



# UNION COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



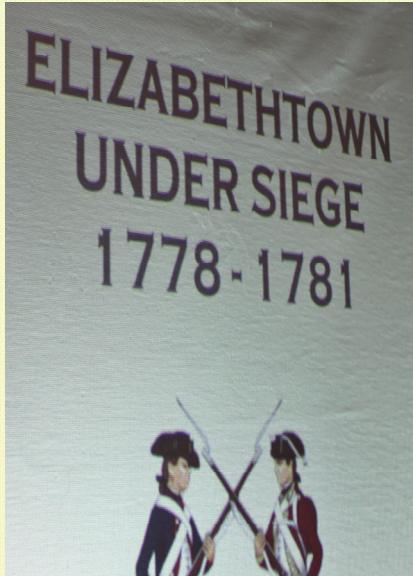
## April 7 Meeting

This year our annual dinner meeting was held in the Garden Restaurant, where we celebrated the 150th anniversary year of the existence of the Union County Historical Society. More than forty members and friends were present and enjoyed a pleasant afternoon of conversation with new and old friends.

The Society was formed in 1869 by several prominent residents of Elizabeth, shortly after the end of the Civil War. Our membership has included many well-known persons, Mary Alward, Henry Crane Warren Dix, Edward J. Grassman, A. L. Johnson, Callahan J. McCarthy, C. Godfrey Poggi, and Thomas Williams, among others.

Through the years there have been many meeting rooms, such as the Court House, First Presbyterian Church, and old St. John's Parsonage.

Our guest speaker was Joanne Rajoppi, Clerk of Union County and our vice-president. Her topic



was Elizabethtown Under Siege, all about the hardships and problems of residents of Elizabethtown during the American Revolution, when the British and the Hessian enemy occupied Staten Island, only five hundred feet across the Arthur Kill.

She told us about the frequent raids in both directions, and of the fires set to destroy the supplies stored in the Academy by the Presbyterian Church for the American army. We heard how some of the women challenged the flames of the burning building to save barrels of flour from destruction.

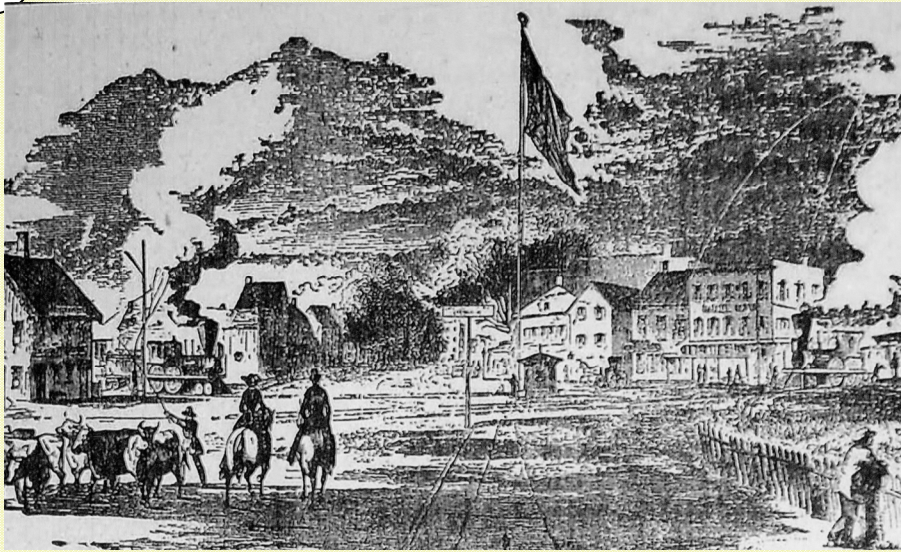


## May Meeting

The meeting of May 19 will be held in the Hanson House at 2 PM, and its main subject will be the awarding of some minor financial assistance to four senior students of the high schools of Union County.

The recipients will be selected by the Awards Committee of the Society from the number of student applicants who meet our award rules. All of the high school in Union County will be informed of this award, but it is up to the students to apply for it.

We hope to see a good turn-out of the members.



### Pictures From Our Files

Here we have a picture of Elizabeth in 1856, that shows the intersection of the two railroads that crossed near the center of the town. This is the same area that was replaced by the famous Arches of Elizabeth about forty-five years later.

In the picture are two locomotives awaiting for permission to advance through the crossing, which is controlled by an official near the guard house in the center of the intersection.

This is reminiscent of an old law in a western state that ruled that, "When two trains meet at a crossing, each shall stop, and neither shall start until the other has left." This law did not apply in New Jersey, but we do not know how these trains made it through the crossing.

The train on the left is of the Central Railroad of New Jersey, renamed

from the Elizabethtown & Sumerville Railroad in 1849, whose first day of operation was January 1, 1839. It is shown passing through Morris Avenue.

The train on the right is a Pennsylvania Railroad train, which commenced operations as the Camden & Amboy, organized in 1830.

A very un-likely sight today is two men on horseback waiting to cross while a number of cows are being driven down Broad Street. Horse-car tracks appear as the end of the Broad Street line, and clouds fill the sky as does the smoke and steam from the two locomotives.

### March 3 Meeting

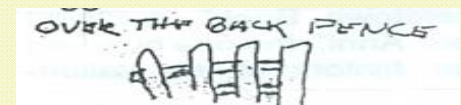
The March meeting was held as scheduled in the Hanson House with a large number of members and guests in attendance, even though the weather was threatening to bring rain and snow storms. Some financial matters

were discussed in the pre-agenda executive board meeting, with action to be determined later.

In the meeting of the membership there were a few announcements of coming events made by several members and then the speaker for the afternoon was introduced, Aimee Fernandez-Puente, of the Elizabeth Public Library, Supervisor of the Local History and Special Collections Department.

She gave a very interesting and informative talk about the resources available in the library, with emphasis on its security and safety. This was increased after it was found that some items had mysteriously disappeared.

She brought with her a few items from the vast collection and carefully held them up for us to see. She also explained that some files, such as those of the Elizabeth Daily Journal, have been and will continue to be transferred to electronic recording, and thus saving wear and tear on delicate originals.



We have heard that the weather was so warm that the Easter Bunny did not have to wear his snowsuit.