THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION COMES TO THE BRIDGETON AREA

By Jonathan E. Wood

President Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation, dated January 1, 1863, was announced one hundred fifty years ago and began the great change in American civilization. It brought a clear division between the two political parties. While the Democrats condemned what the Proclamation called for—the immediate uncompensated emancipation of all slaves in Rebel states—Republicans generally favored these measures. But, even in the North, the Proclamation was extremely controversial. The recent award-winning film, Lincoln, has focused the nation’s attention on this all-important transition that came with the Civil War: freedom for most of the American slaves.

Turning to the local response to this historic proclamation, the two Bridgeton newspapers handled it in two different ways. The Bridgeton Pioneer simply printed the Proclamation as our illustration shows (plus some ninety more lines). There was not a line of editorial comment about the document.

Bridgeton’s other newspaper, the Bridgeton Chronicle, an outspoken Republican weekly, never printed nor commented on the document. They did comment on the issue by printing on the first page a sermon by the Rev. J. G. Stewart of the Greenwich Presbyterian Church, who questioned: “Will the conflict come on between freedom and slavery; between our government, founded upon the doctrine that all men are born free and equal, and a confederacy built on slavery as a cornerstone?”

Clearly, with the Emancipation Proclamation, the issue had become freedom vs. slavery, with the Bridgeton Chronicle backing the Proclamation and the President. Once again, however, there was not an article, not even a line, giving the specific endorsement of the Proclamation.

Where, then, was there great reaction in the county? Well, with the Black community. In the churches, the schools, and the homes of African Americans, there must have been great rejoicing, but it all went unrecorded in the local press.

One act of bravery was taken by a large number of local Black men. They had become eligible for enlistment in the United States Army and enlist they did. Eventually, a number of these men were buried in Ambury Hill Cemetery in Greenwich with their companies and regiments engraved on their tombstones.

These quiet reminders seem to speak best of the rejoicing that must have taken place on the local scene after the announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation.
THE 24th REGIMENT, WINTER AND SPRING, 1863
By Jonathan E. Wood

After the defeat at Fredericksburg, General Ambrose Burnside continued in charge, ending his responsibility with the famous “Mud March.” By mid-January, General “Fighting Joe” Hooker had taken over command of the Army of the Potomac, and there were improvements that the 24th Regiment noticed: the food was better, there were new supplies and equipment, there was better training, soldiers’ pay was delivered on time, and morale was much improved.

Although there was much confidence as the troops prepared for the Battle of Chancellorsville, a failure to carry out plans and consequent defeat (again!) by General Lee’s forces left President Lincoln in despair. Chancellorsville provided the high water mark for the Confederacy. Even though his aide, “Stonewall” Jackson, had died of pneumonia after Chancellorsville, General Lee decided to invade Pennsylvania.

All these scenes come alive in the sketches of John G. Keyser, now on display at the Warren and Reba Lummis Genealogical and Historical Library.

As for the 24th Regiment, their enlistment time was for nine months, which meant that they would return to New Jersey and be mustered out in June. The soldiers were much heralded when they returned to Bridgeton.

GIBBON HOUSE RE-OPENS SPRING, 2013
The opening of the Gibbon House for the 2013 season will take place on Sunday, April 7, when the House will be open from 1 to 4 P.M. House tours and refreshments will be available that day to mark the annual opening of Cumberland County Historical Society Headquarters.

CUMBERLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
WINE AND CHEESE CELEBRATION AT VINELAND HISTORICAL & ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

Saturday, April 27, 2013 is the date for the annual Wine and Cheese Celebration at the Vineland Historical & Antiquarian Society, located at Seventh and Elmer Streets in that community.

The theme of the evening (6 to 9 P.M.) will be the story of the early years of Charles K. Landis’ planned community that began while the nation was involved in the Civil War.

Members of the Vineland Historical & Antiquarian Society will be in attendance to “point up” what was more structured and fast-moving about Vineland in those years than in the other Cumberland County communities. Invitations go out shortly.
NEW BOOKS ABOUT NEW SWEDEN
By Joseph Mathews

The Warren and Reba Lummis Genealogical and Historical Library recently acquired several books relating to New Sweden and the Forest Finns (see also “Acquisitions” below). The books will be useful in our work on preserving and interpreting the Swedish Granary. A few were paid for by a timely bequest from the Bridgeton Research Club in memory of Judy Keturi DeLong, long-time volunteer at the Pirate House Library and the Warren and Reba Lummis Library. Appropriately enough, Judy’s parents emigrated from Finland. We thank the Bridgeton Research Club for their generous gift.

The books are:


The Lummis Library already had several important books on New Sweden. The 2-volume The Swedish Settlements on the Delaware: 1638-1664 (1911) by the Penn professor, Amandus Johnson, is still the fullest history of New Sweden. C.A. Weslager’s New Sweden on the Delaware: 1638-1655 appeared in 1988 and commemorates the 350th anniversary of the first landing of the Swedish colonists, as does New Sweden in the New World: 1638-1655, a collection of essays in English by Swedish scholars. Peter Stebbins Craig’s two annotated census books of 1993 and 1999 provide much fascinating biographical information culled from many sources on actual individuals and families living in New Sweden, a necessary complement to Johnson’s account.

The Warren and Reba Lummis Library will continue to acquire those writings which will facilitate a comprehensive interpretation of the Swedish Granary. Since The American Backwoods Frontier, co-authored by cultural geographers Jordan and Kaups (both now deceased), is as far as I can see the most relevant work for our interpretation of the Swedish Granary, I shall attempt to summarize it in the next Patriot.
ACQUISITIONS 2013
WARREN AND REBA LUMMIS GENEALOGICAL & HISTORICAL LIBRARY
By Warren Q. Adams

DONOR: Jane McKeen (Pleasantville, NY) “Civil War Discharge for Henry Walker, 5th day of August, 1864 from Co. A, 16th Regiment of Vet. Res. Corps, USA.” Born in Haleyville and was a Coasting Ship Captain after the war.


DONOR: Bayshore Discovery Project (Port Norris, NJ) Documents and items pertaining to the Junior Order of United Mechanics of Port Norris from Steve and Donna Moore.

DONOR: Ingrid Holm (Woodbury, NJ) Carl Holm’s scrapbook and information on the Cumberland County Historical Society’s Swedish Granary and many other log cabins located in New Jersey and other areas of the country.


DONOR: Patricia S. Cashman (Newbury, VT) Large-framed photograph of the Liberty Bell, Bridgeton, New Jersey, 1926 by the Chamber of Commerce. It states on the back that the frame was made from an oaken mantle taken from the Gen. Giles House in Bridgeton.

STRAIGHT FROM THE HEARTH
By Nancy Applegate

Did you know…
• Thomas Jefferson grew nineteen varieties of lettuce in his garden?
• Jefferson’s favorite vegetable was the pea?
• In a competition with his neighbors, Jefferson often took the honors of harvesting the first crop of peas?

Come to the Spring Open House of the Gibbon House on Sunday, April 7, 2013 and receive a copy of some of Jefferson’s menus from Monticello!

WILLIAM G. NIXON, III
A DEDICATED VOLUNTEER OF THE PIRATE HOUSE LIBRARY
and
THE WARREN AND REBA LUMMIS GENEALOGICAL & HISTORICAL LIBRARY
By Warren Q. Adams

The marble bench that came from the William G. Nixon house on Commerce Street in Bridgeton and stood in the yard of Bill’s house in Greenwich, was given to the Society by William (Bill) Reinhart, Executor of the Estate.
The bench now stands at the rear entrance to the Warren and Reba Lummis Genealogical & Historical Library in Memory of William G. Nixon, III.

Bill began his volunteer work at the Pirate House Library in 1975 as Assistant Librarian to Carl L. West, Jr., Librarian. They both ran the Library until 1992 when the Farmers & Merchants Bank was purchased and became the Warren C. Lummis, Jr. Library.

Bill had been an avid supporter of history in Cumberland County with the restoration of Potter’s Tavern, Bridgeton Historian, Bridgeton Antiquarian Society, Bridgeton Camera Club and his membership in the Sons of the Revolution, Ebenezer Elmer Chapter. The latter, due to his involvement, provided funds for rebinding books, purchase of books and preservation for the Lummis Library for many years.

Bill willed all of the Nixon family genealogy and other historical material, including an archive on the conservation of Potter’s Tavern, to the Society. He was the alarm person for all of the Society’s buildings as well as opening the Library for specific purposes and, also, trash collector at the Library. No job was too small for Bill. He always saw a need and provided for it.

He was Assistant Librarian of the Warren and Reba Lummis Genealogical and Historical Library until he passed away in 2011.

**STONE BENCH IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM G. NIXON, III**

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**MISSION STATEMENT:** The mission of the Cumberland County Historical Society is to preserve and promote the history and heritage of the county through acquisitions, collections, exhibits and research, educational programs and publications for the benefit of current and future generations.

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**2013 CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

Re-Opening of the Gibbon House  
Sunday, April 7  1 – 4 P.M.

Annual Halloween Ghost Walking Tours  
Dates to be determined

CCHS Wine and Cheese Celebration to be held at the Vineland Historical & Antiquarian Society  
Saturday, April 27  6 – 9 P.M.

4th Annual Gingerbread House Contest  
to be held at the Stone Schoolhouse  
Saturday, December 7

42nd Annual Artisans’ Faire & Marketplace to be held on the grounds of the Gibbon House  
Saturday & Sunday, September 28 & 29

45th Annual “Christmas in Greenwich”  
Sunday, December 8  Noon to 5 P.M.

Annual Business/Dinner Meeting  
Saturday, November 9
AN INVITATION TO JOIN the Cumberland County Historical Society - The Society is very active in promoting knowledge concerning the history of Cumberland County and has much to offer its members. The Officers and Trustees cordially invite you to join this outstanding organization. If you would like more information regarding membership to the Cumberland County Historical Society, please call 856-455-8580 or email cchistsoc@verizon.net. You may also visit our website www.cchistsoc.org and simply print out the online application and follow the instructions.

Membership Fees:

- Lifetime Member $200
- Annual/Individual $20
- Annual/Couple $30
- Annual – Under 18 years of age $10