



HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 1999

GERTRUDE APPELEGET WYCKOFF

The following is the continuation of and the final chapter of Gertrude Maxwell's story of her life and experiences, in and around her home in Hightstown, New Jersey, from 1840 to 1939. Several chapters in her life story have been omitted during this series because they described her life away from Hightstown while she traveled in Europe and lived in Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania due to the calls of her husband's church.

In this final chapter of her life, she returns to her ancestral home in Hightstown and describes her life after her husband's death. She subsequently faces the toughest decision of her life; the selling of her ancestral home and then watching her prized possessions, as well as those of the Appleget family, be sold at auction.

CHAPTER XVIII RETURN OF THE NATIVE

The Play is done
The Curtain drops.
---Thackeray

Our summer in Riverside passed quickly and pleasantly. The friends ignored Max's illness and made many plans for his entertainment. There was an under current of sadness to me in it all for I knew the time of his earthly sojourn was short.

Our good friend, the Elder, took us and his daughters up the River camping. He was a master hand at pitching a tent and "breaking camp" as he called packing up, and both were

rather laborious but it was a new and pleasant experience to us....Another festivity was the Corn Roasts. For these we went out ... to a grove, where a big fire was built and burned until the ashes were deep enough to cover the ears of green corn. The husks were laid back, the silk removed, the covering put back and tied, and then the ears of corn were ready to be placed in the hot ashes and covered by more ashes, and the result very toothsome and accompanied by sandwiches, pickles, and sometimes bacon and coffee. Max was able for all these jaunts and enjoyed them....

We had been uncertain as to our destination. Our house was rented for a term of years and we could not disturb the existing arrangement, but

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

- 13 Business Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Ely House
- 16 Program Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Meadow Lakes

OCTOBER

- 3 Dedication of the Freight Station as the "Sara Hutchinson West Educational Center", 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
- 4 Business Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Ely House

SOCIETY NEWSLETTER FINISHES 2ND AGAIN IN NATIONAL COMPETITION



For the third straight year, the Society's newsletter has placed second in the National Genealogical Society's (NGS) annual newsletter competition of society newsletters from around the country.

On April 15th, Shirley Wilcox, President of the NGS, notified Dr. Thomas by letter that the *Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society News* had received Honorable Mention in the "County/Local Genealogical Societies" category. The winners were announced at their three day national meeting held this year in Richmond, Virginia. The society's newsletter received from three judges a total of 291 points out of a possible 300 points. Some of the judges comments, 1 were "Great stories of people, buildings, etc. A fun newsletter to

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GERTRUDE APPLEGET WYCKOFF

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"God's providence was our inheritance." There were changes in the family and the house was unexpectedly vacated. A dear niece took us on our arrival at John's town, to her lovely country home, where Max was tenderly cared for while she assisted me in getting settled....

We arranged some of the rooms as they were in Mama's time. We put the Grandfather clock in its accustomed place, and we opened the fire places, and turned one of the smaller rooms into a library, and had low shelves built against the wall on which my curios and bric-a-brac looked well. The tops of our door moldings were so heavy I could cover them with the fine china pieces I had stored in the garret, and thus it came to pass that the house was a refuge for us as Mama had foretold. She often said to me, "Never sell your home. If money fails, you will still have a roof over your head." I think she had an uncanny sense of my being alone at the last, and wanted me to keep the house she left me as a refuge. The money had failed. I had heavy losses all along the journey, and I had land which was tillable but rather a care.

When Max and I started to walk the "long path" together we were a unit in thinking what came to us from the Church in the way of support should go back in some way to the Church, unless it was fees or a special gift. I think now the idea was Quixotic but it was our creed and we lived up to it.

John's town had changed very much in my thirty-seven years of absence. Mama's friends were all gone and my contemporaries had nearly all passed away. My return was like Mrs. Carlyle's to her old home at Craigenputtoch. She said the names she sought on the door-plates, she found on the tomb stones.

Max had made friends among the older generation. Their sons now were men of affairs or students, and they were frequent visitors, and represented the various professions, and kept him up to date in passing events. His best friend, was the young Pastor at Sweet

their labors. It was for the funeral service on November seventeenth, for Pernicious Anemia had done its deadly work. He had only entered his sixty-sixth year; young in years but old in service, for he had rounded out forty years of active work in the Ministry.



The Gertrude Appleget Maxwell House.

Auburn. He was like a son to Max, taking him for drives and keeping him posted in ecclesiastical affairs. I called him Mr. Helpful, and he well deserved the appellation....

The winter passed quickly. Friends from Labelle and the City of Monuments and Riverside came to cheer Max, and though I saw his strength was failing, he was always cheerful. In the Spring he was greatly interested in gardening, and through the pleasant summer days was busied there with, he came in very tired but jubilant over the growing vegetables. He would rest on the fine leather couch that had been given him in Riverside, it restored him. The garden flourished and the yield was big. Max wrote the friends, they must come and partake of the fruit of his labors. Alas they came but it was after the hands and feet had ceased from

We buried him at Sweet Auburn, away from his kindred, but among generations of mine. He wished it so.

My husband's half brother's daughter came and remained with me through the winter and following summer. She was elder than I, quiet in her tastes, and did not want society. She was interested in the house and house-keeping, for she had been living alone in Philadelphia, after she had been a companion to the Motherless children in the Coquett's family.

We had a comfortable winter. I had never overhauled Mama's papers nor the accumulation of homespun linen articles, and we spent many days in their examination. There were wills, inventories, almanacs, and newspapers all of more interest than we guessed at the time. The rage for curios and an-

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GEORGE MULLISON WYCOFF

by George Morrell/Richard Hutchinson

As many of you know by now, George Morrell passed away on the 3rd of May. George spoke to me a few days before he entered the hospital in reference to a story that he was putting together for this newsletter, entitled "George Mullison Wycoff and the Mercer County Freeholder Election of 1919: A Tale of Two Newspapers- Part 1." Due to George's untimely passing, the story was never finished but "Part 1" had been submitted to me for review. Due to the article being unfinished, I have taken what I believe to be the important items found in "Part 1" and have put them together to create an overview of the life of George Mullison Wycoff's, who was George Morrell's maternal great-grandfather.

George Mullison Wycoff, was a son of Thomas Applegate and Emmalina (Mount) Wycoff. He was born in 1859 in Applegarth and died in 1936. He moved to Hightstown when he was twenty-eight years of age and took an active role in both township and borough affairs. In 1880, he married Gertrude Van Doren, who was born in 1860 and died in 1920. In 1885, the couple moved from their original farm at Cranbury Station to a farm that was partially located at what is today known as 512 North Main Street, Hightstown, NJ. George then entered the milling business in Etra and then in 1894, he returned to Hightstown, where he and George Norton jointly operated a hay press and coal business under the name of Wycoff and Norton. This was later sold to Grover Brothers. Some of the known children of this couple were Edward Mason Wycoff; Bessie Wycoff, wife of Charles Johnes Keeler; and Jane Van Doren Wycoff, wife of Charles H. Weller.

During his business career, George served as a member of the Hightstown Board of Education, a member of the Hightstown Common Council, and became acting-Mayor of Hightstown for over a year during an extended absence of Mayor John R. Shangle. George had also served as clerk and committeeman for East Windsor Township and in 1914 was elected to the Large Board of Freeholders.

As the primary elections of September 1919 approached, public opinion tended to favor candidates from the "country districts", which is how Hightstown and East Windsor Township were then known. Thus, George Mullison Wycoff of Hightstown, a former Freeholder, announced that he was running for one of the three nominations for Mercer County Freeholder on the Republican ticket. As was reported in the late July 1919 issue of the *Hightstown Gazette*, "...it is believed that Mr. Wycoff has a good chance to win the nomination. A farmer himself, he represents the country districts. His experience as a freeholder on the Large Board, where he served efficiently and untiringly as Chairman of the widow's pension committee, and as a member of the finance, bridge, asylum and weight committees, is expected to have great weight with the voters, especially in the country districts."

As the ballots were counted from the September 23rd primary, for the three positions on the Mercer County Board of Freeholders, George Mullison Wycoff won the third position with an even 4,000 votes and headed into the General Election of 1919 as a "country district" candidate.

HIGHTSTOWN EAST WINDSOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Hightstown, New Jersey
founded 1971

609-371-9580

**To educate, while preserving for
future generations, our people and
our community's history.**

Editor, Richard S. Hutchinson

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Genealogical queries pertaining to the
Hightstown-East Windsor Township area
are accepted, but will be printed as space
allows.

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tiques had not developed to its present extent. Most of the papers and deeds were in a curious leather trunk, the owner's initials in brass tacks, and a huge iron lock. There were several small trunks all plentifully sprinkled with large brass tacks. There was a tax receipt for four dollars on a four wheeled carriage dated 1786. A pass on the Camden and Amboy R. R. to New York, 1835, was on a tiny bit of paper. Five or six deeds dated 1774 for the land on Timber Run, which was still in my possession, bore the signature of the man who is called the Founder of the Town. [John Hight] The receipt for the sale of a Negro slave aged eleven years, dated 1810, caused me a pang. That was my Mammy whose boast was that she had "raised me." Party invitations of a century ago would have set the nerves of Tiffany on edge. "Party, The company of Peter and John W. --- requested at the house of Mrs. ---, Sweet Auburn, on the afternoon of the Fourth of July, 1812." This is printed at the top of a single sheet of paper almost the size of foils cap. Four names are signed, one being Mrs. Mary Ann of Chapter VIII. She was not married at this time. Peter is my "Pater Familias," and John, his brother, of the Mills. Another invitation is printed on a card almost the size of a post card, and reads "Ball, The company of Mr. K. A. [Kenneth Applegat] is requested at the house of Mr. James Cook at John's town on the evening of the 11th instant at a ball. February 11th, 1816."

K. A. was my Papa and Mr. Cook was a well known citizen of that day and operated one of the stage lines from Camden to Amboy. The house is still standing. It has gone under some repairs, but the middle part is the same. In my girlhood it came into the possession of Martha Jane's sisters, and Martha Jane was a friend of the Cottage School in Chapter VIII.

On a tiny scrap of paper half the size of a post card, was written: "The company of Miss Gitty W. is requested at a Ball at the house of W. G. Giberson, on Thursday next, the 21st of March 1816."

And Miss Gitty was my Mama who disapproved of dancing! Was she a gay deceiver, or had she changed her views in middle life, or did she not attend the balls? I conclude she did not. Church members in our denomination were disciplined and suspended if they attended Balls or dances in that period, and I conclude she was a member of the Church at Sweet Auburn at this time, from the fact that she served as collector in the Charitable Society, and was a member of the choir. Four years later, Miss Gitty married Kenneth A.

The very next document we opened was an "Extract from the 3rd article of the "Female Charitable Society" of Sweet Auburn, reading thus: "Any person who shall agree to pay to the treasurer the sum of Fifty cents annually, shall be a member of the society. Aug. 23rd, 1817." There were forty-five names on Miss Gitty's list and all were marked paid.

I had these, with the deeds of 1774, and many more curios framed, and some I gave to College Libraries, and some were left in the antique trunk over which my great niece had the custody, but alas! She was importuned by various societies and exhibits to loan them, and they have not been returned.

How vividly the scenes of life at the old farm came before me. We spent many days with articles. There was Papa's and Mama's wedding outfits, the ruffled shirt, the shoe buckles, and cuff links, the great bull head watch, snuff box, ink horn, and quill pen. The wedding gown with empire waist and big sleeves, over down pillows, time fails to enumerate the articles. My chris-

tening robe, baby caps, little frocks, shoes, pinafores, all brought back tender memories of a day that was dead.

In the Autumn of the following year, I went to Minneapolis and spent the winter with my husband's nephew, who was Pastor of the Linden Hills Congregational Church We visited Carleton College, the Falls of Minnehaha, and went to Inkster, North Dakota, for a three day visit. At Inkster the Pastor of the Church had lost his ears from frost. I reveled in the cold; it was uniform and at twenty degrees below zero. I did not see a patch of bare ground; snow, snow all around us, but it was beautiful.

Before I returned to John's town, I received a letter from the man who was looking after my affairs, saying he had an opportunity to rent a part of my house to a nice small family, and highly recommended the plan. My nephew thought I would be relieved from care and protected as well, and when I went back in April, I vacated six rooms, and it proved a good thing for me as the renter took over the care of the grounds and heater. The house was on a corner and had two front doors, and so lent itself to the arrangement.

I made one more visit to Virginia. Near Mossy Creek was a community of Dunkers, a rather peculiar religious sect, mostly living in Ohio. They claim to follow the observances of the Apostolic Church, and feet washing is one of the essentials at their public meetings. They dress plainly, take good care of their poor, and do not loan money an interest. The women wear a little close fitting cap without frills or ornament, and a shaker bonnet which is removed in Church. It was really amusing to see the telescoping of those bonnets when they met and kissed each other. We attended one of the week day services. Visitors sit on a long

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bench running across the side wall. At the love feasts, after the feet washing, they served a stew made of mutton with bread, and which they passed to the visitors.

My double family arrangement ceased by reason of my tenant's purchase of the Mill property in John's town and which included a residence. Business was very dull and there was no demand for houses by desirable parties, so I refurnished the rooms, and had for a companion one of the teachers from the High School. But a chapter of accidents followed after a few years, which almost unnerved us. One of my beautiful maple trees was uprooted and lay across the street, and neither for love nor money could I, until late in the afternoon, get the obstruction removed. It was a work of time to have the tree disposed of, and the damaged pavement restored. Then the mortar from one of the big chimneys had been eaten by the coal gas from the furnace, and that fell and half the slate roof was damaged. But "things are never so bad but they might be worse," and there was no rain. I had put in a new heater, and a skilled mason had furnished the cold air reservoir, but the mason had lapses, and in one of them he failed to perfect his work, and the water flooded the cellar, and that was the worst of all, though quickly repaired.

I had always resolutely refused to sell my home, remembering Mama's injunction, but now an agent called and asked to have the agency in case he came across a purchaser with "plenty of money." I consented. In a few days the agent returned bringing a "Possible" (he said) purchaser. They talked, and talked, and talked regarding the price, Mr. Agent much more in the interest of the buyer than the seller. I did not mind that, they were old friends. It was natural, but not helpful to me.

At length the agent said he had wasted his entire afternoon, and intimated a money loss, so in desperation I said "Very well," and at once a paper was produced for me to sign, and \$250 laid before me. I said I would sign the paper in the morning, and pushed the money back; that I wished to consult my friend, a young lawyer in town, who had done me many favors because of my friendship with his Mother. But no, the matter must be ended then and there. I was a poor little mouse in a trap, and I signed. Then arrangements were made for the sale of my superfluous articles. The purchaser kindly offered me the use of the parlor for stor-



age, as they would not furnish it at present. I spent a sad night, for I know I had like Esau, "sold my birth-right for a mess of pottage."

The next day I gave all my energies to getting away. My prized furniture I gave at once to the people for whom it was provided in my will. I stored my own reservations. I gave many valuable books to the friends of my husband, I sold to an antique dealer, and to Dr. Pleasant Hunter of Newark, for his private collection, my very valuable antiques, and I arranged to sell the accumulation of generations; kitchen and cellar furnishings connected with our first housekeeping days. I could not sell anything associated with Mama, and I could never

have stored all the variety of impediments.

The day of the sale, (Vendues, they used to be called, and always held on a Saturday) was an Autumn day, and the auctioneer stood in the yard and articles were handed him. In the old method of procedure, the auctioneer was paid a percentage on things sold, but that seemed to have been done away with. The days were short, and dispatch was necessary, so articles were sold for a song. I was not present, but reports came up to me now and again. At the last when it came to the books, I was told a big man gathered in his arms just as many as he could hold, big and little, and each lot was sold for 25 cents, and men were the purchasers entirely, and not one of them with a thought for me, or the "pity of it." It was a "far cry" from the days of chivalry and when "Knighthood was in flower."

At the close of the sale when everyone had gone but the new owners of the house, I went down stairs and met in the dining room the wife. One of Mama's long mirrors with a heavy gilt frame had fitted over the mantle and had not in the successive papering of the walls been removed. I knew there would be an ugly bare spot, and left it until after the sale. When I looked around on the pretty room even though bare, I thought I would do the generous act, so I said to the new incumbent, "The spot will be so conspicuous with the mirror gone, I will leave it for you."

I left that night. A grand niece who had been valiantly helping me, left later with the Encyclopedia Britannica I had gladly given her, with other books she cared for, and my big trunk of antiques for safe keeping. She locked the door, the play was done, curtain dropped.

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I returned in April, removed my furniture, paid my storage, ten dollars for five months, and went into lodgings. The family had not taken possession, did not intend to, but I did not know that, and when they came in later in April, they moved the mirror to their parlor and re-papered the dining room, so my act of self-denials was superfluous and gave me serious thoughts of things terrestrial. Almost immediately the World War broke out and we were all forced out of ourselves and for a time forgot ourselves.

I often wondered that I, who had been so many years and passed through such varied experience, had no intimate knowledge of hospital life After I reached my four score plus nine years, I was a patient in the Ann May Hospital on the Jersey Coast. I missed my chair, came down heavily to the floor, and a broken hip resulted. I was hurried to the Hospital, and after x-rays and treatment, fastened to straps and a frame. I had no real suffering apart from lying in one position, and I had an exceptionally fine nurse who cared as tenderly for me as she would have for her mother, I am sure. She read to me and answered

my letters and told me of the books she had just read. Her name was the same as one of our most prized and lovely flowers whose perfume often pervaded my room, for the dear friends in Riverside and other places kept me supplied with flowers and fruit and all sorts of beautiful things that were a delight to my eyes and senses. Indeed the unfailing kindness of my many friends and that of a niece who has been as a daughter, has enriched my life and made me deeply thankful.

After three months sojourn, I left the hospital for a private sanatorium. On the seventh of last May I reached my ninetieth year. I was out nearly all day in a rolling chair, with the green grass beneath my feet, and the blue sky above my head, and propelled by the kindly hands of the mistress of the establishment who had ministered to my needs so faithfully. In the afternoon my niece came with some of the representative members of the Francis Hopkinson Chapter, D.A. R., and we had a real party on the lawn, for my niece had brought cake and ice-cream for our refreshment. It was a real holiday for me after six months of being a "shut in".

In August, I was permitted to put my foot to the floor and try standing upright, and since, I have been diligently, with the aid of a crutch, trying to learn to walk a second time in my life, and hoping I may accomplish it by my next birthday. If I do not succeed in walking alone, I shall not lose my courage, but try, try again, and give thanks that crutches have been invented.

[Editor - This was the end of Gertrude's story but attached to the last typed page of the manuscript in her own handwriting, was this final paragraph.

"Then Mr. ready-to-halt called for his fellow pilgrims and told them saying, I am sent for God shall surely visit you also. Then he thanked Mr. Great Heart for his conduct and kindness and so addressed himself to his Journey. When he came to the brink of the river, he said, "Now I shall have no more need of these crutches since yonder are chariots and horses for me to ride on". The last words he was heard to say were, "Welcome life!" --- *Pilgrims Progress*

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2ND PLACE

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read." Another wrote, "Wonderful articles about the town and the people!" And, the third stated, "Nice use of graphics."

A great deal of time and thought goes into each issue of your newsletter. Writing and putting together the articles for each issue is only a part of what goes into making your newsletter the best that it can be while at the same time insuring that each issue goes out on time. Articles and scanned photos are emailed back and forth from Delaware and New Jersey, the issue is typeset, a draft copy is sent by fax for my final review, and once approved, the final copy is mailed to the printer. A great deal of the credit for the success of your newsletter has to go to my daughter, Cori Quinlan, who is Quinlan Processing, and who typesets the newsletter for me.

The Society's participation in this annual contest has given it national exposure and recognition while competing against some very large organizations. We believe that we are only a "step" away from being #1 and we would like to get there! The judges have challenged us and given us some possible suggestions that we intend to follow in an attempt to make your Society's newsletter reach that goal of being #1.

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Gertrude Appeget (Wyckoff) Maxwell died on the 19th of November 1939, in Manasquan, New Jersey, at the age of 99 years and is buried in Brainerd Cemetery in Cranbury, New Jersey, or Sweet Auburn as she called it. Some of the important historical items pertaining to Hightstown that were mentioned in this final chapter have found their way, after many years, into the collection of the Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society. Yet, the whereabouts of other items mentioned are not presently known.]

CRANBURY LODGE, NO 47, A.F. & A.M. - 1825

Hightstown Gazette - 6 June 1878 - A friend has lately placed in our hands valuable information in regard to this lodge, and we shall be glad if its publication shall bring out more light on the subject. The descendants of the original members are living and it may be that they will be able to find, in their family archives, some of the ancient records of this Lodge.

The membership of the Cranbury Lodge, No. 47, in the year 1825, consisted of the following officers and brothers: Worshipful Master, Redford Job, a colonel and miller; Senior Warden, Samuel Disbrow, a major and saddler; Junior Warden, Robert T. Purdy, a captain and merchant; Secretary, James Cook, a major and inn-keeper; Treasurer, Timothy Hornor, a captain and

inn-keeper; Senior Deacon, Joshua Edwards, a cabinet maker; Junior Deacon, Rescarrick Ayres, a hatter; Tyler Elias Bayles, a captain and carpenter.

Brethren were Charles Carson, general and merchant; Jacob Wyckoff, coachmaker; Elijah Davis, inn-keeper; Austin Anderson, farmer; Peter Duncan, captain and farmer; Daniel Hutchinson, major and farmer; Samuel Gulick, justice; William Butcher, gentleman; John S. Van Dyke, gentleman; Alex. Shields, weaver; and Archibald Britton, distiller.

In 1827, William Gordon, miller and John M. Lott, doctor, were admitted...D. Ivins and John Wethersly joined. At this date, Dr. John M. Lott, was secretary of the lodge.

In Memory of

WILLIAM HOWELL, JR.

As many of you know, William "Bill" Howell, Jr, 83, of Meadow Lakes passed away on June 7th. The Society has lost a great friend as Bill was our star "recruiter" at Meadow Lakes. He was one of our most avid supporters whether it involved his insight, time, or help in any way. From setting up chairs for a Meadow Lakes program to securing financial help through his corporate contacts, he was always there for the Society. He will be sorely missed. The Society can only hope that another Society member at Meadow Lakes will pick up the "torch" that Bill has carried so intently for us over the years.

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a member!

Individual
Membership
\$15.00*

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Membership
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\$20.00*

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Annual Membership Application (January - December)

Individual Family Student

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone Number: _____

Please mail the completed application, along with a check made payable to the
Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society to:

Membership Committee
Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society
164 North Main Street
Hightstown, NJ 08520

DEDICATION DATE IS SET

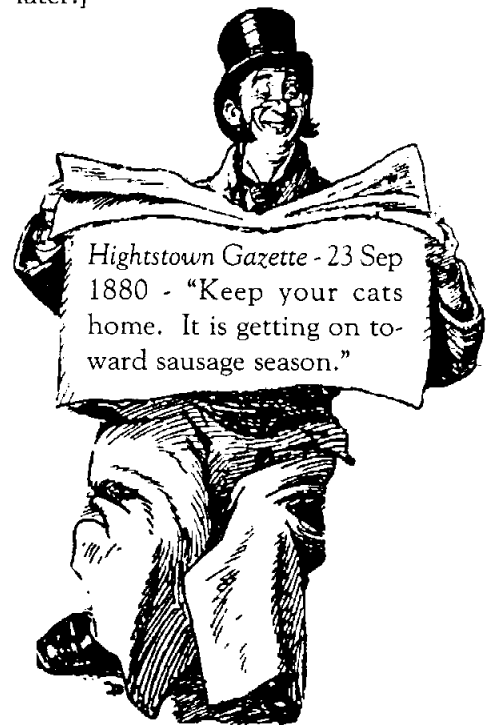
The Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society will celebrate the dedication of the Sara Hutchinson West Educational Center at Ely House on Sunday, October 3, 1999, from 1-5 PM. The ceremonies will include music, a model train display, historical items on display and a re-enactment of a historical Friday Club tea that took place in Hightstown in 1906. The center will be open so that the public can tour the facility, which will be used for meetings, will house a museum and a library for genealogical and historical research, and will be available for programs and school tours.

The refurbishing of the community's old freight station has been a long journey that was started many years ago. Through the bequest from the executors of the Estate of Sara Hutchinson West, the Society was able

to fulfill its dreams of completing the necessary work to restore the building and make it what it is today. The original Hightstown freight station, built in the 1860s, was saved from destruction through the efforts of both the Society, Coca-Cola and many others. The freight station is an important link to our past. It was through the doors of this building, a stop on the Camden-Amboy rail line running through our town, that the town was connected to the outside markets of the world. It was used heavily by the farmers and the business community and is what enabled Hightstown and East Windsor Township to grow.

[**Editor's note** - Just an interesting observation but worth mentioning. The present freight station was built in October 1869. It was moved to its present location at Ely House in Octo-

ber 1990. And, now, is dedicated as the Sara Hutchinson West Educational Center in October 1999 or 130 years later.]



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

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
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Hightstown,
New Jersey
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