



Places in Time

SUMMER 2017

Citizen Archivists

by Brooke Hunter

Last fall Rider University students in my intro U.S. history survey course transcribed a 19th-century local farmer's diary from the Lawrence Historical Archives. Through service learning students uncovered what historians do in a real world context and gained greater knowledge of the place they call home for four years.

George Phillips (1803-1869) was born in Maidenhead and died in Lawrence (courtesy of the town name change in 1816). He married Abigail Ketchum of Pennington in 1825 and had five children. He purchased a farm on today's Princeton Pike along the Lawrence-Princeton border in 1831. Phillips recorded his first diary entry on March 23, 1850 and his last on Christmas day 1864.

Each student transcribed a section of the 291-page diary. Students rated the experience as challenging and difficult, but fun too. Elementary education major Brielle Goldstein said "it's really cool to be able to see what life was like for an everyday, normal person then." While students expected farming details, they were unprepared for how much Phillips talked about the weather, crops, and prices. It wasn't just the handwriting that made it hard, noted Josh Sharik, an american studies major; "the material he wrote about wasn't exactly profound so it made the reading a little more bland." Phillips did mention manure 185 times.

Students researched a range of historical topics including transportation, education, temperance, fatherhood, the panic of 1857, health, and funeral customs to name a few. Students delivered informative oral presentations to members of the Lawrence Historical Society's board of trustees and several local historians at the semester's end.

Student reflections make it clear that the project was a success.

"This project allowed me to see what it would be like to be a historian." (Shannon LeRoy, history)

"The transcription, research, and analysis of this diary introduced me to a more personal style of learning. Instead of simply reading facts about key historical events in America, and famous elite figures, this project brought learning history closer to home." (Zach Nasto, american studies)

"[I learned] that history is not all about remembering the facts and dates of important events." (Brielle Goldstein, elem ed/multidisciplinary studies)

continued on page 4

Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the new version of Places In Time. We hope you enjoy our new format, which is expanded to include more in-depth articles about township history as well as information on our upcoming events and recent news. It has been awhile and we would like to fill you in on what the Lawrence Historical Society has been up to. Our accomplishments include new exterior signs for both Brearley House and Port Mercer Canal House, and a new exhibit at the Brearley House featuring information panels about the Brearley family, the Great Meadow, the D & R Canal, the Princessville Inn and Cemetery, Lewisville Road, and slavery and abolition. We also received the final report from the archaeological dig at Brearley House, along with all the artifacts. Finally, we are participating in the NPS Passport Stamp program with cancellation stations at the Brearley House, and the Lawrence Municipal Building. If you have not stopped by in a while, please stop in during a tour or event and see what is new.

In relationship with our schools, we continue to host field trips to Brearley House by the Eldridge Park School second graders and Lawrence Intermediate School fourth graders.

Brearley House is open to the public the first Saturday (10-noon), March-October, and third Sunday (2-4pm) each month. We also offer periodic lunchtime open houses to encourage employees from nearby Princeton Pike businesses to come visit us.

We have received several grants allowing us to continue various historical interpretations, notably of the garden at Brearley House.

Our annual New Year's Eve Hogmanay bonfire attracted over 800 attendees this year.

History professor Brooke Hunter from Rider University recruited an entrepreneurial studies intern to improve our gift shop at Brearley House, and one of her history classes transcribed 19th-century Lawrence farmer George Phillips's diary and gave presentations based on their research. A report on this project is our featured article in this edition of our newsletter.

We have hosted/co-hosted several informative lectures and programs relating to our local history over the year. Most recently, master's students from a Public Musicology class at Westminster Choir College performed songs in honor of the D&R Canal. These activities helped increase appreciation of our community's rich history.

As you can see, the Lawrence Historical Society is active in our community. But, we need your help!

Please renew your membership now, either online by going to our website: www.thelhs.org, or by mailing in the form on the back of the newsletter. As a not-for-profit organization, the Society is eligible to receive matching gifts from employers with matching gift programs. If you work for such an employer, please use this opportunity to increase the value of your individual contribution.

We are also looking for more volunteers to help in our activities. If you are interested in serving on our board, or want to suggest someone who might, or if you are interested in volunteering for events occasionally, please email webmaster@thelhs.org.

Places in Time is published four times a year by the Lawrence Historical Society. Back issues are available at the LHS website -www.TheLHS.org. We can be contacted at the following address: webmaster@thelhs.org This program is made possible, in part, by a grant from the Mercer County Division of Culture and Heritage, in partnership with the New Jersey Historical Commission, Division of Cultural Affairs/ Department of State.

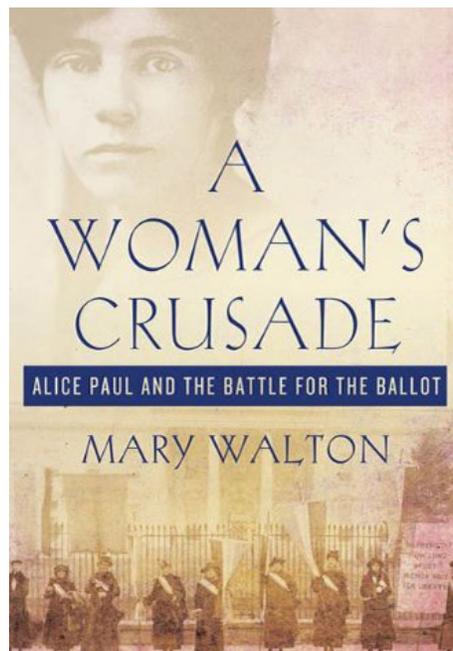
Save The Dates!**OCTOBER 21 GHOST TOURS**

On Saturday evening, just after dark, LHS will offer two thrilling bus tours of the township from the 1761 Brearley House. Tickets will go on sale in September. It is not too late to contribute your own spooky story! Is your house in Lawrence haunted? Have you heard about any mysterious goings-on? The Lawrence Historical Society wants to hear from you NOW!

Please email to webmaster@thelhs.org Or snail mail Lawrence Historical Society, PO Box 6025, Lawrenceville NJ 08648.

NOVEMBER 12 14th ANNUAL MARY TANNER LECTURE

Woodrow Wilson versus Alice Paul, a WWI battle fought on US soil! Mary Walton, author of *A Woman's Crusade*, will discuss the battle between two New Jerseyans: former governor Woodrow Wilson of Princeton and Quaker feminist Alice Paul of Moorestown. The free lecture will take place at 2:00 PM at Rider University.

**Tour The 1761 Brearley House**

Join us for a tour on the following dates:

Saturday, 10am-noon

August 5, September 2, and October 7

Sunday, 2:00pm-4:00pm

July 16, August 20, September 17, October 15
November 19, and December 17

continued from page 1

“This was a real person who lived here way before all of us and this is what he did and what life was like. It has shown me that little treasures are still out there waiting to teach us about things we believe we already know.” (Nicole Kulina, biology)

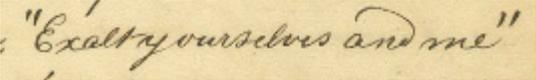
“I gained a great amount of respect for local history and its overall value, and how something so small can be used significantly in a broader historical context.” (Gino Fluri, history)

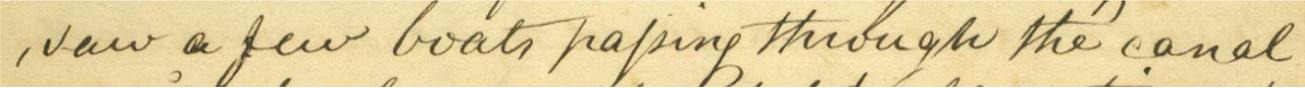
I am working on publishing the diary in print and digital formats using the students’ transcription. The digital version will make this valuable resource more accessible and allow for key word searching. Like Rider’s students, readers will be impressed by Phillips’ intelligence, inspired by his work ethic, moved by his dedication to family and faith, amused by his competitiveness with other farmers and curmudgeonly comments, struck by his keen environmental observations, and fascinated by his views that reveal how different our time is from the past.

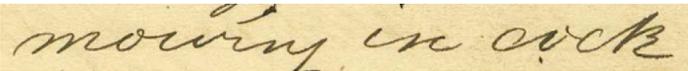
About the Author: Brooke Hunter is associate professor of history and director of american studies at Rider University. She has served on the Society’s board of trustees since 2014.

Test Your Transcription Skills

Students did a remarkable job deciphering Phillips’ handwriting, especially considering how rare cursive is today and that none of them had ever transcribed a historical document before. Try reading the following lines from the diary:

a)  a) *Exaltry ourselves and me*

b)  b) *saw a few boats passing through the canal*

c)  c) *mowing in cock*

Answers: a) “Exalt yourselves and me” b) saw a few boats passing through the canal [note long s] c) mowing in cock [as in a haystack]

Uncommon Pottery Hints at the Presence of Africans or African Americans at the 1761 Brearley House

Keri J. Sansevere

PhD Candidate, Temple University

Searching for evidence of slavery at historic sites can be challenging because historic and archaeological evidence tends to be a bit elusive. Historic records, like wills, probate inventories, and tax records may confirm whether a family owned slaves. However, sometimes these records simply do not survive or become lost and do not capture the scope of slavery at a given site. The documents that do survive from the Brearley family mention a man named James, an enslaved African or African American that lived at the Brearley House in Maidenhead (Lawrence Township), New Jersey during the last quarter of the 18th century. Later documents composed in the mid- 19th century mention the presence of several free African or African American males that worked on the property for the family. Documents hint that one of these individuals may have been the Brearley’s cook.

Hunter Research archaeologists from 1996 - 2005 excavated the 1761 Brearley House. Their excavations in the South Kitchen Wing unearthed two wheel-thrown rim fragments of colonoware pottery. Archaeologists believe colonoware was made and used by Africans, African Americans, and Native Americans. The pottery was shaped into different forms including bowls, cooking pots, drinking vessels, plates, chamber pots, and jars. Colonoware is differentiated from other historic period ceramics in that it typically lacks glaze, has a smoothed or burnished surface, and is fired at a lower temperature in an open air hearth instead of a kiln. The pottery is commonly built by hand, although wheel-thrown colonoware has also been documented.

For over half of a century, archaeologists have recognized the pottery at plantation sites located in the American Southeast and Caribbean. Over the last several years, I have been searching for northern examples of colonoware. My research involves documenting colonowares excavated from untraditional sites located in the Northeast and determining where northern colonowares may have been manufactured. Ultimately, this work will help us better recognize the archaeological presence of individuals that historic documents may not completely capture and the kinds of activities that these individuals were involved in.

The colonoware at the Brearley House offers tantalizing clues that hint at the presence of African or African American individuals in central New Jersey. It is worth emphasizing that the South Kitchen Wing, the location where the fragments were unearthed, may have also doubled as a quarter for slaves or laborers. The presence of the pottery in this space may suggest that at least some meals made in the Brearley kitchen were cooked in colonoware. It is tempting to think that the African American male cook documented at the house in the mid-19th century may have used the colonoware.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Brooke Hunter, the Lawrence Historical Society, and archaeologists Dr. Ian Burrow and Joshua Butchko. This work would not be possible without your help and stewardship of these important artifacts.



Colonoware fragments excavated from the Brearley House.

Photo by Keri Sansevere



Canal Songs Concert

In April, LHS joined Westminster Choir College and The Friends of the Lawrence Library to present a concert on songs one would have heard along the Delaware and Raritan Canal during its hayday.



The students from a Public Musicology class researched the music of the era, the canal's history, and other relevant historical information for the program. The result was a fun sing-along mixed with trivia, a booklet of song lyrics and facts about the D&R Canal, and media presentation. The presentation included video clips of barge captains singing some of the songs.

The audience of about 40 people learned that music, particularly singing, was used as a way to entertain and pass time as the barges moved slowly down the canal.



Winona Nash Award

Each spring, LHS awards a scholarship of \$300, a certificate, family membership, and recent book on history to a senior at Lawrence High School who has demonstrated excellence in history studies, as determined by the history faculty at the high school. The two most recent winners are Jake Ari (2017) and Klara Bieniasz (2016).

An outstanding student and varsity athlete, Jake Ari is a member of the National Honor Society, and was a DECA National Finalist in 2017. Jake is a scholar athlete who played soccer and varsity baseball at Lawrence and has coached a 9-year old baseball team. He is a peer leader, an excellent history and all-around student. He will attend Syracuse University this fall and study mechanical engineering.

Klara Bieniasz currently attends The College of New Jersey, where she is studying public health and law. While at Lawrence High, Klara was in the top ten of her class. She was a member of Model UN, the School Leadership Team, and President of the "Friends Beyond China" club. Klara was also a member of the varsity lacrosse team and works at Kumon Learning Center.

The Winona Nash award is given in honor of long-time Township Historian and LHS member, Winnie Nash. Nash was instrumental in establishing the society and worked tirelessly in collecting and archiving thousands of documents, photographs, and artifacts as part of the township's historical collection.



LHS President John Halvorsen presents the 2017 Winona Nash Award to Jake Ari.

National Park Passport Stamps and Passport Books Available

1761 Brearley House is now a cancellation station featuring several stamps as part of the Passport to Your National Parks program. The stamps highlight local historical areas, events, and special individuals who played a role in township, and national, history. David Brearley, NJ signer of the U.S. Constitution, 1761 Brearley House, King's Highway, and Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area are some of the stamps available during tours and society events. There are also special event stamps for Hogmanay, Col. Hand's March, and Col. Edward Hand's birthday - all are available at the events, which take place the last week of December and first week of January. The stamps can also be found at the Township Clerk's Office at the Municipal Building. Passport books for adults and children can be purchased at the shop in 1761 Brearley House.



The Lawrence Historical Society
P.O. Box 6025
Lawrenceville, N.J. 08648

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Make check payable to: The Lawrence Historical Society, PO Box 6025, Lawrence Township, NJ 08648
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