

PASSAIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

HARRY BURDETTE HAINES 1882-1972

Together with thousands of residents of Greater Paterson, the members of the Passaic County Historical Society, individually and collectively, mourn the death of Harry Burdette Haines, editor and publisher of the Paterson News, on Thursday, March 30th, 1972.

Few persons have given as much to the Society and its work as did Mr. Haines. Ever since the Society was organized in 1926, he was always ready to assist the Society and its officers in any way he could. His columns were always open to publicize the Society and its programs. His staff was always on hand to cover and report on all of our functions. He always had time to meet with our officers to discuss Society problems, and to assist in their solutions with his advice and his influence whenever that became necessary.

Mr. Haines, probably more than any other one person, was responsible for the acquisition of many of the priceless treasures now on display in our museum. Through his many contacts, he secured for us, the Corfu Clock, the Ives statue of Pandora, and the original models of the sculptures of Gaetano Federici, to mention but a few of the many objects of historic and artistic importance which we received through his efforts. The Haines Library of which we are so proud, is built around his personal gift of the extensive library gathered by his father. It was through his efforts that the Board of Freeholders erected the vault which now houses and protects our collection of original archives.

In an effort to show its appreciation and its recognition of what he had done for the Society, the Board of Trustees created the position of Honorary Life Trustee and elected him to that position. In a bulletin to be issued shortly, the Society will pay him another tribute by publishing his biography.

Through his death, the Passaic County Historical Society has lost a Life Trustee, a working member, a sponsor, and most of all, a true friend who can never be replaced. Our deepest sympathy and our sincerest condolences go to the members of his bereaved family.

A.P.C.

GRACIE LEE STICKNEY 1921-1972

On March 27th we were shocked and saddened by the sudden death of one of the members of our Executive Committee, Mrs. Gracie Lee Stickney who was also Secretary of the Board.

In the relatively short time that she had been associated with the Society, she had endeared herself to everyone and had brought new meaning, interest and vision to us all. Her wide knowledge and executive ability brought unity of purpose, grace and direction. Being a perfectionist and a hard worker, she was busy with cataloging our extensive collection at the time of her death. She was on vacation at the time, at Sanibel Island, Florida with her husband George and 12 year old son David, when she passed away in her sleep.

Gracie was born in Alabama in 1921, to Marion and Eva Lee Carroll Junkins. Her parents' families had lived in Fayette County for many generations. Her mother was a leader in the Baptist Church where she taught Sunday School most of her life. It was a frugal existence raising cotton and corn but Gracie helped the family as best she could. After graduation from High School (valedictorian) where her high IQ brought a record of straight A's, she was awarded a four year college scholarship. Unfortunately, family finances would not permit her to accept it. By then she was regarded as one of the most beautiful belles of the area with blue eyes and wavy red hair. In 1939 after her family moved to Birmingham, Alabama, Gracie entered a Jefferson County typewriting contest, winning second place. This opened up avenues and before long she was working in a credit loan office as well as the school office. A chain of circumstances brought her to Bergen County, N.J. After working for First Federal Savings and Loan in Paterson for a while, she went with the accounting firm of Wiley, Block and White. She enjoyed accounting, but management found that clients were phoning too much to hear Gracie's soft Southern accent. For office efficiency, she was told that she must lose it - or else. So she lost it. Later she became private secretary to the president of one of Paterson's outstanding industries, the Watson-Flagg Machine Co.

In 1958 she married George H. Stickney, Jr., an industrial realtor. They resided in a Georgian home at Ramsey filled with heirlooms, many of which had descended from General Congdon. This brought an interest in art and led to her association with the American Association of Conservators and Restorers. One of her ancestors, Rev. Dr. George Junkins was President of Washington College, Lexington, Virginia (later known as Washington & Lee). One of his daughters, Ellie, married Major Thomas J. Jackson, better known to us as the great, 'Stonewall'.

To her husband, son and family, the Passaic County Historical Society, mourning her untimely passing, expresses heartfelt sympathies.

R.A.M.

Due to extenuating circumstances, the Annual Meeting of the Society has been postponed until Wednesday, May 17th at 8 p.m. at Lambert Castle.

NEW MEMBERS

The Society welcomes the following who have recently become members:

General

Miss Beatrice Di Duca, Los Gatos, Cal.
Mr. Dillard Henderson, Paterson
Mrs. Garry Smith, Paterson

"The first white settler in the present boundaries of Paterson is said to have been Simeon Van Winkle, in 1719, whose home stood about where Park Avenue now ends, at the Passaic River. He was a son of one of the "Acquackanonk patentees." These were fourteen Dutchman who purchased in 1685 from the East Jersey Proprietors most of the tract including the present cities of Paterson and Passaic and most of the intervening territory. This board of East Jersey Proprietors, still in corporate existence, consisted of William Penn and others, who bought Eastern New Jersey from the trustees of Sir George Carteret's estate after his death in 1680. The first road through what is now Paterson was made in 1707. The main settlement of the Acquackanonk patentees was at what they called Acquackanonk Landing, an important trading point where vessels on the river were laden and discharged, now a part of Passaic City. The "little sister city" of to-day was then a thriving village when her now great neighbor was almost virgin forest. The years of the Revolution saw little settlement in what is now Paterson. No battles were fought on its territory, but the American army was encamped at Totowa nearby, in the autumn of 1780, and Washington had his headquarters there."

(Excerpt from "Art Work of Paterson - 1892").

History has recently been rewritten and become fact rather than fiction thanks to careful research.

It had been accepted and recorded by William W. Scott in his 3 volume work, "Passaic and its Environs", (1922) that John H. Post, Passaic's local hero at Acquackanonk Landing, had led a group of men who destroyed the bridge over the Passaic River, Nov. 22, 1776, after General George Washington led his army from Bergen County to the comparatively safe area of Acquackanonk. It was also noted that Post was commissioned a captain by General Washington for the destruction of the bridge.

Application for a pension filed by John Post in 1832 shows he was born in Bergen County in 1760, thus making him 16 years old at the time of the destruction of the bridge, and that he never held a commission as a captain. Post stated that in his years of service in the army during the war, the highest rank he held was that of corporal and signed his pension application with a cross, indicating he could not write. In the dictated account of his war service, no mention is made of the bridge event.

A copy of John Post's pension papers have been acquired and filed by the Society.

Acquackanonk Landing has found an angel in the guise of Mr. Solomon Grossman who owns land adjoining the proposed Acquackanonk Park site. Mr. Grossman is planning a colonial designed restaurant surrounded by a suitable picturesque park area befitting the proposed historic site park.

Passaic County Historical Society Newsletter
May 1972
Vol. 4, No. 2

Alfred Cappio, *President*
Helen Malcolm, *Treasurer*
Gracie Stickney, *Secretary*
Edward M. Graf, *Curator*
Jerome Nathans, *Editor*

Membership categories:
General, \$4.00 annually
Sustaining, \$10.00 annually
Contributing, \$25.00 annually
Special Student, \$2.00 annually

MUSEUM HOURS:

Wednesday, Thursday and Friday
1 - 4:45 P.M.

Saturday and Sunday
11 A.M. - 4:45 P.M.

Admission is free at all times.

Telephone: 201 - 523-9883.