

HIGHTSTOWN



EAST WINDSOR

NEW

JERSEY

HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2002

St. James A.M.E. Church, Hightstown, N.J.

By Richard S. Hutchinson

The St. James A.M.E. Church, of Summit Street, Hightstown, New Jersey, has a long historical standing and presence within our community. Its origins were present in the community prior to the building of the first church on the present site on Summit street.

The following is a continuation of information from the January - February 2001 issue of the newsletter regarding the history of the A.M.E. Church:

22 December 1898 - The members of the St. James A.M.E. Church will celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of their church next week, beginning Wednesday evening, December 28th, and

continuing until January 2nd. There will be a special feature each evening during the week. On Sunday, January 1st, at 3 o'clock, Rev. O.P. Eaches, D,D, will preach, and the Baptist Church quartette will give a service of song.

2 June 1898 - Rev. F.S. Cox, the new minister of the A.M.E. Church, is proving very popular, not only with his own congregation, but with those outside whom he has met. He is the brother of Miss Hannah Cox, who formerly resided in Hightstown.

7 September 1899 - Rev. F.S. Cox has resigned the pastorate of the Hightstown A.M.E. Church and Rev. Mr. Long, of North Carolina, takes his

place.

14 September 1899 - The members of the A.M.E. Church held a harvest home and "feast in the wilderness" in Peddie Park on Tuesday evening.

5 October 1899 - The appeal of Rev. Albert Long, in another column, should be read by every one interested in church work. His little band of colored people seem to be in some straits and it is to be hoped that they will be helped by those who have more abundant means.

The history of the Hightstown A.M.E. Church has been one of constant struggle. Some of its pastors have been very worthy men, who have worked

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY

- 7 Business Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Sara Hutchinson West Educational Center
- 20 Annual Banquet, 1:30 p.m., Longstreet Library, Peddie Campus

FEBRUARY

- 4 Business Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Sara Hutchinson West Educational Center
- 14 Program, 7:15 p.m., Meadow Lakes Meeting Room - Weyman O. Steengrafe - "NJ Signers of the Declaration of Independence"

Speaker Set For Annual Dinner Meeting

On January 20th, 2002, at 1:30 PM, the Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society, will hold its Annual Dinner meeting. This year we have changed our venue and the meeting will be held on Peddie Campus, in the Longstreet Library building, which is located next to Kalamathia House. The meal will be catered and will feature a Special Buffet menu. The Society is honored to have as its featured speaker, George Washington.

General Washington, this country's first President, is widely known for his travels and many over-night stays throughout the colonies. The President will speak to us about his youth, his life in the military and his later Presiden-

tial years. Special emphasis will be placed upon the sites that he visited while in New Jersey during the Revolutionary War. He will also tell us about his Presidential Inaugural ride in the state. At the end of the program, President Washington will hold a "Presidential News Conference." All friends of the Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society and members of the community are most welcome to attend our Annual Banquet and meet President George Washington.

The cost of the dinner is \$20.00 and all reservation checks should be made payable to "H.E.W. Historical Society, and sent to Shirley Olsen, 6 Farr Ave, Hightstown, NJ 08520.

St. James A.M.E. Church

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hard and undergone privation for the sake of their church; ... its members are honest and conscientious men and women. The present pastor is a gentleman of more than ordinary education and refinement, and, with assistance, would undoubtedly build up his little church. The people of Hightstown have an excellent chance for charity that begins at home.

"Our Work; its Needs and Why, Editor of the *Gazette*: Dear Sir: You will please permit me space in your excellent paper to say a word or two about the work which I represent in Hightstown.

The Church of which I am pastor is weaker in point of membership than any in the city. We are struggling against great odds. There is a man in Trenton who has a judgement against the Church for more than one hundred and thirteen dollars. Eighty dollars will loosen his grip off the property. Our next payment is to be made the first of November; we have no funds in hand nor do we see our way clear to meet the demands that will be made upon us to the amount to be paid. I am here a stranger. The burden of the work is upon me. If the church should be sold, then, there are those who will place the burden of failure upon my shoulders. I appeal to all who will help us, to do so now. We have tried entertainments and they have not been as successful as anticipated. By them we have gone deeper in debt in many instances instead of them being a means of helping us out. I have a book in which I shall enroll the names of those who contribute to our cause. If there are those whose hearts are with us, and whom I cannot see, if they would envelope whatever sums they feel willing to give and drop the same in the post office, I would be sure to get them. I will give those who thus give, Credit for whatever they gave as if I had met them personally and they had given their sums to me face to face.

Being a stranger here so far as many of the people are concerned, I take this

method of asking them to help me, so that each one who gives will receive credit for the same. I am not unaware that there are those of you (our white folks) who have burdens of your own. The difference is, that there are those in your several communions, doubtless, who are able to rescue any of your churches, were any of them endangered as ours is. I believe that there are those in this community who will help us. You have stood by the cause when it was in a better condition than it is now. The honor of the cause is at stake. Let every lover of Jesus feel for us as he would have us feel for them were they positioned as we are. The Master who seeth in secret has not forgotten to reward those openly who are liberal to the poor. Doubtless there are those who have given often and therefore think it an imposition to be called upon again to give. "Thine arduous work will not be done, till thou hast gained the crown." Jesus has been with me in the past, and I feel that He will not fail me in this hour of trial; we are all brethren.

Praying as I am, that tangible evidences may result from this appeal, I am your faithfully in Christian service. Albert Long, D.B.; Pastor St. James A.M.E. Church, Hightstown, N.J.

17 May 1900 - Rev. George Green has entered upon his duties as the new pastor of the St. James A.M.E. Church.

31 May 1900 - Lucinda Hill, 7 months, daughter of Benjamin Hill, died Sunday, of pneumonia. Funeral at the A.M.E. Church.

2 August 1900 - The marriage of Miss Mary White and William Frye took place at the A.M.E. Church on Sunday last, by Rev. Mr. Green.

To be continued ...

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 ac-
cepted, but will be printed as space allows.

Typeset by Cori Hutchinson Quinlan
Quinlan Processing 609-888-4028

The Slave Princess

The following item was re-printed in the *Gazette*, 12 September 1878, from another New Jersey newspaper:

Near the end of the last century, Archibald Mercer, the owner of mill property at Millstone, N.J., bought a slave girl in this city. It is the legend about her that her features were almost as clear out as those of a Caucasian, and her complexion of a light copper hue. She was slender and shapely, and her bearing was proud, almost haughty. After she became somewhat reconciled to Mr. Mercer's service, and could speak English, the beautiful young slave told a sad story of her life. She was, she said, a king's daughter, and in her native land, she wore a dress fashioned of the plumage of the brightest hues birds. Her headdress was also of feathers, and her neck, arms and ankles were encircled with bands of gold and strings of many colored beads. One day she wandered to the seashore to pick up

shells for a necklace. She was alone, and intent upon her pastime. Suddenly she felt herself grasped from behind by rude hands. She had been captured by the crew of a slave ship. The slavers tied a handkerchief over her mouth and carried her to their boat. Then they rowed swiftly to their ship.

Dreading her father's anger, the captain ordered sail to be made at once. The captive princess was forced to exchange her costly attire for a coarse cotton gown, and to herd with the slaves ironed between decks. No manacles were put on her, because she was passively obedient to every command. The slave ship entered the United States, and the girl was brought to this city for sale.

Within a few years the captive princess fell in love with a fellow slave, of a lighter hue than his comrades, and they were married. Their first child, a daughter, was born about 1778. They called

her Rachel. About this time, Mr. Mercer, the girl's owner, sold his property and moved to Newark. There Theodore Frelinghuysen, one of the founders of the well known New Jersey family, of which Senator Frelinghuysen is a member, won the hand of his daughter Charlotte. Mr. Mercer gave the slave princess and her child, Rachel, to his daughter on her wedding day. When Rachel grew to womanhood, she was as beautiful as her mother had been. She was married to Samuel Williamson, a slave belonging to Mr. Frederick Frelinghuysen. Six children, two of whom are living, were the fruit of this marriage.

Rachel's mother lived until she was fully one hundred years of age. She was in her later years an object of affectionate solicitude on the part of the Frelinghuysens. She was not allowed to do any work, and at eleven o'clock every day a glass of fine old wine was sent to

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* * * New Location * * *

Join today,
become a member!

Individual Membership
\$20.00

Family Membership
\$25.00

Booster/Patron
Membership
\$40.00

Sustaining Membership
\$50.00

ANNUAL BANQUET



Longstreet Library

Peddie Campus (next to Kalamathia House)

Hightstown, NJ

Sunday, January 20, 2002 • 1:30 p.m.

\$20.00 per person

Catered Special Buffet Menu

*Send reservations with check payable to: "H.E.W. Historical Society" to:
Shirley Olsen, 6 Farr Ave., Hightstown, NJ 08520 (609-448-8388)*

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: () _____

Princess

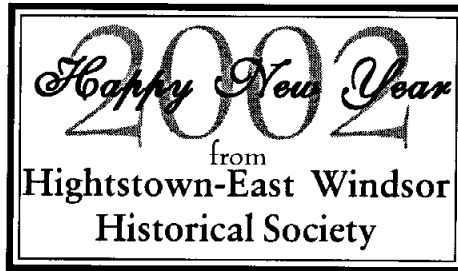
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her, with her master's and mistress's best wishes. She was of incorruptible honesty, and jewels, plate, and money of very large value, were often left under her charge by the Frelinghuysens.

Rachel, who has been living for many years in the household of Mr. Dumont Frelinghuysen, a brother of the Senator, and a gentleman of independent means, in Somerville, N.J., fell into her dotage about a year ago, when she attained her 104th year. On Saturday, the 10th instant, Mr. Frelinghuysen determined to send her to her daughter's house on the outskirts of Somerville. Rachel seemed pleased with the change. On Sunday her daughter, who is about eighty years of age, had a great mustering of her friends to show off Rachel, or "Mammy", as she was generally called. On Monday Rachel was in fine spirits and ate heartily. In the evening she was stricken with paralysis of the right side and throat. She lingered, without solid

food, until Tuesday last, and then died. Her body was interred in the colored cemetery near Somerville, by the side of a colored woman who died at the age of one hundred and three. The whole Frelinghuysen family, including the Senator, attended the funeral in their carriages.

Mr. Dumont Frelinghuysen said yesterday that he does not doubt that Rachel Williamson was about one hundred and five years of age. She often spoke of playing with the Mercer children, who, if they were living, would be between one hundred and three and one hundred and seven years of age.



Some African-American Deaths

Hightstown Gazette - 24 January 1878 - A colored man, known as AOld Caesar@, died near White House [N.J.], last week, aged 113 years—it is positively known he was over 100 years. A colored woman is now living in Washington Valley, near Martinsville, aged 106 years, and is still hale and hearty.

Hightstown Gazette - 21 February 1878 - Peggy Logan, colored, died at Barrentown, Monmouth Co, a former slave, aged 111 years. She died on the 10th inst. A sister died last winter in Rumson, aged over 100 and another sister died two years ago aged 105.

Hightstown Gazette - 16 January 1879 - An aged colored man, named Gray, was found dead near Major Yard's residence in Freehold yesterday.

FIRST CLASS
POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 21
Hightstown,
New Jersey

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