



UNION COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Meetings

The Cv19 has certainly messed up our plans for the past year and for those of the new year of 2021.

At our last meeting, held in August, several planned events had to be put on "hold" as we could not determine how or where we could have them. Our customary picnic did not happen, and as a result there was no slate of officers presented for the usual election to be held in October. The present officers will continue in their positions until an election can be held.

Our Holiday Party also became a casualty of the virus. Once again it is the old familiar cry of, "Wait 'till next year!"

At the October meeting, held in a large tent in the Liberty Hall Museum, the program was a slide show presented by Hannah Gaston, of the Liberty Hall Museum. The projected images were surprisingly visibly adequate for being given in daylight under a large tent. Most of the slides were of members of the Livingston and Kean family, former residents of Liberty Hall, but one was of

Hannah Caldwell, murdered during the Battle of Connecticut Farms in June 7, 1780. Her ghost, revealed by a flash of lightning during the summer storm and seen by British looters in the mansion, scared off the empty-handed looters. Even today her ghost may be seen by visitors to the museum .

Several pictures were taken at the October meeting, but space limitations prevented using them in the last issue of the newsletter, so we are presenting them now for your pleasure. At the time we were under a very large tent.



We were careful to observe all of the rules and regulations and wore masks. We all stayed in separate family groups, with plenty of room between them.



Pictures From Our Files

Oh, for the good old days when you slept tight in your spring-less, rope strung bed, with a mattress made of a large bag of corn-shucks!

Here we have a picture of such a bed, with the covers turned back to reveal the rope laced between the side-rails, and also the chamber pots on the floor beneath it.

As rope under a strain will stretch in time, a bed-wrench rests nearby. The rope itself is one continuous length that passes through the holes in the rails and forms a network to support the covers and the sleeping occupant.

Periodically, the slotted wrench engages the loop of rope and is twisted to take up the slack. A peg is then wedged into the hole to hold what has been gained and the wrench is moved to the next loop. Finally the entire slack has been removed and the rope is tied off. For the next several nights the occupant will, "sleep tight".

In this photo a couple of chamber pots are shown, but one is usually sufficient for its purpose. As this house had no indoor plumbing, a "privy" or outhouse provided the necessary sanitation. No one cared to leave a warm bed and walk out to the distant "two-holer" so a chamber pot

relieved the problem. As the china lid of the pot made a distinctly obvious noise in use some housewives crocheted a "husher" around the edge of the lid to eliminate the noise.



For the benefit of younger readers who may be unaware of what a "privy" is, we have printed a picture of a standard design "two holer" outhouse, a type used before we had indoor plumbing. Beneath it was a large, deep hole, where lye was sprinkled frequently over the contents. Smaller privies had only a single hole, but this one has two, the use of which will be left to your imagination. "Privy" is short for "private".

Included within this little building is the thick Sears-Roebuck Catalog, standard equipment for such a building. It can be used for reading or other purposes, and rarely has all of its pages

In the days before city water was piped into all of the houses, it was necessary to locate the privy quite some distance from each house so that the ground water supply was not contaminated by the contents of

the outhouse.

Most of the household water came from a bucket in an open well, or from a pump mounted on a pipe driven into the ground or placed into the well. Atmospheric pressure limited a suction pump from drawing water from beyond a depth of twenty feet, but a bucket was limited only by the length of its rope.

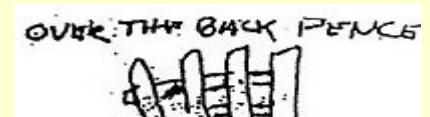
An open well always had some sort of well-house built around it, both for safety, and to hold the windlass for the rope and bucket.

Dues

Well, Folks, it's that time of the year, again, when dues are due for the following year of 2021. A sign-up slip and addressed envelope has been enclosed for your convenience and we hope that you will make good use of them. Thank you.

The Union County Historical Society has been in existence for over one hundred fifty years, having been started in 1869 by a number of prominent county citizens for the purpose of recording and maintaining the history of Union County.

Although the county had been created only twelve years earlier, in 1857, its history as the first English settlement in New Jersey goes back to 1664, when a group of settlers bought and paid for over 500,000 acres of land from the local Indians. The names of the sellers still remain here as Warinanco and Mattano Parks.



Santa Clause made it down the chimney alright, but he left dirty soot and footprints on the white marble hearthstone.