

HIGHTSTOWN



EAST WINDSOR

HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 1997

TIME CAPSULE SEALED FOR 100 YEARS

by Richard S. Hutchinson

On Saturday, November 23, 1996, at 8:30AM, the Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society replaced the "Time Capsule", which had been removed in May, into its resting place within the wall of Memorial Park surrounding Peddie Lake.

As I was preparing the seal around the lid of the outer vault, I told everyone present that if they wanted to put anything into the outer box before I sealed it, now was the time. Everyone said, "Are you serious?" and immediately began searching for something to throw into the outer portion of the vault. The *Windsor-Hights Herald* photographer was present and also contributed to the contents of the outer vault. From out of the wallets of those present came various business cards,

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Before: The 1996 Time Capsule as it is mounted in the wall.



After: Wall of Memorial Park where 1996 Time Capsule has been replaced.

THE BURNING OF HIGHTSTOWN - 1882

by Richard S. Hutchinson

It was February 5th, 1882. It was a cold day with a steady wind. And, the town had just experienced a new snow fall leaving high drifts in the streets. It was Sunday; and with the church services being over and the businesses closed, the stillness hung in the crisp air.

But, it wasn't long before that stillness was broken. In fact, it was less than an hour after the finish of church services, when it was discovered that something was wrong. The streets that were now quiet with scarcely a soul about would soon be filled with anxious and exited people. A mild odor of smoke filled the air but that wasn't really unusual; especially with the cold weather and with people using wood and coal for cooking and heating. But, this smell was stronger and somehow different.

After searching out that smell, it was soon discovered that there was a fire in the downtown area of Hightstown. With the downtown area consisting of wooden structures built one upon the other, it was realized that a disaster was in the making. There was a very real possibility that Hightstown was in danger of being destroyed by fire.

The *Hightstown Gazette* wrote a lengthy article on the fire which, in my opinion, was a great piece of journalism for this period of time. They covered the fire from several angles without adding the embellishment which so often accompanied these early journalistic ventures when it came to tragedies. Their reporting of the fire and their follow-up coverage gives us a great idea of what the town looked like prior to the fire and locates the businesses and the residences for us in that section of the town. Through their coverage of the fire, you can almost see the television crews of today running around the streets interviewing residents and giving their continuing opinions about everything; whether you want to hear about them or not. You can almost see our present *Gazette* reporter, Katherine Dennis, interviewing the people of Hightstown on the snow covered dirt streets.

So, here is the story of the people of Hightstown, who for the most part, came together from all walks of life to save their town on that cold crisp day in 1882.

It was about one o'clock on Sunday afternoon and Mr. C.M. Norton, while passing up Main street, detected a peculiar burning odor which seemed to come from the direction of Pearce's building, which stands on the corner of Mercer and Morrison streets.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY

- 6 Business Meeting, 7:30PM, Ely House
- 19 Annual Dinner, Coach & Four, with slide program - "The Pinelands Traveler - Ghost Towns, Bogs and Legends", 1:30PM

FEBRUARY

- 3 Business Meeting, 7:30PM, Ely House
- 20 Hightstown Historical Homes, Harold "Skip" Cox, 7:30PM, Meadow Lakes Meeting Room

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organization cards, a calendar, and even the photographer's press pass. Someone ruminated about how they should really put their credit cards into the vault. Then with very little ceremony, the top was placed onto the outer vault and the time capsule was sealed for the next 100 years.

Through the efforts of Earl Groendyke, our local mason contractor, the wall was taken down in order to accommodate the new, larger outer vault holding the time capsule and then rebuilt. With the help of Councilman Warren Olsen; Harold "Skip" Cox, Society president; Charles "Cappy" Stults; Tom Olsen; Chris Cox; and myself; the large block and cap stone was lifted by hand and put into place within the wall. The stone surrounding the block and the time capsule was then cemented back into place and the major portion of the job was finished by 2:30PM.

At this time, I'd again like to thank William F. Glackin, of the Glackin/Saul Funeral Home, Hightstown and Mr. Harold T. Hall, Jr, President of H.T. Hall, Inc, of Manasquan, NJ, for the donation of the burial vault for this project. [Mr. Glackin and other members of the Glackin-Saul Funeral Home were present in the early morning hours to take photos of the time capsule and the vault before they were placed into the wall.]

The following items were placed into the time capsule sealed within the burial vault:

ITEMS PLACED INTO THE 1996 TIME CAPSULE

1. Photos of the Hightstown Fire Department.
2. Photos of the Hightstown Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary.
3. Copies of the Hightstown Fire Department Newsletter.
4. Photo of the Hightstown Fire Department coverlet.
5. Copy of the *Hightstown Gazette*.
6. Copy of the *Windsor-Hights Herald*.
7. Copy of the history on how the "1923" Time Capsule was found.
8. Copy of the "Time Capsule" recovery proposal presented to Borough Council.
9. Copies of the 1996 *Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society News*.
10. Copy of the "Celebrate Hightstown" program and map.
11. Copy of the Friday Club's 100th Anniversary program.

12. Copies of other Friday Club materials and photos.
13. Photos and program of the dedication of the refurbished Y.M.C.A. building on Mercer Street.
14. Photo of Mayor and Council.
15. Copies of documents pertaining to the history of the Peddie Bridge construction.
16. The program from the Peddie Bridge Rededication ceremonies.
17. Copy of the family chart of Jasper Hutchinson who politically "pushed" for the building of the Peddie Bridge.
18. Copies of various historic photos of Hightstown dating from 1860 to the early 1900s.
19. A message from Richard S. Hutchinson, who found the time capsule, to those future residents of Hightstown/East Windsor Township who will hopefully recover the time capsule.
20. A descendant's chart of one branch of the Hutchinson family of Hightstown from the known progenitor, Jonathan Hutchinson of Middlesex County, who in 1737 married a girl from Monmouth County, which traces those descendants down to Stanley Stults Hutchinson, the father of Richard Stanley Hutchinson.
21. Numerous photos of the "Celebrate Hightstown" weekend events.
22. From the US Postal Service, the US Postal Service cancellation stamp (1721-1996) used during the "275th Anniversary" of Hightstown at the US Postal Service's Mobile Station during the "Celebrate Hightstown" Weekend.
23. "Celebrate Hightstown" refrigerator magnets.
24. Hightstown postcards.
25. Some Hightstown business cards.
26. Approximately 150 plus photos of Hightstown and East Windsor Twp buildings, houses, churches, streets, people, and the 1996 Memorial Day events. Some of the photos being of the same scenes in the photos recovered from the 1923 time capsule.
27. Two \$.32 US postage stamps.
28. Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society note paper.
29. A Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society Membership card.
30. A signed copy of Peggy & Frank Brennan's pictorial book, "Images of America - Hightstown and East Windsor", with a special message directed toward their future grandchildren.
31. The 1996 Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society house tour map and guide.
32. A copy of the publication, "*Clara Barton and Hightstown*", being sold by the

Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society.

33. The Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society's famous 2.5 inch lucite cube with the embedded "John Bull" coin.

The following is the content of the Message placed in the Time Capsule:

A MESSAGE TO THE RESIDENTS OF HIGHTSTOWN/EAST WINDSOR TOWNSHIP

In 1996, while doing research, I discovered this "Time Capsule" which had been buried in 1923 by one of our local undertakers, Elmer J. Rogers. It was through Rogers' own efforts and expense that this "Time Capsule" was constructed and originally filled with medals, books and booklets, and over 75 photos of the town's people, buildings, and residences from the time of Hightstown's Bicentennial in 1921. Because we were celebrating the town's 275th Birthday in 1996, this fortunate discovery was used to help us celebrate the planned three day event. The recovery effort was covered by television and the news print media.

The material that was recovered from the capsule in 1996 was removed and put on display over that May weekend and remained on display until October. At that time, the material was removed, catalogued, and placed in permanent storage with the 1,000 other photographs of this community from the mid 1800s to the present (1996) along with the other items in the manuscript collections of the Hightstown/East Windsor Historical Society. Because the outer copper box was no longer capable of being sealed again after being opened, we had a child's burial vault donated to us by the manufacturer, H.T. Hall from Manasquan, New Jersey, through the efforts of William Glackin, a present day undertaker (now called funeral director) of the Glackin/Saul Funeral Home, located on the corner of Morrison Avenue and Center Street. The original outer box was also made part of our society's collection.

At the time of opening the outer box, condensation over the years had produced about 1/4 cup of water in the outer container. The inner container was dry but the material was very damp. We immediately separated the photographs and placed them on a table to air dry. It only took about 45 minutes for them to be completely dry but they curled up during the process. We then put each picture in an acid free folder and pressed them with several pounds of weight in order to flatten them out. There were only two photos that did not

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survive the 1923 time capsule and this was because the emulsion had come into contact with the silver-plated metal container. Because of this recovery experience, I have attempted to avoid some of these same potential problems by putting the enclosed items in plastic bags. I have also separated the newspaper items from the other paper items due to their paper's high acid content.

You may be asking why 1921 items were not put away until 1923. This was because in 1920 the town burned from the mills at the corner of Franklin Street to the Railroad Hotel at the intersection of Stockton Street. With 1921 being the Bicentennial year, the area was made presentable for the event. However, it was not until 1923 that the rock retaining wall surrounding Peddie Lake and new dam was constructed on Rocky Brook replacing the previous wooden dam that had existed for the burned mills. Therefore, with this new wall being constructed around Peddie Lake, Elmer Rogers came up with the "Time Capsule" idea. Be sure to look at Rogers, for he was not only an undertaker but a musician, the leader of the Rogers' Band, and a published poet. You can read his book of poems that was recovered in the 1923 material from the capsule.

I hope that this little gesture of ours, to you, brightens your day. I hope that you look upon it in the same way that we looked upon

what Rogers did for us. It literally stopped traffic in town. Everyone in the area stopped what they were doing, as the word spread, to come to Town Hall and look at the recovered material. It brought many of us together who would never have met in any other way. If we have given you a little boost in spirit and something to be proud of, come up to the Cedar Hill Cemetery where Rogers, myself and most of the rest of us in this present day community are buried and simply show us your appreciation by saying "thanks". We'll be watching, over both you and our community.

We hope that you will continue the tradition started by Rogers in 1923 and put your "Time Capsule" back into the wall.

Sincerely,

Richard Stanley Hutchinson

PS - There is a time capsule that was buried in 1875 in the base of the Soldier's Civil War Monument at the intersection of Rogers Avenue and Stockton Street, another one in the old rug mill building on Bank Street (if it still exists), and a brass box that was buried in 1969 in the Hightstown High School on Leshin Lane. And, don't forget to look at all the other buildings of the past that have cornerstones including the community's churches.

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[Morrison Street is now known as Rogers Avenue. This building no longer exists but was known to many of us as McNamara's Meat Market.]

Norton went over and examined the building but found all the doors fastened, and no sign of anything wrong. He saw Mr. McCue on the opposite corner and told him that something was wrong, and then went back to the suspected building.

[Mr. Mc Cue would be directly opposite the Pearce Building on the other corner of what is today Mercer and Rogers Avenue or as many of us today would refer to it as Eufemia's corner.]

Norton then detected a slight wisp of smoke curling out from the side of the building, and giving a cry of "fire", started for the Universalist church, which was the nearest bell. He had some difficulty in getting into the tower, but he soon had the bell telling the alarm.

Norton's first cry of fire was heard by T.M. Scroggy, [railroad station master] who was at the passenger depot, and he ran at once to the fire-engine room, where he found Johnson Mount and R.D. Norton ahead of him, and the fire bell gave its well known note of warning, nearly in unison with the bell-ringing by Mr. Norton.

The great bell in the Baptist tower soon added its voice to the others, and in a very few moments a crowd of people were at the corner. Pearce's building, lately known as the shirt factory, is the two story frame building on the corner of Mercer and Morrison Sts. Mercer street at nearly the same point, branching off from Main street. Next to this on Morrison

HIGHTSTOWN EAST WINDSOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

founded 1971

Serving Hightstown Borough
and East Windsor Township
609-371-9580

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street was Morton's carriage shops, of which Mercer Lodge, No. 22, K. of P, occupied the third story. Next came Mrs. Magee's house, and then the residence of T.C. Pearce, the owner of the corner building. On Mercer street next to the factory was Johnson Pullen's shop and house, the later occupied by Jacob Gerns; then came F.E. Cole's residence.

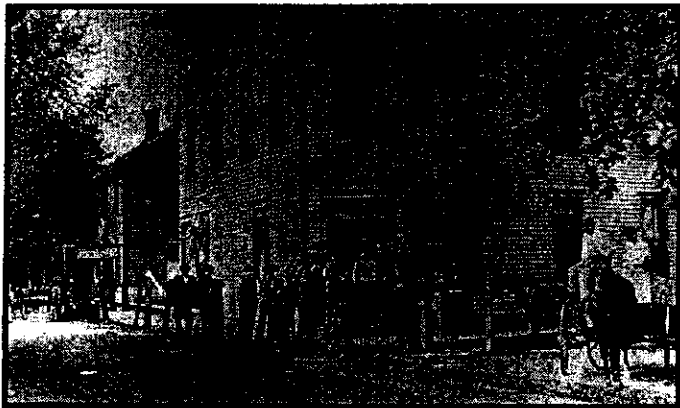
Opposite the shirt factory on Morrison street is the frame building known as McCue's corner. Across Mercer street and occupying the point between that and Main street is Dawes' Hall, a three story building, occupied on the front by S.C. Johnes & Son hardware store, and by Dr. Dawes' dentistry, Dr. Williamson's office, and Mrs. Rebecca Miller and C.C. Mc Michael as tenants.

Across Main street stand the Baptist and Universalist churches, and a frame building belonging to Mr. A.B. Wyckoff. McCue's corner is directly connected by frame buildings with the heart of town.

Mr. Pearce says that he heard the first alarm and as soon as he could get on his boots ran out to his corner building, and passed around it. He found smoke issuing from all sides of the building near the eaves. The doors leading to the shirt factory as well as those of the grocery store of James H. Pearce in the corner of the first story were opened. The whole building was found to be full of smoke but no fire was discovered.

In the mean time, the fire engine had been brought up through the snow drifts, and was located on the stream in front of the marble yard.

[This would be Grape Run that now runs underground and empties into Rocky Brook.]



The rebuilt Pierce Building and Johnson Pullen's Boot Shop, after 1882 fire.

An opening was cut into the store on Morrison street and then flames were discovered along the partition between the store and Geo. Y. Wood's butcher shop. There seems to be no doubt that the fire originated somewhere in this partition, probably from the flue which was used for both stoves, and that it had been burning for some time before it was discovered.

The fire engine gave immediate evidence of being out of order but it was kept at work and bucket brigades were organized on all sides. As soon as the draft relieved the smoke, work was at once begun in saving the books and stock of the store, and in getting out machines, shirts and material from the factory. It is impossible to tell how much was thus saved, but everything was damaged by smoke.

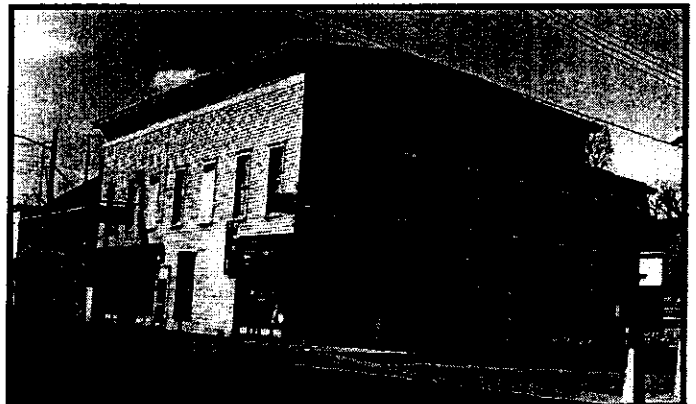
At this time, the wind was from the southwest and the dense cloud of smoke was wafted across McCue's corner and down Main street. This showed that there was immense danger of the destruction of almost the entire village, and as the flames were evidently beyond control of our engine, Mayor Dawes at 2 o'clock telegraphed of Supt. Buckalew, and called for help from Trenton and Bordentown. As hours must pass before help could come, everybody went to work to do what could be done. The funeral of Miss Giberson was to have been held at 2 o'clock but had to be postponed as the Baptist church could not be reached for the smoke, and was itself in danger.

[Giberson - Near Hightstown, February 3rd, Christian Giberson, in the 67th year of her age.]

Mr. D.W. Morton saw that his shops were doomed and at once proceeded to strip

them of everything movable. The Knights, of Mercer Lodge, No 22, removed the furniture and carpets from their hall, but had to leave their most valuable paraphernalia to the flames. All along Mercer, Morrison and the west side of Main street people were moving their goods. Dawes Hall was soon ignited near the roof and no water could be thrown to that point, it was doomed. Johnson Pullen's shop was the next to take fire, and then Morton's shop went down like a flash. It was evident that if the Mcgee house was burned standing it would be impossible to save Pearce's, Carr's and Dey's buildings. The services of a number of men with axes, settled this, and Mcgees's house was cut away, as was also Johnson Pullen's. A few noble soldiers, Scroggy, Brandt, and Taylor, at F.E. Cole's house, another heroic band with J.H. Smith and J.R. Shangle, prominent, on Pearce's house, a third group of hard fighters, Rogers, Lott, Foster, Ford and the Peddie boys, on the McCue corner, and John Punyea with a crowd of fighters at the brown house of Dr. Dawes, with every man, woman and child that could do so carrying water until every well in the neighborhood was dry - these people saved the town.

The wind had veered to the west and the path of the smoke now lay across Main street. Dr. Dawe's building was burning slowly but sure to go down. Right across the way stood the Universalist church, a brick structure, but standing within three feet of it was the three story frame building of Mr. Wyckoff. Next and a little back the Baptist church which was of wood. The bucket brigade and a hand pump were now working to protect the Wyckoff building, for if it caught the churches were gone. The only fear was that as the flames began to get to the interior of the Dawes' building with its furniture, paints, oils, etc, in the store, they would in



The Pierce Building as it looked circa 1960 as MacNamara's Meat Shop.

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crease the flames so as to ignite the building opposite. In every other direction, the town was comparatively safe.

It was at this time, about four o'clock, and the shriek of an train engine told us that help was coming. The telegraph call had been promptly heard, Chief Edward L. Mitchell of Trenton, had hurriedly summoned some of his best companies, the Trenton Steam Fire and Hose Companies and the Delaware Hose Company, and Col. Buckalew had furnished a train, of seven cars. At Bordentown, the Delaware Hand Engine and the Wecaco Hose, under the direction of Chief Flynn and Forman Devine, with their companies were taken on board. The fact that a large number of persons who were not firemen got on the train at Bordentown was the cause of trouble later.

On their arrival at Hightstown ... it took but a few moments for the Trenton lads to lay their hose to the burning building by Messrs. Rogers, Chamberlain and Taylor using their [horse] teams to good advantage in this movement. The Bordentown engine was not put to work, but the firemen from Bordentown worked side by side with the Trenton firemen.

Right here we wish to say that we hear nothing, but good words for the firemen from both cities. The Trenton boys being in uniform and using their own machine were noticed the most, but we wish distinctly to say that we have no evidence that any fireman was guilty of disorderly conduct. We note the following article from the Trenton newspaper, the *Emporium*:

"The Bordentown firemen gained a record at the fire at Hightstown on Sunday which should make them feel ashamed of themselves. On arriving at Hightstown, it was discovered that they had either brought the wrong hand engine or the wrong hose, as the couplings on the hose would not fit the outlets on the engine, and consequently they were of no service. They then turned their attention to battling with the "fire king" known as benzine, which got the best of them, and they made Rome howl. [Benzene was apparently used to drink in those days and they were drunk.] One man was detected stealing a silver spoon. The Trenton firemen received praise from all quarters. The Delaware engine was in service five hours and forty six minutes without stopping."

[So, this means that it was about 10PM, over 9 hours, before the fire was under control.]

This is very unjust, as the drinking and stealing was not done by firemen, but by the roughs who unfortunately were allowed to crowd onto the train at Bordentown. While we not wish to detract from the good reputation established by the Trenton firemen, we have a good word and gratitude also for those from Bordentown who did their best. Who it was that furnished the liquor, we do not know but one incident is relished and retold on all sides. When that champion Hightstown yeller got tired of standing on the engine and cursing everybody who was at work, he sneaked off, secured a bottle of benzine, and offered it to a group of visiting firemen.

But slowly and surely Dawe's building went down. Messrs. Johnes & Son, after removing their kerosene, fastened up their building, refusing the risk of an attempt to remove their goods in that crowd. Their prudence was confirmed later in the day, when for a few moments a gang got inside, and completely gutted the cutlery show cases. The steamer kept a torrent of water pouring into the building, and although at times it seemed sure that the Britton property, Pierson's, Jos. Perrine's and others would go, about eight o'clock the work was done, and all that was left of the old landmark was the walls enclosing the hardware store, and the burning timbers and smoking ruins.

At the order of the Mayor, Hutchinson's Hall was opened and a collation was hurriedly spread by the citizens for the visiting firemen.

[This is the building at the corner of Stockton and Main Street at the light now known as the Stults Insurance building.]

They seemed to enjoy their coffee and cakes and we are glad to hear that they give a good report on the hospitality of Hightstown. May we never need them again, but if we do, may we be fortunate enough to get them as promptly.

LOSSES AND INSURANCE

Pearce's Hall, a large two story frame building, valued at \$11,000 by the owner, Hon. T.C. Pearce, completely destroyed. The main room on the first floor was the grocery store of James H. Pearce, who estimates his stock at about \$3,500. Adjoining the store was

the butcher shop of George Y. Wood who loss about \$50, no insurance. The entire remainder of the building to both stories was occupied by the shirt factory of Messrs. Downs & Finch, who had a large stock of shirts on hand beside their material and machinery. Their loss is estimated up to \$30,000.

Dawe's Hall, a large three-story building, valued at \$6,000, owned by Dr. Dawes. Almost entirely destroyed ... Dr. Dawes also loses about \$500 in furniture and articles stored in the building ... In this building were Dr. Williamson, who saved his office furniture, Mrs. Rebecca Miller, who saved most of her effects, and Mr. C.C. McMichael, who loses a lot of butcher tools and household goods, not insured ... The front of the building was occupied by the firm of S.C. Johnes & Son, hardware dealers. They had a stock on hand of about \$3,000, all destroyed or badly damaged.

Morton's building, a three story frame building, the two lower stories occupied by the owner, D.W. Morton, blacksmith and carriage builder, valued at \$3,400 ... Loss on stock slight ... In the third story was the Knights of Pythias Lodge. The loss and damage to their furniture is probably \$150 ... Mr. Hampton saved his goods.

Mr. Nelson Silvers' residence, owned by Mrs. J.C. Magee, valued at \$2,100 ... Mr Silvers' furniture was badly damaged.

Johnson Pullen's house, occupied by residence and shoe shop, valued at \$2,000 ... Loss on stock and furniture, almost \$100, not insured. Jacob Geros saved nearly all his household goods.

The tenement house in rear of Dawes' Hall, same owner, damaged about \$100 ... The tenants lost considerable furniture.

The McCue property owned by Benj. Rice scorched ... The Smith property was also scorched. The dwelling of T.C. Pearce was damaged as well as the furniture, probably about \$500 ...

THE REPORTER'S FIRE NOTES

Mr. Gern's cat was badly singed, but all of her nine lives were saved.

Mrs. Nelson Silvers would like to hear from a bundle of underclothing. Someone took her underwear and blankets tied up [in a bundle] ... whoever has them in charge will

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confer a great favor in returning them to her at her new residence, corner of Main and William streets.

Question - Who was it that yelled the loudest, swore the most and worked the least? The drunk on top of Hightstown's broken down fire engine. He ought to be proud of his record.

Mr. Morton wishes to thank all who helped him. He may be found at the shop near Shangle's foundry for a few days, to settle up his business and books. Call and see him.

George Y. Wood has taken a shop in the building, where Noah Coward resides.

Dr. Williamson hangs out his shingle next to McCue's Corner.

The students of Peddie, both gentlemen and ladies, worked like soldiers. Two of them performed a feat that has always been called impossible - that of carrying off a red hot stove. Were did it go?

The young lady who rolled the barrels of oil out from under the burning building and did not stop until she got them across the railroad knew what to do and how to do it.

Pieces of burning wood fell into the belfry of the Baptist church, and Mr A. F. Job, who was on guard there, had holes burned in his hat.

It was a cold day but a common hand squirt [make hand gesture] would have thrown water further than our fire engine.

The "Trenton" and "Delaware" firemen say that they were handsomely treated in Hightstown. Everybody speaks highly of them, and may they be always assured of a hearty welcome.

Mrs. Lantz prepared supper for a crowd of roughs on Sunday night but they concluded they wouldn't take anything but the silverware. They did and then left.

There seems to be no doubt that one pail of water would have extinguished the fire seen minutes after the alarm was first given. But the exact location of the fire was not known.

Messrs. Downs and Finch have rented Hutchinson's Hall and will at once put in new engines and machinery.

Mr. A. S. Voorhees was on the roof of Dawes' Hall, and could have saved it with a hand engine at the time it ignited.

We learn that offers of land on which to build were made to Messrs. Downs & Finch, by John McMurrin and W.J. Cole. The idea of having the factory in the center of the town is not agreeable to many of our property owners.

Mr. J.H. Pearce is looking for a new place of business. We hope he will find it, as he had worked up a good trade, and has the heartfelt sympathy of all in his recent loss.

Superintendent Buckalew and Chief Mitchell are kindly remembered for their prompt answer to the Mayor's appeal for help.

We hope Mr. Johnson Pullen will soon get into a new boot shop. A great many people in town think that a pair of "Uncle Johnsons" boots are necessary to keep down the corns.

Mr. T. C. Pearce wishes us to extend his particular thanks to the Peddie students, to the railroad men, to the ladies, and to everybody, for their brave and neighborly labor in the protection of his property on Sunday.

The Hightstown fire engine was left standing during the fire on Sunday from a rotten valve packing. But, the worst and weakest thing was the "brass image" on top of the machine. [Here, the reporter was obviously referring to the drunken fireman swearing while standing on top of the engine.]

The societies burned out are meeting in Windsor Lodge rooms.

A stray feather bed is [still] floating around out there somewhere yet. Mrs. Silvers will be glad to hear from it.

One of the worst results of the recent fire, is the fact that hundreds of persons are thrown out of employment, but we are glad to believe that this will be but temporary.

To the credit of our landlords, we hear, that they positively refused to furnish any drinks to the gang of roughs on Sunday.

By the way, Dr. Dawes may be found at the residence of D.W. Perrine, a few doors above his former office.

'Squire! Please do not play with the fire bell. It is no sportive sound to those who were burned out, and should only be rung when there is danger.

Rogers, the Auctioneer, will sell a large lot of hardware and house furnishing goods, in the Wyckoff building, opposite S. C. Johnes & Son, on Tuesday next. For particulars, see bills. This will be a good chance to get bargains.

William Taylor had his hand badly cut at the fire. This is the only serious injury to any person. How different that would have been if the fire had occurred in the night.

Foreman Shangle repaired the fire engine yesterday and reports the machine to be in working order. From Capt. Mount's yard a stream was easily thrown to the roof of Mason's store, and to the passenger depot.

Dr. Hazard spoiled a suit of fine clothes while working on a roof on Sunday.

SUBSEQUENT NEWSPAPER ISSUES

The paper ran follow-up stories on the fire in subsequent issues. One of those stories was as follows:

ITEMS FROM THE ASHES

Just at this time it may be well for us to put on record some memories of the burned district. Most of our older citizens will remember when the point now known as Dr. Dawes' corner, was owned by Mr. John C. Ward, and was occupied by an old blacksmith shop, in which McMichael [and] -be Voorhees and others handled the sledge. Then it was purchased by James R. Laird and Joseph Perrine and used as a wheelwright and blacksmith shop. In front of these shops, about where the porch of the burned building is, were the [-]y scales. Laird and Perrine sold it to Dr. Dawes, as they bought it, "more or less", and about 1852 the building known as Dawes' Hall was erected. The second story was the place for all lectures and exhibitions, and when the moon was right we often gazed with boyish wonder at the mystic light that beamed from the third story windows, and listened as the Colonel led off in "Now we part" to the tune of Greenville. In the upper room, the Masonic Lodge was instituted, and it has been at times the home of the Odd Fellows, Good Templers, Union League,

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FIRE IN THE OUTHOUSE

by Richard S. Hutchinson

The Ely House, home of the Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society, has probably encountered many close calls during its history due to the use of its many fireplaces and cooking ovens. However, few of us are aware that the house was nearly lost due to a fire in 1904.

Winter was very harsh on the residents of Hightstown, and in other places as well, in those early days when nature called and a trip to the outhouse was required. And, things hadn't changed too much in that category even in the early 1900s. So, in an effort to make those times more comfortable, small oil stoves were put into the outhouses. This seemed like a good idea on a cold wintry day until that Monday afternoon of the 28th of January in 1904.

"What came near being one of the most serious fires in Hightstown's history started at about 3 o'clock on Monday afternoon. An oil stove, in an outhouse in the rear of the Trinity Church and rectory went wrong in some way and set fire to the structure. The Rev. H.L. Phillips, pastor of the church, was the last one to visit the outhouse and noticing that the stove was acting strangely went up stairs and notified his wife. She went down, but by the time she reached the spot

the building was in flames and the alarm was given. The church, which was formerly the Central bank, is built of brick, and the residence occupies the second story, the only access to which is by means of wooden stairs built along the side of the building. In a few minutes the fire had extended along the fence and arbor to the stairs and all the wood work was a mass of flames.

The fire company responded quickly to the alarm and in a short time had the conflagration under control, after carrying Mr. Phillips and his invalid sister down a ladder, the stairs being completely consumed. A barn belonging to Mrs. Hannah Cubberley in the rear of the building caught fire and was almost completely destroyed. The fire nearly burned away the doors and windows of the church and rectory, but did not enter the building, although papers near the wall were scorched. The actual damage to the interior was very slight. Few fires in Hightstown, have ever caused more excitement and, in fact, few have possessed more possibilities of tragic results. That these were not more serious is due to the prompt and efficient action of our Fire Company and too much praise cannot be given our red-shirt boys for skill and heroism.

During the progress of the fire, Storey Reed was struck by a falling ladder and received a severe scalp wound. Dr. Wm. L. Wilbur, who was called, found it necessary to take eight stitches in the cut., but the injured man is now doing well under the care of his physician and his daughter-in-law, Mrs. E.H. Reed.

A pleasant sequel of the conflagration was the presentation yesterday to Mr. Phillips of a purse of something over \$100 by the Rev. J.S. Van Dyke as a slight token of regard from a few friends in Hightstown. Hightstown has had few clergymen it esteemed more highly than the venerable rector of Trinity and the gift but feebly expressed the town's sympathy with him in his misfortune or its gratitude for his safety.

Editor's Note - The above bank building sat on the corner of North Main Street and Bank Street where the vacant lot now exists next to Ely House. James Cubberley was the cashier at the bank and lived next door in his residence which is know known as Ely House. The two structures were only separated by a 12.5 foot alley which is now exhibited on the property as the driveway to the right of the residence.

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Coach & Four Restaurant

Route 33, Hightstown, New Jersey

Sunday, January 19, 1997

Menu:

Fresh Fruit

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\$17.00 _____ *Chicken*

\$17.00 _____ *Baked Filet of Flounder*

\$17.00 _____ *Roast Beef*

Special Dessert

*Send reservations with check payable to: "H.E.W. Historical Society" to:
Mrs. Clara Thomas, 951 Old York Road, Hightstown, New Jersey 08520*

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THE BURNING OF HIGHTSTOWN

Continued from page 6

Know Nothing, and other societies. Many of our prominent citizens as they saw the fire enveloping that room, and many in other places who read our "Story of the Fire" last week, were reminded of their initiation into the solemn mysteries of these orders. The store in front was first occupied by Coward & Perrine, and successively by Coward & Keeler, Robins & Taylor, Jacob H. Walters, Ira Smock, J. Perrine & Son, Mrs. Moore, S.C. Johnes & Son, and probably by others. The boys of that time have not forgotten Mrs. Ford, who kept cakes and beer on the Main street side, while the dentistry of the owner and the office occupied by Drs. Hall, McGeorge, Johnson, Deshler and others will long be remembered. But the old building is gone with all its memories, and will soon be replaced by another. We suggest that before the Doctor lays his new foundation, the borough should purchase a few feet "more or less" to make a better opening into Morrison street.

About the first we remember of the Pearce corner was when it was occupied by

an old turning mill and cabinet shop. We believe Mr. Jones Ogborn built the dam and raised the pond, but we know that the water was cold, for we came near to being drowned in it once. In 1870 Mr. Pearce and Major Smith built the building which was recently burned, 53 by 80 feet, two stories. It has been occupied by Bennett & McManus, Hutchinson's Tag Company, Rev. B.M. Brown, Mrs. Idding, T.C. Pearce, J.H. Pearce, Downs & Finch, and others. Mr. G.Y. Wood has occupied his part since it was built. The second story was a public hall, and for a time was occupied by the Good Templers, Grangers and Y.M.C. Association.

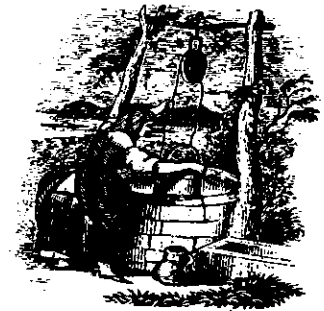
Morton's building was erected about 1860 by T.C. Pearce, and used by him as a shop until he sold it to Mr. Morton, about 1866. Its third story was a lodge room used at one time by the O.U.A. and later by the Knights of Pythias.

The Magee house was built about the same time by T.C. Pearce and occupied by him as a residence. Since then it has been

rented to Theodore Eldridge, Stewart Reed, Mrs. Martin and others. It was sold to Mrs. Joseph Perrine, (now Mrs. J.C. Magee), and at the time of the fire was occupied by her mother, Mrs. Nelson Silvers.

The old turning mill was removed by Mr. Israel Pearce, and afterward, sold by T.C. Pearce to Johnson Pullen, and with additions and alterations became the residence and shop which Mr. Pullen lost by the fire.

AND FINALLY, at last report, Mrs. Nelson Silvers was still waiting to hear from her missing bundle of underclothing.



**Hightstown-East Windsor
Historical Society**
164 North Main Street
Hightstown, New Jersey 08520

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