

# *Historical Society News*

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### A Correction and a Refinement

The Spring 2016 issue of the Newsletter carried an article about the surge in brick construction that came to Hightstown and East Windsor in the 1830s, ushered in by the coming of the Camden & Amboy Railroad. It was claimed in that article that these brick buildings were the first ones in the Hightstown-East Windsor community. Upon review, that was nearly the case, but not quite. The May-June 1994 issue of the Newsletter carries a story about the new brick house that Joseph Hutchinson had built sometime before 1802, when the Methodist missionary Francis Asbury visited Hutchinson and remarked about the house in his journal. The January/February 1995 Newsletter carries a story about the "Old Brick Schoolhouse" that was built in 1815 along the north side of Etra Road near the Millstone Township boundary. Joseph J. Ely later became a trustee of that schoolhouse, which was demolished in 1872.

## President's Message

### DEAR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS,

Thank you for all of your kind emails and comments about the 2017 newsletters that featured East Windsor Township. Our newsletter editor, Bob Craig, spent many hours of research to confirm the widely known and highlight previously unheralded facts. Rick Pratt's layouts were superb.

Dues have been flowing in quite well. Thank you all who have paid in a timely manner. In order to save on expenses, we have not been sending out envelopes for a number of years. If you have a question about your dues, when you last paid, have you paid, are you a "lifer", send me an email or give me a call. The records are up to date for the past three years.

This year's annual meeting will be held at 3 pm, Sunday, May 6th. The officers have received feedback that many members wanted to see the Ely House and Freight Station featured this year. We therefore will be having a brief meeting, self tours and Q & A throughout the facility. There will also be a couple of surprises, hors d'oeuvres and "beverages" both inside and outside the buildings allowing for time to meet and talk to old friends and make some new ones. Should you have any suggestions for the day, I would love to hear them.

Please RSVP to the meeting notice for our planning.  
Cappy Stults, President

Cappy Stults, President  
cstults@allenstults.com  
800-792-8660

### In Memoriam

The Society has also lost another of its long-time leaders: George Dubell, who passed away on January 9, 2018, at the age of 93. George, another World War II veteran, served in Europe in the 104th "Timberwolf" Division and was wounded in action, also receiving the Bronze Star and Purple Heart. He served on the Hightstown Borough Council for nine years, including two years as Council President. George was an active member of the Society, and served for several years as our treasurer and museum chairman.

George S. Wham, Life member of the Society, passed away November 29, 2017, age 97. Although not a Hightstown-East Windsor native, he married Hightstown native Beth (Keeler) Wham, who survives him. George was a Major in World War II, and was awarded a Silver Star, a Bronze Star, and a Purple Heart. George and Beth have both been very active in the local community. George served on the Borough Council and the East Windsor Regional Board of Education. He had a 40-year career with the Hearst Corporation as vice-president and technical director of the Good Housekeeping Magazine Institute.

In 1912, America elected a new president, Woodrow Wilson. He succeeded William Howard Taft, a one-term Republican who had been challenged by former president Theodore Roosevelt. America was a player in international trade and was a growing military force, particularly in the Western Hemisphere and in the Pacific Ocean. Tensions rose dangerously in Europe as alliances were formed pitting countries against neighboring countries and as independence movements sought to dismember the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires. A long era of European peace ended after Austro-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo by a Serbian separatist on June 28, 1914. Quickly war was declared following the previously formed alliances. Armies were mobilized, and fighting actually began on August 3, 1914, on the very day that the US completed the Panama Canal, which pushed the heroic canal success story off the front pages of the newspapers. Wilson was determined that the US would stay neutral, even asking Americans to be neutral in thought. There was little interest thus far by Americans or their politicians to get involved in the fighting. So what led America to get involved in WWI?

In this writer's opinion, America's WWI story actually begins with Mexico. After Civil War fatigue, the US continued to grow, its people moved to the cities, became more educated and vocations became more commercial and less agricultural. For the most part the country remained isolationist except

concerning its borders, particularly with Mexico.

## Mexican History - a Quick Review

Mexico had gained its independence from Spain in 1821, appointing an Emperor to lead it the following year. Civil disorder reigned there for much of the following decades. It was this political environment that led to, among other actions, the Texas Revolution and its independence in 1836. A decade later the Mexican-American War was spurred by President Polk's belief in "manifest destiny": a faith that America was destined to spread from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans. From this war the United States gained the territory of California, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and Nevada. After the war Mexico needed money and sold other portions of what is now Arizona and Mexico to the US (the Gadsden Purchase 1854). Mexican citizens and its future leaders never got over this betrayal by their leader, Santa Anna.

Further attempts by the US to buy more Mexican territory or take it by force were interrupted by the US Civil War. Apache Indian attacks were rife in these western desert regions both against Mexicans and Americans. During our Civil War, the tripartite of Spain, Britain and France invaded Mexico in the winter of 1861, ostensibly over unpaid loans to Mexico, but with the support of Mexican conservatives who were fighting the then-liberal Mexican government. Britain and Spain soon withdrew, leaving France to persist. France's emperor, Napoleon III, had bigger plans and appointed an Emperor of Mexico in 1864. Unfortunately the US was fully occupied suppressing the Confederacy, but through diplomacy supported the liberal side in Mexican politics and urged the French to leave. The French found occupation too costly and withdrew in 1867, and American support for Mexican independence helped improve US-Mexican relations for a number of years. In Mexico, President Porfirio Diaz ruled for 35 years (1876-1911) until he was overthrown in a revolution by Francisco Madero. This brings us up to the tensions brewing in Europe that led to war.

## What were Hightstown's Views of All of This?

At the end of the 19th century, most Hightstown-area residents appeared oblivious to Mexican issues and that Spain continued to hold both Puerto Rico and Cuba. At least from the point-of-view of the *Hightstown Gazette*. Nothing really appears in the local papers during these last years of the century. East Windsor was still primarily agrarian, and although Hightstown was becoming more commercial, most of the economy was local. What existed of foreign trade went to Europe. The Hightstown Rug Company came to Hightstown in 1898 as a result of the town fathers searching for a local industry. There were other "factories" at the time making shirts and other items, but they were small, primarily family operations.

The United States government had concerns about Spanish influence in the hemisphere and had always been sympathetic to Cuban independence. There were growing US business interests in Cuba, and of

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course there was the Monroe Doctrine, which asserted that European nations could not have colonies in the Western hemisphere. Spain treated the islanders very poorly and US pressure on Spain to grant Cuban freedom was continually rejected. Spain, however, was a beleaguered country, unequipped to maintain its grip on these territories. The Panama Canal in the 1890s having been begun by the French but not yet completed by the Americans meant that Spain had to maintain both a Pacific and an Atlantic fleet. Most of Spain's navy was situated in the Philippines.

In January 1898 the US battleship Maine had been sent to Havana harbor to protect US citizens there. On February 15th, as it moved peacefully through the harbor, it exploded, killing 260 US officers and men. Spain declared war on the US on April 24, 1898 and the US declared war on Spain on April 25th. About 300,000 Americans fought in this short war (lasting only 10 weeks). 3,000 died but only 385 from battle, the rest from disease. The Treaty called for Cuba's independence and the Americans bought the Philippines and Puerto Rico from Spain. During the war Spain had pleaded for support from other European countries, but only Germany had responded.



Jingoism that was fueled by American newspaper barons William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer surfaced a little in the Hightstown area. The *Gazette* had ads and letters-to-the-editor particularly supporting Cuban independence. Yet *Gazette* articles and letters do not show a strong local desire to spend the money that a war would require, let alone risk the lives.

Roosevelt was much more "world-oriented" than previous presidents. As Assistant Secretary of the Navy in 1897, he had enlarged the Navy into an enviable size. He resigned to fight in the Spanish American War. After the Spanish American war, Theodore Roosevelt was elected Governor of New York, after which he was the surprise choice in 1900 for the Vice-Presidential spot on President McKinley's reelection ticket. Their slogan was "peace, prosperity and conservatism." McKinley was assassinated six months later, elevating Roosevelt to the presidency.

## New Jersey, as the 20th Century Began

Back at home, the State population was 1,883,669 in the 1900 census and 2,537,167 by the 1910 census (a 35% increase). Urban population went from 70.6% to 75.2%. NJ became the 11th most-populated state versus the 16th of 46 states in the prior census, benefitting from the great European immigration. These new Americans had come from very stratified societies, entering a society in which individual initiative was paramount. Most were running from their European "roots"; they were philosophically alienated from them. The entangling alliances of their former home countries meant little to them.

They had also come from societies where wine, beer and distilled liquors were daily activities, into an America that was increasingly anti-alcohol. The temperance attitude of the NJ populace was such that legislation was passed in 1906 known as "Bishop's Law", after two Catholic bishops who promoted it. This regulated bars and inns, without prohibiting distribution, until prohibition became Federal Law in 1919, via the 18th amendment. Hightstown had many inns and taverns so the "local vs state vs federal regulation" of alcohol was a topic in the *Gazette* nearly every week. [Note: This newsletter has never fully explored the Temperance/Prohibition issue in Hightstown-East Windsor, but Hightstown became a "dry" borough for a time in the 1880s.]

## Presidential Politics

President Taft lost re-election in 1912 when his predecessor,

### Hightstown Veterans of Three Wars

1. Capt Tucker, Spanish-American War
2. William Riley, Civil War
3. Raymond Stonaker, World War I

Theodore Roosevelt, ran against him as a third-party candidate, badly splitting

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the Republican vote. He lost to a relative political newcomer, Woodrow Wilson, an academic and recently-elected governor of New Jersey. Wilson likely was thinking of a run for President long before. While serving as President of Princeton University in 1907, the Princeton's senior class sang to the school's president, sang, "Here's to Woodrow, King Divine, who rules this place along with Fine, We hear he wants to leave this town, and try for Teddy Roosevelt's crown."

Wilson was born in Virginia in 1856. His father was a Presbyterian minister whose parents had emigrated from Northern Ireland. His mother had emigrated from near Scotland. He was Presbyterian, Scotch-Irish. He was brought up in Virginia, South Carolina and North Carolina, during Reconstruction, which many believe affected his racial attitudes for the rest of his life.

He became the first president who had no ancestors that were in America during the Revolution. He married in 1885 and it is said that his first wife was very influential in all of his endeavors. Many have stated that her death while in the White House in 1914 led to his many mistakes, her influence no longer there to guide him. He saw things as, in his own words, having two sides, "the right side and a wrong side." He took things personally. You were either with him or against him, friend or foe. He could also be selfish and ruthless. It was said "you could work for Wilson, but never with him."

He became governor in 1911, after winning the 1910 election. He did not win the 1910 gubernatorial vote in Hightstown and East Windsor, being soundly defeated. The national Republican Party was turning against President Taft and was urging Roosevelt to run again. This played right into Wilson's hands, who had designs on the Presidency since running for governor, if not before. The Democratic Party was in turmoil as well, and Wilson was the surprise choice in 1912,

after the party's first national primary and caucus process (nomination at convention being the prior norm).

Three days before the presidential election, at 12:30 am, November 12, 1912, candidate Wilson sustained a head injury when his limousine struck a hole at the intersection of Monmouth Street and North Main Street, here in Hightstown. He was taken to the office of Dr. George E. Titus at 210 South Main Street, where the wound was cleansed and bandaged. Dr. Titus had also called Dr. George H. Franklin who lived on the corner of South and South Main streets, to assist him. They sent the future president on his way at approximately 2:30 am.

Ironically, Wilson--NJ Governor and past president of Princeton University--did not poll a majority in NJ. It was only because Taft and Teddy Roosevelt split the Republican and independent voters that Wilson took the state (56,000 more votes were cast for Taft or Roosevelt combined than for Wilson). In his re-election bid in 1916, Wilson again did not carry NJ, but he won reelection due to the southern and western states. He only carried New Hampshire by 56 votes. Wilson staffed his major departments with southern Democrats, thus providing more fodder for those who accused Wilson of racism.

### **The Gazette's Silence on Foreign Matters**

The *Gazette* had few if any articles, commentary, or letters-to-the-editor on what was brewing in Europe and not much about President Wilson either. Unlike in the years leading up to the Civil War, Spanish American War and later WWII, these years seemed silent locally regarding what was happening around the world. Articles were focused on local elections, roads, schools, club events, agriculture, alcohol, and cultural events.

An exception was the awarding of the Medal of Honor to a local boy, Capt. Eli Fryer, for heroism at the battle of Santa Cruz, Mexico, in 1914. Fryer has remained Hightstown-East Windsor's only Medal of Honor winner. On April 29, 1914, Capt Fryer wrote his father,

"I want to let you know I am well and in no present danger.... although it first looked like we were going to be unopposed (in their landing), twenty minutes later they started firing... the firing continued until dark and even through the night at intervals....The order was given to move across the city entering every house and searching for people with arms or rifles as practically all soldiers had left. ....I was glad to say I was never afraid during the fighting...but I only felt excited like I would over some close football or baseball game. The men seemed the same,"

wrote Fryer. The letter continued, "I hope the difficulties will

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be over soon. It is all right to want to win glory and all that, but I guess I am a little chicken-hearted. I felt sorry for the dead Mexicans lying in the street.....Then on searching the houses I felt so sorry for the hysterical women and children...." Fryer later became a Major.



Even though Wilson and others were still preaching peace, there were preparations for war being made. On May 2, 1914, a Mrs. Lue Reed Middlebrook sent a lengthy letter to the *Gazette* from San Diego, California. It likely describes the sentiments of most area residents at that time.

"Along the border guarded by State Militia, everything is quiet. The Mexican Federalists are apparently no more interested to start things than the US troops. Uncle Sam is entertaining about 500 Mexican men, women and children as prisoners of war, why I don't know. They were fighting among themselves along the border some months ago and these people crossed the line to get American protection. I presume sending them back would mean their death.... A few days ago 50 of the men escaped through a tunnel dug to the quarantine station. These interna-

tional courtesies are too much for my feeble intellect... The widow of the former Mexico Counsel is a neighbor of mine and she heartily endorses Wilson's policy of getting [General Victoriana] Huerta and not making war against Mexico.... I see a German steamer coming up the channel. (later I found) it is bringing 259 refugees (including 60 women and 72 children), among them the American counsels....they had been given 48 hours to leave Mexico...and yet remember these things were all done by the Huerta action, not the Mexicans as a people."

It seems she was a missionary out there or Red Cross or other volunteer. I include this to point out that as things were boiling in Europe, Mexico was still a problem for the US. (Wilson later ordered a "punitive Expedition" into Mexico in 1916).

Local "European" concern remained minor, even after World War I began in August 1914. Marie Wait of Hightstown wrote to the *Gazette* on October 1, 1914, from her Europe trip that they suffered the "inconvenience" of having to cancel part of the trip as they were not allowed into France, Germany and some other places. I did not find any letters in 1914 or 1915 pro or con of the Europe War. Issues in the papers were (1) local and state politics, (2) the labor movement, (3) women's suffrage and (4) temperance; not necessarily in that order. Some other articles hinted at a trade in military ordnance. On December 9, 1914, a 22-car train loaded with explosives derailed in Hightstown, but did not explode. First thought likely to be sabotage, it was not. Probably the biggest local news in 1915 was that "home mail delivery" would begin in Hightstown in November. Candidates were applying to be mailmen and were being selected. Calvin Perrine was one of the few selected (more about him below).

Wilson's supporter's reelection mantra in 1916 was, "He kept us out of war." He had endured great provocations from Germany and its agents, such as the July 30, 1916 "Black Tom" explosion in Jersey City, which might have been more decisive had it not taken place during the Presidential election campaign in which Wilson was working to stay neutral. He was seeking to negotiate a peace to end the war, as Roosevelt had done before him with Russia and Japan in 1905. In December 1916 he sent correspondence to each side in the war asking for their purpose and object in the war. He addressed Congress with his "peace without victory" speech. Within 2 weeks of this speech, the Germans sent out formal notice of unrestricted submarine warfare, defying Wilson's "can't we all just get along" plea.

In January 1917, a telegram known as the Zimmermann Telegram was intercepted, wherein Germany offered assistance to Mexico to retake all of the Mexican territory that had been taken by the United States in the 19th century! US-Mex-

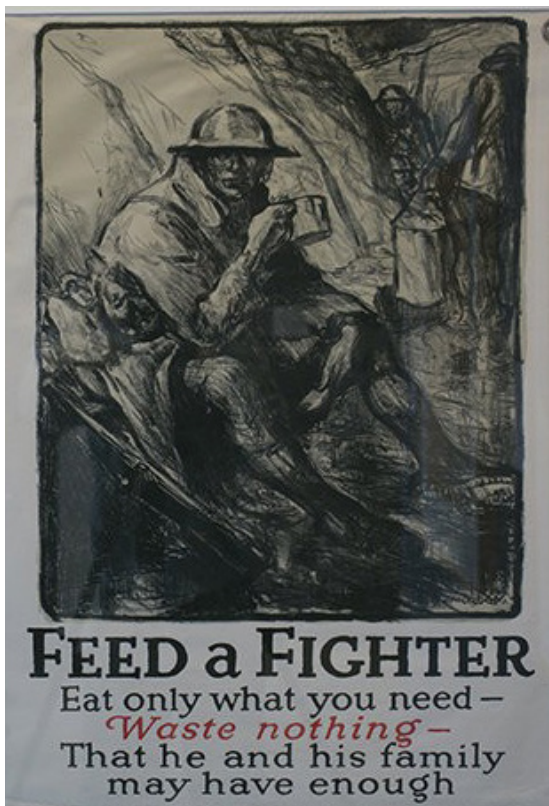


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ican relations had still not improved and Mexico was in a state of turmoil. But it was also a major supplier of oil to Europe. Wilson had maintained neutrality with Europe while being aggressive in the handling of Mexico. After the Zimmerman telegram, Wilson severed diplomatic relations with Germany. Then in March 1917 German U-boats sunk several American ships. Wilson's hand was forced; the US declared war on April 4th 1917.

### New Jersey and Hightstown War Effort

New Jersey contributed nearly 200,000 men to the war effort. By the summer of 1918, 10,000 troops per day were being shipped to France. Our area contributed significantly to the war effort, not only by sending some "boys," but also due to the railroad. The Pemberton-Hightstown and the old Camden & Amboy line were parts of the Pennsylvania Railroad and the main transporter of troops from Fort Dix to the ports for disembarking to Europe. It further was a major supply line for agricultural goods, canned goods and armaments (see more below).



In the *Gazette* the preponderance of articles even in early 1916 continued to be about local issues such as roads, suffrage, temperance and labor issues. Then things started to change.

On June 7, 1916, former President Taft was the featured speaker at the Peddie School commencement. His topic was to be "Duties of Citizenship" but he unexpectedly changed it to "Our World Relations and their Bearing on National Preparedness and the Questions of the Policy of this Country After the War Shall Close;"--quite a mouthful. Taft preached for "adequate preparedness" but also "spoke against alarmists and extremists preaching impending calamity." So here in 1916 he clearly believed we would stay out of the European War. But he also characterized Mexico as an "international nuisance whether we intervene or not." He predicted the need for a garrison of 250,000 in Mexico if we intervened and he warned against it due to "the Philippines experience," which he knew well, having formerly been its governor. "There are those with Anglo-Saxon land hunger," he said, "who say, 'let us take over Mexico,' but they have not been to the Philippines." The *Gazette* did not opine about this speech to the Peddie graduates, but they quoted it abundantly.

In late 1916 and early 1917, there were preparedness articles on starting home gardens, storing and not wasting food, and cutting wheat usage in half, but up until June 1918 a big issue continued to be "local decision on liquor establishments." Eventually this vote was stayed by the NJ Supreme Court.

**April 5, 1917 Gazette** - "Will Honor Captain Tucker at Banquet - Freighter Orleans Under Command of Hightstown Resident Returns Safely from Trip to France". The American steamship sailed from New York on February 10, unstriped and unarmed, to defy German threat of destruction, [and] returned to New York April 1st from Bordeaux. Although they had no stories of attacks, the crew had significant stories of the friendship of the French. In the two weeks the ship was there being unloaded of its foodstuffs and machinery, every member of the crew, from Captain down to cabin boy were entertained by the citizens. Movie and theater owners refused to accept money from the crew. Although not attacked, they did have to maneuver through mines in the channels. After the return of the unarmed ship, the Navy determined it best to equip the ship with three inch guns, fore and aft, with twelve gunners, before it sails again. The Mayor and Council are making arrangements for the banquet."

**April 19, 1917 Gazette** - "Home Guards One Hundred Members" - Dr William Wilbur presiding and C. Stanley Stults, secretary, held the first meeting of the "Home Guards". Patriotic speeches were given by O.T. Fenton, Dr. Tyack, Dr. Stanton, Dr. Swetland, R.H. Rivenburg, A.V. Dawes and J.S. Mount. The Executive Committee was appointed and in addition to the

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above included Dr. H.T. Irick, F.V. Jemison, E.J. Rogers, J.C. Norris, J.G. Scheible, H.R. Applegate, J.B. Davison, Addison Robbins, Jr., E.B. Chamberlin, J.M. Vandenberg. Per State guidelines, the Township was to form their own Home Guard. The 100 plus members who enlisted essentially was a who's who of Hightstown businessmen, professionals and teachers.

Hightstown was to become a crucial rail link to the Camp Dix, the Army's basic training camp at Wrightstown, as reported in the May 31, 1917 *Gazette*. Over 4,000 acres were to be "rented" by the government from 35 different owners in Wrightstown, and the old U.T., which extended through Wrightstown enroute to Pemberton, would become a connector for troops and supplies. (Camp Dix was later named Fort Dix, and is now called Joint Base).

**In December, 1917**, the writer's great-grandfather, Charles E. Stults, died. His partner and uncle, John E. Allen, had died just 7 months earlier in May 1917. C. Stanley Stults became assistant postmaster and headed a family business and the Citizens Building and Loan. He was 24 years old in 1918, and these positions prevented him from serving. I never asked him whether he had wanted to. He did, however, explain to me that he and many other Hightstown residents enlisted in something called the "Home Guard," to protect the railroad bridges, lines, and roads in town, especially the bridge over North Main Street at Franklin Street. They checked it and manned it with volunteers throughout the day and night. The military feared that the Germans would blow up the bridge and thus cut off critical supply lines.

Two of Stults' best friends growing up were Raymond Stonaker and Calvin Perrine. "Uncle" Ray was raised in Prospect Plains but after marriage resided on the northeast corner of North Academy and Stockton streets, across from the funeral parlor. He was very hard of hearing, even deaf in his later years. He explained to me

that it was from his days as an artillery man in Europe in WWI. He became "Pop's" partner at Allen & Stults after the war. Calvin Perrine also served in the war.

Another notable name is Stenson Rogers who lived at 410 North Main Street. He also was in the artillery. He later married Grace Norton, namesake of the Grace Norton Rogers School. She lived in this house until her death at age 95.

**In June 1917**, military Registration for the war began. From the Borough, 168 young men were registered, from the Township 63 men. Sixteen "Alien born" also registered, as did 3 "enemy aliens" who were German citizens. Although registration was mandatory, it was reported in the *Gazette* that the Army and Guard will be manned by "volunteers alone." Volunteers at this point were to be "unmarried and without dependents." On May 18th an Act of Congress necessitated 183,898 men for the Army. By June 1st half that number had been obtained. Pay was \$30 per month, 20 percent extra pay during foreign service.

**The June 21, 1917**, issue of the *Gazette* had a complete list of all of those who'd registered in Hightstown and East Windsor. The "first call" followed on July 26, 1917, and from Hightstown were Voorhees Carson- Franklin Str., Garfield Muse- Norton's Alley, Alvin Archer- Mercer Str., Frederick Fisher -Main Str., Ellis Cottrell- Hightstown Garage, Harrison Pool -Township, George Burton -Township, Carlton Kent- Shangles Alley, Donald Laird -Oucalt Str, Clifford Danser- Township, Walter Pullen- Township, Mark Swetland- Peddie, Feodor Dobrodey, Wilson Miles- Norton Alley, Thomas Jones -Stockton Str, Homer Christie -Township, Howard Kirby -Township, Ellsworth Thomas -Academy Str, Edward Pullen- Morrison Ave, William Terry- Township, Robert Taylor -Shangle's Alley, Russell Black -Township, Howard Story -Township, Everett Higgins -Williams Str, George McGlaukin -Shangle's Alley, Harrison Williams -Railroad Ave, Albert Wilson -Academy Str, Clifford Chamberlin -Broad Str. Many of these were rejected over the next few weeks. Only Carson, Archer, Cottrell, Kent, and Miles were accepted, but half of these claimed exemption as being married and with a child. Nationally during the first few months, over 90 percent were granted "exemption". The "first unit drafted" was September 5 1917. Plans were made to "reexamine" all of those initially rejected for physical unfitness as the government had "relaxed" the prior "stiff requirements." Ellis Cottrell likely was the first local resident to report to Wrightstown sometime in October 1917, according to the *Gazette*.

**On October 6, 1917**, the "Trading with the Enemy Act", gave authority to the US government to assume control and dispose of enemy-owned property. Some records of the Citizen's Building and Loan Association of Hightstown are in this writer's possession. The federal "Custodian" had reached out



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to this local association and other banking institutions requiring the reporting of any property belonging to any person who fell under one of "11 defined enemy classes," which included even individuals that had travelled to Germany since August 4, 1914. Said initial government contact included the following language: "...The ....Custodian has been appointed ...to sequester and administer all money and property of "enemy" character. .... All information concerning money and property of "enemy" character should be immediately sent to".....This was followed by the name and address of the director in Washington, D.C.

The Association reported two names to the Custodian: Herman Lutchen, Franklin Street and John Koch, Maxwell Avenue. The Association reported them as "subjects of Germany" but in the case of Mr. Lutchen, he has been in process of becoming an "American citizen and is well thought of." By 1919 the Custodian controlled nearly 40,000 trusts valued at nearly \$1 billion dollars. Much had been disposed of at rigged "auctions" during this period, including American patents for Bayer Aspirin. The "Custodian's" office was headed by Wilson appointee and former Democratic Congressman A. Mitchell Palmer, who was thought to have been very corrupt.

By 1917 and 1918, the *Gazette* and other papers had become much more jingoistic in their reporting, and many local businesses such as the Rug Company funded ads for War Bond sales. The "Hun" was reported as being "inhuman." One ad in the *Gazette* depicted a German club used to "finish off" wounded soldiers. The Italians, who were allied with France, Britain, and the United States, were said to have captured 32,000 of these.

SPRING 2018

## Casualties

In the end, three local men died in the war: Samuel Platt, Jr., Robert Harold Fones, and Lewis Forman. The November 7, 1918 *Gazette* headline read, "Samuel Platt Killed in Action on Battlefield - First Hightstown Boy Reported Killed in Action".



**Samuel T. Platt, Jr.**



**Robert Harold Fones**



**Lewis Forman**

**Samuel Platt, Jr.** - lived at 201 North Main Street when he registered. Age 29. He was born in Windsor, NJ, March 9, 1888. At the time he was employed by the Pennsylvania Railroad as a Watchman. He was a Private in the 147th Infantry, 37th Division. He was killed in action in France on Sept 25 or 26, 1918. He is buried in Cedar Hill Cemetery. His mother was Emma H. Ford Platt, father Samuel T. Platt, Sr. (the "T" I believe was a family name, Toole). Interestingly I believe his grandfather was Samuel Platt, who in the Civil War was in the 12th Regiment, which was a very active unit. He was killed at Gettysburg and is buried in the Gettysburg military cemetery.

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*Hightstown Rug Company paid ad in Hightstown Gazette for War Bond sales.*

## SAMUEL PLATT KILLED IN ACTION ON BATTLEFIELD

Official Telegram Received Monday Morning—Letter From Soldier Abroad Arrived Saturday. First Hightstown Boy Reported Killed In Action.

Mrs. Emma Platt received a telegram on Tuesday morning from Washington, D. C., reading:—Deeply regret to inform you that Private Samuel T. Platt, Jr., infantry, is officially reported as killed in action, September 25th.

Samuel Platt, son of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Platt, was born in West Windsor township on March 9, 1888. He was inducted into the service last April and spent several weeks at Camp Dix. He was then transferred to Camp Meade and went overseas this past summer. At one time he was employed as driver for the Adams express company. At the time he was called to the service he was flagman at the Monmouth street railroad crossing. Mr. Platt is the first one of the Hightstown boys reported as killed in action.

On Saturday morning Mr. Platt received a letter from Corporal Vandermyde. The letter is as follows:

Somewhere in France,  
October 1, 1918.

the home, which Thou hast gone to prepare for thine own. Lord, Heavenly Father, hear me for Jesus sake. Amen.

### EVENING PRAYER

I thank Thee, my Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Thy dear Son, that Thou has graciously kept me this day; and I pray Thee that Thou wouldst forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me thins night. For into Thy hands I commend myself, my body, and soul, and all things. Let Thy holy angel be with me, that the Wicked Foe may have no power over me. Amen.

### PRAYER FOR MORNING AND EVENING.

O my God and Lord! I live but know not how long. I must die but know not when. Thou, my Heavenly Father, dost know it. Whether this hour, this day will be the last hour, and the last day of my life, Lord, Thy will be done. Thou art the best, in whom I am ready to live and to die in true faith of Christ, my Redeemer. O God, do Thou grant me this petition, that I may not die in my sins and be lost. O merciful Father, forsake me not, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Oh! do

Somewhere in France,  
October 1, 1918.

Mrs. Emma Platt,  
Hightstown, N. J.

Dear Madam: I suppose you will know, before this letter reached you, the sad news that your son, Samuel, has fallen on the field of battle. He fell near our Battery position doing his duty with his face to the enemy.

Some of my comrades found him and we tried our best to give him an honorable burial. We read the 103rd Psalm and the first four verse of Revelations 21; also this beautiful prayer which we found in his pocket.

Judging from the various clippings which we found in your son's pockets, he evidently thought about the higher things and we may rejoice that we need not sorrow as those who have no hope, but we realize that we who have not suffered the direct loss of one whom we love can feel the sorrow as a mother must. May our good Heavenly Father comfort you as no mortal can and sustain you in the glorious hope of meeting some day in that better world your son who died in action on the field of battle as a brave American soldier in the service of his country and for the great cause of a better world for for others to live in.

In the name of those who helped to lay away the remains, I am with our deepest sympathy.

Most sincerely yours,

JOHN B. VANDERMYDE,

Corp., Battery A, 123 F. A.,  
American Ex. Forces.

**Robert Harold Fones** - I had a more difficult time finding information on Mr. Fones. But with some help from Hightstown resident Paul Luhrman of Clinton Street, it appears that Mr. Fones was not killed in action but had died of "stab wounds, homicide" on August 16, 1918. He was born in Hightstown on November 28, 1893. His registration listed him as an "Actor". He had moved to Norwood, Ohio, prior to entering the service where he was employed at a milling machine company. His kin to be notified in case of death was Gertrude Dey, his Aunt, who lived at 416 Franklin Street. Probate records show she claimed to be his only heir.

**Lewis Forman** - born on June 10, 1894, and lived at 226 Stockton Street. His father was William P. Forman and mother was Sarah Forman Ewart (she must have remarried after William's death). He died in France on October 5, 1918. He was buried in the American Cemetery in France. Cause of death was "disease". Very likely the Spanish Influenza. HEWHS members may be interested to know that Clifford R Pullen, HEWHS first secretary, and his wife Sara Forman Ely Pullen are buried in the Forman family plot in the old section of the Cedar Hill Cemetery. Lewis is on the family headstone even though his remains stayed in Brest, Department du Finistere, Bretagne, France.

**Calvin Perrine** - On December 19, 1918, John Perrine of Hightstown reported to the Gazette that he had received a letter from his brother Calvin Perrine, advising that he had been wounded on the Verdon at Grand Pre on October 18th, his arm being fractured above the elbow. He closed his letter stating, "Do not suppose you will get over here now that the war is over but hope you are fortunate enough as it is a wonderful experience and you will have an opportunity to see something of the country." The Armistice was signed 11 am on November 11, 1918, four weeks after the injury.

War- continued on page 11



**War** - continued from page 10

[Writers Note: - 2018 also marks the 100th Anniversary of American Legion Post 148. It was founded by Calvin Perrine and Ellis Cottrell and had 25 charter members. Calvin Perrine died in 1991 at age 100, the oldest surviving charter member of the Legion. Most of his siblings lived well into their late 90s and over 100. As noted earlier, two of my grandfather's closest childhood friends were Raymond Stonaker and Calvin Perrine. "Pop" married Nettie Black (Walter C. Black's daughter), on July 18, 1918. I was lucky enough to have known "Uncle" Ray Stonaker and Calvin Perrine quite well. They were gentlemen and treated this young boy and young married man very well in my early years.]



**THESE TWO PHOTOS**

[http://www.nj.com/mercerc/index.ssf/2017/10/patriotism\\_through\\_posters.html](http://www.nj.com/mercerc/index.ssf/2017/10/patriotism_through_posters.html)  
<2/26/18>



**COVER PHOTO**

[http://www.nj.com/mercerc/index.ssf/2017/10/patriotism\\_through\\_posters.html](http://www.nj.com/mercerc/index.ssf/2017/10/patriotism_through_posters.html)  
<2/26/18>



**BACK COVER PHOTO**

[http://www.nj.com/mercerc/index.ssf/2017/10/patriotism\\_through\\_posters.html](http://www.nj.com/mercerc/index.ssf/2017/10/patriotism_through_posters.html)  
<2/26/18>



# Arbor Day, April 1919

BY CHARLES STULTS

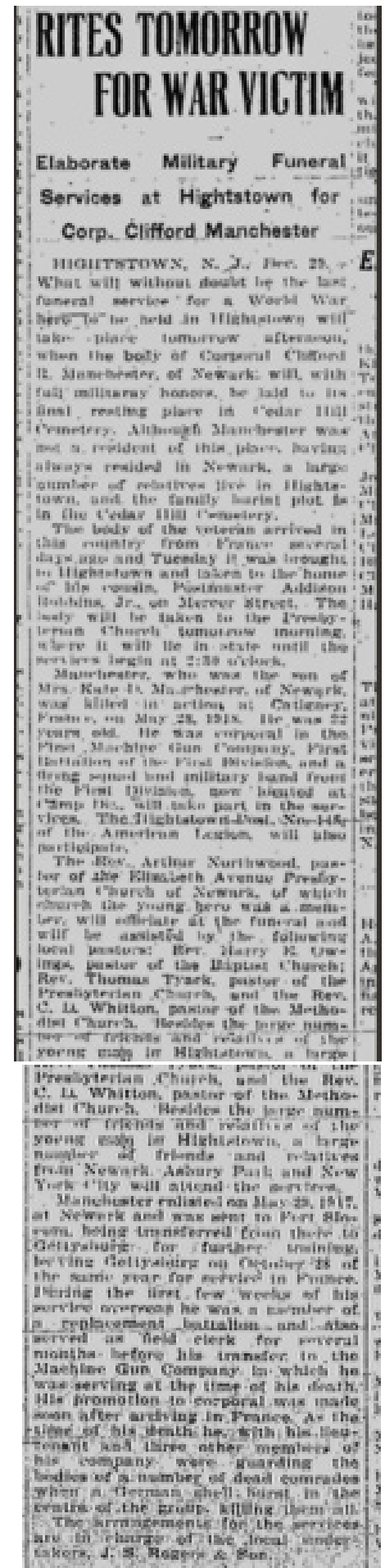
On Arbor Day in April 1919, three trees were planted on the grounds of the Hightstown High School in memory of Hightstown's WWI who died during the war, Platt, Forman and Fones. The school later became known as the Stockton Street School and was used for elementary grades. It was later razed and now is vacant ground in front of the Walter C. Black Elementary School.



The trees were replaced a few years back due to their age and memorial plaques placed in front of them. If you visit there you will notice four plaques, not three. Who is the fourth? Well, Corp Clifford Renville Machester, of Newark is also honored here. He never lived in Hightstown but his remains are buried in Cedar Hill Cemetery. A large number of his relatives lived in Hightstown, including Postmaster Addison Robbins, Jr. of Mercer Street. He was killed in action in France May 28, 1918. He was born Oct 19, 1895 in Newark.

Note:

In the Spring 2015 Newsletter on page 14, there is additional information regarding these men, and the plaques that sit at the base of these trees.



## Save the Date: Society House Tour in October

The Society will host its fifteenth biennial historic house tour on Sunday, October 21st, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. The tour is a fund-raiser for the Society. Several exciting houses will be on display, and details will be announced in September. Please save the date.

### Monthly Meetings

Anyone is welcome to attend our meetings. We discuss progress of each committee and welcome your input for new ideas and offers to assist with our upcoming programs.

### Meetings are held:

The first Monday of the month at 7:00 pm in Ely House. 164 North Main Street, Hightstown.

## Meeting Notice

The Annual Meeting of the Hightstown East Windsor Historical Society will be held Sunday, May 6, at 3 pm at the Society property, 164 North Main Street, Hightstown, NJ 08520. The cost again this year is just \$25 for adults and \$15 for youth under 18. Please mail your reservation and check to HEWHS Annual Meeting, 164 North Main Street, Hightstown, NJ 08520.

Number of attendees: \_\_\_\_\_ Total payment \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

For questions call Cappy at 609-448-0110 or Robin Smith at 609-448-8487 or email [cstults@allenstults.com](mailto:cstults@allenstults.com)



*Hightstown East Windsor  
Historical Society*  
founded 1971

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

### *Officers for 2016-2017*

President- Charles "Cappy" Stults  
609-448-0110 [cstults@allenstults.com](mailto:cstults@allenstults.com)  
Vice President- Robin Smith  
Recording Secretary- Shirley Olsen  
609-448-8388  
Corres. Secretary- Vacant  
Treasurer- Robert Szychowski  
609-448-9490

### *Committee Chairs*

Finance- Robert Szychowski  
609-448-9490  
Property & Grounds- Warren Olsen  
609-448-8388  
Beverly Mann  
Library- Robert Craig  
609-584-1806  
Eileen Couturier  
Website- Gary Stevens  
609-469-1860  
Membership- Cookie Cummings  
[cookcummings@yahoo.com](mailto:cookcummings@yahoo.com)  
Museum- Cookie & Christa Cummings  
Newsletter- Robert Craig  
609-584-1806  
Programs- Christian Kirkpatrick &  
Jane Cox  
609-443-3138  
Programs- Nancy Laudenberger  
609-443-6536  
Publicity- Shirley Olsen  
609-448-8388

### *Building Committee*

Christian Kirkpatrick, Shirley Olsen,  
Warren Olsen, Robert Szychowski

### *Society Trustees*

Nancy Laudenberger, Bonnie Lou  
Field, Warren Olsen, Irene Schubert,  
Bev Mann and Gary Grubb

Layout by Rick Pratt  
Printed by Harwill Express Press



## Hightstown's Ice Plant - in Photos

BY ROBERT W. CRAIG

Back in the 1930s, before every household had at least one refrigerator with a freezer unit, small towns like Hightstown had a demand for artificially-produced ice. Hightstown's ice plant stood downtown, south of Rocky Brook, behind the houses on the north side of Stockton Street. The plant was an industrial plant, and the ice it produced was a manufactured product, but it was pure, and the water once melted was safe to drink, much safer than ice cut from a pond, which could be used for cooling but should not be consumed. The plant in this period was owned and operated by Frank C. Underhill, who had a fleet of delivery trucks to distribute the ice. Somehow, the Society had never acquired photos of the ice plant until now. Underhill's daughter, Corena Van Liew, has given the Society a small collection of photos, including that shown here.

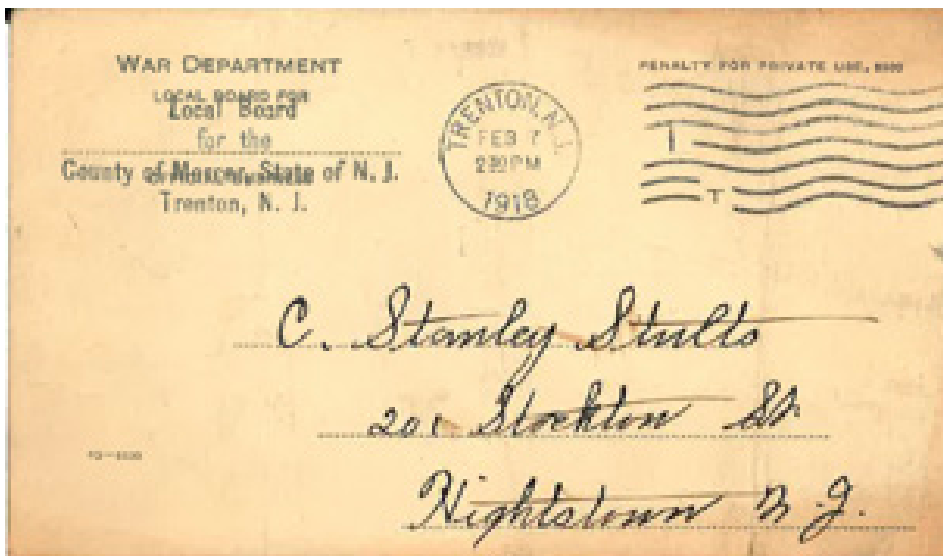


## Chrome Print

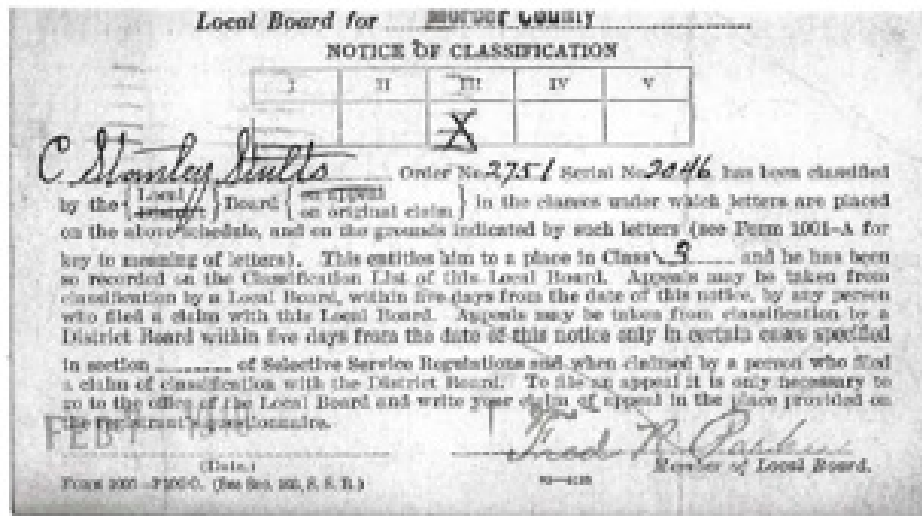
BY ROBERT W. CRAIG

The article in the last Newsletter about the Chrome Print company led one of our readers to tell us about her fine specimen of their work. This plate, with its delicate lace design, also evokes memories of another local industry, the Native Lace Works, on Monmouth Street, in the Township.





Hightstown Resident C. Stanley Stults' draft registration notice



C. Stanley Stults' classification notice - he was 24 in 1918

#### WORLD WAR I

[From Selective Service Regulations, 1917 (see Subject File: Conscientious Objectors - Government Documents)]

\* Conscientious Objectors: any registrant found by his Local Board to be a member of any well-recognized religious sect or organization organized & existing before May 18, 1917, & whose existing creed or principles forbade its members to participate in war in any form, & whose religious convictions were against war or participation therein in accordance with the creed or principles of said religious organization, were to be furnished with a certificate by said Local Board stating that he could only be required to serve in a capacity declared by the President to be noncombatant. He would, however, be classified as any other registrant was.

I	Liability to military service in the order determined by the national drawing
II	Temporary (dependency) discharge from draft; effective until Class I in the jurisdiction of the same Local Board was exhausted; registrants with both wife & children, or any father of motherless children, where such wife & children were not mainly dependent upon the registrant's labor for support; also, registrants whose wives could support themselves through employment
III	Temporary (dependency) discharge from draft; effective until Classes I & II in the jurisdiction of the same Local Board was exhausted; registrants who were responsible for children not their own & who were dependent on registrant's labor for support; registrants who had aged, infirm or invalid parents or grandparents mainly dependent on registrant's government employees
IV	Temporary (dependency) discharge from draft; effective until Classes I, II & III in the jurisdiction of the same Local Board was exhausted; any married registrant whose wife or children were mainly dependent on registrant's labor for support; also included mariners employed in sea service
V	Exemption or discharge from draft, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ordained ministers</li> <li>- students who on May 18, 1917 had been prepared for ministry in a recognized theological or divinity school</li> <li>- persons in the military or naval service of the United States (officers &amp; enlisted men)</li> <li>- alien enemies</li> <li>- resident aliens</li> <li>- persons found to be totally &amp; permanently physically or mentally unfit for military service</li> <li>- persons shown to have been convicted of any crime designated as treason or felony, or an "infamous" crime</li> <li>- licensed pilots actually employed in the pursuit of his vocation</li> </ul>

Registration/Class number descriptions

## Membership ~Application~

Support us this year at the  
following rates:

- ☐ Individual \$20
- ☐ Family \$25
- ☐ Booster \$40
- ☐ Sustaining \$50
- ☐ Life (Individual) \$200
- ☐ Life (Family) \$275
- ☐ Newsletter ONLY \$10

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Email 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you hear about membership?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please mail the completed application  
along with a check payable to:

**HEW Historical Society**  
Membership Committee  
164 North Main Street  
Hightstown, NJ 08520

- ☐ I would not like to be part of the  
New Member Spotlight.

## Volunteer Opportunities

I would like to volunteer to help out  
with the following committee(s):

- ☐ Property & Grounds
- ☐ Library
- ☐ Membership
- ☐ Museum
- ☐ Newsletter
- ☐ Programs
- ☐ Publicity

## THINGS TO BE REMEMBERED

### About Sending Gifts to Soldiers Overseas.

All gifts to soldiers overseas must be sent through the Red Cross. Each soldier is permitted to have only one parcel sent to him. Each soldier will receive an official label from the War Department, which he will mail to the person from whom he expects gifts. The Red Cross has nothing to do with distributing the labels, but when you get a label from your soldier it must be presented to Charles J. Keeler, where the necessary official carton, 3 by 4 by 9 inches, will be given you.

After the carton has been filled—not to exceed 2 pounds and 15 ounces—it must be taken to the Red Cross rooms, inspected, weighed, and wrapped correctly. The Red Cross will then forward the package to the transportation point, for shipment overseas, the sender paying the postage.

The Red Cross has no jurisdiction concerning packages for the navy department.

The Red Cross rooms will be open for inspection of packages every afternoon from three to five. All packages must be ready to mail by November 15.

*Red Cross Christmas Roll Call ad for donations*



1\*\*1\*\*01\*\*\*\*\*SCH 5-DIGIT 08520  
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