

A Tribute .



Staff Photo By Nancy Skeuse
IN A RARE personal moment, Edna Horn relaxes with Tiger, one of her cats, and Specs, the dog she picked up when she helped do the dog census. "He bit me in the heel and I paid ten cents for him," she said.

To
Edna Horn
the person initially responsible
for the preservation
of this historic landmark.

Tributes Paid Mrs. Edna Horn, Community Leader Dead At 72

Mrs. Edna A. Horn of Delaware Township, a civic leader in both county and municipal affairs, died Saturday, April 19, 1975 at her home in Locktown. She was 72.

Born in Watertown, Minnesota, she had resided in Delaware Township since 1933. Her husband, Clarence A. Horn, died in 1970.

A self-avowed crusader, Mrs. Horn was the president of the Hunterdon County Welfare Board, secretary of the Delaware Township Planning Board, President of the New Jersey Federation of Planning Officials and a member of the Locktown Grange.

"She can be summed up in two words...community service," said County Adjuster Mrs. Mildred Preen Mortimer, a personal friend.

"The welfare board felt that she was a most valuable member," Mrs. Mortimer added. "She was most dedicated and gave of her time freely without compensation in the many projects she was interested in.

"She was a stern task master but people respected her opinion. Her word was her bond. We have lost a real friend," she said.

Mrs. Evelyn Walker, director of the welfare board,



Edna Horn

praised Mrs. Horn and added, "It will be difficult to fill her place with a person of her ability and dedication."

The Hunterdon County Board of Freeholders adopted a resolution recognizing "with deepest regret that it has lost a woman of character and ability, but above all, a person concerned for her fellow citizens."

A similar resolution was adopted by the welfare board.

Freeholder Vincent Abraitys, a welfare board member and resident of Delaware Township, praised Mrs. Horn for her dedication to serving the public.

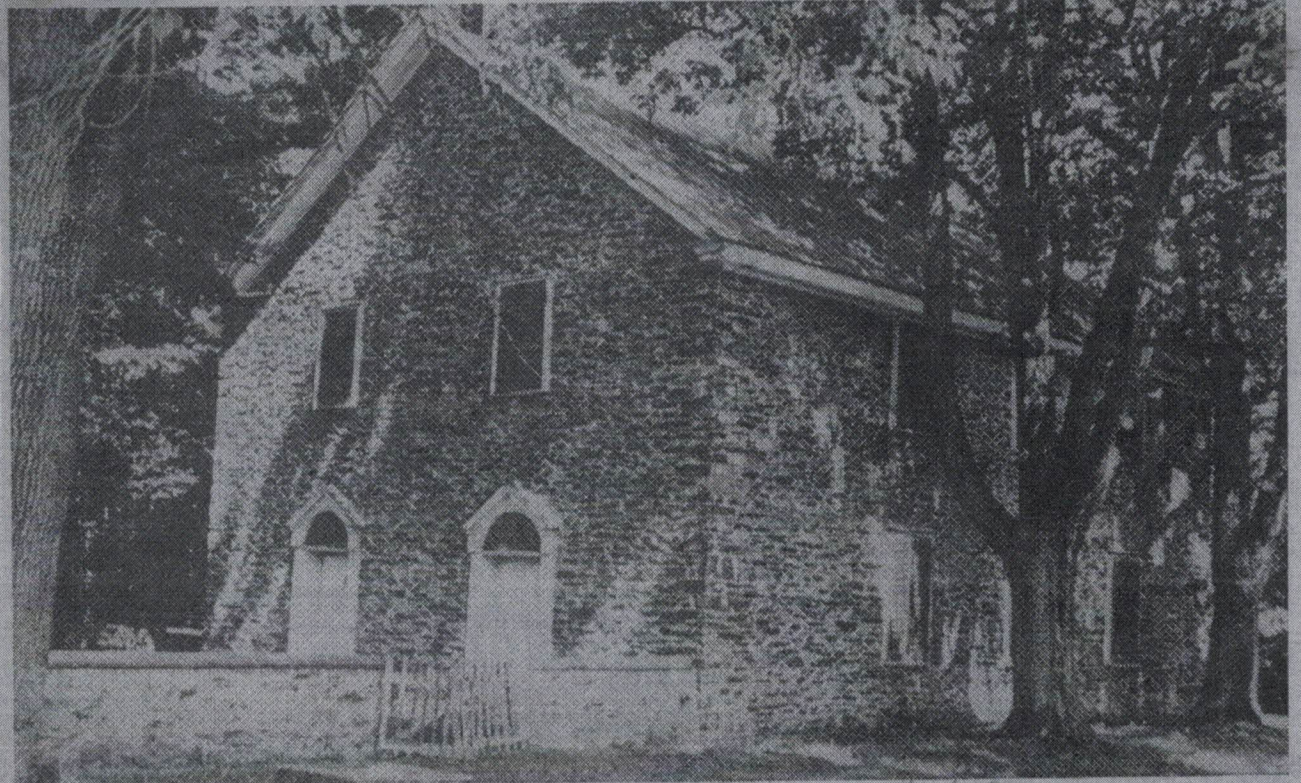
"I always admired her strength of character and her ability to stay with a subject until its completion," he said. "She had a tremendous tenacity, tremendous courage which she brought with her on her job. Delaware Township will miss her very much."

In recognition of Mrs. Horn's contributions to the community, township offices were closed Tuesday.

Surviving are a son, Col. James A. Horn, U. S. Marines, Ret., of Stockton; a daughter, Patricia Horn of Encino, California; two sisters, eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Services were held Tuesday in the Church of the Holy Spirit in Lebanon. Interment was in Rosemont Cemetery under the direction of the Holcombe-Fisher Funeral Home in Flemington.

Memorial contributions may be made for instruction and teaching equipment for cancer patients in the Hunterdon Medical Center satellites in Lambertville and Milford.



7/19/73

—Staff Photo by Nancy Skeuse

DELAWARE TOWNSHIP'S 1819 Locktown Baptist Church may become a residence. Historic, church and civic groups are uniting in a move to negotiate for its preservation. It is owned by the New Jersey Baptist Convention.

Campaign To Save Old Locktown Church

Building Erected In 1819 Would Be Preserved As An Historic Site

The Hunterdon County Historical Society, the Locktown Grange, the minister and members of the Baptistown Baptist Church, and interested Delaware Township citizens are joining in efforts to "save" the old stone church in Locktown.

Flemington Realtor Kenneth Yeaton holds an option on the property, but says it is "not on the market" at this point. "There is a possibility that it might be converted to residential use."

"Perhaps through everybody's good graces we can keep a ministry there. I'm prepared to go to bat with our Convention to see what we can do," declared the Rev. Richard Kollmar of the Baptistown Baptist Church.

The Locktown church, organized and built in 1819, originally was a mission church of the Baptistown congregation.

The Locktown congregation eventually affiliated with the Old School Baptists, and over the years its numbers dwindled. Ownership of the building was transferred in 1967 to the New Jersey Baptist Convention. In recent years, no services have been held there.

B.A. Sorby of the historical society said he had learned only in the past few days that the Locktown Church was "on the market" and that an option had been obtained.

"I was absolutely appalled. We had assurances two years ago that it would be preserved," he said.

Mrs. Edna Horn, secretary of the Delaware Township Planning Board and a prime mover in the successful campaign to save and restore the Green Sergeant's covered bridge, also said she, too, had only lately learned of a possible sale.

Mrs. Brenda Simonds, secretary of the Locktown Grange, wrote to Sorby to enlist the historical society's help. The Grange has been taking care of the Locktown burial ground since 1967 and wants to see the building preserved, she noted.

"Historic Landmark"

Mrs. Horn called the church "an historic landmark that should be used as it was intended."

She got in touch this week with David N. Poinsett, state supervisor of historic sites, and has set up a meeting with Miss Lois Richmond of his staff and with Mr. Kollmar to inspect the

association, and Sidney G. Dillon of Oldwick, an attorney.

Mrs. Horn, Mr. Kollmar and Sorby hope that some similar arrangement may save the Locktown church.

"The exterior was beautifully restored through the efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Evans," Delaware Township residents, about two years ago, Mrs. Horn said.

"The interior is just as classic, with beautiful pews."

There is also a marble slab on the communion table inscribed to the memory of the Rev. David Bateman, the first minister, who died in 1832. He was buried, at his own prior request, under the church floor.

Gave Town Its Name

The church, at least by legend, is believed to have given Locktown its name, Mrs. Horn and Sorby said.

The congregation in 1840 split into opposing factions and padlocked the church door against each other, the story goes. As a result of the dispute, the local tavern keeper painted locks on his sign, and the

nickname "Locktown" was adopted.

It became the official name of the post office there in 1856.

Some historians have said the village took its name from "nearby" Lockatong Creek.

Mrs. Horn, who knows her Delaware creeks, said "they're wrong. The church is on Wickecheoke Creek," as is the covered bridge 2-1/2 miles south of Locktown.

She knows her historic-minded officials, too. She gave Miss Richmond of the Historic Sites Division directions to reach Locktown from Trenton — by way of the road where the covered bridge is located.

Yeaton, meanwhile, gave assurances that even if the church were sold for a residence, "we are interested in its being kept in its lovely state. Nothing bad would be done to it."

A change of use would have to be approved by the township zoning board, he pointed out. "It would definitely not be converted to apartments or commercial use."

He said he has known the structure for 40 years and would not want it harmed.

To retain tax-exempt status, such buildings must be "actively and exclusively used for religious worship," according to state law.

Some Inquiries

A spokesman for the Baptist Convention said this week that "no one from the historical society has called us, although we have had calls from Mr. Kollmar and church members. We would be glad to talk to the historical society."

Mr. Kollmar conceded that "neither the historical society nor my church showed the interest we should have, but then, no one anticipated that the church would be sold."

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Another stone church, the old Kingwood Presbyterian Church on Route 519 north of Baptistown, owned by the Kingwood Cemetery Association, was "assured of preservation, within the past year, by its designation as a state historic site," Sorby reported.

That church, although also not used for regular services, won tax exemption as the property of a non-profit organization and because of its historic site status.

This was gained through extensive research by Mrs. Ray C. Wilson of Pittstown, secretary of the cemetery



CIVIC, CHURCH and historic groups are united to try and save the old Locktown Baptist Church from being sold as a residence. Built in 1819, it is owned by the New Jersey Baptist Convention. A Flemington realtor holds an option on the property but says it's "not on market" now.

Seek To Save Locktown Church

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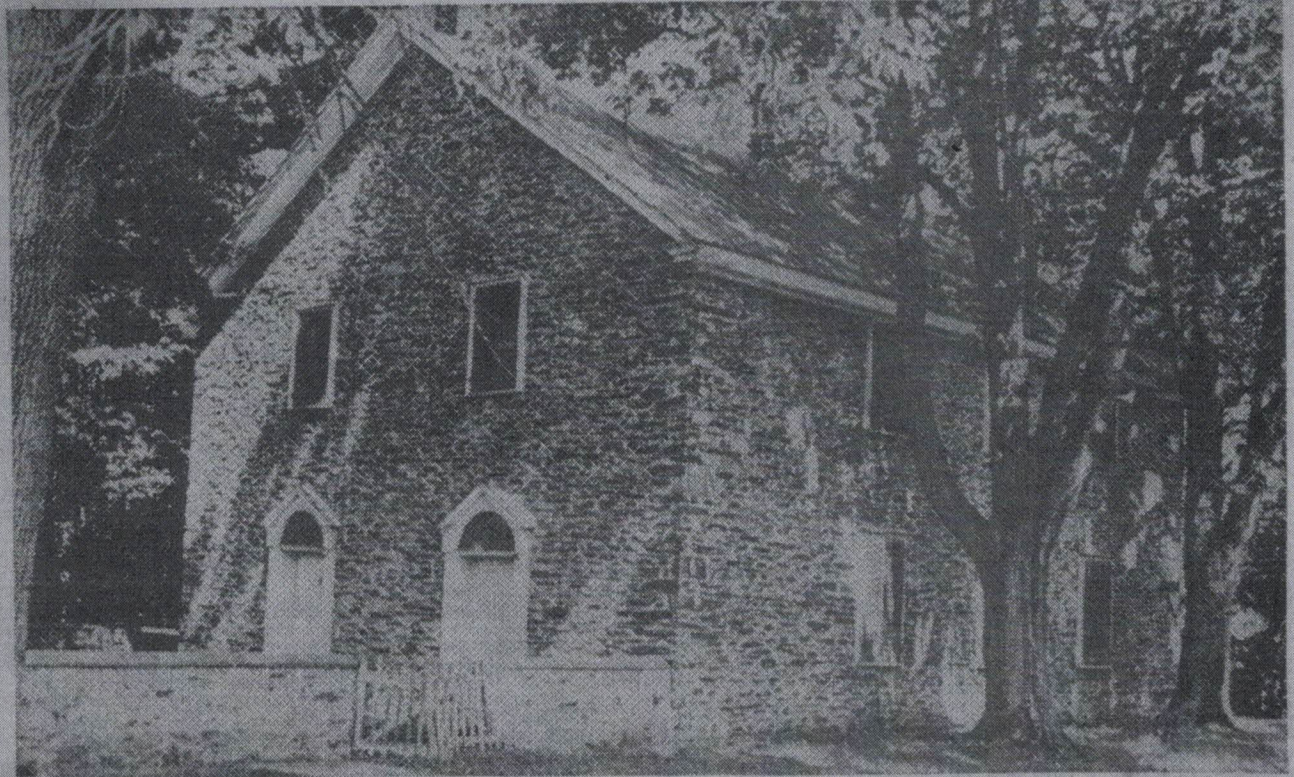
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THE OBJECT of controversy and public concern, the 1819 Locktown Baptist Church will not be converted into a private residence. The Delaware Township Board of Adjustment denied a request for a variance by Flemington Realtor Kenneth Yeaton.

The church was designated an historical site by the state and the federal government is considering making the stone building an historical landmark. Other Baptist congregations will hold services in the church.

12/6/73

Variance Request Rejected, Blocking Sale Of Old Church

The Delaware Township Board of Adjustment has killed efforts by Flemington Realtor Kenneth Yeaton to convert the old Locktown Baptist Church into a private residence.

The unanimous vote by the board to deny a lot size variance Thursday night followed objections by the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey and a vocal, disapproving public.

Yeaton, who held an option to buy the old church from the American Baptist Churches, admitted he was unprepared for the number of objections to his proposed remodeling of the 1819 building.

"When I started I didn't anticipate such opposition," he said.

Yeaton received two surprise pieces of testimony against him. The first was a letter from the State Division of Historical Sites which designated the old church as a state historical landmark.

The letter stated: "On Nov. 20, the Locktown Church was placed in the state register as an Historical Site."

The state has also applied to

In the letter, the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey said: "We do not now desire to sell the property because of deep public concern. However we have entered into a legal contract and we will not break that contract."

The letter went on to say that the sale of the building to Yeaton was subject to the approval of a variance. If a variance is not granted, the building would not be sold, according to the letter.

"We sincerely hope that through the action of the community it will be possible for the contract to be invalidated and we believe this will eventually be the case," the letter read.

Despite its concern to save the building, the ABCNJ told Schenk it does not have the funds to maintain the building as an historic site.

Rev. Kollmar Offer

Board member David Hoff asked who would take the title and assume the responsibility for the upkeep of the church.

Edna Horn said the Locktown Grange hasn't specifically talked about it but the grange

Board member, Floyd Evans, who stepped off the board declaring a conflict of interest, spoke more of the historical ties of the church.

"History would lead you to believe the church played a major part in how Locktown got its name," Evans said. "Many people join with me in feeling that the church has been a very viable part of the Locktown community and can continue to be so."

According to legend, the congregations split into opposing factions and padlocked the church door against each other. As a result of the dispute, the local innkeeper painted locks on his sign and the nickname "Locktown" was adopted.

Yeaton insisted the church had not been used in more than a year and there were no firm guarantees that it would be used and kept up as an asset to the community. But he did concede that the public interest was very strong.

"I had no idea there would be such vocal opposition," he said. "This was not a money making deal. I never intended

Historical Sites to have the church nominated as a federal landmark.

The second surprise was a letter from the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey to Flemington resident John Schenk. Schenk and his wife have been actively involved in trying to preserve the church and prevent its sale.

necessary.

The Rev. Richard Kollmar of the Baptistown Baptist Church said, in a later interview, his church would be willing to take the title.

"We feel it's our responsibility to put the building to good use," Rev. Kollmar said.

"We would be willing to hold a number of services in the building and honestly believe good use would come of it."

The congregations of the Locktown and Baptistown churches were once historically linked.

I simply wanted, like so many others, to have that beautiful building preserved. And I felt I could have done a better job than an outsider coming in to remodel it.

"But I had no way of knowing the deep feeling this was causing. It now seems that there are many people willing to make personal contributions in labor to maintain it.

"I wouldn't even press my application if the owners will turn the title over to someone who would take care of it," he concluded.

We, the members of the Baptistown Baptist Church, ^{The Mother} mission church of the Baptist Church of Locktown, are strongly opposed to you, the American Baptist Convention, attempting to sell this fine old historic church for a private dwelling.

We urge you to reverse your decision and leave this as a place of worship.

Our pastor and we, the congregation, will be glad to hold services periodically in this church to keep it in its present state.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Reeth M. Zdepalski | Robert M. Heigel |
| Ruana Stargis | Reborah W. Hessel |
| Muriel Stike | Leleon J. Ward |
| L. D. Zdepalski | Jerelyne Ward |
| Bennett J. Thronton | Karen K. King |
| Deborah Lynne Wehr | Bonnie Reynolds |
| Newton Bright | Louisa J. Zdepalski |
| Eigen R. Seaman | John Zdepalski |
| Samuel Hessel | Eva Zdepalski |
| Mr + Mrs. Donald Pyne | Edue B. Pister |
| Brenda S. Seaman | Walter Buzynski |
| Ralph Warkowski | Robt Wilson |
| Pat Warkowski | Elizabeth Fink |
| Chas. Lyons | Eleanor McPherson |
| Frank Kalymski | Lynne Emmons |
| Mr + Mrs. S. Pausel | Steve Ballitt |
| Mrs. John Carbay | Capri May 29 |
| Gerinda Cardway | |
| Kenneth V. Vaj | |
| John Finelli | |

Jane Finelli
Gene & Debbie Hale

Betty Miller

Lynne Hill

Sharon Hill

Carol S. Lyons

A. K. Emmons

Martha Emmons

L. A. Zolyski

Leroy W. Sherman

Marion E. Sherman

Wm. H. Scheaf

Anthony Walbert

Walter E. Buczynski

Paul Zolyski

Steve Zolyski

Audrey L. Salenople

Willard Everett

George W. Everett

Stephen Zolyski

Johanna Smith

Margaret Christie

Myrtle Fitzer

Gladys Piell

Walter Piell

Doris B. Stretch

Dick Simon

Sharon Sturges

Baptistown, New Jersey
June 9, 1976

Mr. David N. Poinsett
Supervisor, Historic Sites
Bureau of Parks
PO Box 1420
Trenton, N.J.

Dear Mr. Poinsett:

As you probably know, Edna Horn passed away a few months ago which has saddened many of us who knew her for the vibrant woman she was. It certainly left a great void in many of our hearts.

I had been working closely with her on the saving of the old Locktown Baptist Church in Locktown, N.J., in fact my slides were at your office when the state declared it a Historic site.

My question now is, where can I obtain a copy of the letter naming it in the National Register. It was in the process at the time of her death, and the person going thru her records cannot find a copy, and I am sure she was in possession of one.

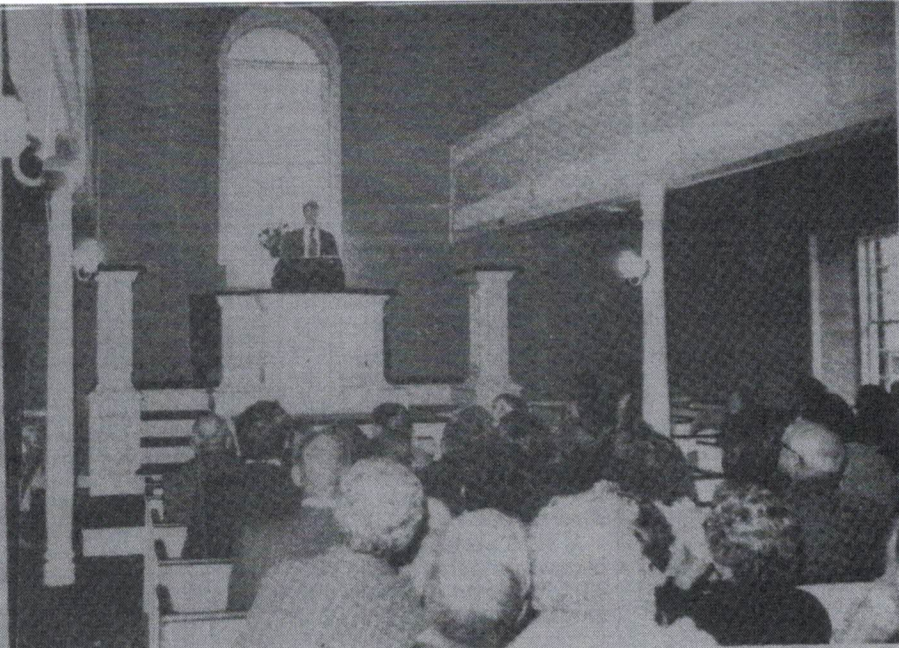
We are in the process of having Open House at Locktown on July 3 and 10th and I am compiling a scrap book with all clippings and data, on the church, including a copy of the State letter. I would like very much to obtain a copy of this letter to add to the book.

Incidentally, one of the members of the Baptistown Baptist Church in Baptistown, the sister church of this old landmark, has published a history of the Baptist Church in Locktown, which will also be available during the Open House period.

Any help you can give me to obtain the needed information will be greatly appreciated. Also, can you tell me how to go about getting a historic marker made for the church.

Cordially yours,

Mildred Wehr



CLASSIC SIMPLICITY of the church defies its years. Pastor preached from a lofty pulpit five steps above the congregation—a good place to thunder out the “d School” discipline.

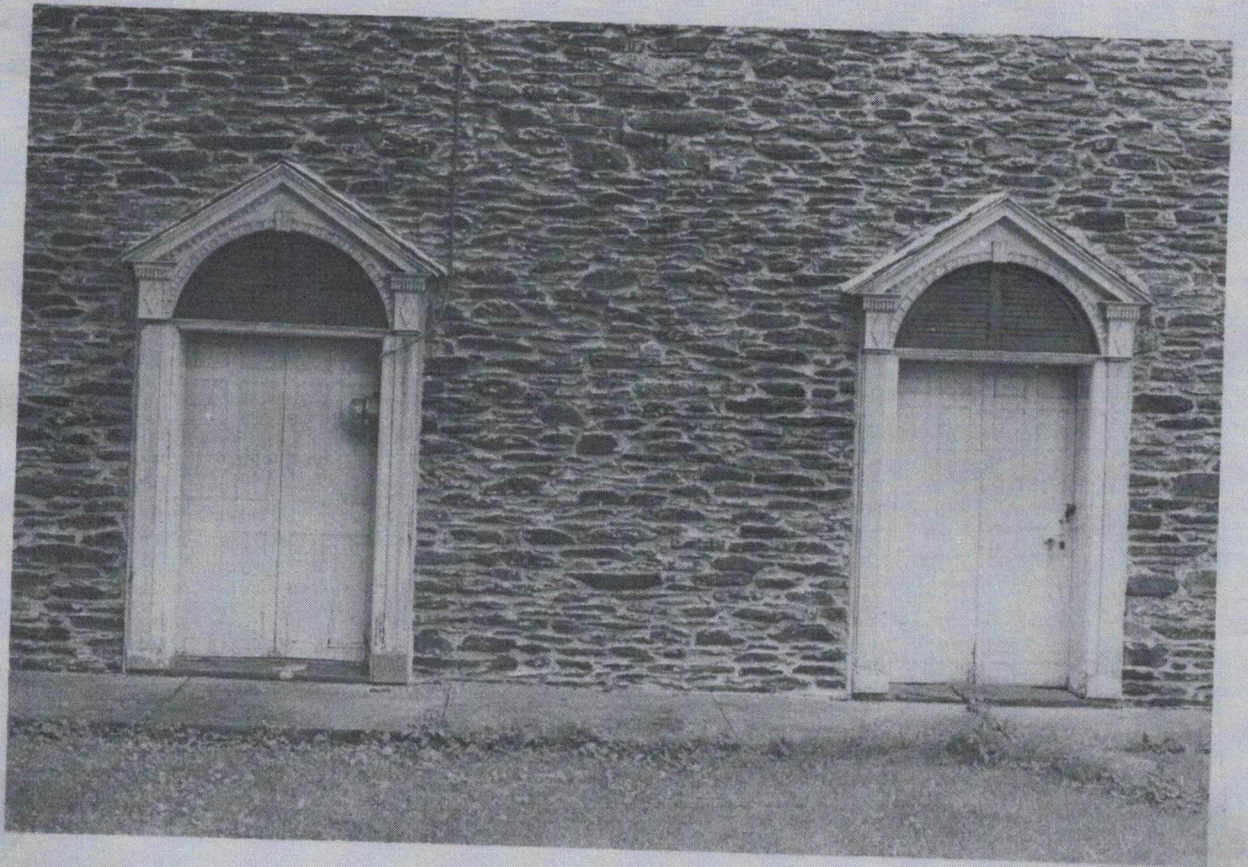
AT, FLEM.



CLEANING EXPENSES rose to a new high of \$6 per building the year the Locktown Baptist Church was built. The Rittenhouse family donated the land and superintended the construction of the building, while church services were being held in the public school. On Oct. 16, 1819 the first service was held in the new building. Right: “Artifacts” found by present day cleaning crews include an old oil lamp, communion vessels and a kerosene can.



Photos by Kurt Herrmann

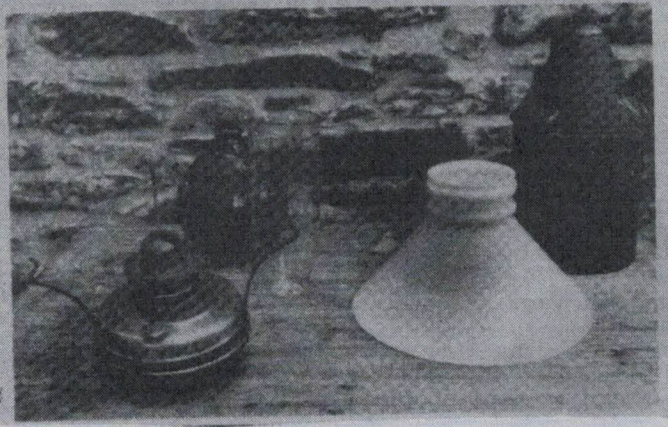






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10/17/74
Photos by Kurt Herrmann



Locktown Church Change Delayed By Technicality

11/13

An application to convert the old Locktown Baptist Church into a residence was delayed last week by the Delaware Township Board of adjustment for failure to observe proper notification procedures.

This marks the second tabling of Kenneth Yeaton's wish to purchase and remodel the historic structure, which dates to 1819.

At the board's September meeting, the 11 o'clock deadline arrived before Yeaton's application could be heard. Some 20 residents who had patiently sat through that three-hour meeting were present again Thursday, and seem prepared to show up at the Nov. 29 session as well.

Yeaton, a Flemington real estate dealer, currently holds an option to purchase the church from the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey. However, he wishes to resell the building, and explained to the board that "a sale would be unlikely" unless the stone structure was converted into a residential or commercial use.

"The owners wish to sell because it has no further use as a church," he said, adding that his firm has restored older houses in the past, and he enjoys doing it.

"I thought I could do it and still keep many of the building's characteristics," Yeaton said.

However, board member David Huff took exception to Yeaton's lack of specific data on what he planned to do with the property.

"You're asking for a variance with insufficient evidence of what can be done there," Huff claimed.

Yeaton explained that he was reluctant to go through the expense of hiring an architect until he was assured the board would approve building on the substandard lot.

The .75 acre lot lies in a 3-acre zone, and lacks sufficient depth to meet township rear lot requirements.

But that discussion became extraneous when a resident questioned Yeaton's notification procedure.

Since the property lies within 200 feet of Kingwood Township, Yeaton notified some property owners within that municipality. However, a check of the statute by Board Attorney J. Douglas Orr revealed that the applicant was also required to notify the Kingwood clerk.

"I think we found a hitch," Dr. Joseph Spaltro, board chairman, quipped.

He advised Yeaton to renotify according to statute, and return at the board's next meeting.

Plan Old Home Day At Locktown Church

2126

That once-a-year day when folks get a peek inside the century-and-a-half-old Locktown Baptist Church is right around the corner.

A 2:30 service on Sunday afternoon will be part of Old Home Day for Kingwood Baptists. The day begins with 11 a.m. worship at the Baptistown Baptist Church. The Rev. Garrett Detwuyler will be the speaker. A Kingwood Baptist pastor in the 1930's, Mr. Detwuyler is now retired and lives in Whiting.

Lunch for some 175 members and visitors will be served by the church women at 12:30. Sorry, this popular event is already sold out. The Rev. Richard Kollmar, pastor at Baptistown Baptist, says that one Sunday School class usually comes back "en masse" each year.

Then the celebrants will move on to the Locktown church at 2:30 p.m. Mr. Kollmar will lead a brief service, leaving lots of time for people to look around the old church, built in 1819.

Interest in the building was revived last year when it was on the verge of being sold as a dwelling. Now it is registered with the state and national agencies as an historic site. Mr. Kollmar hopes it may be possible to begin a regular program of worship services there in the near future.

Hymns will be sung to guitar music accompaniment at the afternoon service, since the church has no piano or organ. It does retain, however, the pews and original pulpit furniture.

Work crews of Baptistown Baptists getting the church cleaned up for Old Home Day found some old oil lamps, a kerosene can and a wine pitcher and cup used in earlier times. These treasures of the past have been preserved for future use.

"The building is exactly as it was when it was last used," Mr. Kollmar says. Regular services were discontinued about five years ago, he said.

Steve Zdepski, of Milford and a deacon at Baptistown Baptist, has put together history of the Locktown church and it will be for sale on Sunday.

The church became the property of the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey a few years ago when it was placed in the organization's hands by the last surviving trustee.

Locktown Baptist Church Now In National Register

March 19
1974

Efforts to preserve the Locktown Baptist Church were strengthened this week with an announcement from the National Parks Service that the 1819 stone structure has been added to the National Register of Historic Places.

The federal agency reported this to the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey and to David Poinsett, state supervisor of historic sites. The church already has a state designation as an historic site.

That was obtained last year when Delaware Township citizens and members of the Baptistown Baptist Church in neighboring Kingwood Township joined in a campaign to save the church from possible sale to private interests.

The Delaware Township Zoning Board of Adjustment last Nov. 29 denied a lot size variance sought by Flemington Realtor Kenneth Yeaton, who had plans to convert it into a residence. Yeaton said he, too, wanted the structure preserved but pointed out it has not been used as a church for several years and needs to be maintained by an owner aware of its historic value.

The Rev. Richard Kollmar of the Baptistown Baptist Church reports that he and his congregation are willing to form work parties to spruce up the interior of the church. The exterior was repointed and repainted about three years ago by residents

of Locktown, and the Locktown Grange has been taking care of the nearby burial ground since 1967.

Mr. Kollmar also said he would be glad to conduct services in the church.

The Locktown church was an offshoot of the Baptistown congregation in the early 19th Century. A split between two Baptist factions, according to legend, gave Locktown its name when one group padlocked the other out of the building.

The American Baptist Churches of New Jersey, an organization based in East Orange, retains ownership of the building and has indicated it would be willing to transfer title to a responsible owner, and the Baptistown Baptist Church has shown in-

terest in that.

The two-story building is on a tree-shaded lot in the heart of the village of Locktown. The pews are intact, and a marble slab on the communion table is inscribed to the memory of the Rev. David Bateman, the first pastor, who is buried beneath the church floor.

State and now federal officials consider it a classic example of simple stone church architecture.

The state and national designations mean only that government projects cannot encroach upon the building. However, they give added force to arguments of the church's supporters that it should be saved and used for its original purpose.



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State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

DIVISION OF PARKS AND FORESTRY
Historic Sites Section

PLEASE ADDRESS REPLY TO
BUREAU OF PARKS
P. O. BOX 1420
TRENTON, N. J. 08625

March 19, 1974

American Baptist Churches of New Jersey
161 Freeway Drive, East
East Orange
NJ

attn: Mrs. Edith Armvrecht

Dear Mrs. Armvrecht:

We are pleased to attach a copy of correspondence from the National Park Service notifying the State Preservation Officer of New Jersey that the Locktown Baptist Church in Delaware Township has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

We are also attaching a pamphlet explaining the National Register program.

Please accept our sincere congratulations on receiving this honor.

Sincerely,

David N. Poinsett MK

David N. Poinsett
Supervisor, Historic Sites

att: copy of NPS corresp.
Nat. Reg. brochure
cc: Eina Horn
Locktown Grange

A R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS the Old School Baptist Church in Locktown, N. J. has been a famous landmark in our village, and, in fact, the village of Locktown received its name because of an unusual problem the Church faced many years ago,, and

WHEREAS the Church, built in 1819, was erected to honor God, and the members of that Church thought very highly of their first pastor and, at his request, buried him under the pulpit of their Church, and

WHEREAS the building was just recently restored and redecorated and much time and money has been given by local residents to maintain the building and surrounding area, and also the members of the Locktown Grange, many years ago, have restored the cemetery connected with the Church, and since that time have maintained this cemetery, and

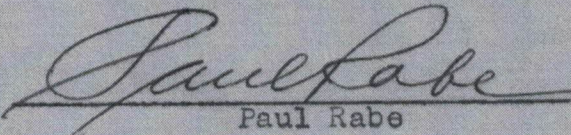
WHEREAS changing the use of the Church into a private dwelling would not only destroy the building, but would also deprive the present and future citizens from enjoying a masterpiece of our Country's history!

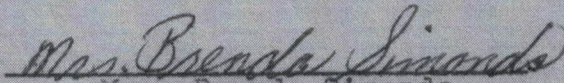
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we the members of Locktown Grange firmly agree that The Old School Baptist Church be left in its present state and that the use of the building be restricted to activities related to its original purpose!

Adopted at the Regular Meeting of Locktown Grange #88
on Friday, July 20, 1973.



S E A L


Paul Rabe, Master,


Mrs. Brenda Simonds, Secretary,
R. D. 2, Box 226A, Flemington, N.J. 08822



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

lugg

The Director of the National Park Service

Ronald H. Walker

is pleased to inform you that the historic property listed on the enclosed sheet has been nominated by the State Historic Preservation Officer responsible for your State's implementation of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, P.L. 89-665 (80 Stat. 915), as amended. It has accordingly been entered in the National Register of Historic Places. A leaflet explaining the National Register is enclosed for your information and convenience.

Enclosures

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE NEW JERSEY

Date Entered FEB 15 1974

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
All Saints' Memorial Church in the Highlands of Navesink Complex	Navesink Monmouth County
Condit, Stephen, House	Parsippany-Troy Hills Township Morris County
Locktown Baptist Church	Locktown (Delaware Twp.) Hunterdon County

COPY OF CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION

Also Notified

Hon. Clifford P. Case
Hon. Harrison Williams, Jr.
Hon. James J. Howard
Hon. Peter H.B. Frelinghuysen
Hon. Joseph J. Maraziti



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

DIVISION OF PARKS AND FORESTS
Historic Sites Section

PLEASE ADDRESS REPLY TO
BUREAU OF PARKS
P. O. BOX 1420
TRENTON, N. J. 08625

November 20, 1973

American Baptist Churches of New Jersey
161 Freeway Drive, East
East Orange
NJ

attn: Mrs. Edith Armvrecht

Dear Mrs. Armvrecht:

We are pleased to inform you that at the November 9, 1973 meeting of the State Review Committee for Historic Sites, the Locktown Baptist Church and Cemetery State and National Register Nomination was favorably received.

The Commissioner is, therefore, sending this application to the National Park Service in Washington, D.C. with a request that it be favorably received. We will, of course, notify you as soon as we receive word from the National Park Service as to its determination on this application.

Congratulations on the approval by the State Review Committee and the subsequent entering of the property on the State Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely,

David N. Poinsett /DK

David N. Poinsett
Supervisor, Historic Sites

cc: Edna Horn
Locktown Grange

Entered in the State Register of Historic Places on November 20, 1973.

Annual Service Recalls Locktown Church's Past

What surely must be one of the most elegant churches in Hunterdon was opened to public view Sunday, for a once a year service.

A number of Hunterdon Baptists, including the Rev. Richard Kollmar, pastor of the Baptistown church, feel the century and a half old Locktown Baptist Church can have a new lease on life and its own congregation in the "near future."

Preaching a brief sermon at Old Home Day on Sunday, Mr. Kollmar touched on the one of the reasons why the church "died" in Locktown. The "Old School" Baptists, strict believers in predestination, were not missionary. Everything was pre-ordained; cut and dried, so to speak. Where there is no action, Mr. Kollmar said, the church dies as it did at Locktown.

Vivid History

The church's history, and that of its sister church in Baptistown, is vividly retold in a pamphlet put together for this year's annual get-together by Stephen Zdepski. An elder in the Baptistown church, Zdepski and his wife were missionaries to Alaska from 1943 to 1952.

The attempt to sell the Locktown Baptist Church for use as a private residence in 1973 sparked Zdepski's desire to learn more about the Baptists in Kingwood, he recounts in the preface.

"The congregations of Kingwood and Locktown were actually one congregation, with many of the original members on both church rolls, and services were held alternately in the two churches," Zdepski says in his history. The first meetinghouse in Locktown, built in 1750, was a 30 x 38 foot log cabin, located near the present site.

Interest in missions, in Sunday School and in Bible societies had been gaining steadily in New Jersey

churches since the early 1800's, the writer continues. But a large segment of the membership opposed this as being counter to Baptist traditional thought—and for being too costly. The "Old School" called this new thrust of Christian activity "human inventions and unscriptural things."

They were worried, too, that some might get into heaven who had not been pre-ordained or elected to this high position by predestination. The "Old School" ministers no longer invited strangers to join their church. There were only 11 baptisms recorded in the 70 years following the church's separation in 1839 from its Baptistown half and the church closed its doors in 1862.

He finally got the money in 1846.

By 1944, membership at Locktown had declined to five, the history relates. Membership in all "Old School" churches in the area was similarly small, so the Locktown congregation consisted, from time to time, of members from states as far away as the Carolinas.

In 1951 the last baptism was performed; in 1962, the last service was held. Five years later, Howard Johnson, the last remaining trustee today at 99, wrote in the minute book, "I locked the door with sorrow forever."

Later Johnson turned the building over to the New Jersey Baptist Association, who, feeling there was no interest in its revival as a church, put it up for sale in 1973.

This action unleashed a storm of disapproval, and interested persons succeeded in getting the church declared an historical site by state and national registries. They also got together and repointed the exterior and silicined the surface to preserve the ancient stones. The grounds were kept up. All that is lacking today is are regular services, a congregation and a pastor.

Church Filled

Churchgoers, who filled the main floor pews at Sunday's afternoon service, sang hymns accompanied by two guitars. Since "Old School" didn't go along with instrumental music at services, there is no piano or organ. Mr. Kollmar noted that "we've taken a bit of license to add music to the service."

Mr. Kollmar says lots of man hours—about 300, he estimates—and a little paint will see the old church fully restored for use. There are no church school rooms—the "Old School" didn't believe in them either. A parking lot and rest room facilities would be needed, too, if regular services were to be revived.

Meanwhile, all the elegance of American Federal Classicism remains much as it was in 1819 when the Locktown Baptist Church was built and launched on its often stormy, sometimes sad,



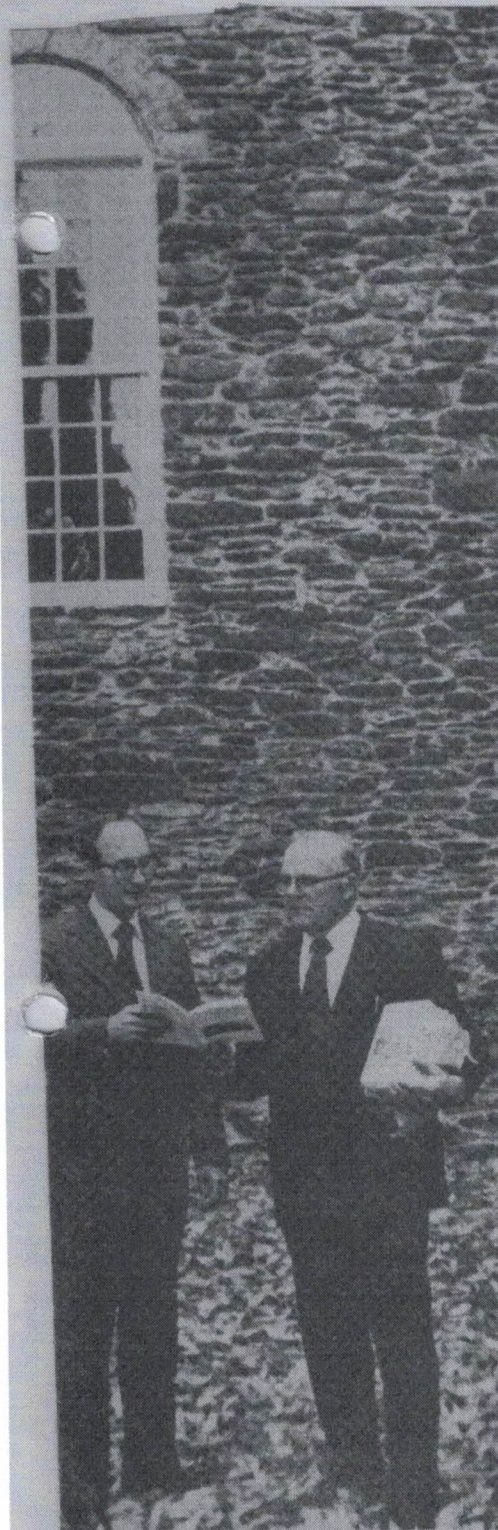
"Old School" Baptists gained the upper hand after the two churches were persuaded to withdraw from the Philadelphia Baptist Association in 1835. The elder, who had liberal leanings, was dismissed.

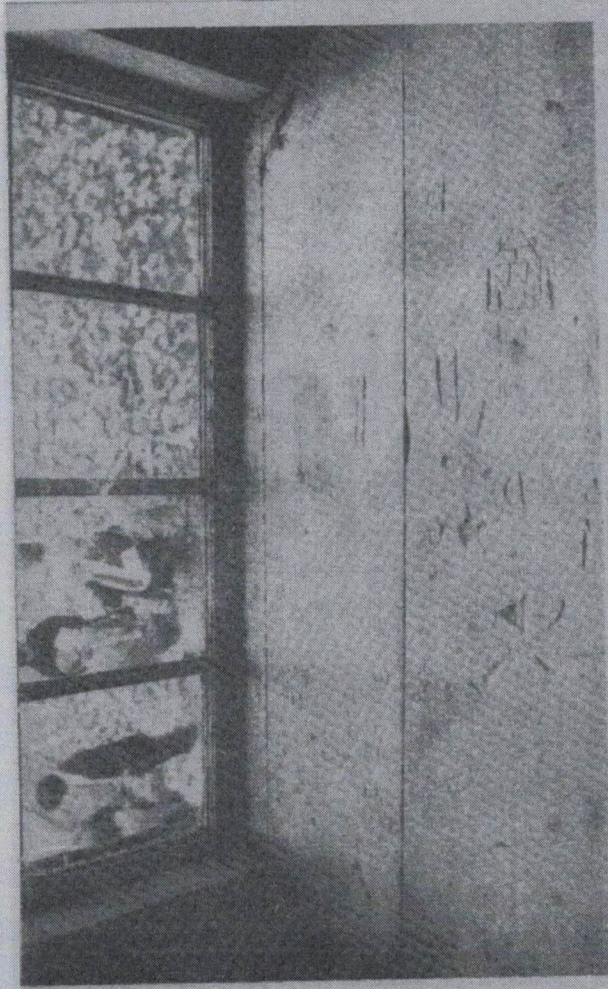
Locked Out

The following Sunday, he and his followers found the stone church padlocked to keep them out. Legend says the local tavern keeper painted a picture of a large lock and on the door of his taproom. The village got the name Locktown because of the church quarrel and it bears the name to this day.

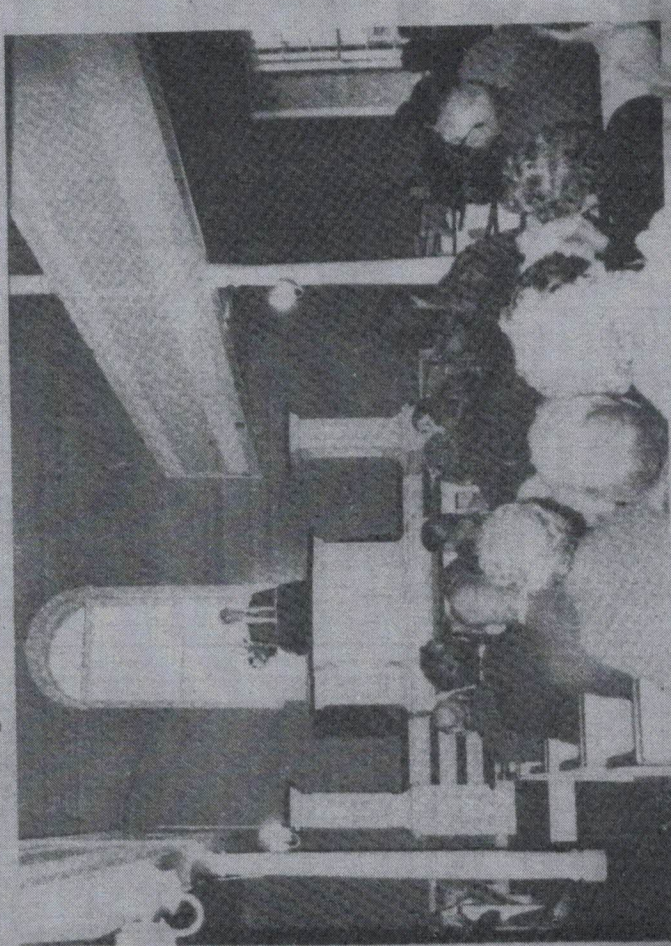
The liberal elder was forced to bring suit against the church to recover his back wages—some \$171—

STORY prepared by Stephen Zdepski, sale at \$2 a copy. The Rev. Richard Kollmar, pastor of Baptistown Baptist Church, in Baptistown, N.J. Church's past contains stormy happenings and accounts for the name of the village.





ANTIQUE GRAFFITI decorates a deep window sill upstairs in the stone church. Most of the furnishings are original.



CLASSIC SIMPLICITY of the church defies its years. Pastor preached from a lofty pulpit five steps above the congregation—a good place to thunder out the "Old School" discipline.



FIRST PASTOR is buried beneath the church and his "gravestone" is built into the communion table. Churchgoers get to see the inside of Locktown Baptist only once a year, on Old Home Day.

WELCOME TO LOCKTOWN BAPTIST CHURCH

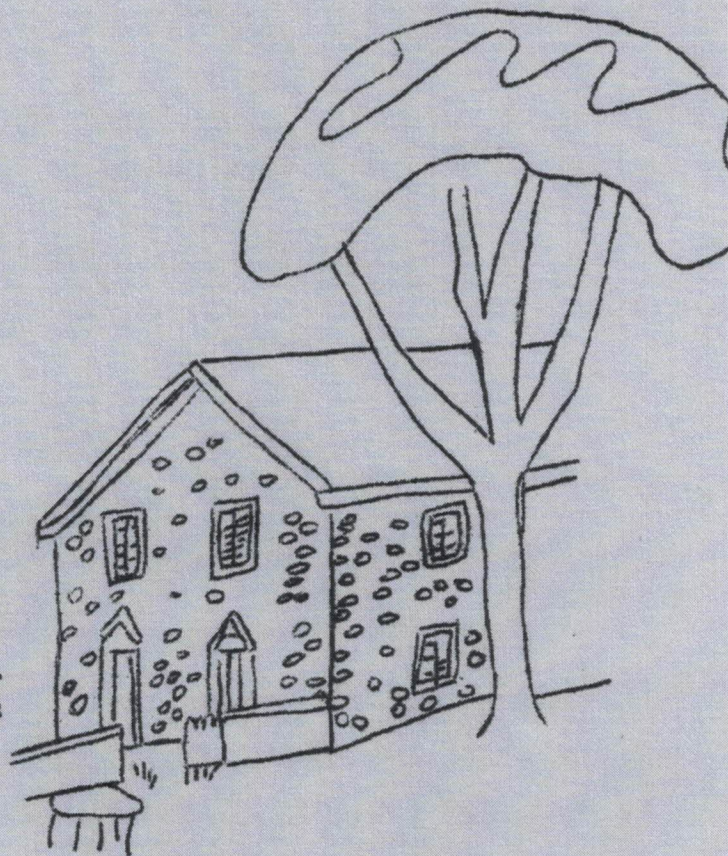
Buried in a church? Yes, a minister is buried under the pulpit of this century-old church!

Built in 1819, this well preserved sanctuary was the place Elder David Bateman requested he be laid to rest.

Old School Baptists--New School Baptists--Locking the church doors--Who placed the padlock on the church doors one Sunday morning in 1835?

That's how Locktown got its name!

Read about the local tavern keeper who painted a lock on the door of his inn.



Did you know that famed Brigadier General Daniel Bray was a member of this church?

Did you know the descendants of the group that was locked out that eventful Sunday morning in 1835 are the people who saved this historic site from becoming a private dwelling?

Did you know this famous old church has been designated not only as a State Historic Site but as a National one as well?

All this and much more makes fascinating reading of a church and its convictions, beliefs, growth, and eventful death in a comprehensive book recently published by Stephen Zdepski of the Baptistown Baptist Church, a sister church and the first Baptist church in Hunterdon County.

The book, "Baptists in Kingwood, New Jersey," is on sale at cost in the rear of this building.

HYMN SING

LOCKTOWN BAPTIST
CHURCH

SUNDAY EVENING, MAY 30, 1976

7:30

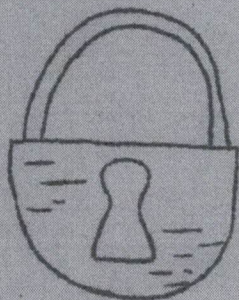


BICENTENNIAL OPEN HOUSE

JULY 3 AND 10 10 A.M. TO 4 P.M.

GUIDED TOURS OF HISTORIC CHURCH AND CEMETERY

LEARN HOW LOCKTOWN GOT IT'S NAME FROM THIS FAMOUS OLD CHURCH



SPONSORED BY THE BAPTISTOWN BAPTIST CHURCH

WELCOME TO LOCKTOWN BAPTIST CHURCH

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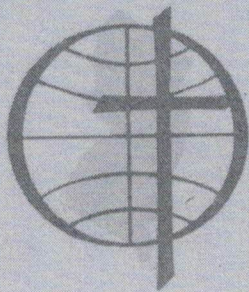
Did you know that famed Brigadier General Daniel Bray was a member of this church?

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AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF NEW JERSEY

161 FREEWAY DRIVE EAST, EAST ORANGE, NEW JERSEY 07018

(201) 676-5015

Executive Minister, GEORGE D. YOUNGER

July 23, 1985

MEMO

To: All Concerned

From: George D. Younger, Executive Minister

Subject: Locktown Baptist Church

At the request of Floyd Evans, a TWA pilot who is a member of the Flemington Baptist Church, I met on Wednesday, July 17, 1985 with a group of concerned people from the Locktown area and the Baptistown and Flemington churches. The group present included the following:

- Locktown Grange - Paul Rabe, Grand Master; Mary and Bob Schenck
- First Baptist Church, Baptistown - Ruth and Stephen Zdepski, and Mildred K. Wehr
- Flemington Baptist Church - Dr. Edwin H. Tuller
- Then neighbors - Floyd and Diane Evans, Denise Evans (their daughter)
- Mr. & Mrs. Elmer Walker (next door neighbors) and Mr. & Mrs. E. Milton Smith (former mayor, lives across the road)

The group asked me for the circumstances of the option given to Robert J. Hughes. I explained that it was for 18 months, but that there were five conditions that would be necessary in order to permit his converting it into a residence:

- a. Soil log and perc tests that meet local and state standards
- b. Availability of a potable water supply
- c. Permit to construct an individual sewerage treatment system at less than prohibitive cost
- d. Determining whether human remains are buried on site and obtaining permits for removal of same and interment at a different location
- e. Variances from the applicable provision of township ordinances (he hopes to acquire "land contiguous to the subject property so as to make the same conform as much as is possible with zoning requirements")

The Locktown Grange had discussed the issue at its picnic and voted to enter into a program of maintenance and an activities program that would make regular use of the church property. The Grange has no money, but it would be willing to make this a historic project and to assist in soliciting funds.

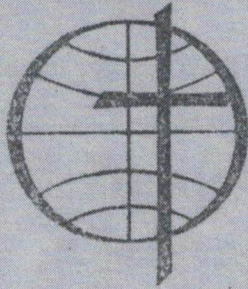
Contact has been made with two historical groups in Hunterdon County -- Pralls Billa Mill Association and the Hunterdon County Historical Society (there is also a Kingwood Historical Society), neither of which has any interest in acquiring the property or taking care of it.

Ed Tuller spoke on behalf of the Flemington Baptist Church and said that both he personally and the church had an interest in contributing programs that would make use of the property. The representatives from First Baptist Church of Baptistown said their congregation had a limited interest in the possibility of using the property.

All agreed that the Grange proposal offered great hope for starting to improve the physical condition of the property and seeing that it was used on a more regular basis. It was felt that a set of maintenance projects should be outlined, beginning with repair of the roof and probably continuing to redecorating the inside, where the walls are seriously peeling and have not been repainted in a long time. Bob Schenck had agreed to coordinate the Grange's effort. Ed Tuller volunteered to assist in coordinating administrative details and the involvement of groups outside the Locktown community.

The following persons volunteered to assist as a committee to draw up proposals and begin to put them into effect: Bob Schenck, Mary Schenck, Stephen Zdepski, Mildred Wehr, Milton Smith, Floyd Evans; Edwin Tuller. I agreed that I would return on Thursday, August 1, 1985 when we would hold another meeting at 7:30 p.m. In the meantime Stephen Zdepski is going to work on getting an estimate for roof repairs from a roofer.

GDY:pf



AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF NEW JERSEY

161 FREEWAY DRIVE EAST, EAST ORANGE, NEW JERSEY 07018

(201) 676-5015

Executive Minister GEORGE D. YOUNGER

MEMO

August 2, 1985

To: All Concerned

From: George D. Younger, Executive Minister

Subject: Locktown Baptist Church

A second meeting on the future of the Locktown Church building was held on Thursday, August 1, 1985 in the Locktown Grange. Although the meeting had been originally scheduled for a smaller committee, some new participants attended as well as those who had been present on July 17. Paul Rabe provided coffee and Mary Schenck brought two delicious cakes. The group present included the following:

Locktown Grange - Paul Rabe, Bob, Mary and Denise Schenck; Robert Daves
Baptistown Baptist Church - Stephen and Ruth Zdepski
Flemington Baptist Church - Ed Tuller
Neighbors - Denise Evans, Elizabeth Magnier, E. Milton Smith, Mary Smith,
Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Walker, Ed and Sandra Walker
American Baptist Churches of New Jersey - George Younger, Walter Hickey

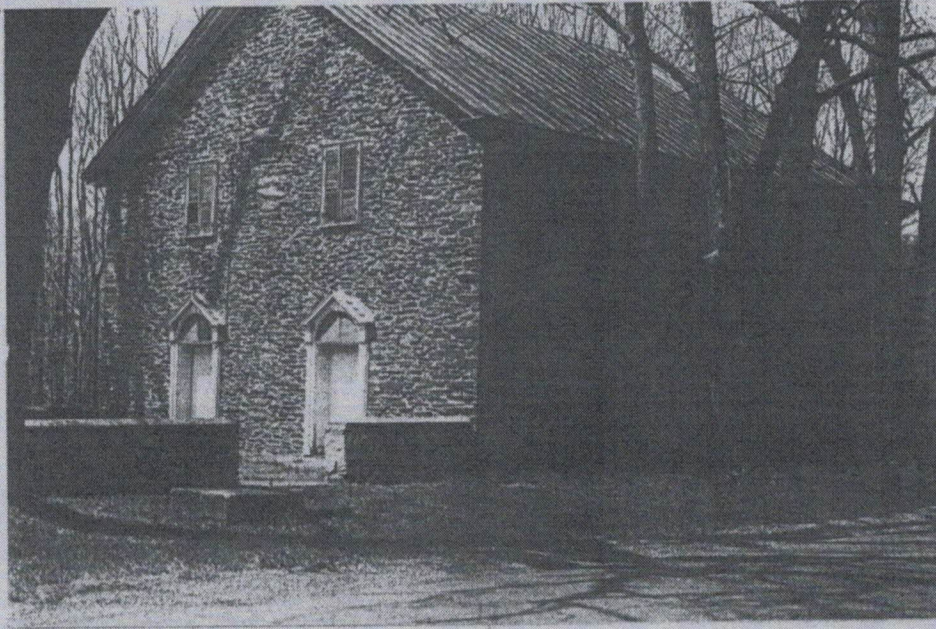
The first part of the meeting was taken up with questions about the option that ABCNJ has granted to Robert J. Hughes, 17 Mine Street, Flemington. It is for 18 months at a purchase price of \$ 35,000. The option will expire on August 1, 1986.

Steve Zdepski reported on his inspection of the property with Frank Dalrymple. All that is needed on the present metal roof is repair with sheet metal from underneath at an estimated cost of \$ 500 for materials, scaffold and labor. ABCNJ is willing to have this work done as soon as possible. There is also either dry rot or termites in the beams and floor joists at the back of the church. ABCNJ will have a termite inspection (and treatment, if necessary). Other physical improvements would need to wait until the matter of the option is settled. These could include: redecoration of interior, repair of floor at back of church, repair of soffits (underside of cornice), repair of shutters, toilet and water facilities, more adequate heating, replacement of roof.

I stressed that there were three related issues that would need to be addressed in order for the future of the Locktown Church to be clear: (1) kinds of use that could be developed, (2) physical improvements on a long-range plan, and raising funds to pay for them, and (3) an organizational arrangement to maintain and improve the property, as well as to schedule its use. Questions were raised about the willingness of ABCNJ to sell the property to a community group. I replied that we would be willing either to sell it or to remain the owner, if there was a community-based group willing to take up the questions of use and long-term maintenance and restoration. I will send names of fund sources.

The following kinds of program were suggested: weddings, Grange meetings, meetings of other groups (ex: Delaware Twp. Historical Society), church services, fund-raising events like craft shows and bake sales.

Committee Meeting - Tuesday, August 13, 1985 at 7:30 pm, Locktown Grange
Bob Schenck, chair; Denise or Floyd Evans, Paul Rabe, Mary Schenck, Ed Tuller,
Ed Walker, Sandra Walker, Steve Zdepski



THE
BAPTIST CHURCH
OF
KINGWOOD
AT
LOCKTOWN N.J.

OPEN HOUSE

SUNDAY, MAY 4, 1986

The Agenda

WORDS OF WELCOME - Master of Ceremonies

SOLO - Elmer Walker

CONGREGATIONAL SINGING -

THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH - Steve Zdepski

COMMENTARY - Dr. George D. Younger - American Baptist Churches
of New Jersey

MUSICAL SELECTIONS - Members of the Flemington Baptist Church

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY - Dennis Burkland

SOLO - David VanNess

COMMENTARY - Marfy Goodspeed, Friends of the
Locktown Stone Church

MUSICAL SELECTIONS - Members of the Flemington Baptist Church

CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

REFRESHMENTS -

Locktown Grange

Johanna Dairy Farms

Sale Of Locktown Church Will Proceed, Buyer Says

By Ruth Klastow

Despite community efforts to prevent the sale of the 167-year-old Locktown Baptist Church, a Flemington man plans to exercise his option to buy the building.

Robert Hughes had until Aug. 1 to exercise his option to buy and said this week that he had notified the American Baptist Convention in East Orange, owners of the building, of his intention to go ahead with the purchase.

He said the attorney for the convention is preparing the necessary documents and he is prepared to close on the property as soon as the paperwork is ready.

Hughes plans to convert the church into a residence and plans to live there.

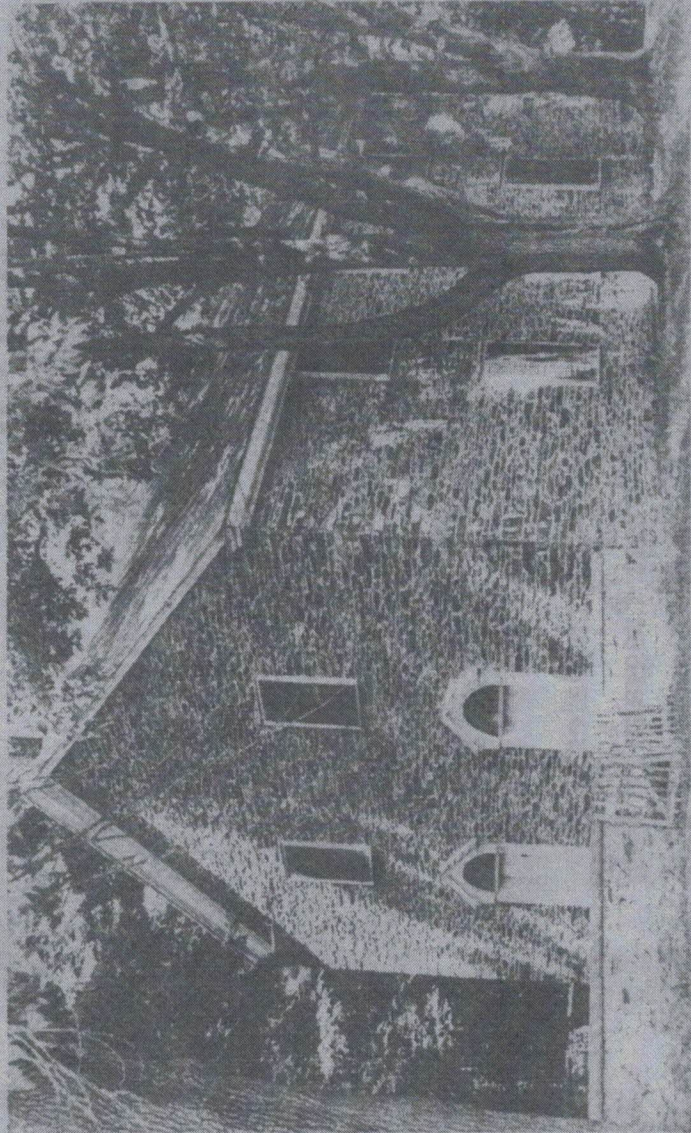
Condemnation Rejected

A community group known as Friends of the Locktown Stone Church hoped to block the sale in order to preserve the old church as a historic site.

The township committee was asked to help, but voted last month not to resort to condemnation proceedings to acquire the church. Mayor James Horn said the committee was willing to help the group, but was not interested in acquiring the building.

Hughes said this week that his plans to convert the church to a residence "have not varied one bit."

He said he will renovate only the building's interior, leaving the stone exterior intact.



LOCKTOWN CHURCH is a step closer to being converted to a residence. A Flemington man has informed the owners that he intends to exercise his option to buy the 167-year-old building in Delaware Township — a plan that has sparked controversy among those who want it to remain as is.

"I recognize the building's historical significance," Hughes said. "I'm not planning to do anything strange to the building."

Hughes also said he will honor his agreement with the township to open the church on certain days for pub-

lic tours and will not to disturb the burial site of the late Rev. David Bateman, who is buried beneath the church floor.

The church was built in 1819 on the site of a 1750 log meeting house and was an offshoot of the Baptis-

town Baptist Church, which was founded in 1745.

The church has not been used regularly by a congregation since the early part of this century, although special services and meetings have been held there occasionally over the years.

Door Still Open To Acquisition, Committee Indicates

Delaware Rules Out 'Condemning' Old Church

By Ruth Klastow
 Delaware Township Committee voted unanimously Monday not to attempt to acquire the 167-year-old Locktown Baptist Church by condemnation, contrary to a recommendation by the township attorney.

And while it didn't close the door to another method of acquiring the property, the committee met in executive session following the two-hour special meeting to give township Attorney Robert Hornby a chance to explain why he thought the committee should have resorted to condemnation proceedings to acquire the building.

"I'd rather discuss this in executive session so as not to educate the opposition," Hornby said, apparently referring to Robert Hughes, a Flemington resident who has an option to buy the church and wants to convert it to a residence.

Hughes has until Aug. 1 to exercise that option with the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey in East Orange.

A group of township residents seeking to block the sale and preserve the old church has asked for the committee's help. Despite their concern, however, the special meeting drew a sparse crowd of only a half-dozen.

In an attempt to offer the group some assistance, the committee acting on Hornby's recommendation — adopted a resolution July 3 informing the state Department of Environmental Protection of its interest in acquiring the church in

order to get the DEP to inspect the property to determine whether it would be eligible for Green Acres funding. Committee members cautioned at the time, however, that the township had no intention of purchasing it.

Hornby, before the vote not to condemn the property, said that a project officer from the Green Acres had program inspected the church and told him the property would qualify for Green Acres funding. He said the township would also be eligible for a 20-year loan at 2 percent interest from the state, and that any money raised by the township would be matched by the state.

Hornby told the committee the township had two options — to buy the property outright or condemn it, adding that "I happen to have a letter drafted to begin the condemnation process."

The mayor, however, said he was opposed to instituting condemnation proceedings, calling it an "ungentlemanly way to do something."

"I prefer to negotiate with the owner of the property," he said. Horn added that even if the committee decided to go ahead and purchase the property, it does not have the money available.

"We already have a lean budget," Horn said, noting that there is only \$62,000 in the capital improvement fund, with \$42,000 of that earmarked for the road department. The \$20,000 left is for "emergencies," he added.

"While I would like to save the church, I'm not willing to play Rus-

sian roulette with the taxpayers' only nest eggs," he said.

Horn also delivered a message from Committeewoman Virginia Hook who was unable to attend Monday's meeting. He said Ms. Hook wants people to know that she is also opposed to the idea of acquiring the property through condemnation.

He said both he and Ms. Hook have received phone calls from people who were disturbed that the committee was considering condemnation as an option.

"Ms. Hook believes that instituting condemnation proceedings would create the feeling of a police state. It could change the quality of life here in Delaware Township," Horn said.

Committeeman Richard Brozman suggested that if the committee wants to acquire the property it should continue to negotiate with the owner, despite Hughes' purchase option.

"I wouldn't let the fact that there is an option on the property discourage us," Brozman said. "We should just go ahead and make them an offer."

Brozman added that he is disturbed that the citizens group that wants to save the church has not responded to the committee's request for an outline of its plans relating to fund-raising or what it plans to do with the church.

"You're asking the township to underwrite a loan without showing us your plans," he told Robert Skank, who represented the citizen's group at Monday's meeting. "You haven't done what we've asked."

"And if we go ahead and purchase the property with our own money, I'm not sure where we would come on the Green Acres' priority list," Horn added.

Skank said about eight or 10 people make up the "nucleus" of the group, but that it includes about 10 other "interested people."

He said the group has done some "limited fund-raising" and is in the process of forming a corporation.

He said would have a written outline of its plans to the committee by the weekend.

"We are dedicated to following through with our plans," Skank said.

1986

Flemington Man Buys Locktown Church

A Flemington man is now the owner, for \$35,000, of the 167-year-old Locktown Baptist Church.

Robert Hughes closed on the property last week and said his "plans are still intact" to convert the church into a private residence.

Hughes purchased the church from the American Baptist Convention in East Orange, which he says had been trying to sell the property for years.

The church has not been used regularly by a congregation for more than 50 years.

Hughes' plans to purchase the building resulted in the formation of a community group known as Friends of the Locktown Stone Church which had hoped to block the sale in order to preserve the building as an historic site.

The township committee was asked to help, but voted in July not to resort to condemnation proceedings to acquire the church. It still offered to help the group, but is not interested in trying to buy the building from Hughes.

Hughes has said he is agreeable to opening the church on certain

days for public tours, but so far "no one's approached me."

He doesn't want to alter the stone exterior of the church, "unless code requirements make it absolutely necessary" and will not disturb the burial site of the Rev. David Bateman, who is buried beneath the church floor.

Hughes plans to spend about \$200,000 renovating the 3,600-square-foot interior into a residence for his wife and three daughters, ages 5, 3 and 1.

"The impact on the township will be nothing but positive," he said, adding that the property "has tremendous potential."

He's not sure when he'll begin renovations, but first must get approval for a change of use from the township board of adjustment. He foresees no problem, he says, because the area is zoned residential.

The church was built in 1819 on the site of a 1750 log meeting house and was an offshoot of the Baptistown Baptist Church, which was founded in 1745.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1993



Staff Photo by Walt Lankenau

LOCKTOWN STONE CHURCH, historic stone houses and other sites in the Delaware Township village of Locktown will be featured in a house tour Sept. 25 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Making plans for the tour, which is sponsored by the Hunterdon County Museum Association, are Helen Gergar (left) and Stephanie Stevens. Tickets are \$10. For information or to order tickets, call 735-4101 or 788-1296.

FRIENDS OF THE LOCKTOWN STONE CHURCH, INC.

Officers and Trustees

Robert J. Schenck, President
Floyd L. Evans, Jr., Vice President
Sandra K. Walker, Treasurer
Bridget C. Waverka, Secretary

Trustees

Richard M. Conley
Marfy Goodspeed
Paul Rabe
E. Milton Smith
Edward E. Walker
Stephen Zdepski

December 1986

Dear Friend of the Locktown Stone Church:

As the end of 1986 approaches, you are probably receiving many requests from worthy organizations seeking a donation from you for the reason that any such donation can be deducted for federal income tax purposes as long as it is made before December 31, 1986. We would like you to think very seriously about making such a gift to our organization before the end of 1986, even if you are only able to send us \$5.00, \$10.00 or \$25.00. If you are able to send us a larger donation, we would be extremely grateful.

Friends of the Locktown Stone Church, Inc. is a non-profit corporation formed this year to attempt to save the old stone church in the village of Locktown. The church is on the National Register of Historic Sites and has been an integral part of the Locktown community since 1819. Not only is the church structure one of the best-preserved examples of an important architectural style in the whole region, but also the remains of the first minister of the church are buried under the floor of the chapel.

Unfortunately, the Baptist Church, which had owned this structure in one form or another since the early 1800's, decided to sell the building and grounds to a private individual this year for the sum of \$35,000. We were very surprised and disappointed that the Baptist Church decided to convey title to this property, and we are distressed to learn that the new owner intends to convert the historic building into a personal residence.

Handwritten:
9/26-6/93

Friends of the Locktown Stone Church, Inc. - 2 - December 1986

Friends of the Locktown Stone Church, Inc. is interested in taking whatever measures are appropriate to attempt to save the church from severe modification by a private owner. We are also hopeful that there may still be ways that ownership can be conveyed to our group, or to Delaware Township or some other public entity, so that the church can be maintained for the benefit of generations to come.

If you are in a position to contribute to us financially, please do so at your earliest convenience. As we have noted above, contributions made before the end of 1986 will be deductible for federal income tax purposes, so that the contribution you make can be partially recouped when your federal taxes are paid.

We thank you for any help you can give us.

Very truly yours,

R. J. Schenck / (B)

Robert J. Schenck

Delaware Moves To Borrow State Funds To Buy Church

By Delbille Messling

Delaware Township Committee voted Monday to apply for state Green Acres funding to purchase the 167-year-old Locktown Baptist Church in a deal that could provide a profit of up to \$114,000 for a Flemington man who purchased the old building in August.

The township seeks a 20- to 30-year loan at about 2 percent interest, according to township Attorney Robert Hornby.

Friends of the Locktown Stone Church, a citizens' group working to preserve the church as a historic site, would repay the township at a later date, Hornby said.

The church was purchased for \$35,000 from the American Baptist Convention last August by Robert Hughes of Flemington, who said at the time that he planned to convert the building into a residence. He is now listing the church with Weichert Realtors for \$149,000.

Marty Goodspeed, township planning board chairman and a member of the citizens' group, said the organization would be willing to raise the money for the initial appraisal fees required under the Green Acres program, estimated by Hornby at \$2,000.

"The group hasn't actually discussed it, but I feel very confident making the offer," said Ms. Goodspeed.

Under the Green Acres program, the township must pay for two appraisals of the site whether or not the application for funding is eventually approved.



FOR SALE — AGAIN. Locktown Church's new owner has put the church up for sale, and Delaware Township officials are interested in purchasing it.

Committeeman Richard Macomber cast the only vote against the application.

"People may be shocked at this, but I personally am not into old buildings," he said.

He questioned what the township would do with the church once it was acquired.

Hornby said the primary reason for acquiring the building would be to preserve it as a historic site, but

once acquired by the citizens' group, the church could be used occasionally for weddings, craft shows and other events, he added.

It has not been used regularly for worship for many years.

Despite protests from several residents, Delaware Township Committee voted 4-1 recently to adopt a \$96,000-bond ordinance to pave the way for a community group to purchase and preserve the 170-year-old Locktown Baptist Church.

Generous Owner Helps Delaware Buy Locktown Church

12/7/89

By Stephanie Glucksman

After years of planning, Delaware Township purchased the historic Locktown Baptist Church Tuesday with the help of a \$43,000 gift from its former owner.

The gift came from Donald B. Jones, a local preservationist who chairs the township planning board — and who owned the 170-year-old church until Tuesday.

For about \$43,000, Jones bought the township Treasury bonds which will pay \$96,000 at maturity, in time to re-pay the state Green Acres loan that Delaware used to buy the church from him.

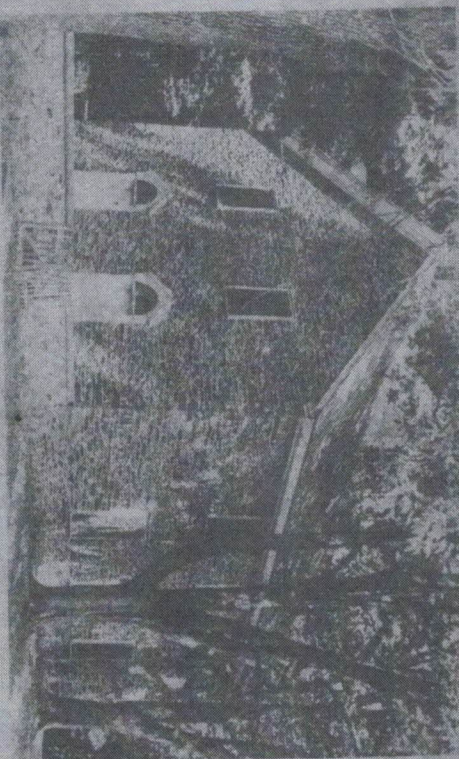
Jones explained why he donated the funds.

"Somebody's got to do it, and inasmuch as I'm a resident and I like the church, I thought I'd do it."

The use of bonds made his gift more feasible, he said. "Using bonds is a nice way to take advantage of Green Acres funding."

"By a gift of 45 percent you can give the whole thing. That I like."

The township bought the church on behalf of Friends of the Locktown Church, a preservationist group that is raising money to renovate it and use it for services, concerts, weddings, meetings and other community activities. The township agreed to



LOCKTOWN BAPTIST CHURCH changed hands Tuesday when Delaware Township bought the 170-year-old structure with the help of a \$43,000 gift from former owner Donald B. Jones.

help because only governments — and not private groups like the church organization — can receive Green Acres loans.

Jones gift ensures that no taxpayer money will be used to finance the purchase, according to Phoebe Wiley, a trustee of the church group.

Once a year for the next 20 years, Delaware can sell bonds that have matured and use the proceeds to

make biannual loan payments to the state, said Robert Hornby, another trustee.

Jones sold the church for \$96,000 — the amount he bought it for.

Hoping to buy time for the church, he had purchased it in 1986 from an individual who planned to renovate it for use as a house.

Jones said the planned renovation work may start early next year.

weather permitting. A meeting to discuss renovation plans was scheduled for last night.

"It's a beautiful looking building, on a very visible sight by the Wickecheoke Creek," he said. "I guess they baptized their people right in the creek there."

Other trustees hailed the purchase, and praised Jones and the township for their help.

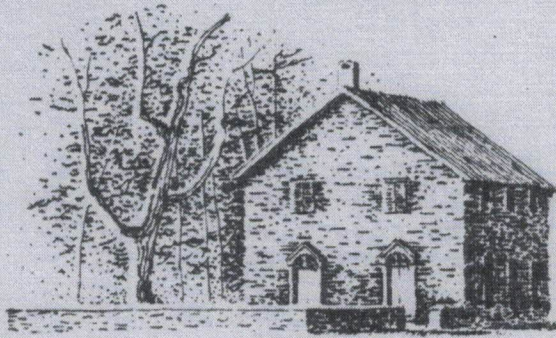
"All the years of fundraising, meetings, grant requests and hard work, finally paid off," said Robert Schenck, outgoing president of the group. "All members are pleased that this first major goal has been accomplished."

The group plans to lease the church from the township, "in order to stabilize, preserve and restore it," Schenck said.

Schenck's group has about 150 members. New members will be sought to donate time and/or money to help rebuild the church, Mrs. Wiley said.

The group meets at 7:30 p.m. the first Monday of each month at the Lockton Grange next to the church.

The church has serious structural problems. The group's first goal is to replace rotted support beams under the floor, according to Wiley.



Friends of the
Locktown Stone Church, Inc.

RD 2, Box 391 • Flemington, New Jersey 08822

THE LOCKTOWN STONE CHURCH

1819 - 1989

The Old School Baptist Church in the village of Locktown in Delaware Township, New Jersey, has an interesting history. But events in the past couple years have shown that history is being made every day.

The Church was built by the Old School Baptist congregation of Kingwood Township in 1819, and has been a focal point for the communities of Delaware and Kingwood for 170 years. It stands nearly unchanged from the day it was built, even though its congregation faded away several years ago. Buried in the ground underneath the altar table are the remains of the church's beloved pastor, the Reverend David Bateman, who died in 1832.

After the congregation disbanded, ownership of the church was held by the Baptist Convention of New Jersey, although its upkeep was left to a small group of the church's neighbors. Then in 1985, the Baptist Convention entered into a contract to sell the church. The purchaser planned to convert it to a residence, gutting the interior and destroying the building's original character.

The Friends of the Locktown Stone Church, Inc. was organized late in 1985 when news of the contract was received. Attempts to persuade the Baptists to convey the church to the Friends or to the Township of Delaware were unsuccessful. The contract purchaser exercised his option to buy in August 1986, and after a few months, put the church up for sale at \$150,000. The Friends appealed to the Township for help, and the Delaware Township Committee applied to Green Acres for funding to acquire the church, intending to lease it to the Friends for maintenance and restoration. In order to guarantee that the church would be held by a sympathetic owner, a generous individual bought the church from the original purchaser, taking it off the market and holding it until such time as the Township is able to acquire it. The Green Acres application has been accepted, and the property appraised for \$96,000.

In 1973, the Locktown Stone Church was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, thanks to the efforts of Floyd Evans. This status is very important when applying for grant money to restore the church. But it is not enough. We also need a historic structures report to be eligible for grant money, and during the

last year, the Friends hired Dennis Bertland, a well-respected architectural historian, to write one for us. We expect it will be finished in 1989. The historic structures report will identify immediate structural problems and provide guidelines for historically accurate restoration.

We hope that ownership of the Church will pass into the hands of the Township this year. A grant from the Large Foundation will help us to guarantee the mortgage, thus ending a difficult period in the church's history, and freeing up our energies to pursue restoration of the church. One of the most important benefits of municipal ownership is that the cost of acquisition can be used to acquire matching funds for restoration of the building. This could amount to nearly half of the anticipated cost of renovation.

The Friends of the Locktown Stone Church, Inc., incorporated as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, now have over 150 members from the immediate community and from around the county and the state. During the past year, the Friends have organized into standing committees, including the all-important maintenance committee which has seen to the lawn and, as a temporary expedient, secured the windows with plywood to prevent vandalism. The Friends conduct regular monthly meetings at 7:30pm on the first Wednesday of each month. The meetings are held at the Locktown Grange and are open to the public.

The Friends have a three-fold mission. The first is to save the church from destruction caused by private ownership and that goal is nearly achieved. Municipal ownership will guarantee that the church belongs to the community. The second mission is to save the church from destruction through neglect. Dampness is a serious problem, causing wood to rot and paint to peel. The rotting floor joists must be replaced; the exterior and interior woodwork must be repaired and painted. The roof will need some attention, also. The third mission is to develop a plan for public use of the building. The church is most suitable for weddings, concerts, meetings, memorial services and visiting ministries. Also, we hope to make it available to those who wish to study it as a rare survivor of the early religious tradition of Hunterdon County.

Much work has been accomplished so far, but there remains much to be done before the Locktown Stone Church resembles its original self. Once restored, the church will become a permanent historic and cultural resource for Delaware Township, for Hunterdon County and for the State of New Jersey.

Preservation Urged Of Historic Sites

The July issue of the Hunterdon County Historical Society's newsletter contains an editorial.

We support the view expressed in the editorial and hope Flemington residents will let their borough officials know they support it, too.

Lack of a Flemington "Historic District Zoning Ordinance" authorized by the Municipal Planning Act of 1953 NJ R.S. 40:55-1.2 and Chapter 447 Laws of 1968, has placed Flemington's "Main Street Acropolis" at the mercy of real estate speculators and so called modern "improvements."

Through adoption of an Historic District Zoning Ordinance the borough fathers are in a position to halt this vandalism.

Enlightened Oldwick is the only Hunterdon municipality that has enacted such an ordinance thus far.

Historic district legislation has operated well in Boston's Beacon Hill; Philadelphia's Society Hill; Washington's Georgetown; New Orleans Vieux Carre, and Charleston and Savannah.

Under the ordinance the external appearance of architecturally notable buildings may not be remodelled or destroyed. The owner is at liberty to do as he likes with the interior. This approach has been most successful in Paris where the streets retain architectural distinction, facades are retained while new reconstruction is permitted within the street facade.

The Bartles-Hawke house, 111 Main Street, a fine example of Victorian architecture and its beautiful parkland surroundings are unprotected at present from undesirable developments.

The house is on the site of the home of General William Maxwell, Revolutionary War hero. (See Snell, pp. 329-330. 1820 map of Flemington.)

The house and grounds would have made a distinctive borough hall and public park. Visitors to Flemington find this house of interest. A Japanese tour group recently made a detailed photographic record of the exterior.

One factor responsible for the destruction of some of Main Street's landmarks is the borough requirement for off-street parking before building permits are issued. Flemington's spacious municipal parking lots might modify this requirement in some instances when distinctive landmarks are at stake.

The proliferation of real estate firms and activities of local and foreign land speculators threaten the charm of "rural Hunterdon."

Both county and municipal governing bodies might well give consideration to immediate enactment of an Historic District Zoning Ordinance before it is too late! Blacktopped, treeless parking lots and shopping centers do not enhance the quality of life today.

Absalom Runyan's Grave Now Has Granite Marker

Previously hidden by weeds and briars, the grave of Absalom Runyan, a Revolutionary War soldier, now has a granite marker in the Old Baptist Cemetery, Baptistown.

It was installed and dedicated last week by the New Jersey Society, Sons of the American Revolution. Runyan served as a quartermaster with the Second Regiment, Hurberston Militia.

The monument was provided by the federal government at the society's request. The grave also is marked by a bronze standard with a 13-star flag in the center.

"We are interested in that cemetery, and believe more 1776 patriots may be buried here," said Marvin C. Shepherd of Elizabeth, a native of Flemington, who is president of the society.

Dedication of such gravesites is part of the society's statewide program to mark the graves of Revolutionary patriots, Shepherd said.

The Old Baptist Cemetery derives its name from the Old Baptist congregation which many years ago was active in Baptistown and Locktown. This same denomination established and built the Locktown Stone Church, recently designated a state historic site.

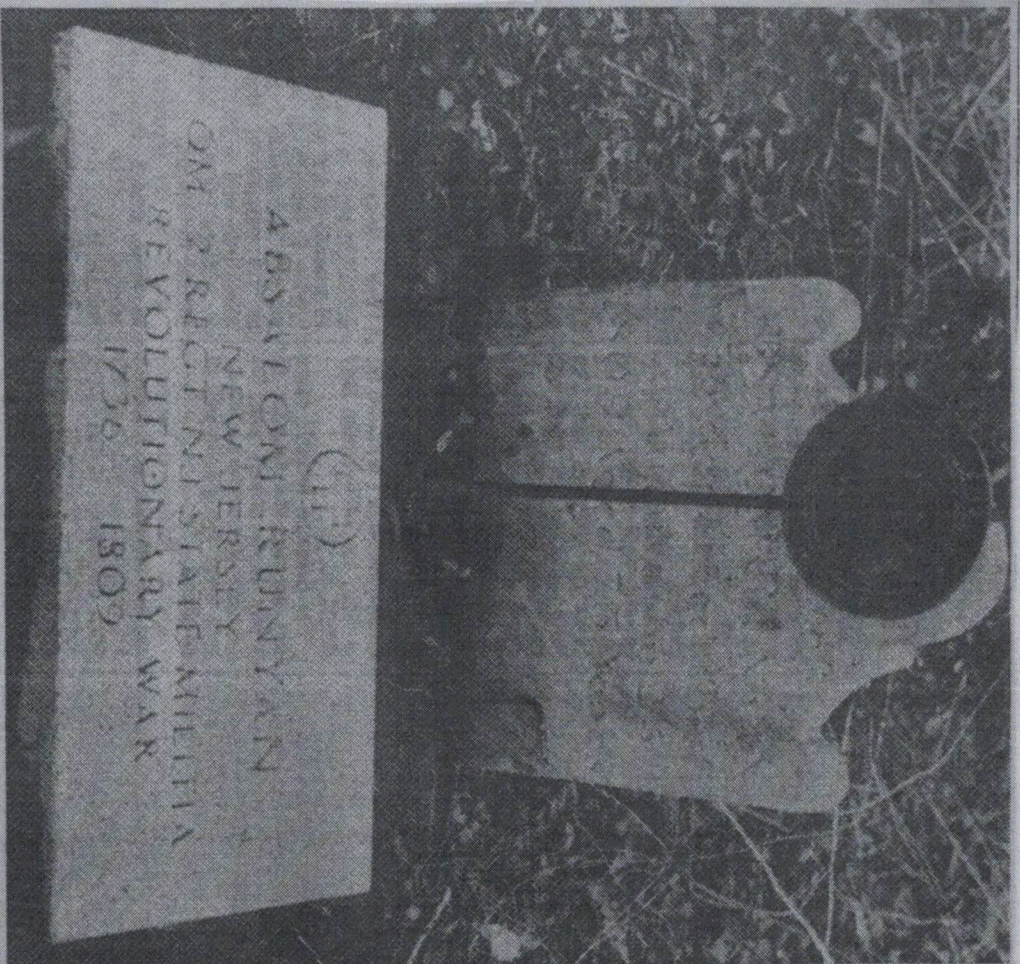
Apparently, Shepherd said, a small fund is available to maintain the cemetery next to the Locktown church, but the Baptistown cemetery has had little or no attention.

It is across Route 519 from the Baptistown Baptist Church, which takes care of its own

cemetery in front of the church. That cemetery does not date back to Revolutionary times, according to the Rev. Richard Kollmar, pastor.

The dedication of the Runyan marker was directed by William W. Vandervoort Jr., the New Jersey Society's Revolutionary grave registrar. Marvin Shepherd, along with Richard Shepherd of Lambertville, attended the brief ceremony.

The society has asked that anyone with information on the location of other Revolutionary soldiers' graves write to the New Jersey Society, Sons of the American Revolution, 1045 East Jersey Street, Elizabeth, N. J., 07201.



—Staff Photo
LONG-NEGLECTED grave of Revolutionary War militiaman Absalom Runyan now has an official federal marker, installed in the New Jersey Society, Sons of the American Revolution. The cemetery itself, next to the Baptistown stone and post office, lies largely in neglect. Weeds had to be hacked away to reach Runyan's resting-place. The original gravestone stands behind the bronze standard. 12/15/73

THE KEYS TO THE CHURCH

Locktown to renovate, preserve 170-year-old structure

By JEAN BRANDES

Delaware Township resident Milton Smith remembers dusting the pews before services in the historic Locktown Baptist Church when he was a young boy in the 1920s—he has lived across the road from the stone structure most of his life.

So it was particularly meaningful to him that Delaware Township acquired the 170-year-old church, which now will be renovated and preserved for future generations.

"I think this building is very, very important to us. Today, we talk about progress all the time. . . . Let's retain something we believed in and grew up with," said Smith, who is treasurer of Friends of the Locktown Stone Church, an organization that was instrumental in the acquisition.

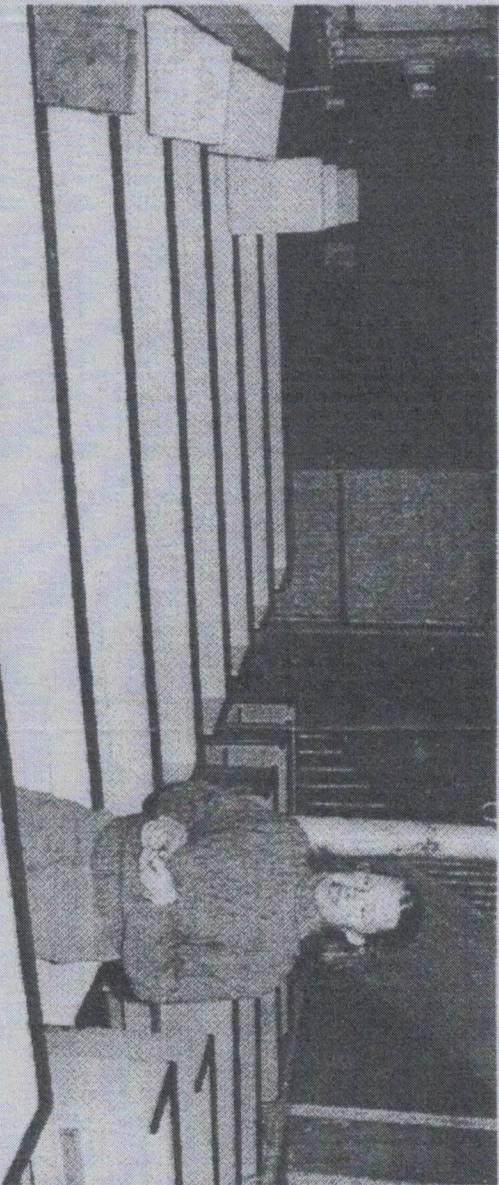
The good news for the township is that the landmark church, just above Wickecheoke Creek, will be available as a community resource, and no taxpayer funds will be used to finance the purchase or renovations.

"I think it's a valuable preservation of one of the oldest churches in the township and that portion of the state. In addition, it can now be open to the public so more people can enjoy it," Mayor Richard Macomber said.

"We're proud to have it. We're excited to have it and look forward to working with the Friends of the Locktown Stone Church," he added.

The township purchased the building on Tuesday, using a \$96,000 low-interest state Green Acres loan. The township acquired the church from resident Donald Jones, who bought it in 1967 to take it off the real estate market, according to attorney Robert Hornby, who represents the Friends organization.

Jones, chairman of the township



Phoebe Wiley, president of the board of trustees of the Friends of the Locktown Church Inc., stands in the historic 169-year-old building, which is being restored

Photo by Steve Andraski

planning board, purchased the church for \$96,000 from an individual who had planned to renovate the structure to use it as a home, and then changed his plans. Jones also has purchased and donated to the township \$43,000 in long-term bonds, which mature annually and will be used to pay off the Green Acres loan in its entirety, according to Hornby.

The Friends will contribute the 2 percent interest payments on the 20-year loan and will seek historic preservation grants as well as donations to help pay for renovations, according to Phoebe Wiley, president of the group's board of trustees.

"Needless to say, we are just very

pleased the township has agreed to do this, and we are very indebted to Donald Jones. We think it's a project that has obvious appeal to many people," Wiley said. "We want everyone in the township to feel they are a part of this."

The Friends organized in late 1985, when news of a contract of sale by the New Jersey Baptist Convention became known. Now that the long-awaited closing has taken place, the organization plans to lease the church from the township "to stabilize, preserve and restore the building, and turn it into a public place where services, concerts, weddings and meetings will occur," she said.

The Friends hope to organize com-

munity work days and enlist other organizations to help renovate the two-story church, which has deteriorated and is in need of repairs.

The church was built in 1819 and is listed on the state and federal historic registers. Its exterior could not have been altered, even if it had been renovated for use as a home. But residents wanted "to maintain the integrity of the building" as a church, with pews and pulpit intact, said Hornby.

"Architecturally, it's a handsome building and a good example of vernacular architecture," or a local expression of the rural architecture of that time, said Hornby.

History On Menu Saturday At Locktown Village Tours

DELAWARE TWP. — The village of Locktown got its name one day in 1835 when Elder James Wigg and his Baptist followers got locked out of the stone church in the center of the village.

They were locked out by the majority of the congregation, which had decided to follow the teachings of the Old School Baptist Church. Services were held sporadically in the church over the next century until October 1967, when church trustee Howard Johnson wrote in church documents, "I locked the door with sorrow forever," according to members of the Hunterdon County Museum Association.

These and other historical tidbits will be served up by the association members during their Historic Village of Locktown House Tour Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The event, which is the association's sixth annual tour of historic areas in the county, will start at the Locktown Grange, where tickets can be purchased for \$10. A brochure outlining a self-guided tour is provided. The Grange will provide a light lunch, coffee and cake for those on tour, and exhibits by association member organizations will be on display.

The tour will feature four 18th-century and early 19th-century buildings, as well as a visit to the Locktown Church cemetery. Tour-goers will learn that the original church was built of log in 1750 and was called the Swam Church Meeting House. This is because the whole area was once called "The Great Swamp" and people living there, near the Wickcheoke Creek, were called "swampers."

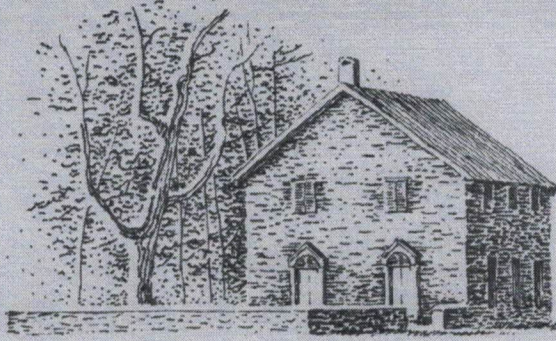
In recent years, the church doors were unlocked by a group called the "Friends of the Locktown Stone Church," who have worked to restore the building to its original condition.

Other doors that will be unlocked for tour-goers will be those of Stone Post Farm, Whiskey Run Herb Farm and the Evans Farm — "a rare example of three-story stone construction," according to association member Stephanie Stevens.

The stone house on Stone Post Farm was once occupied by Revolutionary War soldier Albert Mires. The house at Whiskey Run Herb Farm is a pre-Revolutionary frame structure and includes the original walk-in cooking hearth.

For more information, call 735-4101.

To members of the Historical Society -
 In behalf of my mother, Ditties
 & sister, I'd like to thank you
 for the flowers you sent in
 memory of my dad, Stephen
 Depski. Many thanks, too, to
 Willie Wehr for her kind
 words she shared at the
 funeral service. History was
 one of Dad's many passions &
 I've enjoyed serving the commu-
 nity with sharing his knowledge.
 Many thanks, Jean Ballard



Friends of the
Locktown Stone Church, Inc.

RD 2, Box 391 • Flemington, New Jersey 08822

15 March 1990

Mr. & Mrs. William Wehr
P.O.Box 125
Baptistown, NJ 08803

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Wehr,

We have reason to celebrate.

On December 8, 1989, the Township of Delaware purchased the Locktown Stone Church from Donald Jones with the proceeds of a Green Acres loan. This event was over three years in the making, so its conclusion brings us great joy. Of course, it would not have happened without the generous help of Donald Jones, to whom we are immensely grateful. We are also grateful to you for your support. Without a committed membership of the Friends, the Township would not have embarked on this endeavor.

Enclosed is an article printed in the Star Ledger describing this milestone for the Church.

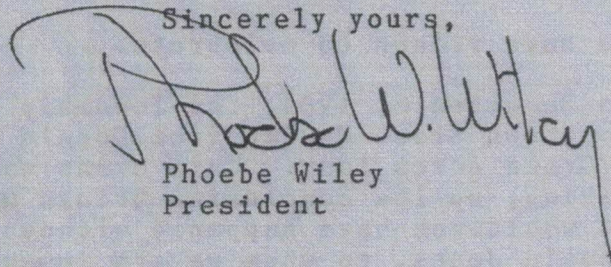
The Church has now been saved from the possible destruction that private ownership could have caused. But now our real work begins. The Friends have signed a twenty-year lease with the Township in which we take on the responsibility for the church's restoration and maintenance.

Our immediate goal is to fix the floor. The joists have suffered from dry rot and must be replaced. While we are at it, we will want to install a heating system and do some archeological work. The project will cost about \$60,000. We have applied to the N.J. Historic Trust for grant money, but we must match the grant 50-50, and the \$30,000 we need to raise is over and above the costs of interest payments on the Green Acres loan, insurance and regular maintenance.

Please consider renewing your membership today and, if possible, increase your past contribution of \$25.00. We missed you in 1989. Your financial help and your interest make all the difference.

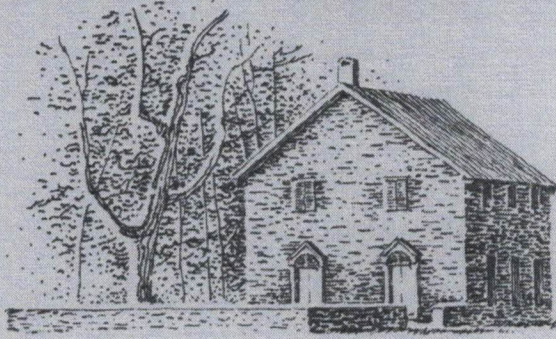
This spring, we will begin work on the floor, with a special Save the Church Day planned for May 18th. You are cordially invited to come see the church and meet the trustees of the Friends. If you are so inclined, you are also welcome to roll up your sleeves and help with the work of taking up the pews and floor boards.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Phoebe Wiley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping tail that extends downwards and to the right.

Phoebe Wiley
President

P.S. Don't forget to fill out the enclosed envelope and mail your contribution today. Thank you.



Friends of the
Locktown Stone Church, Inc.

RD 2, Box 391 • Flemington, New Jersey 08822

21 February 1989

Mr. and Mrs. William Wehr
P.O.Box 125
Baptistown, NJ 08803

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Wehr,

The Friends of the Locktown Stone Church wish to thank you for your support.

Through your generosity, we have come closer to the goal of saving this wonderful historic landmark, a focal point for the community for the last 170 years.

We expect that Delaware Township will be able to gain ownership of the Church this year. A Green Acres loan will make this possible, but in order to avoid raising taxes, the Township is depending on the Friends to pay back the loan. We also need funds to restore the church to its original condition.

The enclosed description will inform you of our activities to date. A lot has been accomplished but we have a long way to go!

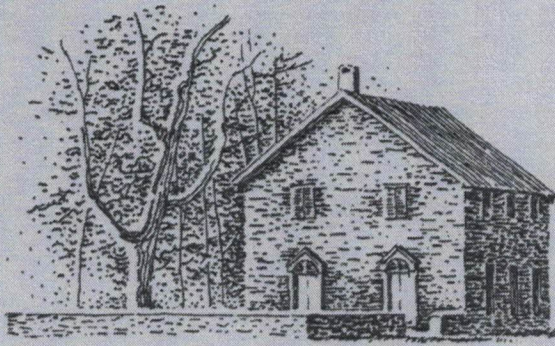
Please consider renewing your membership today and, if possible, increasing your generous contribution of \$25.00. Your financial help and your interest are essential to the survival of the Friends and the success of our goal, to bring the Locktown Stone Church back to life.

Sincerely yours,

Robert J. Schenck
President

782-1278

P.S. Don't forget to fill out the enclosed envelope and mail your contribution today. Thank you.



Friends of the
Locktown Stone Church, Inc.

RD 2, Box 391 • Flemington, New Jersey 08822

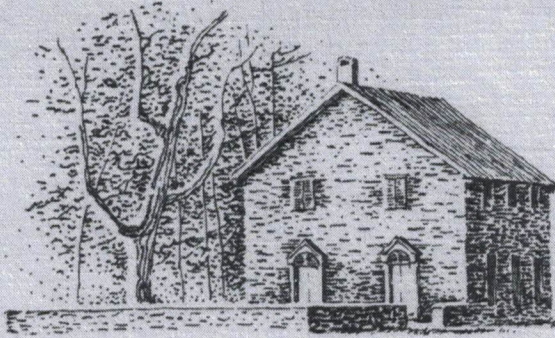
CHURCH WORK DAY and OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, April 27th
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Hot Homemade Lunch

Come for an hour or come for the day.

Spring cleaning, scraping & painting,
(bring scrapers & rags), fixing the floor,
visiting friends and giving advice.



Friends of the Locktown Stone Church, Inc.

136 Locktown-Flemington Road
Flemington, New Jersey 08822

Dear Neighbor,

The Friends of the Locktown Stone Church have been hard at work this past year to restore this wonderful church. We need your help to get the job done.

If you are already a member of the Friends, we thank you for your generosity. Your continued support is very important to us. Please send in a membership donation for 1991 in the enclosed envelope today.

If you are not yet a member of the Friends, please consider joining us in this very rewarding project. Your contribution will help us reach the goal to completely restore this remarkable and unique building.

We want to involve as many people as possible in this very local project, to restore a wonderful old building to prime condition and to make it available to the people of Delaware Township and the surrounding area. We wish to reiterate that all mortgage and renovation costs are paid for by the Friends. Not a single tax dollar has been used, even though Delaware Township holds title to the property.

Our progress has been slow but sure. This spring we had the roof repaired and the cornice repainted and repaired. Also the big tree limbs which hung over the church roof were removed. This summer we hope to have important drainage work done around the perimeter of the church so that next year we will be ready to tackle the structural repairs needed under the floor.

At our annual meeting last November we elected the following trustees: Phoebe Wiley, President, Richard Brozman, Vice-President, Milt Smith, Treasurer, Marfy Goodspeed, Secretary, Richard Conley, Bob Griffiths, Bob Hornby, Walt Macak, Bob Schenck, Jack Schoenherr and Steve Zdepski. We also established an Advisory Committee headed by Donald Jones who has been named honorary lifetime trustee. Members of the Advisory Committee are Walter Dunsby, David Eichlin, Floyd Evans, Lloyd Gang, James Hosford, Robert Reed, Mary Schenck, Ed and Sandy Walker, Chet Williams and Ruth Zdepski.

The Friends of the Locktown Stone Church meet on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. From May through October we meet at the Church. From November through April we meet at the Locktown Grange.

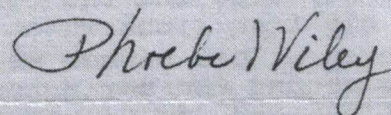
We also have a monthly work day during the summer, held the third Saturday of each month, from 9:00 a.m. to noon. This is a good opportunity to see the church and meet some of the trustees and advisors. During the summer workdays we hope to finish exterior painting and the shutters on the second floor.

Our annual workday held April 27th brought many volunteers who scraped and painted shutters and windows and doors and who put in a temporary floor to cover the area that needs work.

On May 1st of this year, we held our first Oral History Program which was well attended and enjoyed by all. We expect to make this an annual event.

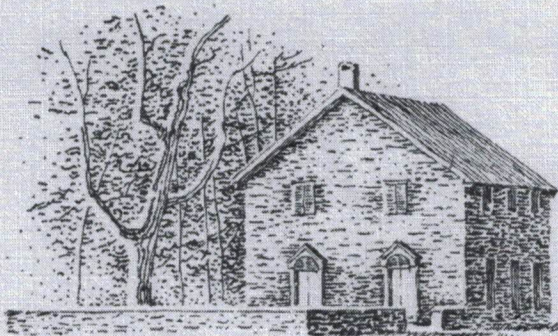
There is lots going on, but we need financial support to continue our work. Won't you please help us?

Sincerely,



Phoebe Wiley
President

P.S. As usual, this will be our only membership mailing for calendar 1991. We will not pester you with further solicitations, so please respond right away.



Friends of the
Locktown Stone Church, Inc.

136 Locktown-Flemington Road
Flemington, New Jersey 08822

October 18, 1993

Mrs. Mildred K. Wehr
P. O. Box 125
Baptistown, NJ 08803

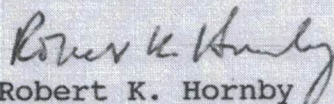
Dear Mildred:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Friends of the Locktown Stone Church and for myself, I want to thank you for the use of the Old School Baptist tracts during the Locktown Church's recent participation in the Hunterdon County Museum Association tour.

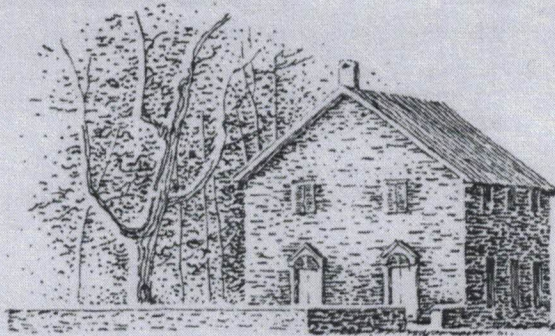
Many people looked at these publications and were quite interested, especially since many of the people mentioned were from the Hopewell and Hunterdon County areas.

With best wishes.

Sincerely yours,


Robert K. Hornby

RKH:jb



Friends of the
Locktown Stone Church, Inc.

136 Locktown-Flemington Road
Flemington, New Jersey 08822

November 4, 1995

Mildred Wehr
P.O. Box 125
Baptistown, NJ 08803

Dear Mildred,

The Trustees of the Friends of the Locktown Stone Church which to acknowledge your generosity in donating to us the old kerosene can that once was kept in the church, as well as the two copies of "The Signs of the Times." These items are important to us as reminders of the good people who first built the church and who kept it going for so long. We promise to take good care of them.

We also want to thank you for the many years of interest and concern that you have shown for the church. You share with us the knowledge that it is a very special place, and we hope you will feel free to come to future trustees meetings.

Again, many thanks.

Sincerely yours,

Marfy Goodspeed
secretary, trustee

Former Church Gets \$10,000

LOCKTOWN — The Friends of the Locktown Stone Church has received a \$10,000 contribution from Noel Gilmour of New South Wales, Australia.

Mr. Gilmour delivered the money on behalf of his late wife, Catharyn Risler Suydam Gilmour, who made provision in her will for the organization, which had no idea the bequest was that large.

Mrs. Gilmour's mother was a member of the Old School Baptist Congregation that once worshipped in the building. Mrs. Gilmour remembered visiting the church in her childhood and held an abiding affection for the building.

The contribution is a timely one for the group, which has just completed a major renovation project for the building's floor and will use some of the money to paint the interior.

The Locktown Stone Church's congregation disbanded in the 1960s. The church building is owned by Delaware Township and was leased to the Friends of the Church for 20 years. The lease expires in 2009.

After renovation is completed, it will be used as a place for public gatherings such as weddings, memorial services, lectures and possibly chamber music, says trustee Marfy Goodspeed.

The former church will be featured on the Hunterdon County Museum Association Tour next month as well as Delaware Township's Thanksgiving in the Country tour in November.



A BEQUEST OF \$10,000 from his wife's estate is given by Noel Gilmour, right, to Locktown Stone Church Treasurer Milt Smith.



Profile

The Guardian of Historic Hunterdon

Almost every morning on his way to work, Donald B. Jones leaves his sprawling farm in Sergeantsville and passes over one of New Jersey's most significant architectural landmarks — the last original covered bridge in the state.

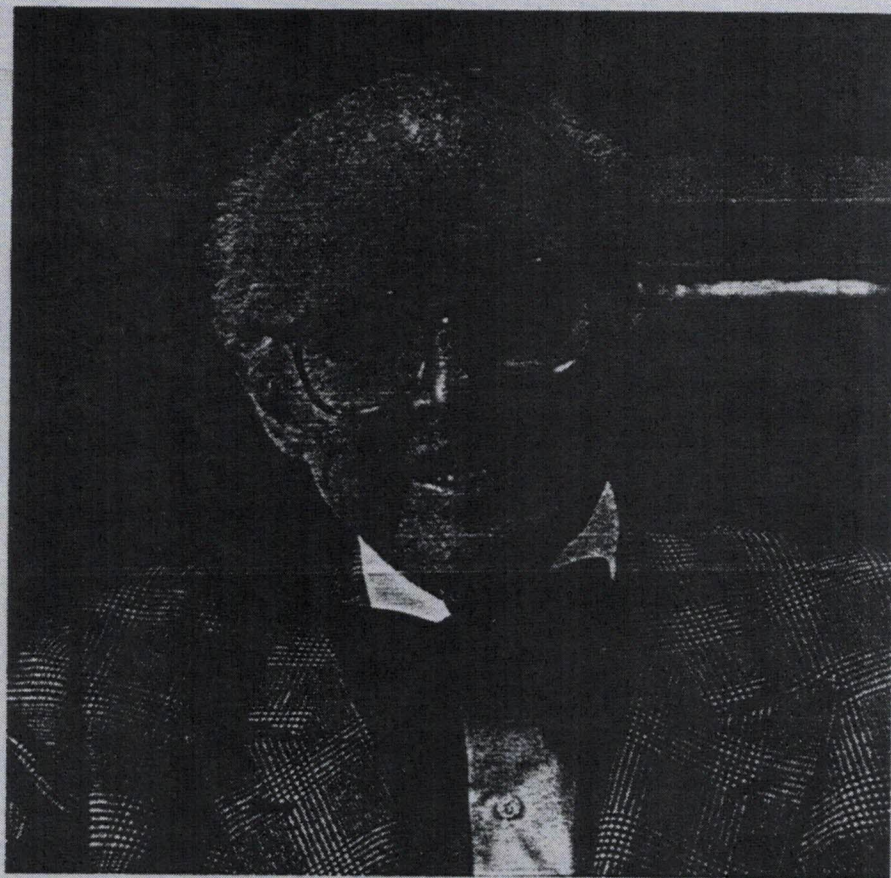
Jones shares a special relationship with Green Sergeant's Bridge in Hunterdon County. It is one of several historic structures that might not be here today if it weren't for this bow-tied crusader's dedication to conservation.

At 82, Jones — a lawyer, businessman and farmer — has led a life full of adventure and personal rewards. As owner of Charles Jones Inc., a thriving, Trenton title search business founded by his father, Jones still commutes to the office five days a week. He also manages his 253-acre farm. But even though his schedule is rather hectic, Jones has always found time to help preserve New Jersey's natural and cultural resources.

One of Jones' first causes was saving Green Sergeant's Bridge, the last survivor of New Jersey's 75 covered bridges. The battle started in 1959 when the bridge was nearly destroyed by a heavy truck or wagon. Hunterdon County officials decided the practical solution was to replace the bridge with one that could handle modern traffic, including large trucks and farming equipment. But Jones and a small group of people felt differently. They banded together to save the historic treasure that has linked the towns of Sergeantsville and Rosemont for nearly a century.

"It was a bitter battle, but it all turned out well," says Jones.

Jones was able to get a court order to prevent the county from removing any of the bridge. In the meantime, he convinced the New Jersey Department of Transportation to restore the covered bridge and build a new span parallel to it.



Donald B. Jones is credited with saving three historic sites in Hunterdon County — Green Sergeant's Bridge, the Prallsville Mills and the Locktown Church.

His actions saved the landmark, and the covered bridge became the official symbol and logo of Delaware Township.

Less than a decade later, Jones was called to battle again. The Prallsville Mills along the Delaware and Raritan feeder canal and Route 29 in Hunterdon County were up for sale, and some feared the property was in danger of becoming the site of a supermarket, an auto repair shop or a townhouse development.

The property had started as a single grist mill when it was built in the early 1700s. In 1794, John Prall Jr. bought the mill and made many improvements. He converted the wooden grist mill to stone, and added a saw mill and several other stone structures, including one that was later used as a linseed oil mill, a plaster mill, a chapel, a post office and a store.

Jones credits the late Barbara Coar, an avid mill supporter, and David F. Moore, executive director of the New Jersey Con-

servation Foundation, with getting him involved in the preservation of the site.

"They got me enthused to the extent that I bought it," says Jones. "Not with the intention of using it, but to hold on to it until the state could take it over."

To save the historic mills, Jones purchased the site in 1969 for less than a \$100,000. He and other individuals then began making repairs and restorations, especially on the decaying roof of the grist mill. In 1973, the state purchased the property, and the site was added to the State and National Register of Historic Places. A year later, the mills became part of the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park.

The Delaware River Mill Society within the office of the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission has since been formed to help fund the restoration costs and keep the site open to the public. Today, the mills are the site of a bustling cul-

tural center that offers such activities as summer tours, exhibits, concerts and regional festivals.

"I'm very proud of what the mills look like today, but that's certainly not because of me," says Jones. "It's because of the members of the mill society. They've done a great job."

Following his triumph with the Prallsville Mills, Jones was recruited a third time to rescue yet another historic site.

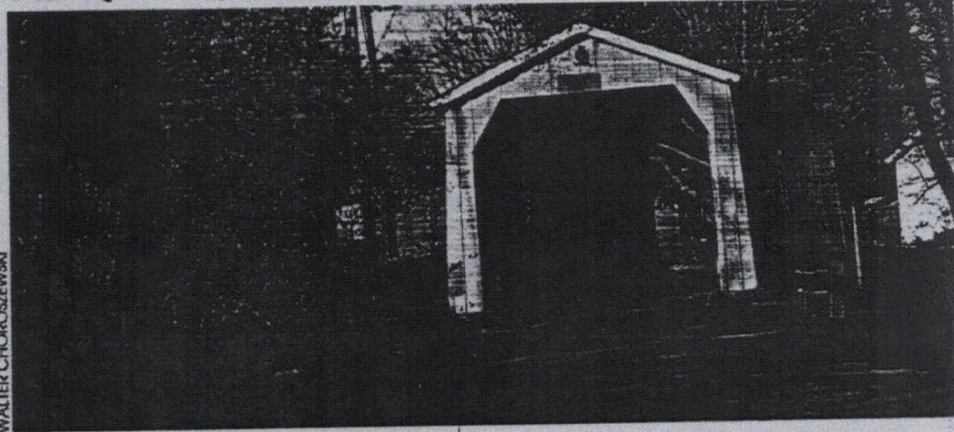
"Maybe the news had gotten around that I was a sucker for saving things," laughs Jones.

This time, Jones found himself involved in preserving the Locktown Church in Hunterdon County, which was constructed in 1819. In the late 1980s, the church was purchased by a person who wanted to renovate it for use as a private home.

Many local residents were upset by this turn of events. After all, both the town and church were named after an infamous schism among the Baptist church members. In 1839, the congregation became divided over the issue of recruiting new followers for the church. Conservative Baptists believed people were destined to come to the church on their own, but reformers wanted to reach out and convert people. The conservatives, realizing they were becoming outnumbered, locked out the reformers. The infuriated reformers put their own lock on the church so the conservatives could not get in either. And an amused tavern owner near the church commissioned a sign for his business with three locks (the third lock is believed to have been included for aesthetic reasons). The sign displayed outside the tavern greeted visitors to the town for years until it disappeared.

To avoid losing the church forever, Jones again used his own money to buy the beautiful stone building from its new owner for \$96,000. Once again, an important landmark had found its way into Jones' safe hands, and he kept the church until Delaware Township was able to purchase it in 1989 under a loan from the state Green Acres program. No local taxpayer money is being used to make the loan payments, however, thanks to an-

Green Sergeant's Bridge in Delaware Township.



WALTER CHORSZEWSKI

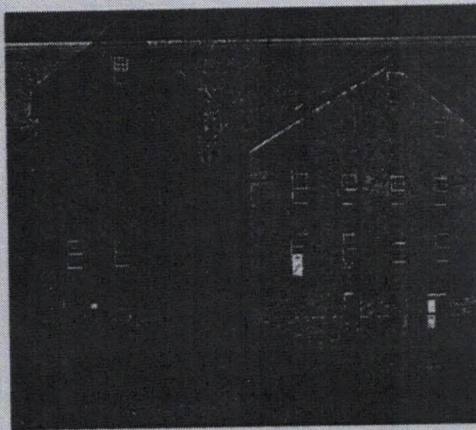
Many historic structures might not be here today if it weren't for this bow-tied crusader's dedication to conservation.

other generous gift from Jones. He donated \$43,000 in long-term bonds, which mature annually, that can be used to pay off the loan in its entirety.

In between saving structures, Jones has dedicated his time to preserving New Jersey's environment. He served on the Hudson River Planning and Development Commission, assisting with the creation of a pathway along the river. He also was involved with the Delaware Township and Hunterdon County planning boards and the New Jersey Tidelands Resource Council. He also serves on the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission.

A self-proclaimed "nut about trees," Jones currently heads the Hunterdon County Shade Tree Commission. He is also former president of the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, an environmental group he lauds as the "greatest organization in New Jersey as far as saving

JIM ALMON



The Prallsville Mills along Rt. 29 in Stockton.

open space and conservation."

Jones continues to be a proponent of open space, and he advocates that new home construction should be done in clusters to preserve the land.

"It really annoys me to see a house on ten acres of land," says Jones. "It's beautiful, but it's not sensible. Houses should be huddled more closely together to preserve the open space."

This savior of significant state sites and land is already looking toward the future protection of his own homestead. Jones is making plans for a conservation easement, a designation that prevents development on a piece of land, to ensure his property will always remain a farm.

"The whole area is so nice," says Jones. "It would be a shame to cut that up."

by Amy Franco, a journalism intern from Rider College