



Places in Time

WINTER 2018

Call of Duty

Nicole Kulina and Brooke Hunter

The Civil War was the most significant historical event to take place during the time George Phillips kept his diary. Phillips had a lot to say about subjects like farming but frustratingly little about others including the Civil War. Phillips only mentioned the sectional conflict once before the war. On Thanksgiving Day 1860 Phillips noted solemnly: "There is also much for us to do in humbling ourselves before God in view of the calamity now threatening our beloved Country on account of the threatened secession of the Southern States." (273) The tumult caused by Lincoln's election moved Phillips to note the impending crisis. A month later South Carolina carried out its secessionist threat sparking a chain reaction ending in the Confederacy. By April 1861, America was a nation at war with itself.

Two of Phillips' three sons served the Union cause. William, the eldest, volunteered as a surgeon for the first three years, while Ephraim, the middle son, joined in the final year. Yet Phillips tended to record their movements and not much else in his diary. For example, after logging the weather and farm chores on September 29, 1861, he added: "W.W. L. Phillips left Trenton Friday 12 o'clock September 6, 1861 for Washington D.C. as Surgeon of N.J. Cavalry in Col. Wm. Halstead's Regiment. From a letter received from him, I learn that he arrived in Washington at about 11 o'clock next day." (277) In the last dated entry on December 25, 1864, he matter-of-factly stated, "Eph. has enlisted in the cavalry service of the United States Volunteers and is or was at Harpers Ferry" (287). This brief sketch will fill in some blanks about his sons' military service.

William Wilson Latta (called W.W.L.) was born February 19, 1829 and grew up helping his father on the farm. But he was a scholar, not a farmer. He entered the sophomore class at Princeton, graduating in 1848, and then studied medicine at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia. According to the school catalog, he took courses in physiology, therapeutics, anatomy, surgery, obstetrics, and chemistry. As a student W.W.L. observed famous faculty like Dr. Thomas Mütter perform amputations in the clinic (a large amphitheater) and studied his private collections. Today you can view these same specimens and models at Philadelphia's Mütter Museum. To earn a medical degree from the college, a candidate had to be male, at least 21 years old, and of good moral character. Degree requirements included a minimum three years of study and a thesis. W.W.L. earned his M.D. in 1851 at the age of 22. He opened a practice in Trenton and married Margaret, daughter of Dr. John McKelway, with whom he trained. Margaret died in 1857 after childbirth along with their second child.

How Much Did a Princeton Education Cost in 1845?

To the parents and students who have paid for college or are now saving up, George Phillips recorded that it cost him \$48.83 per session (the equivalent of about \$1,600 today) to send W.W.L. to Princeton. The itemized list of expenses, viz.:

Tuition	25.00	Entrance	5.00
Fuel	7.00	Room Rent	6.00
Library	1.00	Servants wages	2.00
Incidental	2.50	Copy of College laws	0.33

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Annual Meeting Set For February 25, Lecture to Focus on Millham

Lawrence Historical Society's Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 25 at 2:00 p.m. in the Community Commons at Lawrence High School. The agenda will include a brief business meeting, the election and swearing in of the Board of Trustees with terms beginning in 2018, followed by a lecture by Township Historian Dennis Waters, and will conclude with refreshments, featuring the township birthday cake.

The nominees for the Board of Trustees for three year terms beginning in 2018 are Katherine (Kathie) Meeker-Cohen, Judy Salcewicz, Martin M. (Marty) Bloomenthal, and Priscilla Taylor. Meeker-Cohen and Salcewicz were recently appointed to fill unexpired terms, while Bloomenthal and Taylor are re-appointments.

The lecture, *Lawrence: Love It Or Leave It, The Millham Secession and Other Distastefulities*, will be delivered by Lawrence Township Historian Dennis Waters. Waters, a former Society Trustee, has volunteered as Lawrence Township Historian since 2006, and has presented a lecture on local history at the annual meeting of the Lawrence Historical Society since 2010.



In 1882 Lawrence lost half its population when Millham, the South Lawrence neighborhood on the Trenton border, seceded to form its own township. Millham's declaration of independence capped several decades of dynamic growth that was largely ignored by the North Lawrence farmers who ran the township. Today Millham is part of Trenton's North Ward. Join us on February 25th to learn how this thriving industrial neighborhood came into being and how Lawrence lost control of it.

Renew Your Membership for 2018

Lawrence Historical Society relies on membership renewals and donations to pay for our programs, newsletter, website, and scholarships. Please renew your membership by mailing back the form on the back page, online on our website, or in person at the annual meeting.

Society Receives Grant From County

The Lawrence Historical Society was awarded a \$5,800 general operating grant from the Mercer County Division of Culture and Heritage for 2018. The grant is part of the county's history re-grant program, which is in partnership with the New Jersey Historical Commission. This is the second year the society has received a general operating grant from the county, having been awarded \$5,700 in 2017. Previously, the society had been awarded a similar grant of \$5,000 per year from the New Jersey Historical Commission for the years 2012-2016. The general operating grants have been used to offset rising insurance and accounting fees, allowing the society to use membership funds and donations on programming and house upkeep.

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.

1980: The Olympics Come To Lawrence

by Laura Nawrocik

The 1980 Winter Olympic Games were held in Lake Placid, New York and left many Americans with lasting memories of a miracle gold medal in ice hockey, a five gold medal performance by Eric Heiden in speed skating, and heartbreak for Scott Hamilton in figure skating. Lawrence Township played a role in the games when the Torch Relay passed through on the evening of Sunday, February 3, on its way to the Opening Ceremonies that were held on February 13. To celebrate, the township held a Lawrence Olympic Festival, which featured a Mini Olympics at The Lawrenceville School.

The day kicked off around noon with registration for a host of events. The program included traditional Olympic sports such as track, wrestling, basketball, soccer, cross-country skiing, and swimming, as well as frisbee toss, ice skate speed racing, and snow sculpting. Events were held for both children and adults with an awards ceremony featuring Olympic Torch Relay officials at the conclusion of the day.

Matthew Pauli, a high school freshman from Alaska, was the runner who brought the torch through the township, entering from Hopewell Township on Lawrenceville-Pennington Road and then following Rt. 206 to Princeton Township. Over 20 runners from the area joined him as part of the official escort. Spectators were allowed to line the route, with a reviewing area set-up in the village. Special candles with the 1980 Olympic Winter Games logo were sold so spectators could light the roadside for the post-dusk run.



Did You Know?

In December, Township Council dedicated a new display case in town hall. One of the items in the new display case is a 1980 Lake Placid logoed candle that was used during the torch relay in Lawrence.

The 1984 Los Angeles and 1996 Atlanta Summer Games torches also made their way down Rt. 206, with the 1984 torch housed overnight at Rider College.

Left: Matthew Pauli on the reviewing stand

Below: A kids track event at the Mini Olympics



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When the war started in 1861, W.W.L. joined the army as a surgeon in the 1st New Jersey Volunteer Cavalry. He served from August 16, 1861 until September 20, 1864. For the last two years he was chief surgeon of the 2nd Cavalry Division of the Army of the Potomac.

The Army of the Potomac battled Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. W.W.L. would have treated the wounded at Gettysburg and other famous battles.

By modern standards, Civil War-era medicine seems barbaric. Observing a few gunshot surgeries and amputations in Philadelphia as a med student and maybe doing a few in his practice would hardly have prepared W.W.L. for the war's crude battlefield surgery conditions or gruesome injuries. We know now that disease was the war's greatest killer because of what they did not know then. Germs and how to stop them. While doctors did dull patient pain with anesthesia like chloroform, they did not operate in sterile environments. Out of the 624,511 total soldiers killed during the war on both sides, 388,580 died from infection or disease. Dysentery and diarrhea combined took more lives than combat. Medical staff got sick too, including W.W.L. but luckily he recovered. Upon his return, he evaluated recruits for duty at the Trenton Draft Post.

After the war he continued to practice medicine and became a civic leader in Trenton. He helped Civil War veterans as a medical examiner for pensions, and later as the chief surgeon at the National Soldiers' Home in Hampton, Virginia. After working in Hampton for two years, W.W.L. died from a cold that spun out of control on April 17, 1896. His death was front page news back home. He was buried at Trenton's Riverview Cemetery.

Ephraim was born on May 5, 1832. In 1854 he married Mary McClure and moved to a farm near the Upper Cemetery in Lawrence with his father's help. Life would not be easy for Ephraim. In 1856 a fire destroyed nearly all he had.



Photograph of Dr. William W.L. Phillips in uniform

His father recorded the tragic event in his diary. Phillips described spotting smoke coming from the direction of Ephraim's farm and rushed over to find "that my fears were too fully realized when we arrived at the scene of the awful conflagration... His loss is estimated over 5000 dollars." (172) Despite his hard work, Ephraim lost the farm in 1862. His father noted, "Poor fellow!! how sorry and sad it makes me feel, nearly nine years of his life has been wasted as far as regards providing for his family & himself against a rainy day." (287)

Ephraim enlisted in the army to help support his family like so many other soldiers. When Union recruits dwindled in 1863, Congress instituted a draft for all males between the ages of twenty and forty-five. Though he was not drafted, Ephraim volunteered for military service the following year at the age of 32. Ephraim mustered into the army a few weeks before W.W.L. mustered out. He served as a private in the NJ 3rd Cavalry from September 1, 1864 through the end of the war earning \$16 per month plus a bounty and subsistence for families of volunteers. Payment records show that Ephraim earned almost \$800 by January 1865. At the time, Ephraim had four children and one on the way. Two of his children stayed on their grandfather's farm, according to George Phillips' diary, and the rest of the family went to Burlington, NJ.

Philip Henry Sheridan making his famous ride from Winchester



L. Prang & Co, and Thure De Thulstrup (1886). Library of Congress.

Ephraim's obituary in 1906 made several incredible claims about his military service. The article said he was wounded at Chancellorsville, but the battle took place more than a year before he enlisted. The headline proclaimed: "General Sheridan Used His Horse in Famous Ride at Battle of Winchester." Yet, General Philip Sheridan made his famous ride at the battle of Cedar Creek, rallying an army in full retreat to turn back and defeat General Jubal Early's Confederates. Sheridan's legendary black steed is now part of the collection of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

Ephraim joined General Sheridan's 1864 campaign to vanquish the Shenandoah Valley. Union control of the Valley helped re-elect Lincoln and deprived the Army of Northern Virginia of food and resources that contributed to Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House six months later. Whether Ephraim ever loaned a horse to General Sheridan seems less important than his being on the front lines for the end of the war.

When we send a tweet or post a photo on Facebook, the point is for lots of people to see it. George Phillips (1803-1869) did not expect this type of exposure for his diary. Thanks to W.W.L.'s daughter Isabella and her descendants we now have access to George Phillips' world more than 150 years later. But the striking history lesson presented by the diary on the Civil War is how little this major event mattered in his day-to-day life at the time.

Sources:

George Phillips Diary (1843-1864). Lawrence Historical Archives. Mercer County Public Library-Lawrence Branch.

Civil War Service Records, 1861-1865, New Jersey State Archives.

Civil War Payment Vouchers, 1861-1865, New Jersey State Archives

"Catalogue of Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphia: Session of 1851-52" (1851). Jefferson Medical College Catalogs. Paper 64. http://jdc.jefferson.edu/jmc_catalogs/64

William W.L. Phillips obituary. Trenton Evening Times 19 April 1896: 1.

Ephraim Phillips obituary. Trenton Evening Times 18 March 1906, sec. 11: 5.

About the Authors:

Nicole Kulina is a senior Biology major at Rider University. After working on the Phillips Diary Transcription Project in HIS 180, she conducted further research in an independent study with Professor Brooke Hunter and together they produced this article.

Lawrence Students Participate In Colonel Hand March

by Priscilla Taylor



Priscilla Taylor, Bill Agress as Col. Hand, Arjun Agarwal and John Weaver

On Saturday, January 13, 2018, Lawrence High School student Arjun Agarwal and Lawrenceville Prep student John Weaver presented their award-winning National History Day documentary, “The Ten Day Stand that Defined a Free Country,” at the annual Colonel Hand Historic March. Agarwal and Weaver created the documentary in 2017 when they attended Lawrence Middle School and interviewed historian David Hackett Fischer, author, “Washington’s Crossing,” for their project.

National History Day is an annual competition for students in grades 6-12 that begins on a regional level in March, advances to a state level in May, and culminates in a week-long event in June at the University of Maryland. It’s an exciting opportunity for students to utilize and improve their writing and critical thinking skills while undertaking thorough, detailed research on a topic of their choice within the guidelines of the annual NHD theme.

Students choose a topic to research, develop a thesis, and then create a presentation as a paper, website, exhibit, documentary, or performance. Students have the opportunity to work individually or in groups of 2-5. Lawrence Middle School has participated in the competition since 2013, and Lawrence High School started a NHD club in 2016. Lawrence public schools have had 22 students qualify for the national level of competition since 2013. Lawrence Historical Society board member, Priscilla Taylor, serves as NHD adviser at both the middle and high schools. The 2018 theme for this year’s History Day competition is: “Conflict and Compromise in History,” and the Mercer County Regional competition is March 3, 2018 at Rutgers University-Camden.

For more information about National History Day, visit their website at www.nhd.org.

Society Adds Two New Board Members

Members of the Board of Trustees filled two vacancies in the fall, naming Katherine (Kathie) Meeker-Cohen and Judy Salcewicz to unexpired terms that are up for re-appointment at the 2018 Annual Meeting.

Katherine Meeker-Cohen joins the Board of Trustees of the Lawrence Historical Society following her tenure as Director of Business Development for Michael Graves Architecture & Design. For the past 20 years she has directed business development for some of the nation's most prominent design firms, including Gwathmey Siegel and Associates and Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer. She has lived in Lawrenceville since 1982. Before working in architecture, Katherine taught English at Princeton Day School, Mercer County College and Rutgers University. Katherine has served in numerous capacities in local non-profits including McCarter Theatre Board of Associates, President of the Lawrenceville Elementary PTO, President of the Willows Swim Club and Trustee and Member of the Session at the Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville. She currently serves as Trustee of the Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville.

Judy Salcewicz has lived in Mercer County for over 40 years, where she enjoyed teaching and running the Community Service Program at Notre Dame High School. In addition to writing, she enjoys reading, travel, volunteering, gardening and spending time with her grandchildren. Retiring and joining the Lawrence Memoir Writing Group has helped her reconnect with her passion for writing. She has had stories published in Kelsey Review, Horse Network and Women's World. One of her proudest teaching accomplishments was creating an anti-bullying program that her students presented to dozens of area grammar schools.

Ghost Tour a Hit

October's ghost tour of the township was a hit with attendees, who were entertained and educated during the 90 minute bus ride. Volunteers acted as tour guides and ghosts on various stops, highlighting the township's history with their stories. Aside from the human specters, the tour encountered some spooky wolves roaming the countryside. Many thanks to Priscilla Taylor, Janet Bickal, and Bill Agress for their work in putting the program together.



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

Return Service Requested



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Please renew my membership today (circle level):

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Family (\$40)

Individual (\$20)

Student/Senior (\$10/person)

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Email: _____ Phone: _____

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