



UNION COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Drs. Veit and Mercantini Present Ongoing Research Findings at Annual Society Luncheon

More than 45 members and friends of the Union County Historical Society gathered on Sunday April 14th for the society's annual luncheon and a presentation on research at the Connecticut Farms and Springfield battlegrounds of June 1780.

Dr. Richard Veit, Interim Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and professor of anthropology at Monmouth University, and Dr. Jonathan Mercantini, Acting Dean of Liberal Arts and Associate Professor in Kean University's Department of History, presented a summary of their research utilizing cartography, archaeology and historical research to glean more information on the last battles to take place in the north during the revolutionary war.

“Despite several books written on the historical battles,” Society President Joanne Rajoppi said, “Drs. Veit and Mercantini demonstrated there is still more information waiting to be unearthed at the battle ground including artifacts and possible troop movements. Importantly, this research is providing opportunities to share such information through signs and presentations with the public as we approach the 250th anniversary of the American

Revolution.”

In addition to Society members, those in attendance at the annual luncheon included members from the Elizabeth, Union, Vauxhall and Westfield Historical Societies.

Drs. Veit and Mercantini have been invited to return to present their complete research findings at the conclusion of their study.



UCHS presenters Dr. Jonathan Mercantini and Dr. Richard Veit, right with UCHS President Joanne Rajoppi and VP's Charles Shallcross and John Prescott at the annual luncheon.

Dr. Walter Boright Presentation

UCHS member and Kenilworth historian Dr. Walter E. Boright will be presenting a “two-fold” program on Thurs., June 20 titled “A postcard journey thru Kenilworth history.”

A collection of recently discovered, rare postcards and others will be illustrated reliving places and events in the Borough from 1899 to modern times. Dr. Boright, a prolific author of historical writings, also will

conduct a mini-workshop on “Hints to dating old photos and postcards.”

The program, which starts at 6:30 p.m., is sponsored by the Kenilworth Historical Society. It will be held at the barrier free Kenilworth Senior Citizens Center, 526 Blvd.

Admission, parking, and light refreshments are free.

Interested attendees may register in advance by calling the Senior Center at 908 276-1716 and leaving a message with their name and phone number or emailing their information to senior-centerkenilworthnj.org. Attendees should enter through the rear parking lot door.



UCHS members and friends take a moment to pose for a group photo before the conclusion of the annual luncheon.

Student Awards

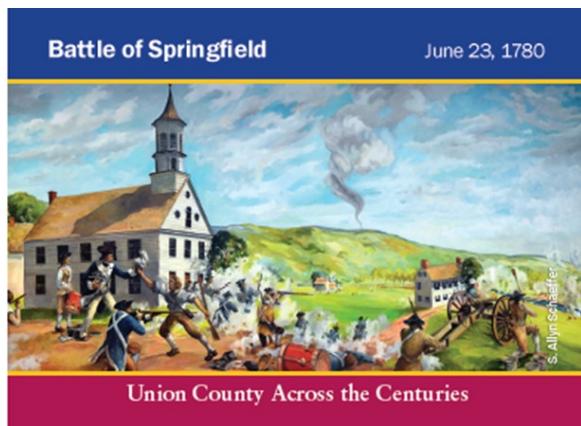
UCHS will present its Student Scholarship Awards on Sunday, May 19th at the Hanson House, 38 Springfield Avenue in Cranford at 2 p.m. All are invited to attend. Refreshments will follow.

Historic County Cards

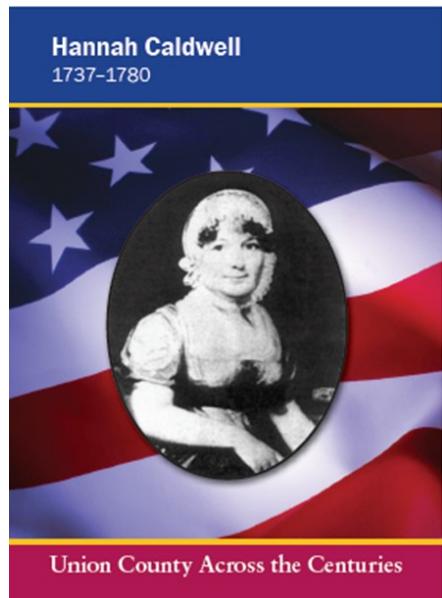
More than 60 commemorative history trading cards are available to Union County residents through the Office of Heritage and Cultural Affairs. Initiated by the Board of County Commissioners some seven years ago, the cards highlight the lives of notable people and historic places in the county. The cards are available at local historical sites and through the website at

<https://ucnj.org/parks-recreation/cultural-heritage-affairs/trading-cards/>.

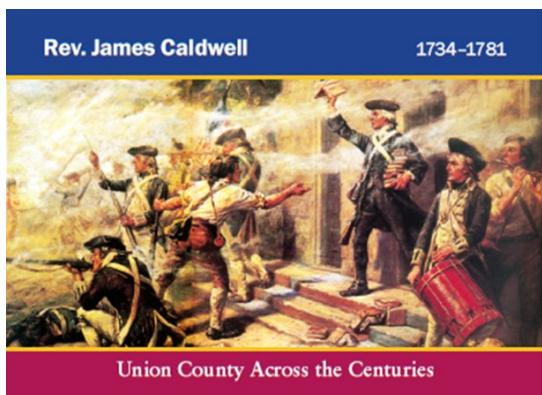
A sampling of the cards follows.



This battle was the final major confrontation between American and Crown forces in the North. Had the British broken through the American line and vanquished Washington's forces in Morristown, the war would have taken a very different turn. A month later, 6,000 French troops arrived in Rhode Island, providing desperately needed reinforcements. In 1781, memory of the losses at Springfield prevented the British from attacking the armies of Washington and Rochambeau on their march to Yorktown, Virginia, where they ultimately defeated the British.

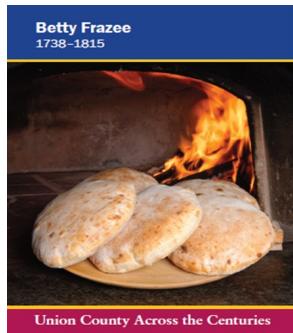


Hannah Caldwell was married to the minister of the Presbyterian Church in Elizabethtown, Reverend James Caldwell, who fought fervently with the patriots against the British in the Revolutionary War. In 1780, during the Battle of Connecticut Farms (in what is now Union), Hannah was fatally shot in the parsonage. It has been long debated whether the British had targeted the Caldwell's or Hannah's death was an accident of war. Her death is commemorated on the Union County Seal.



During the 1780 Battle of Springfield, American soldiers were running low on

ammunition for their smoothbore muskets. Gunpowder and a lead ball would be wrapped in paper and then rammed down the barrel, with paper wadding holding everything tightly in place. On hearing the need for paper, the Rev. Caldwell rode to his church, grabbed a stack of hymnals written by Isaac Watts, and took the books to the soldiers to use the pages for wadding. As he did, he shouted, "Give 'em Watts, Boys!", a battle cry that became famous and the basis for this painting



According to legend, with his troops tired and hungry after the Battle of the Short Hills, British General Cornwallis stopped at the Frazee house at the smell of baking bread. Cornwallis introduced himself and asked "Aunt Betty" if he could have some bread for his troops, to which she is said to have replied, "Sir, I give you this bread through fear, not in love." Cornwallis is said to have then politely declined to take the bread. However, historical records indicate his troops plundered the property, taking tools, livestock, a hive and household goods.