

# QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

## Salem County Historical Society

Founded July 31, 1884

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### Founding the Alliance Colony

By: Charles H. Harrison

Early on a spring morning 130 years ago, forty-three Jewish families, who spoke no English and had never owned or worked on a farm, boarded a train in Manhattan and set out for very rural Salem County. Here, in 1882, they founded the first Jewish agricultural community in the United States. They called the settlement on the bank of the Maurice River the Alliance Colony, named to honor the Alliance Israélite Universelle, a French organization that encouraged Jews to escape persecution in czarist Russia and elsewhere in Europe.

The Jewish families were part of the Am Olam movement, the so-called "eternal people," Jews who had been prohibited from owning rural property in their native country and had migrated to America to prove to the world, as Am Olam founder Sidney Baily put it, "that Jews could be hard-working, land-tilling producers. Our goal was to own a home and land as a means of earning a livelihood and to be true citizens of our adopted country. We aimed to bring our children up to receive the blessings of a natural life from heaven and earth. For these goals we left Russia to become farmers in the 'land of the free and the home of the brave.'"

The families who on that spring day long ago, said goodbye to all that they had known, detrained in what is, today, the unincorporated town of Norma at the crossroads of Almond



In 1882, 43 families escaped the pogroms of Russia and settled in this rural Southern New Jersey community as the first Jewish agricultural colony in the United States. They belonged to the Am Olam Movement that believed in a "return to the soil." They organized a Chevra Kadisha and built a synagogue and in 1891 they founded Alliance Cemetery.

970 Gershall Avenue, Norma NJ 08347

Road and Gershall Avenue in the extreme southeast corner of Pittsgrove Township. Other local place names in the area that date from the time of the Alliance Colony are Brotmanville and Alliance.

The settlers of the Alliance Colony had much to learn about living off the

land, and the lessons were hard. Jacob *(continued from cover)*  
H. Perskie, son of original settlers, recalled those early years: "The new immigrants came to this country poverty stricken, without a knowledge

*(continued on page 27)*

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The *Quarterly Newsletter* is published by the Salem County Historical Society Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter.

This publication may include historical materials that contain language or stereotypes reflecting the culture or language of a particular period or place. These items are presented as part of the historical record.

**Research Library & Museum Hours**

Tuesday through Saturday  
12 Noon - 4 PM

Admission Fee \$5.00  
Free for Members

[www.salemcountyhistoricalsocety.com](http://www.salemcountyhistoricalsocety.com)

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**Mission Statement:** The mission of the Salem County Historical Society is to seek, document, preserve, interpret and perpetuate Salem County's heritage, and to enhance the awareness and appreciation of that heritage, through its research, collections, functions, exhibits, educational programs and publications, for the benefit of future generations and for the betterment of the community.

**Message from the Director**

It is my sincere pleasure to greet all of our members for the first time as the new Administrator/Curator of the Salem County Historical Society. It has been a busy but extremely enjoyable time for me as I have begun to settle into the duties and responsibilities of the position. Of particular pleasure has been meeting all of the Board Members, Trustees, Staff, Volunteers, Members and friends of the Society and experiencing firsthand the passion and dedication that all of you bring to this wonderful organization. With your continued help and support, look for the Society to continue to do the good work we have been doing in preserving the history and culture of Salem County. In the coming months, and beyond, we look forward to new efforts to deliver on our mission to seek, document, preserve and interpret.



The first big project that was well underway when I arrived was our Spring Open House Tour. I don't need to tell anyone who has been around putting together a project such as this how difficult it is to get everything coordinated. You will be reading more about this event later in this issue, but it is well worth thanking Board President Barbara Duffy and the Open House Committee for all the hard work in bringing this great event together.

I also would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff, Beverly Carr Bradway, Danielle Polonczyk, Wanda Hofbauer and Kimberly Steiner, as well as the individual Committee chairs and members, for all of their gracious time and help in getting me up to speed as I have transitioned into this position. We are doing a lot of things here at the Society, and without the help of everyone it would be nearly impossible to get my arms around it. Thanks so much to all.

Spring has sprung here at the Society, and that means that we are well into our Spring and Summer events. This means school groups. The Education Committee has once again done a great job in presenting programming to the groups that have visited us, as well as getting the facilities physically ready for the kids. It is always fun to see young children learning about life in the past, and the Society is a wonderful place to do it.

I have spent some time in these first few weeks getting to know the buildings and collections. This has meant climbing around in attics and barns and basements learning about our facilities. We are currently working to get our back vault available for storage of archival materials and some weeks ago had some electrical problems solved in the library. These sorts of projects, while not as glamorous as exhibits or programs, are vital to keeping our collections safe and sound. Completion of these projects is made possible by the support of our members and we thank them for it.

While we are on the subject, membership is vital to what we do here in so many ways. Memberships provide not just support but also the people who do much of the volunteer work that is so important to our operations. We are grateful for that support, and we encourage all our members to go out and be ambassadors for the Society in the community. Encourage your friends to visit the Society and become members themselves. A healthy, growing membership is essential for the health and growth of the Historical Society itself.

Thank you.

*[Handwritten signature]* Jonathan C. Johnson, Administrator/Curator

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**Annual Dinner**

Friday, September 21st  
5:30 PM Social Hour



## Calendar of Events

### **Thursday May 24, 2012**

*Salem Main Street* presents: First Salem Farmer's Market of the Season

### **Sunday, June 10, 2012 1:30 PM**

Summer Quarterly Meeting at Friends Village in Woodstown

### **Saturday, August 25, 2012**

*Salem Main Street* presents:  
Market Street Day

### **Sunday, October 21, 2012 3:00 PM**

9th John S. Rock Memorial Lecture,  
at Mt. Pisgah A.M.E. Church.  
Presenter Professor Timothy Hack.

### **Friday, September 21, 2012**

Annual Dinner at Washington Club  
in Penns Grove, NJ  
5:30 PM Social Hour  
6:30 PM Dinner Program

#### **MARK THE CALENDAR**

#### **9<sup>TH</sup> JOHN S. ROCK MEMORIAL LECTURE**



#### **PROFESSOR TIMOTHY HACK ANNOUNCED AS PRESENTER**

Assistant Professor of  
Political and Social Science  
Salem Community College

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2012  
3:00 PM**

**MT. PISGAH A.M.E. CHURCH  
15 Yorke Street  
Salem, New Jersey**

**There is an exhibition** in the window of B. Frank Wood's Book Store, a splendid crayon drawing of the steamer "Perry" by her captain, Samuel Johnson. It is a faithful drawing of the steamer, both in appearance and coloring, and stamps Capt. J. as a skillful artist.  
*Salem Sunbeam*, Salem, NJ, March 29, 1878

## *Quarterly Newsletter*

## **Society News**

Things have been active at the Society these days. In addition to the usual library researchers and museum visitors, the Society has hosted or will host a number of special groups in the coming months.

On March 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Society hosted the "Best Practices" collections care workshop. This featured an informative workshop on how to care for, handle and pack books and objects in a museum setting. After the workshop came a tour of the Society's facilities and some demonstrations of how we are utilizing the best practices in our museum, library and archives.

On April 21<sup>st</sup>, we hosted a group from Salem Sunrise Rotary who came all the way from Nigeria. These guests brought an interesting new perspective and asked some very good questions as they toured our facility. They greatly enjoyed the visit, and it was an honor for us to host them.

In May and June the school groups arrive. This year the Delaware Valley Junior Academy, Elsinboro Township School, Oldmans School, Carlton School and Upper Pittsgrove School will be visiting. As usual, thanks to the members of the Education Committee for their work in getting the facilities and programs ready for the kids.

The Master Gardeners of Salem County returned this spring to prepare our garden and flower beds for the spring and summer. Thanks to the Master Gardeners and our groundskeeper Bill Jackson, the courtyard, which is one of the favorite features of the Society, looked lovely for the Open House on May 5<sup>th</sup>.

The Salem County Historical Society would like to thank Joe Kimber and Bud Magill for their past services to the Museum Committee. Joe and Bud have been important members of the committee and have contributed many hours of effort to support its work. Their departures from the committee have been accepted with regret. They will be missed, but we still look forward to their involvement in other Society activities.



#### **Salem County Historical Society**

#### **Quarterly Meeting**

**Summer 2012**

**June 10 @ 1:30 PM**

**Friends Village in Woodstown, NJ**

#### ***Salem County in the Revolution!***

Join us for a presentation from American Historian and former National Park Service Ranger Anthony Melita with a focus on the American Revolution.

**A new steeple** was raised yesterday on the Baptist Church, Fenwick Street. The steeple, independent of the spire, is 69 feet in height and is said to be the tallest in Salem. It was framed on the ground, and raised to its destined position by means of derricks, &tc.  
*National Standard*, Salem, NJ, June 18, 1851

## ALEXANDER'S ANNALS

### 50 YEARS AGO

*Elmer Times*, Elmer, NJ, June 1962

- Irene Harris and her "Marimbatones" win spot on Ted Mack's Original Amateur Hour Program.
- Ranch Hope Inc. Organized; Rehabilitates Wayward Boys.
- George Kernan elected President Elmer Jaycees.
- Ella Paulding Hepner and Dorothy Ward Brooks retire from Elmer Elementary School.
- Pick Your Own Strawberries—10¢ per Quart—Daretown—Myer-Goldberg Farm.

### 75 YEARS AGO

*Salem Standard & Jerseyman*, Salem, NJ, June 1937

- Muskrat Industry worth about \$150,000 to County.
- Marie Irelan—\$20k first prize—Name and Slogan for Sunday Inquirer's Magazine Section—"Everybody's Weekly".
- James E. Hitchner and son purchase Green's Hotel yard for expansion.
- Salem Glass Works 4th St. office building and old store razed.
- Tomato Plants—\$1.25 per Thousand—Orol Ledden & Sons.

### 100 YEARS AGO

*Penns Grove Record*, Pennsgrove, NJ, June 1912

- First Salem County presidential visit last week—William H. Taft.
- Gasoline by the gallon or barrel—V.S. Homan—311 Delaware Avenue
- First Chautauqua in County—Next Week in Salem.
- Wanted 100 Women—South Jersey Canning Company—Pedricktown—Apply at Once.
- 2,000 plus from Wilmington on the *Ulrica* for the 4th.

### Corporate and Business Members

#### *"Partnerships with History"* FENWICK BENEFACTORS

Salem County Mutual Fire Insurance Co.

The Denn House

### PEDERSEN PROVIDERS

DuPont Chamber Works

Farmer's Mutual Insurance of Salem

Harvest Community Bank

Henry D. Young, Inc.

Mannington Mills

Warner & Co., CPA's

### OAK TREE ASSOCIATES

Clement Pappas & Co., Inc.

Cowtown Rodeo

Earl H. Sloan, Inc.

Franklin Bank

John D. Jordan, Esq.

Kates Realty, LLC

Morgan's Electrical Services

Oak Tree Chapter-NSDAR

The Society is grateful for the support of our corporate and business members. For more information about our "Partnership with History" program  
Call 856-935-5004 or visit

[www.salemcountyhistoricalsociety.com](http://www.salemcountyhistoricalsociety.com)

## USED BOOK SALE

The Society continues to add to our used book sale list on our website ([www.salemcountyhistoricalsociety.com](http://www.salemcountyhistoricalsociety.com)). Members and non-members alike have been actively purchasing donated, used, damaged and duplicate books in support of our Library's future collection and conservation efforts.

*We thank everyone for their continued interest and support.*

### Library News

- ◆ An every name, ten-page index has been created for *O the Great Days, A collection of Photographs by Edward W. Humphreys (1895-1930) Compiled and Edited by Natalie Ware Johnson*. The index was completed by J. Harlan Buzby and is available from the Society for \$5.00, S&H included.
- ◆ The 1940 census for Salem County is now available on Ancestry.com. The society maintains, for patron use, online subscriptions to Ancestry.com and to Genealogybank.com.
- ◆ The Genealogy Magazine of New Jersey, Volume 87, Number 1 contains an article, *The Weavers of Pilesgrove, Salem County, and Their Compatriots, Part I: Frederick and Abigail Weaver* by Joseph R. Klett. The society subscribes to many periodicals which are valuable resources in our library.

## Spring Open House Tour Update

Saturday May 5th dawned slightly overcast, but for those who participated in the Open House in Fenwick's Colony Spring House Tour, it was a bright sunny day!

Home owners and tour participants alike could not have enjoyed the day more. Over 450 people came out to hear the story of early Salem County families, marauding British troops and the effects of the times on our County today.

The John Kelly House, owned by Fay and Walt Leslie, hosted the Salem County Militia, a group of local enthusiasts who were able to take our patrons back in time and help each to understand our early history. At other homes, James Barrett House, Nicholson House, Jarman House and Mayhew House, hosts dressed in period garb greeted patrons, cooked on open hearth, showed off gardens (complete with peacocks) and told true tales.

The Johnson House, Wistar and Hufty Houses, Holmeland, Pledger House and Champneys House (on the Tour for the first time) shared very special stories of the early occupants.

The Society was happy to share the day with and thank the public sites, churches and the other historical societies for opening their doors to tour patrons. None of this could have been accomplished without the efforts of the Open House Committee. Led by Gay Schneeman (who developed the idea of this year's theme) and Barbara Duffy, committee members who deserve recognition are Peg Danner, Craig Schneeman, Brian Duffy and Joe Kimber for developing a very readable map to guide tour patrons as they traveled county roads. As always and of constant support was the SCHS team: Andrew Coldren, Beverly Bradway and Danielle Polonczyk, the strength of the Society. Many thanks go to Peg Danner and Doug Pjaden who opened their home to the tour homeowners and board members for a night of laughs and camaraderie.

As Walt Leslie said of the tour, "It was a day many will not forget."



**Gardens of Alexander Grant House**



**Pledger House**

## Collection Spotlight Recap - Bowen Belt

By Andrew Coldren

Back in the Spring 2012 issue of our newsletter we featured a collections spotlight on the belt of Capt. George Bowen. At that time we were attempting to determine the function of this unusual looking item. We had some excellent theories, including that it was a hernia belt, but nothing definitive. Soon after coming aboard as Curator, I put the internet to work on the mystery of the Bowen belt. After trying several combinations in image searches, the terms "khaki", "electric", and "belt" produced the answer. I pulled up an image of a belt almost exactly like ours only in better condition. The description of the image provided vital information to search again and get a scan of the original advertisement for the belt. The object is an example of Dr. Sanden's Electric Belt, and the ad appeared in the *San Francisco Call* on Sunday, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1895.

It seems that the belt was good for pretty much all that ails you. The initial hint I had that one of the purposes of the belt was for "lost manhood" was that the first hit I got from the Google search was a website featuring bizarre treatments throughout history for male impotence (I'll leave it to the reader's imagination to figure out where the coiled wire loop goes). I knew then that this was going in an interesting direction. The reason that George Bowen owned one of these belts can only be speculated upon. We have in our collection one of Bowen's swords from the Civil War. At the top of the scabbard is a bullet strike from the Battle of Po River, May 10, 1864. It is possible that the bullet slammed the sword and scabbard against his hip, causing internal damage that may have bothered



him the rest of his life. Another possibility is that Bowen suffered from "nervousness", "sleeplessness", and "nervous debility", all of which sound familiar to us today as symptoms of post-traumatic stress.

## Genealogically Speaking...

### ***More Post Office Lists...1818***

#### **A LIST OF LETTERS**

*Remaining in the Post-Office, at Salem, New Jersey, July 1, 1818.  
[Transcribed as in the original]*

Ann W. Brick  
 Francis F. Brewster  
 Elias A. Bradley  
 Thomas Brown  
 Zaccheus Brown, esq.  
 Ephraim Britten  
 Andrew Brown  
 James Batten, esq.  
 Thomas Bond  
 Elizabeth Conover  
 Sarah Conover  
 Benjamin Carty  
 John Cravin  
 Maria Cook  
 Samuel Cripps  
 John Coombs  
 Daniel Dorril  
 John Desbencaw  
 Joseph Dennis  
 Samuel Davis  
 Kisia Early  
 John Elwill  
 David English  
 Andrew English  
 William Emberson  
 Jacob Eaton  
 Thomas Eldridge  
 John Ferguson  
 James Frazer  
 Henry Fries, jr.  
 George Gilmer  
 Lydia Gibbs  
 Benjamin Griscomb  
 William Gadwun  
 Samuel Hilliard,  
 Smith Harris  
 Joseph Hall  
 James Harris  
 Andrew Ham  
 John Hains  
 Charles Hubbs  
 Richard Hiles  
 Capt. John Hickman

Edward Jones  
 David Inglish

Jacob Johnson  
 Elizabeth Ireland  
 George Kirkpatrick

Sarah Lloyd  
 Samuel Landolt  
 John S. Landolt  
 Miss S. Maigill  
 John Moore  
 Lewis Mairs  
 James Newell  
 Joseph Owen  
 Charity Peterson  
 Emely Poulson  
 Andrew Pile  
 Hannah Perry  
 Abner Patrick  
 Isaac Price, esq.

Ann Ridgway  
 Mark Riley  
 Philip Shimp  
 Ebenezar Smith  
 William Swing  
 John Shourds  
 Jonathan Sanderlin  
 John Sparks  
 Jacob Stretch  
 Daniel Smith  
 Peter T. Shaw  
 Hannah Shaw  
 Howell Smith  
 Isaac Sims  
 James Thompson  
 Benjamin Thomson  
 Elizaketh H. Wilson  
 William Walter, sr.  
 Thomas Wright  
 Daniel Woodruff  
 Jonathan Wood  
 Michl. Walker, esq.  
 Giles Yournsan

**SAM'L SHERRON, P.M.**  
 July 8, 1818,

*West-Jersey Gazette, Salem,  
 New Jersey, July 8, 1818*

#### **A LIST OF LETTERS**

*Remaining in the Post-Office, at Salem, New Jersey, October 1st, 1818.*

John Adams  
 Elias A. Bradley  
 Samuel Blake

Ruth Ann Bassett  
 Temperance Bradford  
 Lemuel Butler

Elizabeth Bassett  
 Edward Boyce  
 Peter Bilderback, esq.  
 Isaac Bunn  
 Joseph Cook  
 Charles Conwell  
 John Cravin  
 Ann Crow  
 James Clement  
 Aaron Cook

Simon Cartright, esq  
 David Chambers  
 Thomas Craft  
 Richard Coles, jr.  
 William Cooper  
 Sarah Dickinson  
 Ann Dolby  
 Samuel Daniels  
 Archibald Dare  
 David English  
 James English  
 Kisiah Earley  
 Mrs. Flement  
 David Fogg  
 Joseph Foster  
 Jones Freeland  
 Mary Grantland  
 Jeremiah Goforth  
 Daniel Green  
 Thomas or Jonah Garison  
 Thomas Guest  
 Samuel Gilmore  
 James Hill  
 Hannah Howey  
 Elijah Howard  
 Ellen Hubby  
 Stacy Lloyd  
 Sarah Lloyd  
 Susan Larence

John Mayhew  
 John Myers  
 Archibald Moffatt  
 Mark Miles  
 Zipheriah Ohdoughtay  
 Daniel R. Perine  
 John Pysrin  
 John Plumer  
 Elijah or Ralph Porch  
 Josiah M. Reeve  
 Obidiah Robins  
 Juliana Sparks  
 James Sayre

Elashia Smith  
 Joshua Scattergood  
 Amos Simes  
 David Shepard  
 Joseph Stretch  
 Joshua Smith, esq. Daniel Smith  
 Mary Truss  
 Mrs. F. Tudas  
 Sarah Wheaton  
 David Ware  
 John Ware  
 Rheubin Woolman  
 Lydia White  
 Richard Wood  
 John Wood  
 M. Wood  
 Louisa Youngs

All those who call for Letters, will please to say whether they are advertised or not.

**SAMUEL SHERRON, P.M.**

*West-Jersey Gazette, Salem, New Jersey,  
 October 14, 1818*

The Woodstown post office was moved on Saturday to the Opera House store recently vacated by the Woodstown National Bank. The new location will give Woodstown one of the finest post offices in any town of its size in Salem County.

*Elmer Times, Elmer, NJ, July 4, 1924*

## "SPARKS' EARLIANA"



*Photograph courtesy of Seed Savers Exchange.*

### SPOTLIGHT ON SALEM COUNTY

In 1900, GEORGE C. SPARKS stepped into the New Jersey agricultural spotlight with an original, early, smooth red tomato variety. Early in that year, his carefully developed and newly recognized tomato seed was introduced to the national scene by the garden and farm manual of the Philadelphia seed house of Johnson & Stokes.

Born in Upper Penns Neck, the son of Joseph and Hannah Coles Sparks, George married Catherine Justice in December of 1870. They settled on a farm outside of Perkintown where they raised seven children. Sparks was a thrifty and industrious farmer who made a specialty of growing early tomatoes and strawberries for the Wilmington, Delaware market.

#### "MOST VALUABLE NOVELTY IN A CENTURY"

JOHN W. MILLETT, BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA  
MARCH 29, 1901

In 1899, the editor of *The Farmers' Grove Record* made the following observation: "Two years ago Geo. Sparks found one hill of a new variety among his early tomatoes. [Sparks had planted a field of tomatoes of a variety named 'Stone'.] He saved the seed and last year he planted them. They proved to be a fine tomato, very productive and an extra early one. This year his whole crop is of that variety. Between the 14<sup>th</sup> of June and the 22d of July he had received returns amounting to over \$600."

"A member of the firm of Johnson & Stokes, of Philadelphia, came down to Mr. Spark's farm near Perkintown and procured a plant, photographs of which will doubtless appear in their 1900 catalogues, as the firm will put the seed on the market next year. . ."<sup>1</sup>

And hence, the new discovery was introduced by Johnson & Stokes in their 1900 *Garden and Farm*

*Manual*. The new variety was named "Sparks' Earliana" to honor the newly born grand-daughter, Anna, of Mr. Herbert W. Johnson, co-founder of the Philadelphia firm in 1881 with Walter P. Stokes.<sup>ii</sup>

To compliment the photograph of introduction, the manual reads: "Very early tomatoes have of late years been such a profitable crop that almost every grower in Southern New Jersey boasts, with more or less justice, that he has the earliest tomato.

"We have for years watched with a good deal of interest the first shipments to reach Philadelphia markets, and were not a little surprised to find this season a new variety from Mr. Geo. C. Sparks in a full week ahead of all the others. We immediately arranged with Mr. Sparks to save us some seed, paying a very high price for the same.



Back cover of the Johnson & Stokes 1901 *Garden & Farm Manual* illustrating the recently introduced "Sparks' Earliana" in 1900.

red color. Its solidity and fine quality are quite equal to the best medium and late sorts. From less than 4,000 hills, Mr. Sparks realized from his first pickings \$725.00 clear of freight and commission.

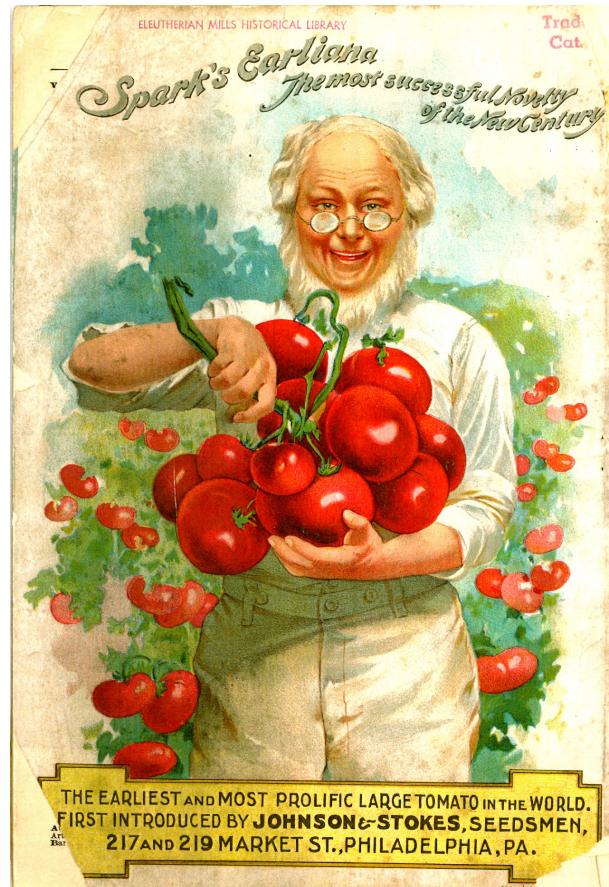
"Owing to the high price paid and the limited quantity of seed that could be saved by Mr. Sparks this season, we can offer only in packets at 20c. per pkt; 3 pkts. for 50c.; 7 pkts. for \$1.00."<sup>iii</sup>

Testimonials, to the new tomato variety, showered the Philadelphia firm with accolades from across the United States and Canada. In their 1903 catalogue, Johnson & Stokes labeled the SPARKS' EARLIANA as "The greatest novelty in tomatoes ever introduced. The earliest large tomato in the world. ... Nothing we have ever introduced has brought us so many strong testimonials. ... This tomato is not only remarkable for its earliness, but for its very large, uniform size, handsome shape, beautiful red color and wonderful productiveness, standing unequaled and alone in this respect. Its solidity, fine size and quality are unsurpassed. ... To be sure of genuine seed, grown direct from stock seed selected by Mr. Sparks, the originator, order direct from the introducers."<sup>iv</sup>

Marketing for this new tomato variety was swift and hurried with many other seed houses across the United States carrying this novelty. As early as 1901, W. Atlee Burpee and Company of Philadelphia introduced the new *Sparks' Earliana* in their 'Novelties of 33 Tried and True New Vegetables for 1901' section of their annual farm and seed manual.

Burpee states: "This is the earliest smooth bright-red Tomato of good size now in cultivation. It has been  
In 1902 the "Sparks' Earliana" tomato had rightly earned its presence  
on the cover. Courtesy of the Hagley Museum and Library.

market. MR. GEORGE C. SPARKS, of Salem Co., has been most successful in developing his "Earliana,"... In our Trial Grounds a specimen plant had forty-five ripened fruits at time of the first picking and thirty-five green ones of good size and yet the whole plant could be completely hidden by an ordinary bushel basket."<sup>v</sup>



In 1905, *Burpee's Farm Annual* states that the Spark's Earliana "... is undoubtedly the earliest smooth bright red tomato of good size. It has been developed in the light warm soil of southern New Jersey, where every effort is made to market tomatoes at the earliest possible date. It is so far superior...that it is now planted exclusively in this section which practically controls the markets of our Eastern cities during the last week in June and the month of July.

"Solid train loads are dispatched daily from the Swedesboro Station alone. These go to all points in the Eastern States, refrigerator cars being used for shipments to New England and Canada. See below."<sup>vi</sup>

Back cover of the Johnson & Stokes 1903 catalogue promoting the Sparks' Earliana as "the earliest and most prolific large tomato in the world." Courtesy of the Hagley Museum and Library.



After twenty-five years the firm of Johnson & "Shipping Sparks' Earliana Tomatoes,--(thirty carloads in one day!)-from Swedesboro, N. J.

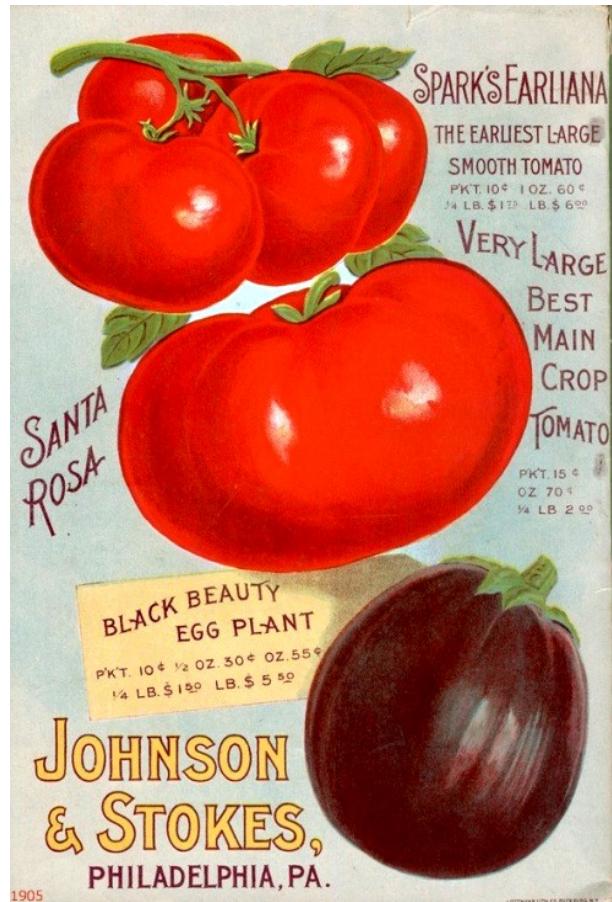
From a photograph taken by us on July 20, 1904.

On this day we counted on the tracks eighteen boxcars and twelve refrigerator cars--all loaded with Sparks' Earliana Tomatoes. On the preceding day (July 19) there were shipped from this station thirty-six cars, all fully loaded with this same single variety of Tomatoes! Just think of one day's shipment of 22,000 crates and you will have some idea of the "money-making" qualities of SPARKS' EARLIANA!"

In this 1905 Burpee's catalogue, "Sparks' Earliana" seed stock source was developed from farms in "South Jersey Home", "Buck's County, Pa." and a "Western-Grown Seed."

[In 1916, the Burpee Company used this photograph on a postcard that was mailed to their customers verifying the subsequent delivery status of their order.]

growers of the United States have realized hundreds of thousands of dollars from this remarkable variety. By starting your plants early you can have ripe fruit by the 15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> of June. ..." <sup>vii</sup>



Back cover of the 1905 Johnson and Stokes seed catalogue.

#### SEVENTY-TWO FRUITS ON A SINGLE PLANT

S. E. Fristie, Milford, Connecticut, Aug. 20, 1901, writes: "I have grown tomatoes for market for twenty years, and find your Sparks' Earliana to be the largest, earliest, most solid and the best tomato that I ever saw. I have counted 72 well-formed fruits on a single plant, not less than 40 on any."

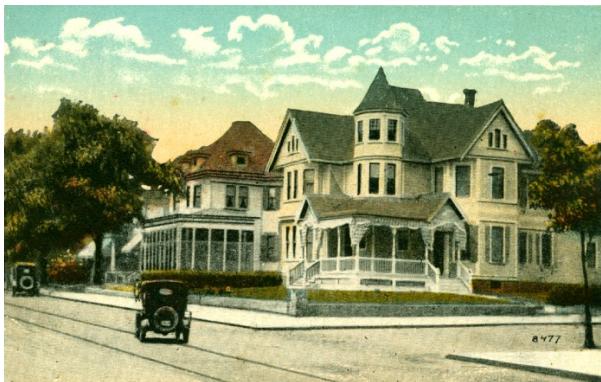
#### DO NOT CRACK OR ROT

A. L. Smith, Princeton, Indiana.

#### TWO WEEKS AHEAD OF OTHERS

A. C. Denham, Somerset, Kentucky.

*Johnson & Stokes Garden and Farm Manual 1902.*



Here Sparks enjoyed the fruits of his successful early produce farming, as one of the leading agriculturalists of Salem County. Unfortunately, Mr. Sparks died quite suddenly, in 1906, at the age of 60, Home of George & Catherine Sparks built in 1901 at the corner of Franklin and West Main Streets, Penns Grove, New Jersey.

*Courtesy of Donna Federanko-Stout.*



- i. *The Penn's Grove Record*, Penns Grove, New Jersey, July 28, 1899.
- ii. Ibid, March 25, 1937
- iii. *1900 Johnson & Stokes Garden & Farm Manual*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; p. 12.
- iv. *1903 Johnson & Stokes Garden & Farm Manual*.

Earliana (1900)

Heritage Harvest Seed 2011 Catalog, Carmon, Manitoba, Canada.

*Courtesy Heritage Harvest Seed.*

vi. *Burpee's Farm Annual for 1905*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; pg 10.

vii. *Stokes' Standard Seeds*, Walter P. Stokes, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; pg. 1, 43

viii. *The Penn's Grove Record*, Penns Grove, New Jersey,

ix. *The Penn's Grove Record*, Penns Grove, New Jersey, October 26, 1906.

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Diane Wunsch, Special Collections, National Agricultural Library, Beltsville, MD.

#### **TOMATO BROUGHT TO SALEM IN 1829**

"The tomato was brought to Salem, New Jersey, in 1829 by some ladies from Philadelphia, nieces of a former citizen of Salem named J. Z. Coffie. They visited at a house on Griffith Street now owned by Mrs. Grier (No. 147). John H. Cann, an old citizen of Salem, lived in the house at the time. The seed was sown in pots and the plants transplanted in the ground. They were a curiosity in those days being small, round and red. ...

"The first regular canning factory for canning fruits and vegetables in Salem was built in 1864 by Theophilus Patterson, Richard B. Ware and Charles W. Casper... The factory was located at Nos. 208 and 210 Church Street and dissolved at the end of that year."

Charles W. Casper

*Paper #83*, Salem County Historical Society.

Read to the Society on March 13, 1906.

*Salem Sunbeam*, Salem, NJ, March 16, 1906.

Eleanore C. Zane, Historical Society of Penns Grove, Carneys Point and Oldmans, Penns Grove, NJ.

----Compiler, J. Harlan Buzby

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of the language and without friends. Their hardships were almost indescribable. I recall the large barracks where men, women and children were crowded together under unsanitary conditions, with no clothes and hardly any necessities. I can still remember a great big iron pot in the woods where they cooked their food over an open fire while people clamored for something to eat. The cries of the children and the sighs of their mothers were the personification of misery. It resembled a gypsy camp, but with this difference: in a gypsy camp one hears song and laughter; here, in Alliance, one heard only lamentation and weeping."

By the spring of 1883, the Baron de Hirsch Fund, which helped finance Jewish agricultural settlements in the United States, had created a subsidiary corporation that purchased large tracts of land and divided those tracts into 15-acre farms. The farms were mortgaged to the colonists for \$350. Also, the Fund assisted the settlers by helping to construct a two-room house and a well for each family.

Fortunately for the Alliance Colony families, who knew next to nothing about farming but were now forced to become farmers, local Christian farm families were supportive and offered advice and assistance. The Alliance Colony families learned to grow grapes and strawberries and corn and hay. Some persons worked in cranberry bogs, and others later raised chickens.

Twenty years ago, I wrote an article about the Alliance Colony for the magazine *INSIDE*. I was fortunate to have interviewed at length one of the descendants of the original Alliance Colony settlers. Her name was Rose Applebaum. At age 78, she then lived alone in a house in Norma. One of the original settlers was Sarah Helig, Rose's grandmother, and Rose recounted a story about her ancestor that led my article:

"The sand and gravel indigenous to southern New Jersey reflected the hot summer sun as Sarah Helig, age 82, left her new house near the synagogue [at the corner of Gershon Avenue and Garden Road] without telling her husband and walked almost four miles to the old house they had moved into 40 years earlier [1882]; it was now occupied by her son and his family. When she arrived at the homestead, Sarah announced, 'I've come home to die.' And she did, three days later, on July 10, 1929."

Rose grew up in the house built for her grandparents on

The First Settlers of Alliance, NJ, who arrived in 1882: **Eli & Ethel Abramowitz, (the Abramowitzes were the parents of Lena Abramowitz Perskie, who married Jacob Perskie)**, Eli & Feigeh Bakerman, Moses & Ethel Bayuk, Abraham & Channah Leah Berman, William & Beckie Cohen, Hersh & Jennie Coltun, Joseph & Rachel Diamond, Jacob & Rebecca Ecoff, Chaim & Bessie Goldman, Nissan & Molka Greenspan, Abraham & Duba Grutsky, Simcha & Sarah Helig, Joseph & Yenta Kleinfield, William & Lizzie Kolman, Zurach & Esther Konowitz, Hersh & Rivka Kutzibow, Isaac & Golda Krassenstein, Labe & Bayla Kuden, Simcha & Pearl Luborsky, Israel Hersh & Esther Levin, Leapa & Toba Levinsky, Berel & Leah Levinson, Labe & Toba Riva Levinson, Henry & Rose Levy, Sholom & Pearl Luberoff, Chaim & Sarah Mennies, Labe & Rachel Moyd, Israel & Feigeh Opachinsky, **Lazer & Mindel Persky**, Jacob & Golda Rosenberg, Yonah & Anna Rosenfeld, Jacob & Anna Rosinsky, Joseph & Feigeh Rothman, Joseph & Deborah Rudnick, Solomon & Frima Salonsky, Moshe & Ruchel Serebrenick, Chaim Hersh & Sima Liba Silberstein, Hersh & Rose Silberman, Lazar & Bessie Staver, Eli & Riva Gitel Stavitsky, Moses & Bayla Strasnik, Pesi & Brucha Tolchinsky, Naphtula & Deborah Yosep, Joseph & Rose Zager.



Eben Ha'Ezer Synagogue and Hall at Alliance, NJ. Dedicated on Sunday morning, August 12, 1888, this was the second synagogue in the colony, "... it being a split from the old one. ..."

the 15-acre farm, the house that her grandmother returned to in 1929. Rose's father took over the farm after his father and mother moved into another house. Rose's brother, Jacob Helig, was one of the last of the Jewish dirt farmers in Pittsgrove. He raised corn and hay on 200 acres until his death in the later 1980s.

I concluded the article as follows: "As I drove away from Mrs. Applebaum's white clapboard house, which she believes predates the Alliance Colony by 100 years, I sensed that I not only had been with her for the last couple of hours, but had also been in the company of ghosts. As their name suggests, the Eternal People have left a legacy that will last forever."

## New Acquisition French Peasant Woman by Lucy D. Holme

Lucy Holme was born in Elsinboro in 1848, the daughter of Benjamin and Elizabeth Dennis Holme, and the great-granddaughter of Colonel Benjamin Holme of Revolutionary War fame. She was a student at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts where she was taught by William Sartain and Thomas Aikens. Later she studied at the Colorossi Academy in Paris with Coutois and Rixens. In 1889-91 she went abroad to paint in the French countryside, Italy and Holland. In 1891, probably while on this trip, she completed this painting of a French peasant woman.

The painting passed from Lucy Holme to her nephew, Edgar R. Holme, then to Edgar's wife Harriet York Holme. It was willed by Harriet to her niece, Mildred Hicks, who generously donated it to the Salem County Historical Society. The painting features rich, dark colors and carefully executed details. It is signed Lucy D. Holme in the lower right corner and dated 1891. It is an important addition to the Society's collection, where it joins two other works by Holme, the much loved *Holiday Occupation*, and a recently discovered pencil sketch of apple blossoms.



**French Peasant Woman by Lucy Holme**



**Apple Blossoms by Lucy Holme**



**Holiday Occupation by Lucy Holme**

## Donations Sought

### Purchase of Salem Redware Jar

This redware jar or churn was manufactured at the Diamond Pottery which was located on Howell and Ward Streets in Salem. It is the only signed example from this pottery known to exist. The Society is raising funds to purchase this important artifact for our collection. Please consider making a donation for any amount. Checks should be sent to the Salem County Historical Society, 83 Market Street, Salem, NJ 08079.

The pottery property was owned by Benjamin and Sarah Acton. It was rented to William J. Diamond, a native of Pennsylvania, who operated his earthenware manufactory at that site from 1833 until his death in 1862. His son Thomas succeeded him and continued in business until 1887.

It is very similar to a jar in our collection which has been attributed to the same pottery. The jars are approximately the same shape. They both taper in from the base to the top, and are decorated with three horizontal bands of cogwheel ridges. Both jars are missing their handles. The jar currently in our collection is inscribed *Miz H. Acton* on one side and *1836* on the other. It may have also been made by William Diamond, but it is not signed. It is thought to have been made for Harriet Acton, wife of Richard Miller Acton, son of Benjamin and Sarah Acton.

The signed William Diamond jar would be an important addition to our collection. It is a rare, documented, locally made artifact, the only known piece of signed redware from the Diamond Pottery. Its existence strengthens the attribution of our Miz H. Acton jar. It was found at a recent auction incorrectly listed as Pennsylvania redware. Its true identity was recognized by a knowledgeable local collector who understood its potential importance to our collection, purchased it, and then offered it to us at his cost, \$911.25 including the buyers premium. Please consider making a contribution towards its purchase.



**Acton Pottery Jar by William J. Diamond**

The jar is inscribed: *Mrs. Benjamin Burt  
Nov. 4th, 1852, Presented by Wm. Diamond  
for Buckwheat Batter*

(dimensions: 9" high x 7 3/4" at base)

## Museum Spotlight Recap

**What we knew:** The artifact in question is a large, almost 5 foot tall, plank of wood. The front is painted blue and has ten octagonal shapes made up of small, thin pieces of wood that extend off the surface of the plank. The artifact is most likely a design matrix.

**What we did not know:** What is the function of the artifact?

**What we know now:** Former director Jim Turk gave us an answer! Dr. Turk recognized this artifact as being half of a floorcovering printing block that was donated to the Society by Mannington Mills. Printing blocks like this were used to transfer patterns onto cloth that would be made into a floorcovering known as oilcloth. "The cloth in its raw state first receives a coat of ordinary dark paint...It is then taken to the operating room, where it falls under the manipulation of the skilled operators or printers, who place upon it the attractive colors. This is done with a series of blocks, each representing a color or shade...in some patterns requiring the handling of at least eight or nine blocks to complete it."



## CIVIL WAR LETTER FROM CAMP

From the 4<sup>th</sup> New Jersey Regiment

Cumberland Landing, Va., May 15, 1862

(continued from Quarterly Newsletter, Spring, 2012)

"FRIEND GWYNNE,—I received the *Sunbeam* yesterday for the first time in two weeks; and its date rather ancient, it was not the less welcome. All the boys crowded around me, on its reception, to hear the news from home! We are scarcely two days at one place now, and our mail facilities are necessarily not very regular. But you may rely upon the items of news which I send you from time to time; they are not sent to make a sensation, as many correspondents for the daily papers do, but as facts and results transpiring around me.

In my last I merely alluded to a skirmish at West Point. The rebels behaved very cowardly there; they would not come out and fight fairly, but would skulk and hide until our men came close upon them, when they would suddenly fire from their ambush.

The loss on both sides was more severe than was at first supposed. Our killed was about 200, besides 100 or more wounded or missing. The rebel loss, from all that I can gather, was equally large, notwithstanding their advantage. Some of our men were only found on Monday, having lain five days on the field; and some who had been badly wounded, had died on the ground for want of care. Poor fellows! How they must have suffered! The 31<sup>st</sup> New York suffered most, its loss being 120.

We had not received the news of the battle of Williamsburg then: but since I have seen several from the 2d N. J. Brigade, and they gave me a full account. Our loss there was very severe—at least two thousand in killed, wounded and missing; the enemy's loss was fully equal. The Jersey boys proved their valor there, and Gen. McClellan praised them in the highest possible manner.

Last Thursday we started from West Point, and marched about three miles south, where we remained, as picket guard two days, when we returned, took up our baggage and started again. The same evening we halted in a large clover field about five miles from West Point, and close by the Pamunkey river, on the plantation of an old rebel.

He has been very recently here, and owned about a hundred slaves, whom he left in charge of an overseer. The farm appeared to have been properly taken care of, as the clover was about knee high, and the wheat and oats looked fine. All the slaves have left, and most of them are with the Union army. One of them is with our regiment, and is highly delighted.

On Sunday we were again ordered to strike our little tents and go to another point about three miles distant, which we soon reached. We met several slaves here, who all told the same story: that they had been told that we were going to take them to Cuba and sell them to work like horses!

There is scarcely a white man to be seen who is not too old to go into service. I talked with one young man, who said he had a brother in the rebel ranks—that their people had been deceived—that had they known what our intentions really were, they would not have taken up arms against us—that the Virginia soldiers were getting tired of the war, and that if we defeated them in Virginia they would give up.—They say that their army has suffered of late for food, which I think is true, for we saw hundreds of their haversacks (which they threw away in their flight) with nothing in them but stale corn cake, crackers, and even roasted corn. Salt is very scarce with them; all I could find had been course, but pounded, and done up as carefully as though it were gold.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> we again started further on toward Richmond. From 7 A.M. until 3 P.M. we were on the road, or rather through the woods, for the road (so called) is not wider than a path striking through the woods in Upper Penn's Neck.

Most of the houses we passed were deserted; some were tenanted by women and men too old for the service. Some of the women professed Union sentiments, while others were indignant against the "invaders," as they called us.

The slaves were the only ones who appeared joyful at our approach. We halted at New Kent Court House, where we expected an attack: but after forming in line of battle and waiting some time for the enemy to make his appearance, we started on to the place where we are now encamped.

All along our route the clothing and appurtenances of the retreating rebels were scattered. Gen. McClellan and a large portion of our army is near us. The Pamunkey river, though narrow, is navigable for almost any of our vessels. By this means our supplies are easily transported.

As I close orders have reached us to move tomorrow five miles further on to Richmond.

Good-bye." YOUNG AMERICA  
Salem *Sunbeam*, Salem, NJ, May 23, 1862

[This was Young America's last letter home.]

"ANOTHER VICTIM—It is with no common feelings of regret that we record the death of Mr. J. P. Sparks, a member of Co. K 4<sup>th</sup> N. J. Vol., which took place a few days ago—not on the field of battle, as we know he would have wished, but in the hospital, where his young life wasted away under that destroyer of more lives in the army than the bullets of the enemy, typhoid fever. He fell gallantly, in the first flush of manhood, a martyr to this country—a victim to the accursed rebellion. He was a son of Mr. David Sparks, a highly respectable farmer of Lower Penn's Neck, and was a young man of literary taste—as his letters published in the *Sunbeam* over the signature of "Young America" will testify. His body will be brought home for interment." *Ibid.*, June 20, 1862]

—JHB

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*Yes, I would like to become a member of the Salem County Historical Society!*



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History of Friendship M. E. Church is on sale  
at the TIMES office. Price, 25¢.  
*Elmer Times*, Elmer, NJ, April 6, 1889



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**New Post-Office**

A new post-office was established by the Department at Marshallville (formerly Frogtown) in Mannington Township, last week, and Benjamin Abbott was appointed postmaster. The name of this new office is "Marshalltown," instead of Marshallville, as the village is called.

*National Standard*, Salem, NJ, August 18, 1880

**An oil painting done**  
by Mrs. Lillie Grier  
Johnson, of Salem, is  
exhibited in John H.  
Turner's window.

*The Monitor*, Woodstown,  
NJ, April 11, 1890

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