



UNION COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



December Meeting

This meeting was held on December 9, one of the coldest days of the end of the year. However, a pleasantly surprising number of guests and members appeared for the meeting and were treated to a wonderful slide show of old Christmas cards, from the collection of our president, Charles Shallcross.

The cards were all from a period of about 1900, and were in color, with some trimmed with gold. Many had religious themes while others featured snow and winter for their scenes, including the dragging in of the Yule Log. The Yule Log tradition dates back to medieval times when the servants did not have to work as long as the log was burning. Naturally, the largest log was selected and carefully watched while it burned. Most of the cards had been printed in Europe, with Germany having produced the best, because of better printing ability. However that source dried up with the start of the World War, and England



and the United States assumed the post card market.

After the conclusion of the slide show, refreshments were served, through the efforts of Barbara Sokol and Bette Hulighan, and we thank the ladies for their work.

October Meeting

The October meeting was held as scheduled in the Hanson House. A few reports and information about other societies were given, and after a brief discussion the annual election of officers was held. There was no opposition from

the floor so the slate presented in September was elected, with Charles Shallcross as president, Joanne Rajoppi as vice-president, Linda Daubner as secretary and William Frolich as treasurer. John Prescott was added to the Board of Trustees and the other members moved up a year in classification.

With business disposed of, a slide program was given by a group from the Friends of the Rahway River Parkway, a part of the Union County Park System. Most of this system was laid out in the early 1920's

by the Frederick Law Olmsted Company, that had laid out Central Park in Manhattan. This company also laid out Warinanco Park in Roselle, considered a jewel of the park system.

Pictures From Our Files

Pictured above is an early map of New Jersey, with a date of approximately 1670, shortly after England had acquired this area from Holland and renamed New Amsterdam as New York. The area between the Delaware River and the Atlantic Ocean became New Jersey, in honor of one of the islands in the English Channel. This map shows an early spelling of the name, and also shows that "North" is on the right side, a common feature of early map-making.

Although not as accurate as a modern map, many points on it are easily identified, such as Manhattan and Staten Island. The river we know as the Elizabeth River is marked as the Achtor Kol, a name now used as the Arthur Kill, or the Staten Island Sound. The Raritan River is shown, but only as a short line on the map. The Passaic River is well represented, but the Hackensack is just another short line near it.

Sandy Hook is indicated, but not quite as slim as we know it, and the off-shore islands are shown all of the way to Cape May, with Little Egg Harbor noted as such on the map.

Throughout the map are various embellishments with two birch-bark canoes manned by Indians well into the Atlantic Ocean, and wild animals are shown where the map-maker thought they might be found.



Indian encampments are drawn, but it is unlikely that the tribes would have built such formidable log walls around their homes.

There are a few familiar names on this map, including Brooklyn, Gravesend, and Coney Island. A small unidentified circle just off the Jersey shore in the upper bay can be recognized as Liberty Island, the home of the world-famous Statue.

Happy New Year

The Society would like to wish all of its members and friends a very happy new year for 2019. In April the Society will celebrate 150 years of life and preserving the history of Union County and New Jersey.

However, it is also that time of the year when dues are due and payable. For those who are not life members a sign-up slip and self-addressed envelope is enclosed for their use.

Life members are fully paid up, and the Society thanks them.

Christmas in the Good Old Days

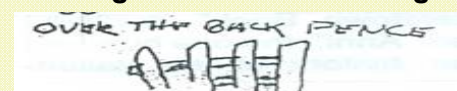
To a small child many years ago Christmas seemed much different from the modern world of today. Santa Claus was real and you were

on your best behavior lest he learn otherwise. There was the carefully written letter to him asking for gifts that must be mailed to him at the North Pole. There was no decorated tree in the house early in December. Santa would bring that when he came on Christmas Eve.

Bed time came early on Christmas Eve and there was no sign of Santa Claus yet, but on Christmas Morning there was the tree and all of those presents near it. Santa was truly magic.

None of this had been there the night before, but there was a beautifully decorated tree with lights and shiny balls almost touching the ceiling, and all those wrapped up presents near it.

Best of all, there was that great big box with the picture of an electric train on it and inside were the engine, cars, and lots of track and controls to run the train. What an amazing Christmas Morning!



Bill Frolich says that when he was a little boy, he knew that on Christmas Eve, "down the chimney Saint Nicholas came with a bound" because there was that black sooty footprint on the white marble hearthstone in front of the fireplace.