



UNION COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



313+ Ancestors Speak Project Dedicated at Historic Graveyard

Dr. Wanda Lundy, Pastor of the Siloam-Hope First Presbyterian Church (formerly the First Presbyterian Church) in Elizabeth, NJ presented an inspiring and interesting program on the 313+ Ancestors Speak Project at the recent October meeting of the Society.

"The project is designed to give voice to the lives of the 313+ enslaved and free African Americans buried on the grounds on the church," Dr. Lundy explained.

The \$250,000 project, funded through grants and donations, is visible in the 21-foot-high granite monument erected in the cemetery and inscribed with the names of the Black people buried there. Designed by sculptor and painter Sterling Brown, the monument was dedicated earlier this year.

Some of those buried on the grounds are not known by name and the plaque represents them as "unknown." Others may have only a first or last name listed. All are represented.

"We spent a great amount of time researching church burial records so we could reflect the accuracy of the burials," Dr. Lundy said.

During Dr. Lundy's discussion of the restoration work done at First Presbyterian



Church, it was learned that the Society's Vice President, Charles Shallcross, had actually served on the Board of the Old First Historic Trust in the early 2000s and was a part of that project which helped to preserve a most important part of both Elizabeth's and New Jersey's history.

Much of that work was made possible through a generous grant from the Snyder Foundation. Dorothy Snyder, a member of the Cranford Presbyterian Church, had actually witnessed the terrible 1947 fire that greatly damaged the church and destroyed its steeple.

Through the dedication and tireless efforts of Trust member Marybeth Lapham, additional grants were obtained, allowing much of the restoration work to be accomplished, including restoring much of the church cemetery, refurbishing what is now the Snyder Academy, and rebuilding the beautiful 212-foot steeple.

Dr. Lundy entertained questions about the research conducted on the 313+ project. Everyone present applauded the efforts made by her committee to realize a representation of those who are buried there as well as their contributions to the city of Elizabeth and the patriot cause.



RINGING IN THE HOLIDAY SEASON

On Sunday, December 3rd at 2 p.m. we invite you to mingle and jingle with us for a festive reception at the Hanson House. This year we request you bring your favorite holiday dessert for sampling. The Society will provide an assortment of sandwiches, cheeses and fruits. Best dessert wins a prize!

***A Few Thoughts About
Veterans' Day
As remembered by Bill Frolich***

Here are a few thoughts about the Eleventh of November, that has come to be designated as "Veterans' Day". It was not always so. As an American holiday it was first known as "Armistice Day", as a reminder that on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of the year 1918 the guns of the Great War, the World War, fell silent, and the world was again made safe for democracy. It was the "war to end all wars" and for the following years we celebrated the day with parades and services, and a moment of silence at eleven o'clock in each city, town and village.

It was shortly after the end of World War I that the idea of an "Unknown Soldier" was born, and that he should be selected from the unidentified dead of that war and honored as a representative of all soldiers. The selection was made from a row of caskets in France, and when a ray of sunlight fell on one casket, it was seen as a sign from above that that was the one.

The body was transported to the United States by the cruiser Olympia, Admiral Dewey's flagship of the Philippines, and now rests near our nation's capital, in honored glory, known but to God.

Sadly, the noble efforts of the soldiers of the American, British and French Armies and their allies came to naught only twenty-one years later when the Hitler war machine of Nazi Germany invaded Poland on the third day of September in 1939, and Britain and France honored their treaty to come to Poland's defense. It was six years to the day when

that conflict was brought to a successful conclusion, and peace again came to the world.

As time went by, it seemed pointless to remember Armistice Day as such, for a war that did not achieve its stated purpose, and the Eleventh of November is now known as Veterans' Day, a day to honor all members of our country who have come to its defense.



On April 9, 1932, the completed Tomb was unveiled. The marble sarcophagus features elaborate carvings of wreaths and three neoclassical figures representing Peace, Victory and Valor.

It also holds the remains of servicemen from World War I, World War II, and the Korean War. Throughout the day, a soldier replaces a comrade in a symbolic ceremony.

While guarding the graves, sentinels continuously repeat a ceremonial procedure. They march 21 steps southward down the black mat behind the Tomb, turn left, face east for 21 seconds, turn left, face north for 21 seconds, and take 21 steps down. The repetition of the number 21 represents the 21 gun salute, the highest military honor offered to a Soldier. This procedure repeats until the changing of the guard.

***A Few Questions You Never
Thought You Needed to Ask***

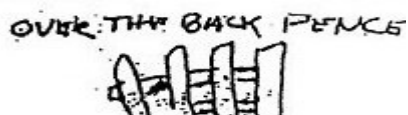
***Why is Thanksgiving celebrated
on the 4th Thursday of the
Month of November?***

At the request of Elias Boudinot, in 1789 President George Washington decreed Thursday, November 26, as a day of public thanksgiving, but, in the years that followed, the holiday bounced informally from month to month and date to date. The last Thursday in November became the norm in 1863 with a declaration by Pres. Abraham Lincoln.

Franklin D. Roosevelt moved Thanksgiving to the third Thursday of November by proclamation as the country was coming out of the Great Depression with hopes that an extra week of holiday shopping would help the economy. The next couple of years there was still some vague confusion about which Thursday of the month was officially Thanksgiving, so President Roosevelt eventually signed legislation that declared the fourth Thursday in November as the holiday. The legislation also meant that future presidents could not change the date again.

***Why does the President
pardon a turkey?***

Although Kennedy spared the life of his turkey in 1963, the tradition of pardoning White House turkeys can be traced back to Lincoln's granting clemency to a bird a century before, according to the Library of Congress. Lincoln's son Tad asked his father to spare the life of the animal, which the boy wanted for a pet.



***Happy and safe holiday
season to all!***