



THE HISTORIC COUNTY

PASSAIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME 1, ISSUE # 2

SEPTEMBER, 1996

SOCIETY RELOCATES WHILE CASTLE IS REFURBISHED

Welcome to our new look. *The Historic County* is what we are and we hope to highlight our history in this and future issues. Part of the mission of the Passaic County Historical Society is not only to preserve items of historic value to the county— which we do in our extensive collection but we must also discuss the ideas and people which have made Passaic County so interesting and important in the development of this country.

As you might know, the Society's association with Lambert Castle began in 1934. If you have driven by Lambert Castle recently you might have noticed the "Closed to the Public" sign. The Castle is under going a much needed facelift under the guidance of Norm Robertson and his fellow Freeholders.

Though the Castle is

closed for renovations, the Society is going strong. The Freeholders of Passaic County have offered us their gracious hospitality at 317 Pennsylvania Avenue (third floor) in Paterson. The offices are situated next to



the farmer's market so at least we are never at a loss for fresh fruits and vegetables.

The renovation of Lambert Castle will probably take another year to complete. We are told it will be done by September, 1997 but you know accurate construction dates are!

As the body of Lambert Castle is being restored, its soul— where the furniture is placed, what pictures are hung etc. so that it is historically accurate is being planned notably by the Society's curator and acting director, Andrew Shick.

Mr. Shick has already completed a draft of the room designs which will try to re-create the Castle's interior in such a way that if its builder Catholina Lambert were to walk in, he would feel at home.

To this end, an effort is being made to locate pieces of furniture and other items that were in the Castle. So if you think you're sitting on a Lambert chair or have any leads about the location of Castle artifacts, give us a call.



CYNTHIA VAN DAM ELECTED SOCIETY PRESIDENT

Ms. Cynthia Van Dam was recently elected president of the Passaic County Historical Society.

Cynthia, a life long area resident, is a nurse at St. Joseph's Hospital in Paterson.

Her interest in history began when her uncle started collecting a family history and needed help to put it all together. From her work on her own family history, she became acquainted with the Passaic County Historical Society Genealogy Club.

Once inside Lambert Castle, it was all over— she subsequently became President of the Genealogy Society, a Castle volunteer and now heads the Historical Society.

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PASSAIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
317 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE
PATERSON, NEW JERSEY
201-881-2761
FAX 201-357-1070
OFFICE HOURS 9-4 P.M.
MONDAY THOUGH FRIDAY

PRESIDENT— CYNTHIA VAN DAM
1ST VICE PRESIDENT— ELLIOTT COLLINS
2ND VICE PRESIDENT— DOMINICK BUCCI
TREASURER— JOHN P. PULLARA
SECRETARY— ELBERTUS PROL

IN CASE YOU'RE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD THE HOWES OF PASSAIC

Though the site of 88 Howe Avenue is now occupied by a garden apartment, the members of the Howe family are remembered with a street named in their honor.

Physician John M. Howe settled in Passaic in 1853 and his son, Charles, later became mayor.

John Howe was described as "...one of the most public-spirited men during the village days of Passaic." He is

credited with building the first private school in Passaic, known as Howe's Academy. He died in 1885.

His son Charles, graduated from the City of New York Dental College graduating in 1873.

He was elected mayor from 1887 to 1891 and from 1899 to 1903. During his tenure as mayor the city purchased the home of Charles Paulson and converted it into the City Hall. He had the

city water supply improved and installed the first sewer system.

Howe caused an uproar in the city when during his last year as mayor, he cut \$20,000 from the school budget. The Board of Education forecast the closure of the school system two

months early but much to their chagrin, the school term closed on schedule and the Board had to admit there was even money

leftover in the bank!

A proud booster of Passaic, he said in 1903, "Our manufactories have been running on full time, many new public and private buildings have been erected and, as a rule, everyone willing to work has found employment."

FACT— In 1934 the 200 inch Mt. Palomar telescope lens was cast at the Corning works in Paterson.



HISTORICAL SOCIETY CELEBRATES 70TH AT DEY MANSION

The Dey Mansion, site of George Washington's headquarters in 1780 was host to the Passaic County Historical Society's 70th anniversary.

The date of our founding was February 18, 1926 to be exact. The first meeting of the Society took place in the headquarters of the Paterson Rotary Club in the Colt Building.

Charles Dietz presided over four enthusiastic citizens whose common interest was the history of Passaic County.

Since that time the Society has grown to several thousand members, its collection has hundreds of thousands of artifacts and our headquarters

are in the classiest address in the county.

It was a beautiful summer's night in early June when the First Dragoons provided a colonial toast in honor of the Society. The Mansion was open for touring by guests who were in period costumes as

music by the Lew Conti Band filled the air.

Freeholder **Richard DuHaime** and Paterson's Mayor **Bill Pascrell** were in attendance.

Also represented was Assemblywoman **Maryann Crecco**.

For one summer's evening we shared the pleasures of Dey Mansion with the spirit of George Washington.



HOW'S IT SPELLED?

It seems that the early Dutch and English settlers of Northern New Jersey had a difficult time translating many of the Indian names into their own language. Phonetic spellings were used in legal documents but as there were frequently no standard phonetic spellings, confusion often reigned. For example, there

were at least eighty-three known spellings of Ack-quackanonk which was one of the earliest settlements. There were fifteen spellings for Passaic and seven for Pequannock.

So how was Wanaque the river, borough and reservoir spelled back then? Wana Q? Wan-Akey? or Wanakey?



County Kids

The Passaic River-- Submarine Capital of the World

Wouldn't it be great to take a ride in a submarine? I know I'd sure like to— especially if they let me say "Up periscope". Today's submarines are nuclear powered, can travel 400,000 miles between fillups, are almost 500 feet long and can stay under water for a very long time. They even have VCR's so you can watch movies and microwaves to pop the popcorn. I don't know if they let them have butter for the popcorn.

People have always dreamed of flying like a bird— soaring high on a summer's day or just gliding on a gust of wind. I hope everyone knows the Wright Brothers who made the first flight on December 17, 1903, and Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, the place where they did it.

Not only did people want to fly like birds but they also wanted to swim like fish. Can you imagine holding your breath for a month and gliding silently underwater turning somersaults and doing hand stands almost weightless, like walking on the moon? Well, to be honest, I don't think too many people today dream of being a fish in the Passaic River but more than 100 years ago someone by the name of John Philip Holland did.

The first successful submarine was made by a Dutch inventor named Cornelis Drebbel in the 1620's. However, the first

practical non-human powered submarine was made in Paterson and tested in the Passaic River!

The developer of the "Passaic" submarines was John Phillip Holland, who was a high school mathematics teacher in Paterson. What was different about his submarines was that they were powered by engines. A gasoline engine ran the Sub on the surface and an electric motor was used when it was underwater.

The Sub called Holland #1 is 14 feet, six inches long and weighs 2.25 tons and could travel 3.5 miles an hour. I'm not sure how it happened but it did eventually sink. It was not until 1927 with the encouragement of, you guessed it, the **Passaic County Historical Society** that the Sub was recovered.

Holland #2 is 31 feet long, weighs 19.5 tons and burned up the river at a sizzling 9 miles an hour. Both Holland #1 and #2 can be seen and touched at the Paterson Museum. Mr. Holland continued to perfect his submarines and in 1900, the U.S. government bought Holland #6 which was 53 feet long. Can you guess what they called it— that's right the U.S.S. Holland.



Holland #1 1878



Holland #2 1881

DON'T BELIEVE US. GO SEE FOR YOURSELF!

THE PATERSON MUSEUM
2 MARKET STREET PATERSON, NEW JERSEY 07501
201-881-3874

ANDREW SHICK, SOCIETY CURATOR NAMED ACTING DIRECTOR

The word curator comes from the Latin *curare* which means to take care of. Since 1988, Andrew Shick has done more than just take care of the vast collection of the Passaic County Historical Society. He has also created the exhibitions at Lambert Castle and helped with the educational programs of the Society.



Mr. Shick, an honors graduate of Monmouth College, holds a masters degree in museum, archival and historical studies. He has spent his entire professional career working in museums and historical sites.

So the choice seemed clear when the Director's chair became empty that Andrew was the perfect choice.

Join Us

MEMBERSHIP

PASSAIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
317 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE
PATERSON, NEW JERSEY 07055
PHONE 201-881-2761 FAX 201-357-1070



NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

FOR COMPLETE MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION CALL

Regular Member \$20 Student Member \$5 Family Membership \$35



INSIDE THE COLLECTION THOMAS WHITELEY'S "NAIL MILL"

One of the many historically important paintings in the Passaic County Historical Society's collection is "Nail Mill". This oil painting was painted in 1850 by Thomas W. Whiteley. The painting was a gift to the Society by Mrs. James H. Rogers.

Mr. Whiteley came to Paterson in 1835 where he established himself as a landscape painter and editor of the *Hoboken Gazette*. He later became a drama and arts writer for the *New York Her-*

ald. Mr. Whiteley was an exhibitor at the National Academy from 1835 to 1863.



Nail Mill was located in Paterson. It was owned by partners Sam Colt, John Colt and Nicholas Delajlaine.

The factory, which made

nails and sheet metal, was built in 1811. The process of making nails in the early 1800's was a two stage procedure which included rolling the iron which was done by machine and then creating the head of the nail by hand— one at a time! Sometimes nails were actually used as money.

The mill continued operation until about 1827 when it became unprofitable.

If you would like to get a closer look at this paint-

ing or some of the many others we have, please come down to the Society's office at 317 Pennsylvania Avenue in Paterson but please call 881-2761 first.

By the way, "Nail Mill" is one of the many paintings which can be adopted. Adoption will allow a painting or artifact to have conservation work performed.

FACT— People actually honeymooned at the Great Falls in Paterson before Niagara Falls was on the map!

**THE PASSAIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
317 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE
PATERSON, NEW JERSEY 07503**

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Paterson, N.J.

Have a Great Fall!



Join the PCHS



**Mark Your Calendar
November 15--December 1
Holiday Crafts Fair**

**St. Mary's Church in Nutley 17 Msgr Owens Pl
Between Park Ave and Center Street**