

EAST WINDSOR

HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2003

Hightstown, New Jersey And Some Hight Family Connections

By Richard S. Hutchinson

Hightstown is a unique community in more ways than one. However, one of the more unusual situations is its lack of knowledge regarding its namesakes, John & Mary Hight. We all know the town's accepted version of how the town was formed by John & Mary Hight in 1721, with their log cabin by the stream and establishment of a mill, etc. But, is this accurate? There are certainly some who can challenge this accepted "history."

The main reason we find ourselves in this predicament is due to the lack



- NOVEMBER
- 7:15 p.m., "The One Room Schoolhouse", Carolyn Campbell, Meadow Lakes
- 13 7:30 p.m., Business Meeting, Sara Hutchinson West Educational Center

DECEMBER

- 7:30 p.m., Business Meeting, Sara Hutchinson West Educational Center
- 7 1:00 4:00 p.m., Christmas Tea, Ely House

of public records and/or written documents that presently exist for the Hight family and the family name of Hight in this area. And, perhaps, the main reason for the lack of such items is due to the fact that the Hight family, like many other families, did not stay in this area of New Jersey. No, not due to the taxes!! Most of the time, they moved to secure more land in newly opened areas of the country.

Over the years, I have been able to make contact with several people who have been tracing their ancestry to the Hight family "of Hightstown" either through their research or what has been handed down to them through their family's history. However, what one has to be aware of is not to confuse the boundaries of todav's Hightstown "Hightstown" in the 1700s and early 1800s. You have to remember that Windsor Township was much larger than it is today and was in Middlesex County and encompassed such areas East Windsor, West Windsor and Washington Township in the 1700s. So, when people wrote in their Bibles, or spoke of Hightstown in their oral histories, stating that their relative was "born near Hightstown" or "born in Windsor", you have to remember that the location may have been many miles from the present boundaries of today's Hightstown. And, it is because of the above that I am of the opinion that the Hight family was settled in the Penns Neck area of what was then Windsor Twp, Middlesex Co, New Jersey prior to Windsor Twp being divided into both East and West Windsor townships in 1798.

Therefore, with the above warnings in place, here are several Hight lines, both researched by myself or those having been received from Hight family members, who trace their heritage back to this area of "Windsor township, Middlesex County" or "being of near Hightstown."

Nicholas Hight - In one piece of correspondence wherein a Hight descendant asks for Hight family information, the relative answers - "What little I wrote in my letter is all, I am sorry to say, I can answer to your questions ... O. R. Hight, Los Angeles, Cal., may have some history of the Hight family." The letter also contains the following question and answer - "Can any family records be found showing the brothers and sisters of John N. Hight or of his parents? Great-aunt Rachel's Bible has a note -"Nicholas Hight born March 1728, John and Henry older brothers. His sons were Nicholas, William, John, David and Aaron. His daughters Susan, Marga-

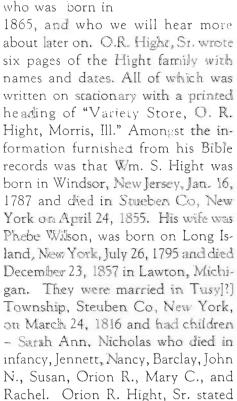
Hight Family

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ret, Mary and Nancy. He died Sept 15, 1805. The underscored name was of course our family ancestor John N. Hight."

O.[Orion] R. Hight, Sr. was contacted and responded Aug 23, 1903 with a great deal of information including people having Hight history

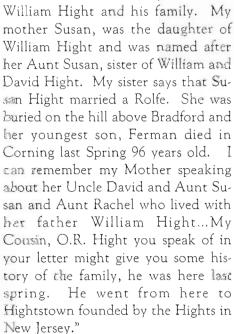
and indicating that the Hight Bible was in Chicago. He also indicated that Wm. S. Hight, son of John N. Hight was in the War of 1812. He then gave his entire family's history indicating that he was born in Bradford Co, New York, December 13, 1835 and came to Lawton Michigan in 1856. One of his children was O. R. Hight, Jr.,



that his son, Orion, Jr., never married and traveled in Europe for 18 years before returning to the U.S.

Another member of the Hight family and relative to O. R. Hight, Sr., was George W. Rosenkrans, of Weston, Schuyler Co., New York, who was contacted in 1925 by the same Hight researcher, who had spo-

ken to O. R. Hight, Sr. in 1903. In a letter, he stated that he had been in Bradford, "where my grandfather William Hight and his father Capt. John N. Hight died and were buried, though my sister Josie Fuller might know more about the Hight family than I, but we are about alike, we know but little about the Hight family outside of





Orion R. Hight, Sr.

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HIGHTSTOWN EAST WINDSOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Hightstown, New Jersey founded 1971

609-371-9580

To educate, while preserving for future generations, our people and our community's history.

Editor, Richard S. Hutchinson

-madillen-

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Genealogical queries pertaining to the Hightstown-East Windsor Township area are accepted, but will be printed as space allows.

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Hight Family

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I have an undated clipping from a newspaper that indicates that O.R. Hight was President of the Hight Family Reunion Association of Michigan, which was held in Lawton, Michigan. There were 56 representatives of the Hight family present and a photograph was taken of them after dinner. The article names all of those who were present.

In 1916, it was brought to the attention of Roger W. Swetland, Principal of Peddie, by a school alumni that O. R. Hight, Sr. of Morris, Illinois was a descendant of John and Mary Hight. In a letter, Mr. Swetland invited Mr. Hight to come to Hightstown being that in June the town and Peddie were celebrating their history in a pageant. Mr. O. R. Hight, Jr. wrote the following back to Mr. Swetland: "Dear Sir: Your letter of April 27th was read with great interest. I am O. R. Hight, Jr. The letter was intended for my father who died eight years ago in Morris, Ill. I am the great-great-grandson of the founders of Hightstown. I regret very much that I will not be able to attend the pageant. I have been living in California for two years and six months. I intended on going east this summer as far as Philadelphia and New York and had I known it sooner would have planned to come June 6th. I will try to attend the Hight family reunion at Bradford, N.Y. in August. Ther[y?]e are the descendants of John Hight (my great-grandfather) who was a captain under Gen. Geo. Washington. [Everyone was under Gen. Geo. Washington.] Only two of a large number bear the name of Hight, myself and a cousin, Bert Hight of Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. I have with me here the bayonet and my greatgrandfather's gun that was carried through the war, a daguerreotype of his two daughters, Mary (my drandmother?) and Rachel who spent the last days of her life with us, and

his old clock. I also have a photo of my cousin, Clarence Hight (recently deceased) in his automobile in front of their home built in 1782 and ever since occupied by one of the Hight family. I would certainly like to hear all about the celebration and with best wishes for its success and kind regards to all relatives, I am Sincerely – O. R. Hight"

[Now, in 1916, O. R. Hight would only be 51. But, some of the things he states in his letter are inaccurate and questionable to me. First, I question that he was the great-great-grandson of the founders of Hightstown (John & Mary Hight). If he is correct, then that would mean that his ancestor John N. Hight, who was his greatgrandfather, would have be the son of John & Mary, to be his great-greatgrandparents. I have believed that John N. Hight (1756-1856) could have been the son of Nicholas Hight, who was born ca. 1728, and not John & Mary Hight. [It has also been the contention of some of the Hight researchers that Nicholas was a son of John & Mary Hight.] Also, when Orion, Jr. is referring to the possessions of his great-grandfather, who would be John N. Hight, and he states that he has a daguerreotype of "his children, Mary (my d[g?]randmother) and Rachel," Orion Hight, Jr. creates another problem. This is because with his greatgrandfather actually being John N. Hight, a daughter of John N. can't possibly be his grandmother when his line of descent is through John N. Hight's son, William Savage Hight, who was the father of O.R. Hight, Sr. [Per O.R. Hight's own handwritten Bible records.] So, it appears that O. R. Hight, Jr. was confused on his Hight ancestry. I suspect that O.R., Jr. was really referring to his father's sisters, who were Mary and Rachel, as to who had been living with his family. It also makes sense that his fahter's sisters could have lived with him and his family until there deaths. Perhaps,

to him, his Aunt Mary was affectionately called his "grandmother". It is unfortunate that he gave this type of information in a letter with these errors because it was published on the front page of the *Hightstown Gazette*, dated May 11, 1916, and will always be accepted as fact.]

John N. Hight - My research on John N. Hight shows the following:

He was a Captain of the 1st Battalion, 2nd Regiment, of the Militia of Middlesex County, New Jersey, in April 1793, when he gave his age as 37

John N. Hight and John Schenck made the Inventory on 22 May 1782 for the estate of James Adams, of Windsor Township, Middlesex Co, New Jersey, who left a Will, dated 25 January 1775 and proved, 22 May 1782.

John N. Hight and Garret Schenck made an Inventory, on 5 April 1793, for the estate of James Freeman, Sr, of Middlesex Co, New Jersey, who left a Will, dated 21 March 1793 and proved on 8 April 1793.

John N. Hight and John Schenck made an Inventory on 19 March 1795 for the estate of Johannes Ryder, Sr, of Middlesex County, New Jersey, who left a Will, dated 20 March 1790 and proved 10 June 1795.

John N. Hight and John Schenck made an Inventory on 19 March 1795 for the estate of Garret A. Schenck, of Middlesex County, New Jersey, who died Intestate, and was granted administration on 20 March 1795.

John N. Hight and Garret Schenck made an Inventory on 2 December 1796, for the estate of Eupheamia Freeman, of Middlesex County, New Jersey, who made a Will,

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dated 24 November 1796 and proved 5 December 1796.

The following information is found in John N. Hight's Revolutionary Pension file at the National Archives which was made by his surviving wife, Revolutionary War Pension Application # S31743. It stated that he was of the NI Line and was born 9 Ian 1756 at Bedminster, Somerset Co. NI and when he was small moved with his parents to Windsor, Middlesex Co. NI and he lived there at the time of his enlistment. At the time the pension was applied for, 16 October 1832, he was living at Jersey, Steuben Co, NY. In the file, it indicated that a son, William S. Hight, was of Bradford in Steuben Co, NY in 1854.

The US Bureau of Pensions further reported that John N. Hight was in the following battles during the Revolutionary War - "Battles engaged in - Crosswicks Bridge and Monmouth." Soldier's son William S. was alive in 1845. Soldier's younger brother David served in the NJ Militia in Revolutionary War."

My deed research in Middlesex County Court House on John N. Hight shows that he and his wife Hannah lived in Penns Neck, West Windsor, New Jersey, as was evidenced by deeds Book 2-page 92, dated 6 Sept 1797 & page 176, dated 9 July 1796; Vol 3-page 178, dated 28 December 1797 & page 625, dated 25 May 1796 and Vol 8-Page 669, dated 9 June 1798. In all deeds, he and his wife were selling their land in West Windsor Twp, Middlesex Co, New Jersey and were referred to as John N. Hight & his wife, Hannah. In the last deed found for them in Vol 24-page 42, dated 20 May 1799, he was referred to as John N. Haight of Somerset where he sold land to Susanna Haight of West Windsor. [They had a daughter name Susannah as did Nicholas Hight.]

Hight Family

However, when signing this deed he actually signed his name as "Hight" as did his wife, Hannah. In reference to this deed, John appeared before the court on 14 Feb 1801 and Hannah appeared on 23 Oct 1802. One can conclude from the sale of their land that this was in preparation for their leaving the State of New Jersey and moving to Steuben County, New York.

According to another Hight researcher, John N. Hight died 15 Oct 1856, and that he was definitely listed at age 95 years in the 1850 census of Bradford Co, NY.

Another Hight, also a descendant of John N. Hight, who was born in Genoa, Livingston, State of Michigan, filed her DAR Lineage Form showing that John N. Hight and his wife, Hannah Savage/Savidge were her great-grandparents; their son David Hight, being born in Windsor, New Jersey, June 21, 1781, and his wife Mehetabel Cook were her grandparents, and that Nathan Cook Hight and his wife, Elizabeth Bennett, were her parents. She repeats the above government records and indicates the dates on her application come from tombstone and Bible records. The children of John N. & Hannah (Savage) Hight were given as David, Deborah, Betsey, William Savage, Nicholas, Anne, Susanna, and Rachel. She further indicates that Mrs. Frances Wheeler Smith, National DAR# 142773 received membership under this same line being "she was the daughter of my father's sister, Sally Ann Hight Haight, the daughter of David and Mehetabel Cook Hight born Jan. 9, 1811." [Sally Ann Hight married Reuben Haight in Steuben Co, New York in 1826. She died in Odessa, Ionia County, Michigan in 1850.]

One of the most poignant items found dealing with the John N. Hight

family is a letter from John N. and wife Ann [Hannah] S. Hight and addressed to their children - David, Meheta, and Debby Hight on September 14th, 1836. It was address to David Hight, Washtenaw County, Michigan and to be forwarded by Wm. Bealer. The letter reads: "Town of Bradford Stuben County Septbr 1836 - Beloved Children, This may Inform you that we are yet Living and in a Comfortable State of Health Excepting the Infirmaties of Old Age which is fast gaining upon us to our Eye Sight Hearing and Memory our Whole Faculties Seems to be Failing. But thanks be to God. Still have that Comfortable Hope that it will be but a Short time when we Shall be Freed from All Pains and Troubles which are the allotments of this Life And Shall have the Enjoyment of that Happiness which God hath Provided for all these who do Truly Believe in and do Love and Serve the LORD, Jesus Christ, the only Begotten Son of The Father. Rachel is yet Afflicted with the Head Ach rather More than Usual. Williams Family are as well as Usual. It is uncertain whether he will yet come this Fall. I shall Do what I can to help him to move for I believe he can do Better there than what he can do here it is Some weeks Since I have John when I Advised him to go out to his Father's But he gave no Satisfaction whether he would or Not. He Complains Some of Not being Verry Hearty - I spoke to Hannah the Other Day she said they were then well And I know Not if they get out this Fall. Simon Jacobus thinks to start with his Family for your Country in two or three weeks It has been a Cold Season with us here. Corn Crops will be Poor. We had a Smart Frost here last week and in some places Corn and Buckwheat Suffered much we have had now a few Days Verry Warm and pleasant and last Night and to Day have Had a fine Rain. I have had thought to come and See you but it is

Hight Family

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Doubtfull. Religion is Quite low amongst us. Peoples Hearts Are too much filled with the things of this world and the Spirit of the LORD hardly ever stays long in the Heart where there is so much Worldly Mindlessness Dear Chrildren if I Should again Never See you in this World I hope that you will Strive to live Near to the Lord. Remember us to All Enquiring Friends — So Remain your Loving Parents — John N. Hight, Ann S. Hight"

John & Mary Hight - The Borough of Hightstown has accepted as fact that the town was formed by John & Mary Hight in 1721, with their log cabin by the stream and establishment of a mill, etc. It is probable that the 1721 date is not correct. This information is based upon two or three sentences found on the first page of a book written by Mrs. Ida Martin Pullen of Hightstown, New Jersey, entitled "Family History of John Hight, Founder of Hightstown." Unfortunately, there is very little information about John & Mary Hight or their male children in this work. These few items state: "John and Mary Hight were blessed with two or more sons. The writer has only been able to procure the names and history of two, John and Joseph. There is a tradition that there were two sons born prior to John, Jr., who died in infancy. John Hight, the elder was born in the year 1731, exact date unknown, Joseph the younger was born April 27th, 1739."

It is believed that the Joseph referred to above as the son of John & Mary is the Col. Joseph Haight family of Monmouth Co, New Jersey. This part of the Hight family spelled their name as "Haight", which appears to be the spelling found in very early records.

It has also been stated by Mrs. Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society News

Pullen that John Hight was one of the "organizers" of the Hightstown Baptist Church. The "mother" church was the church in Middletown and John & Mary Hight were among 17 members of that church that were dismissed from it. These 17 members and several others originally formed the church in Cranbury in 1745. The church eventually left Cranbury and moved to Hightstown with the first church meeting held there in 1785. And, through these moves John and Mary Hight became members of the Hightstown Baptist Church. In the Baptist Church's written history, Rev. Owen P. Eaches, states that Rev. Peter Wilson preached "in 1790 in the house of John Hight, Penns Neck." The question is does this refer to our John, of John and Mary Hight, or another John? I am assuming that this probably refers to John N. Hight but can speculate that many might look at this as being John, of John and Mary.l

The church records dated October 1856 state "Whereas John Hight a member in this church has for a considerable time past absented himself from this place in the House of God to the great dishonor of religion and the dissatisfaction of the Church for which reason they thought proper to lay In. Hight under censure as a person not in church communion with them until such time as he gives satisfaction to the church for his neglect." And, in 1765, Mary Hight was to be asked the reason for her neglect. On June 8th, 1766, John Hight confessed his faults ye received into communion in the church. But, he was still in trouble with the church for the same reason and in 1784 after talking with him, John Hight was suspended from communion. In the records of the church, dated 29 September 1792, when find - "Died since last Association ... Mary Hight." The only other Hight mentioned in their records was in April 1797, when the church "after prayer, proceeded to excommunicate

"Elizth Hight with whom the church had labored."

In doing research and examining the Middlesex County Tavern Licenses on file, I and others, have been able to add another son to the John & Mary Hight family. One the town stil does not know. His name was Thomas Hight. There are several tavern licenses for John Hight, Innkeeper, (usually spelled by the clerk as "Height") who was usually described as dwelling in "town of Windsor" or "Township of Windsor." It was not until ca. 1780 that the clerks began referring to him as "John Hight" who formerly kept a tavern in Hides Town or Hights Town, as though he was living somewhere else. For example, in 1762, his license stated: "Showeth-We subscribers Do Humbly Recommend John Height Inn keeper in the Town of Winsor to be a proper person To Keep a Publick house or Entertainment for Man & Horse in which he Now Dwells in the town of Windsor giving under our hands this 12th Day of July Anno: 1762. Signed - John Hull, Jacob Jemson, Christopher Hoogeland, Joseph Wilson, Richard Major, John Pullin, Chas. Hartipee, Vincent Dye, Richard Hutchinson, George Pulen, Joseph South, Benjamin Ward, William Greevey[?], Charles Pullin."

Tavern License Petition, Windsor, Middlesex Co, New Jersey · 8 September 1767 - "To the Worshipful Justices of the Peace of The County of Middlesex In their General Quarter Sessions Convened in October Term of 1767 - Humbly Shewth-Whereas John Height of the Town of Windsor in Said County Inkeeper Hath Resigned up the Said Business of Publick house keeping unto his Son Thomas Height a married man, Together with the Large Dweling house In which the said John Height Did keep a Publick house & Tav-

Continued from page 5

ern Scituate on the hoigh Road in the Said Windsor, Therefore we the subscribers Inhabitants of the Said Windsor and the Adjacent Neibourhood Do humbly Recomend the Said Thomas Height to be a Proper Person to keep A Tavern & Publick of Entertainment, In the above Said Dweling house in Said Windsor, in wch. Said house he Now Dweleth, and Pray That he may be Lisienced For That Purpose. Given under our hands This 8th Day of September Anno: Dom: 1767." Signed - Wm. Hutchinson Sr, Joseph Wilson, John Hight, Stephen Hooper, Nicholas Hooper, David Olden, Thomas Hooper, John Hutchinson, Daniel Perine, Joseph Hutchinson, Jacob Jemson, Andrew Davison, Vincent Dye.

I have also examined the Marriage Bond for Thomas's marriage. [The date on a Marriage Bond does not indicate the actual date of marriage but the date the Bond was taken out for the marriage.] At this time, a Bond was required to ensure that the marriage would go forth. In the Middlesex County Marriage Bond, dated 30 Jan 1767, Thomas was described as Thomas "Height" of New Windsor, Middlesex County. His future wife, was Rachel Wilson and was also from the same place. The witnesses to this Bond were Christ'r Zinigan and Jos. Borden with the Bond being made by Richard Height, Ir and Richard Hutchinson. II do not know who Richard Height may be but he may be another son. Also, be aware that the "Jr" in this period of time did not always mean a family relationship. It was also used as a way to separate two or more people having the same name in the same area.]

Nicholas Hight, Jr. - Nicholas Hight, Jr. is believed to be the nephew of John Hight, the founder of Hightstown. The 1793 Miltia of

Hight Family

Middlesex Co lists John N. Hight, age 33 [born ca. 1760], and Nicholas Hight, age 42, [born ca. 1751]. I put these two as sons of Nicholas Hight, Sr. believed to be the brother of John Hight.

In a Middlesex Co deed, dated 3 May 1794, Nicholas Hight, Jr and wife Bathsheba, of New Windsor Twp, wheelwright, sold land to Daniel Atchley, Jr of the same place. Another deed, dated 27 June 1794, states "...and the said Nicholas Hight having intermarried Basheba Atchley one of the said Benjamin Atchley daughters..." [Vol 8, Page 881]

Nicholas Hight, Jr. of East Windsor, left a Will dated 12 Jan 1791, proved 27 March 1799. He names his wife as Bathsheba and names children: Jacob, Daniel, John, Catharine, Hanna, and Anna.

There is a record of the Hight Family in the Montgomery Co Archives, at Fonda, NY, that was published in the National Genealogical Society Quarterly, March 1971, Vol #59, #1, page 34 that gives the following: Jacob Hight b. 14 June 1775, Benjamin Hight b. 18 July 1779, Catherine Hight b. 17 March 1782, Hannah Hight, b. 8 Dec 1784, Daniel Hight b. 1 May 1787, Ann Hight b. 8 July 1789, John Hight b. 21 Sept 1793. In another hand is written "Moved Oct 17, 1843. Landed November the 3rd 1843."

A family descendant states that the Catherine Hight, of the record above, married Wm. Calvert and the family moved from the vicinity of Old Tennent Church, NJ, to Saratoga Co, NY. Catherine died there in 1840 in her 59th year [checks with above DOB] and is buried there. This record, per the researcher who sent this to me, indicates that this is the record of the children of Nicholas Hight, Jr. of NJ. I have not seen the article or the actual record ONLY a transcription as given above.

To be continued in the January-February 2004 issue





This Hight family member, who appears to have been "happy" to have his picture taken, will bring his family's story in the next issue. He, too, was born in Hightstown.





Christmas Tea

Come on! Hurry!! I heard a rumor that the Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society is having real tea at their Annual Christmas Tea on December 7th at the Ely House from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.!



The Solidan Greeting Gard

Each year at this time, the Society sponsors a Holiday Greeting Card, which is one of the ways we hope to spread a little good cheer during the holidays.

To cover our costs and to raise needed revenue for the Society, we ask our subscribers to contribute a small amount for their names to be inscribed on the card.

The monies received for the Greeting Card help in meeting our regular expenses.

Please contribute \$12 for an individual name and \$15 for a family. Checks may be made payable to H.E.W.H.S.

To have your name(s) added to the Holiday greeting card, please list your names (as you would like them to appear) on the form below.



Your name___

Amount \$___

Evening phone

Send replies by December 1st to Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society, c/o Dr. Harold C. Cox, Jr., 183 E. Ward Street, Hightstown, New Jersey 08520. Please be sure to include your full return address and write "Holiday Card" on the envelope.

Herbert Braunfels Davison

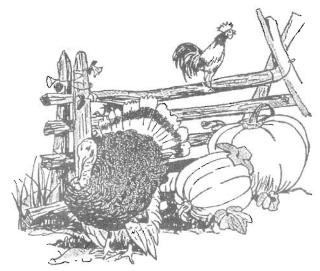
he Society lost another important friend and member with the passing of Herbert Davison. Mr. Davison, 88, passed away Tuesday. He was a resident and an active member of Hightstown and its business community. He later moved to Meadow Lakes but always remained an active participant within the community. He always made sure that Meadow Lake residents knew about the Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society and actively recruited them for membership. He always looked forward to the Society's programs at Meadow Lakes and made sure that the Society's Annual Meeting had whatever was needed. He will be sorely missed by his friends and the Society.

Tidbits

Hightstown Gazette, 17 Feb 1916 - "Rattlesnake Bill" Van Horn, who has just finished his one hundred and thirty-seventh jail sentence at Newtown, said that he was contemplating writing the history of his life at the end of the next snake season."

ity and the historical artifacts displayed, including the antique dresses in Ely House. On the October 16th, forty-five children from the Walter C. Black School toured the facility and another fifty were to tour in the following week.

H-EW Historical Society - It has been reported that the Society had numerous visitors while being open all day during Hightstown's Incorporation Anniversary on October 11th. All of the visitors to the Sara Hutchinson West Educational Center were impressed with the facil-



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Figgr CLASS TOSTAGE PAID Permit No. 21 Hightstown, New Jersey Hightstown-East Windsor Historical Society 164 North Main Street Hightstown, New Jersey 08520