

PASSAIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

LAMBERT CASTLE
 PASSAIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Fifty members and friends of the Society were in attendance at a theatre party held on Wednesday, June 11th. They witnessed the Broadway production of "1776", a musical play dealing with the events which took place in Philadelphia during the spring and summer of 1776. The play captured the spirit of the days which preceded the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and portrayed the thoughts and actions of the members of the Second Continental Congress. It is well worth seeing and we recommend it most highly.

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Trustee Raymond Dey opened the 1969 Historic Lecture Series with an excellent talk on "The Infiltration of the Dutch into Passaic and Bergen Counties." There were about fifty members in attendance who listened attentively to the speaker's story of the first settlers in this area. A very active questions and answers period followed the talk.

The second in the series of lectures will be held on Wednesday evening, July 23 at eight o'clock in the Grand Ballroom of Lambert Castle. The speaker will be Mr. T. Robert Kammer of Upper Saddle River and his topic will be "The Revolution in Passaic and Bergen Counties." Mr. Kammer is a former president of the Bergen County Historical Society and was the first chairman of the League of Historical Societies of New Jersey. He is past president of the Revolutionary Round Table of Bergen County and is an active member of Revolutionary Round Table group which meets monthly at Faunces Tavern in New York City. He also is a past president of the Military Historians Society of New York, and is a Fellow of the Company of Military Historians. He is presently serving as a columnist for the New Jersey Bicentennial Committee which will prepare plans to commemorate the Revolution. The Society is honored to have a man of Mr. Kammer's proven ability relate the part played in the Revolution by the early settlers of the area. We urge your attendance to this lecture.

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On Sunday, July 20th, the Society will conduct a bus tour to points of historic interest in the lower half of our county. Arranged by Captain Andrew T. Derrom, the trip will leave the parking lot at Lambert Castle at 9:15 A.M. and will first visit the offices of V. Ottilio and Sons on Preakness Avenue, Paterson. This building is a veritable museum of relics taken from many historic buildings and structures which no longer remain standing throughout the Metropolitan region. The tour will then proceed to the Van Riper-Hopper House on Berdan Avenue, now the home of the Wayne Historical Commission. The third stop will be the Schuyler-Colfax House on Hamburg Turnpike in Wayne. This, the oldest house in Passaic County, was built by Arent Schuyler in 1667 and has been occupied by his descendants ever since. Our hostess, Dr. Jane Colfax, is a direct descendant of both Arent Schuyler, and of General William Colfax, who commanded General Washington's bodyguard during the Revolution. A luncheon stop will be made at the Dey Mansion on Totowa Road in Wayne. This served as the General's headquarters on two occasions during 1780, and it was here that Washington first learned of the arrival of French troops in America to assist in the war against the British. The final stop will be made at Acquackanonk Landing in Passaic, the site of the first settlement in Passaic County, and the location of the bridge destroyed by Captain John Post and a band of patriots in November 1776, an action which saved Washington and his army from capture during the retreat through New Jersey.

The cost of the bus trip and the box lunch is three dollars, and reservations should be made at Society headquarters in advance.

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The third in this year's series of historic lectures will present President Emeritus D. Stanton Hammond in a talk on "The Making Of Historic Maps". It will be held in the Grand Ballroom of Lambert Castle on Wednesday evening, August 27th at eight o'clock. Mr. Hammond will illustrate his talk with many of the maps he has drawn.

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Many members of the Society are not aware of the use which is being made by research workers and writers of the extensive archives of the Society. Only a few weeks ago, Karel M. Waer completed a thesis of 110 pages on "The Negro in the History of Paterson, New Jersey." This is the first serious study made of this phase of the city's history, and in his work Mr. Waer gives due credit to the Society and our Curator, Edward Graf, for the help he received in his studies.

We should go all out to stimulate historical research and writing by serious students of local history. Our archives are filled with information of our past that has never been published but which should be written if we are to know the full contribution Passaic County and its inhabitants have made to the history of our nation.

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With this issue of the Castle Lite, the Society includes a copy of a history of Acquackanonk Landing written by Trustee James J. De Mario. This is the area to be seen on the bus tour on July 20th, and Mr. De Mario will be on hand to act as guide for the group as they walk over the places described in his article.

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The young man who lives next door returned from Viet Nam on July 3rd, the day before our nation's 193rd birthday. Other soldiers have been returning home since that July 4th, 1776. Like him, they have served their country faithfully on the field of battle. In these days, we are apt to overlook the fact that there are more young men like our next-door neighbor than there are who burn draft cards, participate in street riots or become a part of campus demonstrations. Most of the young Americans of today are still loyal to the principles which made our country the great nation it has become, and only comparatively few of them are responsible for the disorders we see on television and read about on the front pages of our papers. Perhaps it is time for us to look at our young people in their true perspective and to realize that the vast majority of them are patriotic citizens ready to carry on the ideals of a nation of the people, by the people and for the people, first proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence, 193 years ago.