.

Albion's Seed - Four British Folkways in America, By David Hackett Fischer. Illustrated. 945 pages. Oxford University Press. 1989.

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### "Independence" by Thomas P. Slaughter Untangles the Roots of the American Revolution

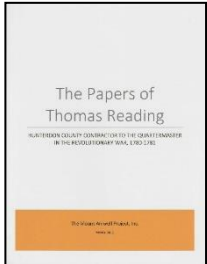


Slaughter shatters the overly simplistic as well as the overly nuanced views of the root causes of the American Revolution that are commonly seen and discussed. In a clear and very readable narrative, he dissects the complexity of the interaction of misunderstandings, attitudes, time and distance, misconceptions, neglect, and political corruption,

Independence - The Tangled Roots of the American Revolution, By Thomas P. Slaughter, 465 pages. Hill & Wang. 20

## Announcements

### Thomas Reading Papers Available to Purchase from MTAP (36 pages, \$10)



The papers of Thomas Reading are drawn from two manuscript collections held by Princeton University Library Department of Rare Books and Special Collections: The Reading Family of New Jersey Collection and the Moore Furman Collection. The Moore Furman Collection contains several business

related letters written in the 1790's and two letters to Thomas Reading in 1780. The Reading Family collection consists of correspondence and documents of Thomas Reading, his father, Governor John Reading, and his brother, George Reading, dating chiefly from the time of the American Revolution. Thomas Reading's papers include a return of purchases made for forage for the U.S. Army during the Revolutionary War, dated 1779; a statement of accounts, dated 1780, when he served as contractor for Hunterdon County, New Jersey; and a "Statement of certificates given.". There are several other letters and documents sent to Thomas Reading from officials in the Continental Congress regarding army supplies and hay and forage for the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War.

These soft cover books were edited and transcribed by David Reading and printed at no cost by Scott Reading of Charlotte, NC. For a copy please send a check for \$10 to MTAP, 97 Bissell Rd., Lebanon, NJ 08833.

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### Third Annual Cemetery Seminar

The Mount Amwell Project will be the lead organizer for the third annual Cemetery Seminar co-sponsored by the Hunterdon County Historical Society, the MTAP and the Hunterdon 300<sup>th</sup> Committee. It will held at the Hunterdon County Library Main Branch on Route 12 on September 24, 2016. The theme will be "Statutory Protections for New Jersey Historic Cemeteries" and will include a workshop to draft legislative recommendations. We will also feature a legislator as the keynote speaker. More information will be forth coming in the Spring Newsletter.

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### Web Site Access New Members

Members: To access web site ([www.mtamwell.org](http://www.mtamwell.org)) members only page simply click on the members page and enter user: member, password: mtap2008.

## Volunteers Needed

If you (or someone you know) would like to volunteer to work on various activities in the coming year we need the help. We always need people to clear cemeteries, help reset gravestones, write articles for the newsletter, work on web-site, and for 2016 help work on the seminar, both in planning and execution. Please call me at 908-236-0276 if you call help.

Dave R.