

CUMBERLAND PATRIOT

**Cumberland County Historical Society
Greenwich, NJ**



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The Experiences of an Everyday Soldier during the Civil War: John Bacon Hoffman

By Victoria Scannella

The American Civil War is still considered one of the most horrific events in American history. New Jersey's role in the Civil War is seldom spoken of because no one great General commanded any of the New Jersey regiments. [Thinking specifically of General Ulysses S. Grant, General George Meade, General Ambrose Burnside, so on and so forth.] Also, no Civil War battles took place in New Jersey, but several regiments were raised and sent to fight. With all of this being said, this article highlights one man's story that was recorded and published with the intention of telling that story.

For the clarity of the reader, the order of army sizes is as follows:

The regiment was the basic maneuver unit of the Civil War. They were recruited from among the eligible citizenry of one or more nearby counties and usually consisted of 1,000 men when first organized. The attrition of disease, combat, and desertion would rapidly reduce this number. Replacements were exceedingly rare for both sides--it was more typical for an entirely new regiment to be raised instead. Regiments were usually led by colonels. Two or more regiments would be organized into a brigade. Note that it was uncommon for the branches of the army--infantry, cavalry, and artillery--to be mixed within a brigade. A typical brigade would consist of between three and five regiments and be led by a brigadier general. (1).

John Bacon Hoffman was born on January 18, 1836, in Shiloh, New Jersey. Hoffman's children, specifically his daughters, asked for their father's consent to write down and publish his experiences of his time in the War. This book is titled "The Civil War Diary and Letters of John Bacon Hoffman of Shiloh, New Jersey". It is a near complete retelling of the happenings of the Civil War from the perspective of an everyday soldier. Hoffman enlisted in Trenton on January 4, 1864, in Company E.D. 10th Regiment of the New Jersey Veteran Volunteers, at the age of 28. (2) The 10th Regiment was organized and mustered in Beverly, NJ, under the jurisdiction of the War Department. The Regiment was first sent to Washington D.C. in late December of 1861, and then transferred to the State of New Jersey and became the 10th Infantry on January 29, 1862 (3).

In Hoffman's series of diary and letter entries, he recounts his experiences, thoughts, and feelings about the war. His writings begin on January 10, 1864 and end until April 26, 1864 [It is unclear why there was such a large gap between entries, although it is likely due to the fact that there was not much exciting activity going on around him that was worth writing down (4)]. In his April 26 entry, he discusses camp life. That consists of waking at sunrise, marching and drill for most of the day, "dress parade" at 6 pm, and evening roll. "Dress Parade" is when the troops would line up in formation and listen to orders be given. Following this, troops were left to their own devices for the

(1) "Civil War Army Organization." American Battlefield Trust, April 13, 2021. <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/civil-war-army-organization#:~:text=Regiments%20were%20usually%20led%20by,led%20by%20a%20brigadier%20general.>

(2) 1 - Hoffman, John Bacon, and Ron E. Davis. *The Civil War Diary and Letters of John Bacon Hoffman of Shiloh, New Jersey*. Plainfield, NJ: Seventh Day Baptist Pub. House, 1979.

(3) "Battle Unit Details." National Parks Service. Accessed August 28, 2023. <https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-battle-units-detail.htm?battleUnitCode=UNJ0010RI#:~:text=10th%20Regiment%2C%20New%20Jersey%20Infantry,10th%20Infantry%20January%2029%2C%201862.>

(4) Ibid.

rest of the evening. Hoffman specifies that around 9 pm on his downtime would be the time to wash up from the day. This, he says, keeps him pretty busy.(5) In this same entry, he states that his Regiment was given orders that they would be moving soon and to begin preparations.

There was no conflict that the Regiment took part in until May of 1864. Prior to this, the Regiment shuffled around from Washington D.C. and Virginia, then to Philadelphia and later to Pottsville, then back to Virginia.(6) It was on May 3, 1864, that his Regiment was notified that the following day they were to begin their march. His next entry is dated May 15, 1864, he was writing from Fortress Monroe, after being captured by the Rebels. He tried to write to his family but since he did not have the time to mail it before the march, he destroyed the letter instead. He talks further about the march itself, the discomfort from the heat and the dust that was present stating that: “Early in the A.M. we resumed our march on the plank road and were soon on the battleground of the Wilderness. We were second in the line of the battle supporting the advance. In the afternoon I was among those who were detailed to work on the breastworks and the sharp shooters were picking at us all the time.” (7).

It was on May 7, 1864, the third day of battle, that the Rebel army surrounded and captured the remainder of Hoffman’s Regiment, who were forced to march with no rations. However, Hoffman also speaks of the Rebel’s kindness toward the prisoners and

their admittance that they would have fed the prisoner, but they only had enough for themselves. (8) At this point in the War, many of the Confederate armies were without food or rations due to the government in the North stopping train lines and other resources that would ordinarily have fed the army. The intention of the capture was to send them to Richmond and then Andersonville. Right as they were approaching the train station, Sheridan’s army rides up in the nick of time and forces the Rebels to fall back. Hoffman and his fellow prisoners were rescued and joined Sheridan’s Calvary before reuniting with their own Regiment. (9)prisoner, but they only had enough for themselves. (10) At this point in the War, many of the Confederate armies were without food or rations due to the government in the North stopping train lines and other resources that would ordinarily have fed the army. The intention of the capture was to send them to Richmond and then Andersonville. Right as they were approaching the train station, Sheridan’s army rides up in the nic of time and forces the Rebels to fall back. Hoffman and his fellow prisoners were rescued and joined Sheridan’s Calvary before reuniting with their own Regiment. (11)

In his next letter, Hoffman discusses his involvement in the 6th Corps, which became known as “The Flying Corps” because they were expected to be available at a moment’s notice. There was speculation around the Regiment that there

(5)Hoffman, John Bacon, and Ron E. Davis. *The Civil War Diary and Letters of John Bacon Hoffman of Shiloh, New Jersey*. Plainfield, NJ: Seventh Day Baptist Pub. House, 1979.

(6) Ibid.

(7). Ibid.

(8) Ibid.

(9) Ibid.

(10) Ibid.

(11) Ibid.

were plans to take Richmond, but it had no credence at the time Hoffman was writing this letter. As with war, nothing is set in stone. By his next letter, dated June 1, 1864, it still remained unclear whether or not his Regiment had planned to take Richmond but was all dependent on the Rebels plans, and whether or not they would flee deeper into the South, or corner themselves in Richmond.

Hoffman wrote a series of short letters ranging from June 1, 1864 to June 6, 1864. Hoffman and his men saw action at the Battle of Cold Harbor but Hoffman only chronicled what that the 6th corps were not eating nor hardly sleeping during this time. On June 25 he responded to a letter from his wife who seems to be having a difficult time during her husband's absence. In a later letter from August 16, 1864, his demeanor seems slightly more positive. They were located in the Shenandoah Valley for quite some time from this point forward, through almost the entire rest of the year. He briefly talks about passing the courthouse where John Brown was hanged in the letter. Further in the letter he described a skirmish his Regiment was involved in, and how close of a call it truly was. There were a few rebels, or "Johnnies", as Hoffman refers to them in his letters, who were attacking the Picket, once the regiment fought them off, Hoffman and his fellow men thought they were safe for the rest of the evening, but they were

wrong. From out of the fog, more Rebel troops appeared and began advancing and closing in on the regiment. The regiment was unprepared to fight such a large-scale battle and did not have enough Union troops to fight back properly. The Calvary retreated after running out of ammunition. The orders for Hoffman and his fellow soldiers were to remain in place. Despite their leader's retreat, Hoffman stayed until he realized he would be captured if he did not run (12).

He ran into the woods to get cover while minnuet balls were being shot left and right, which all miss him miraculously, making it out of another event unscathed. They were beyond b severly outnumbered and truly did not stand a chance in this particular fight (13). Hoffman asserted that: "In fact it was a wonder that any of the regiment escaped. I think we should not if it had not been for darkness coming on and hiding us from view of the enemy. They had overlapped both of our flanks (sides) and were rapidly closing upon our rear." (14). After coming out of the fray with all limbs intact, he and the other survivors captured a Rebel Lieutenant who informed them that there were 16,000 Rebel troops waiting in the wings. The regiment reunited a few miles out from where the battle had occurred and were homefree for the time being.

Following this in the next letter dated August 24, 1864, they were making their way back towards Harper's Ferry with plenty of backup in case they ran into more "Johnnies". At this point, there were only 15 men left in Hoffman's company (H) and only 800 remained in the entire Brigade. He reflected in

(12) Hoffman, John Bacon, and Ron E. Davis. *The Civil War Diary and Letters of John Bacon Hoffman of Shiloh, New Jersey*. Plainfield, NJ: Seventh Day Baptist Pub. House, 1979.

(13) Ibid.

(14) Ibid.

this letter about the prior skirmish against the Rebels and was grateful for having survived. Following that, things became significantly quiet, so much so that it no longer even felt like they were in a colossal war. Hoffman wrote:

This afternoon the remainder of our Regiment is going out on picket. Theof. (name of his friend) stays in camp and so takes charge of our tent. We came out on picket just before night. How very different this all seems from our Summer Campaign; then all was march and fight, now we lay still in the midst of rich farming country with farm houses all around us. It does not seem like war. (15)

While in the Shenandoah Valley, Hoffman wrote: “The Valley has been the richest farming country I have ever seen but alas, its glory has departed and it has paid for its Secessionists principles.” (16) There was nothing of note until September 22nd, which was the Battle of Fisher's Hill. During this battle the Regiment captured 19 pieces of artillery, several battle flags and 2,500 prisoners of war. This was a very exciting victory for the Union because it was beginning to signify the end of the war to the soldiers. Entries from September 27th to October 16th are mundane, discussing more of camp life and what he and his fellow soldiers were doing on a daily basis, consisting of washing their clothes, bathing, and other similar activities (17).

In his entry written on October 16, 1864, Hoffman discussed the foraging that he and his fellow soldiers had to do. Once they left

their camp which was located near Fort Royal, Virginia, they walked nine miles away from camp and found what Hoffman described as, “a feast”. While enjoying the food they acquired, Hoffman and his fellow soldiers looked over the valley before them and reflected on the physical damage done to the beautiful valleys and farms that the Southern part of the U.S. was known for. Hoffman wrote:

From Stanton back to Washington is hardly a barn left in the Valley. A distance of near a 100 miles all the barns, stacks of grain, and hay that could be found, were consigned to the flames. It was terrible to see the vast volumes of smoke and flame rolling up and darkening the sky all around us for three or four days as we were marching back. But terrible and hard as it seems, I suppose it is right, for they are all Secessionists. They have been supplying Lee's army with provisions for a long time and this is a terrible war. (18)

The tragedy that was the Civil War is no secret. Hoffman also states how grateful he was that the War had not reached New Jersey as of the time he was writing that entry. By the end of the war, there were never any Civil War battles that ever took place in New Jersey. After his reflection, he continued his entry by noting that the rebels returned to claim Fisher's Hill after losing to the Union. Hoffman was unclear as to whether or not his regiment returned to Fisher's Hill to fight the rebels off again. (19)

(15) Hoffman, John Bacon, and Ron E. Davis. *The Civil War Diary and Letters of John Bacon Hoffman of Shiloh, New Jersey*. Plainfield, NJ: Seventh Day Baptist Pub. House, 1979.

(16) Ibid.

(17) Ibid.

(18) Ibid,

(19) Ibid.

Unfortunately for Hoffman and the 6th, on October 19, 1864, the Rebels were able to quickly and quietly sneak up on the army and ambush them. In their haste to retreat, they left Hoffman behind so far that he had to ditch his haversack (which is a backpack that holds all of his things, including his sleeping mat, if he had a tent, and other items that were the only things he had during that War) in order to run and catch up. As the Regiment was retreating, and Hoffman finally caught up, General Sheridan rode up and gives what can essentially be described as a pep talk to the army and sends them right back to fight off the Rebels. (20)

After a bit of back and forth with the Rebels, the Union got upperhand and drove them out of the field. The Regiment ended up taking some of the rebels' belongings and some Prisoners of War. This win was especially beneficial to Hoffman, considering he had to leave all of his things behind.

The next letter is dated November 11, 1864. Hoffman wrote about the busywork and housekeeping he had been involved with recently and the small skirmishes that really did not produce any significant results for either side. The election was approaching and Abraham Lincoln was up for reelection, and Hoffman had this to say about Cumberland: "Cumberland Co. (County) too I hear has gone Union (Lincoln). Is that so? If it has, Three cheers for Old Cumberland." (21). Clearly, he was

happy with the way his home county is voting. This is the first time he mentioned anything about politics or Abraham Lincoln in his letters and diary entries.

From January 19 to January 30, 1865, Hoffman was able to come home to Shiloh to see his family. Upon his return to the brigade, he was mustered in as a 2nd Lieutenant of Co. H. 10th N.J.V.V, which was a huge honor. In a diary entry from February 4, 1865, Hoffman writes: "Jan. 31st 1865 was a day long to be remembered by our Nation. Our Congress passed the resolution to amend the Constitution abolishing slavery from the United States. Thank God we are now taking steps in the right direction." (21) This was the second and last time he spoke about politics in his writings.

In a diary entry from March 30, 1865, Hoffman described how he and the 6th were woken up to the sound of a bombardment along the Appottomax river as "The shells were thrown almost perpendicular turning and coming down they looked like balls of fire flying through the air. At times 25 of them could be seen at once making beautiful curves." (22). It only lasted an hour, with them returning to their tents once the bombardment concluded and they knew they were safe.

For the remainder of Hoffman's entries, there were no battles and the skirmishes were few and far between. Much of his entries consist of a few words or lines of mundane things that are consistent of

(20) Hoffman, John Bacon, and Ron E. Davis. *The Civil War Diary and Letters of John Bacon Hoffman of Shiloh, New Jersey*. Plainfield, NJ: Seventh Day Baptist Pub. House, 1979.

(21) Ibid.

(22) Ibid.

soldier life, such as him getting sick and going to the doctor and day to day life in the camp. His final entry comes July 15, 1865, when he stated that after 18 months and 9 days, he had officially completed his service and the war had concluded.

Hoffman lived out the rest of his days in Shiloh with his family. John Bacon Hoffman passed away in 1921 at the age of 85. Although Hoffman's experience in the war may not have been unique to him or to his brigade, it is certainly an interesting series of events from the perspective of an average soldier from a small town in New Jersey.

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Oral History: *Growing up in Bridgeton

By Paul J. Ritter, III

Growing up in the historic City of Bridgeton in the 1960s and 1970s was a wonderful experience. In the 1950s, my parents first met after class while attending Bridgeton High School at Elwell's, which later became the Cinderella Tea Room and is currently Vito's Restaurant. Rhinehardt's was another teenage gathering spot in the

downtown.

They first lived in the Glenn Park Apartments before later purchasing a three-bedroom ranch house on Smith Avenue in the Georgetown section of Bridgeton, which was the neighborhood that I grew up in. Some of the memories of growing up in Bridgeton are as follows:

Holidays:

I remember the downtown during the holidays, Christmas music played on the loudspeakers. We had four banks in town: Cumberland National, Farmers & Merchants, Young Men's Savings & Loan Bank (later Colonial), and Century Savings Bank. A lady played a large harp inside the Farmers and Merchants National Bank along with Christmas carolers. They would give you toasters or piggy banks for opening a new account and you could open a Christmas account to save up to buy presents for family and friends. Santa had a booth at the corner in front of the Cumberland National Bank where more Christmas carolers would be stationed next to him. The sidewalks were crowded with shoppers and it was difficult to even find a place to park.

The downtown reminded me of a Norman Rockwell painting. The stores were fully stocked with a variety of items, and you could usually find whatever you were looking for. Often, the owner of the store waited on you, so you knew that you were a valued customer since they always tried to accommodate you to get the sale. During the holidays, we would line up to

*What is oral history? Oral history is the collection of people's memories that historians interpret and analyze to write histories. Oral histories are not historical facts but are sources that historians put into conversation with other types of sources to learn about the past. Oral histories like all sources possess biases that can be shaped by class, gender, race, etc. Lived experiences are personal and uniquely different for each individual. CCHS is excited to adopt a regular oral history column to The Cumberland Patriot.

get Hess Toy Trucks at the gas station at Carll's Corner. Agway on Shiloh Pike had a nice Christmas display including lighted trees. Christmas trees were purchased at Jim's Deli at Carll's Corner. When we went to Dill's Seafood for fresh fish, we made sure to also get a dill pickle out of the big pickle barrel. There were always long lines on Christmas Eve for the Feast of Seven Fishes which was popular with the Italian Americans. Springer and Thomas Meats provided Christmas turkeys for my grandfather Sorantino's farm employees and gift boxes for the Ritter food brokers.

During the Christmas holiday, we would drive around the various neighborhoods admiring the light displays on many of the homes during the holidays. The Memorial Day and Christmas parades were always well-attended events. The parade would start on West Avenue at the High School. They would then march up Broad Street and Laurel Street. The parades featured floats, bands, National Guard tanks, antique cars, and many fire engines. The parade was loud with the sounds of the marching bands and the sirens. One time, Santa actually fell off of a float which was shocking for the children to see!

There was always a line outside of Hespelt's Florist on Valentine's Day where we would pick up flowers or a gift before returning home at the end of the workday for our spouses. Fred Weber operated Weber's Candy Store through four generations making their handcrafted candy including Irish Potatoes, Easter and Valentine's specialties, and other various sweet treats. They would even string your tennis racquet for you! Sorantino Cadillac

sold cars to celebrities including Mohammad Ali and Frank Sinatra Jr.
School

I attended the Little Red Hen Pre-School on Fayette Street. I remember the playground in the backyard. The Chatterbox Pre-School was the other local preschool. We celebrated May Day, enjoyed the sandbox there, and made our first friends. We attended Immaculate Conception Regional School on Pearl Street and would walk to mass every Friday morning. Everyone walked to the bus stop or to school even in the rain or snow and the bus would not wait for us if we were late. After school, we walked to the YMCA at the old Armory on Washington Street for basketball practice. We knew exactly where all of the dead spots were on the wooden court which gave us a home-court advantage. Behind the Major Coat building was a baseball field that Immaculate Conception Regional School used for its flag football and softball teams. We spent many afternoons after school practicing on that field.

We would purchase school and business supplies at Ashley-McCormick's store and our encyclopedias, one volume each week, from the Acme grocery store. We would buy our shoes and sneakers for back-to-school from Smashey's, Popkin's or Sack's Shoes, all located downtown. You were able to buy a suit or back-to-school clothes and other items before malls, at the Fashion Shop, Wynette Shop, Smashey's, Bacon's, Rovner's, Brushkin's, Bond Linen, and the Enterprise at Sam's Men's Store. We would ride the elevator to the 2nd floor of Bacon's store. The hangouts after school in the 1950s and 1960s were Dandrea's and

the Sweet Shop soda fountains where you could listen to the jukebox and drink cherry or vanilla cokes or have a milkshake. Later in the 70's and 80's, we would go to the Towne Tavern on the weekend to listen to the bands.

Aromas

There were aromas that were connected with these memories. The P.J. Ritter plant was simmering tomatoes for its famous catsup all day and through the night. Hunt's was also cooking tomatoes across the stream from Ritter's. The smell of the spices placed a pleasant aroma over the town, it smelled like a pot of homemade tomato sauce on the stove. The truckloads of tomatoes lined up from the plant down the hill on Broad Street all the way to the High School. On the corner, the fried fish and shrimp from Captain Bill's permeated the corner across the old, abandoned train station that would later become our Tourist Center. Martin Dye on Pearl Street had a pungent sulfur smell that was best to be avoided. Cumberland, Rainier's and Shoemaker Dairies processed milk that was delivered daily to a silver insulated box on your porch. The Bond bread man would also deliver to your house. The fresh danish pastries were the best! Now we have Instacart deliveries and the local Wawa to supply us with our culinary needs. You could smell the bread baking at LeStourgen Bakery, which was delivered to the local corner stores. Our favorite places for cheesesteaks, bellybusters, and subs were Hopewell Sub and Pizza and Terrigno's Deli. The cheesesteaks were as good as any you would get in Philly. Many small corner stores and delis also serviced the various neighborhoods. They

include Rizzo's, Morio's, 3rd Ward Subs, Vee's Italian Subs, Angelo's, DeMaio's, and my Dad's favorite, Stanley's Market. His wife was one of my elementary school teachers. The convenience was that these locations were all walkable.

Activities

Everyone said ice skating at East Lake or Jeddy's Pond was dangerous since there had been several drownings, so we would skate at Cubby Hollow, which was only a couple of feet deep. The skaters would also make a bonfire and roast marshmallows and hot dogs on those cold evenings. When it snowed, folks would go sledding at Hampton Street, Turkey Loper Hill, or the Cohanzick Country Club and we would also ride our flexible flyer sleds from the top of the neighborhood hill at the Presbyterian Church.

There were great places to fish and swim at Mary Elmer Lake and Sunset Lake and Piney Point had a nice picnic grove. We went fishing for sunfish and always enjoyed canoeing up the northwest passage to the one-lane wooden bridge at Silver Lake Road. It was always a challenging trip since the stream was often overgrown with overhanging branches. You could rent your canoes at the beginning of the raceway and paddle through the zoo. Georgetown Swim Club, Sun & Fun, and the 77 Motel had swimming pools for cooling off during the summer months. There were pool parties and swim meets all summer long to cool off on the hot days. We would play pick-up neighborhood baseball and football on the vacant lot next to local dentist Dr. Boss'

house. Since there were no cell phones, we knew we had to come home for dinner when the streetlights came on. We would get model rockets, slot cars, and model car kits from Charlie and Dot Erickson at the Walnut Street Hobby Shop. We painted and blasted them off in my grandmom Ritter's back yard hoping we could recover them after they fell to the ground. In the Bridgeton City Park was an old F-86 Sabre jet that you could climb and sit in the cockpit. You had to be careful of the sharp metal edges inside the plane. The large slide could get hot as a grill in the summertime and the merry-go-rounds would make you dizzy when we spun them as fast as we could. We always tried to swing as high as possible on the swing sets. It's a good thing they were cemented into place. We would ride our bikes to Sunny Slope Farms where would drink their apple cider out of paper cone cups to cook off on a hot day.

Food

Billy Myers would sell snow cones from his horse and wagon while Mr. Softy arrived during the hot summer months with custard and their famous jingle. Century Bakery featured its famous cakes, pastries, and donuts while Terrigno's Bakery baked its popular loaves of Italian bread. We would bake potatoes in their ovens for their annual St. Teresa Chicken Bar-B-Q. My favorite was Century's pumpkin donuts and sticky buns with walnuts on top. My grandmother Ritter would take my brother and me to the Richman's Dairy Bar on Shiloh Pike in Hopewell. Our favorite meals were the basket burger or basket dog

with fries. There was a golf driving range and miniature golf range behind the restaurant. Big John's Pizza was a popular dinner option on a Friday night. We would get Slurpees at the 7-11 Store on Broad Street in baseball cups that we would collect during the summer and trade them along with baseball cards with our friends. Bernie's Bookstore was the best place to find comic books and trading cards downtown.

Baseball

Riley's Hardware Store was a true general store. They had everything you could ever think of. In addition to hardware, they had a sporting goods section featuring baseballs, bats, footballs, and basketballs. They usually had whatever you were looking for including your first baseball glove.

Bridgeton was a baseball town with the first game played against the Philadelphia Athletics in 1863. I played on the Little League fields near the city dump so it would have a strong smell if the wind was blowing in. You would try to hit the ball into the dump for a home run. If we won, the manager would get us hot dogs, fries, and penny candy at the concession stand at the game. We played our Babe Ruth games at a facility built for the 1963 Babe Ruth World Series. We had great coaches in Herb Henry, Ray Powell, and E. Morgan Maxwell and we won a couple of city championships. The Bridgeton Invitational Tournament brought in a King and his Court softball squad and the first female umpire along with a variety of major league players like Willie Mays, Mickey

Mantle, Joe DiMaggio, Roy Campanella, Greg Luzinski, Bob Feller, Satchel Paige and Steve Carlton to sign autographs. The stands were always filled, and the concession stand was very popular with the fans. My first autograph was local resident Don Money of the Phillies signed at a local car dealership. The hamburger, hot dogs, and fries always tasted better at the ballpark.

These are all fond memories of our town that I will always remember!

--

Paul J Ritter III is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and the Delaware Law School.

He is currently the President and CEO of Cumberland Mutual, an insurance company that was established in 1844. He is also currently the mayor of Hopewell Township, Cumberland County, NJ which was founded in 1748.

The Crisis of the "Mormon Menace": "Anti-Mormon" Sentiment in Bridgeton, NJ 1905-1911 Part 3

By Brittney Pantelione Ingersoll

Many of the anti-Mormon meetings were spearheaded by Ruth E. Chew of the Young Woman's Christian Temperance Union (YWCTU). Who was this woman who saw Mormons as a threat to society? In this last installment of "The Crisis of the "Mormon

Menace": "Anti-Mormon" Sentiment in Bridgeton, NJ 1905-1911," I will tell the story of Miss Chew, who was the president of the Bridgeton YWCTU and who led majority of the meetings that were discussed in part 1. Lastly, this article will go outside of the 1905-1911 timeframe listed in the initial title to cover the entirety of her life.

Ruth E. Chew was born in Landis Township in Cumberland County, New Jersey on August 25th, 1878. She attended both Adelphi and Smith College. After graduating from Smith, she returned to Cumberland County, moving to Bridgeton. There she became the president of the YWTCU and the Shakespeare Club. Additionally, she began subbing at Vine Street School before being hired as a permanent teacher in November 1903. (1)

Chew also participated in advertising competitions held by the *Bridgeton*



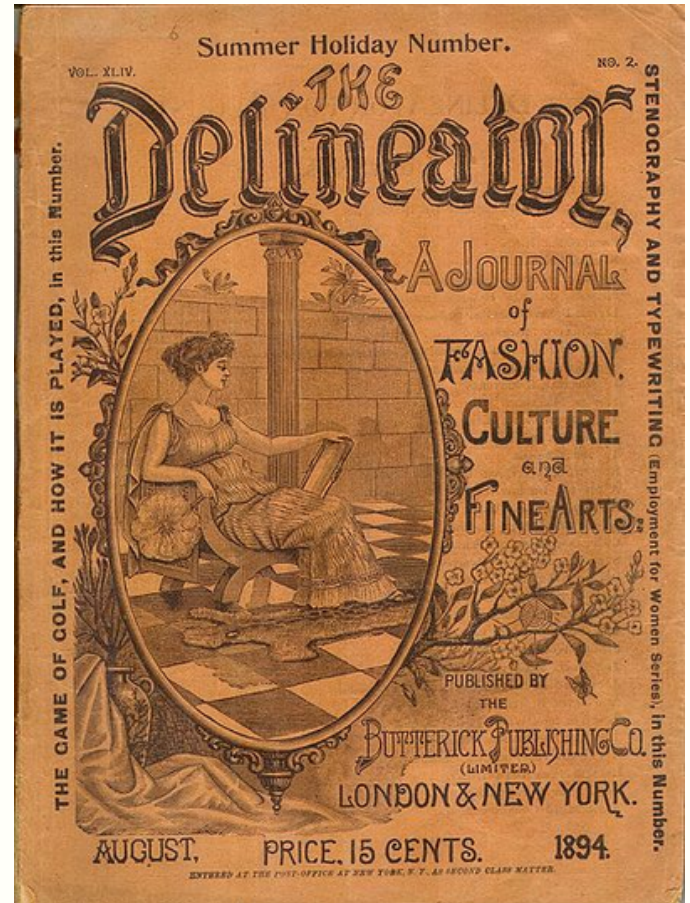
MISS RUTH E. CHEW.

(1) *Bridgeton Evening News*, October 20, 1903 (Bridgeton, NJ); *Ibid.*, November 17, 1903; *Ibid.*, November 24, 1903; *Ibid.*, February 8, 1904; *Ibid.*, February 4, 1905.

Evening News. In addition to the competition, as president of the YWCTU, she organized an amateur newspaper in January 1905, with her being the editor-in-chief. How long this paper existed or if any publications came out of this is unknown. Only a month later, Chew submitted her resignation to Vine Street School after being hired by the Bridgeton Evening News to write ads and to write an entirely new column called the “Department for Women” that was to run every Saturday. (2)

In 1906 Chew moved to Seattle, in 1907 it was reported that she was now writing ads for large department stores and held two offices in the YWCTU - county secretary and state superintendent. In 1909 Chew was recognized for an artistic folder that she prepared for the department store, J.A. Baillargeon & Co. Three years later, she began working for the *Delineator*, a woman’s paper that was printed by Butterick & Co. That same year the YWCTU celebrated its fifteenth anniversary and held its final meeting. Sometime in 1913, Chew additionally became a regular staff member for a magazine called *The Designer*. She wrote under a pen name, using “Helen Hathway” with the *Delineator* and “Alice Goodwin” at the *The Designer*. (3)

Later, Chew became involved in metaphysical practices, following the



teachings of Judge Thomas Troward, with her taking over the School of Truth in Helena, Montana in 1930 that was later renamed to Unity Metaphysical Center in 1931. She also held regular talks such as “The Magical Power of Joy” and “Realizing the Power in You.” After ten years of running the school, Chew earned a ministry degree in 1941 from the Divine Science School and became a full minister of the Church of Religious Science, she was given her degree by Nonna Lovell

(2) Bridgeton Evening News (Bridgeton, NJ) January 10, 1905.; Bridgeton Pioneer (Bridgeton, NJ) February 23, 1905.; Bridgeton Evening News (Bridgeton, NJ) February 28, 1905.; Bridgeton Evening News, (Bridgeton, NJ) March 7, 1905.

(3) Bridgeton Evening News (Bridgeton, NJ) March 8, 1905; Seattle Daily Times, (Seattle, WA), April 11, 1909; Bridgeton Evening News (Bridgeton, NJ) March 26, 1912; Bridgeton Evening News (Bridgeton, NJ) April 12, 1912.; Bridgeton Evening News (Bridgeton, NJ) March 26, 1912; Bridgeton Evening News (Bridgeton, NJ) April 12, 1912.; Bridgeton Evening News (Bridgeton, NJ) March 26, 1912; Bridgeton Evening News (Bridgeton, NJ) Jan. 14, 1913; *San Diego Union*, (San Diego, CA), Oct. 11, 1928

Brooks who was one of the founders of Divine Science School who taught Metaphysical Christianity. Chew left Helena in 1942 and was sent to work to Calgary, Canada to work at the Church of Truth, where she opened the first Divine Science Church.(4)

By 1954 Chew had adopted the title of “Dr.” and was living in San Bernardino, California and was working at the Church of Religious Science. In 1955, she retired from the church and became a minister of the new church, Religious Science Church. She continued working for 3 more years, before retiring from that church and from ministry in general in 1958. After ending her religious career, she moved to La Jolla, California in 1959 where she took up art - joining the Art Center and the La Jolla Art Association and exhibited many of her works. She also wrote articles for metaphysical magazines. (5)

On May 13, 1965 Dr. Ruth E. Chew died at 86, only a couple months shy of 87. She was cremated and it was requested that donations were made to a senior center, Horizon House, Inc. Ruth E. Chew lived a long and honestly, interesting life. So much can be ascertained from her life in terms of social involvement, work, and religious leadership as an educated white woman in the early to mid twentieth century. (6)

(4) *San Diego Union*, (San Diego, California), November 10, 1928; *San Diego Union*, (San Diego, California), February 24, 1928.; *Montana Record Herald*, (Helena, Montana), May 22, 1930.; *The Independent Record* (Helena, Montana), May 22, 1930.; *The Independent Record* (Helena, Montana), Jan. 4, 1931.; *Montana Record Herald*, (Helena, Montana), February 12, 1931.; *The Independent Record* (Helena, Montana), November 26, 1941.; *The Independent Record* (Helena, Montana), May 3, 1942.

(5) *The Albertan*, (Calgary, Alberta, Canada), December 21, 1946.; *The San Bernardino County Sun* (San Bernardino, California), March 6, 1954.; *The San Bernardino County Sun* (San Bernardino, California), November 19, 1955.; *The San Bernardino County Sun* (San Bernardino, California), June 28, 1958.; *The Albertan*, (Calgary, Alberta, Canada), May 29, 1965.; *San Diego Union*, (San Diego, California), May 15, 1965.

(6) *San Diego Union*, (San Diego, California), May 15, 1965

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Brittney Pantelione Ingersoll is the Curator of CCHS. She received her MA in American History with a Certificate in Public History from Rutgers University-Camden and is currently working towards her MA in Library Science concentrating on Archives & Preservation at Rutgers University-New Brunswick.

Dainty Delicacies: Food & the Women’s Shakespeare Club

By Tia Antonelli

The Shakespeare Club, formed by ladies in the Third Ward of Bridgeton, NJ, began in November 1898, though it was not the first – however, this was the first to have membership composed entirely of women. (1) Popularity of homosocial groups, particularly for women, was a trend that steadily developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. (2) Some of these groups were built entirely around intellectual stimulation, some were more informal – regardless, one of the most important aspects of these group gatherings was the food.

1. Bridgeton Evening News, November 30, 1898.

2. Beverly Gordon, *The Saturated World: Aesthetic Meaning, Intimate Objects, Women’s Lives 1890-1940* (2006), 66.

Accounts of the Shakespeare Club in Bridgeton almost always mention “dainty refreshments” offered by the host, who would rotate each meeting. Commonly, these refreshments were on the sweeter side, consisting of cakes, fruits, and ice cream. (3) Miss Jennie C. Nickelson, however, did not follow suit for their meeting in January 1905. Rather than the “fruit gelatine with cream, butterthins, and cocoa” that had been served the month prior, Miss Nickelson treated her guests to an oyster luncheon. (4)

Each meeting the women would read a piece by Shakespeare or other classics, including *Les Miserables* by Victor Hugo; the focus of these meetings was, assumedly, on the intellectual aspect. However, the food was not merely there as a side; it was a fundamental aspect of the gathering. In all cases, the food was intended to be its own sensory experience – the sweetness of the ice cream was softened by the cake, fruit provided tart and freshness, and nuts were a savory addition to balance one’s palate. In these meetings, all five senses would be used: holding a sponge cake and being conscious of crumbs or slight stickiness on one’s fingers; the sound of women reciting old literature, perhaps acting it out to bring it further to life; the sight of the host’s parlor, prepared to the nines; the taste of juicy Jersey strawberries on their tongues; and the smell of women’s perfume mixed with baked sweetness.

In some cases, the hosts would take the refreshments above and beyond, showcasing how significant they were to these gatherings. In February of 1904, Miss Ruth E. Chew (the president of the Shakespeare Club) concocted “unique refreshments,” where “each person [was] required to guess which was her portion by the card attached, each card [contained] some characteristic of the person or a pun of her name.” (5) A little over a year later, Miss Chew provided bouquets of birdfoot violets to each of her guests, in conjunction with decorating her home with roses and dogwood. (6) Though not food-related, the effort put into the aesthetic of these meetings shows they stood for more than intellectual development.

The Shakespeare Club in the Third Ward, Bridgeton, was certainly an educational enterprise – with it, women were able to socialize and work through literary classics – though to water it down to just that would be a disservice. The women involved knew that sitting in a circle reciting plays and novels would not be enough to sustain itself, or at least the women would not have as much fun. The inclusion of food gives the opportunity for hosts to unleash their creativity and create a larger sensory experience for the women to bond over as they socialize.

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Tia Antonelli, pursuing her M.A. in History from Villanova University, is the administrative assistant at Cumberland

3. Beverly Gordon, *The Saturated World: Aesthetic Meaning, Intimate Objects, Women’s Lives 1890-1940* (2006), 97.

4. *Bridgeton Evening News*, December 21, 1904; January 25, 1905.

5. *Bridgeton Evening News*, February 8, 1904.

6. *Bridgeton Evening News*, May 3, 1905.

County Historical Society's Lummis Library, and a docent at The Gibbon House, 1730.

A Revisit of the Chief's Gravesite

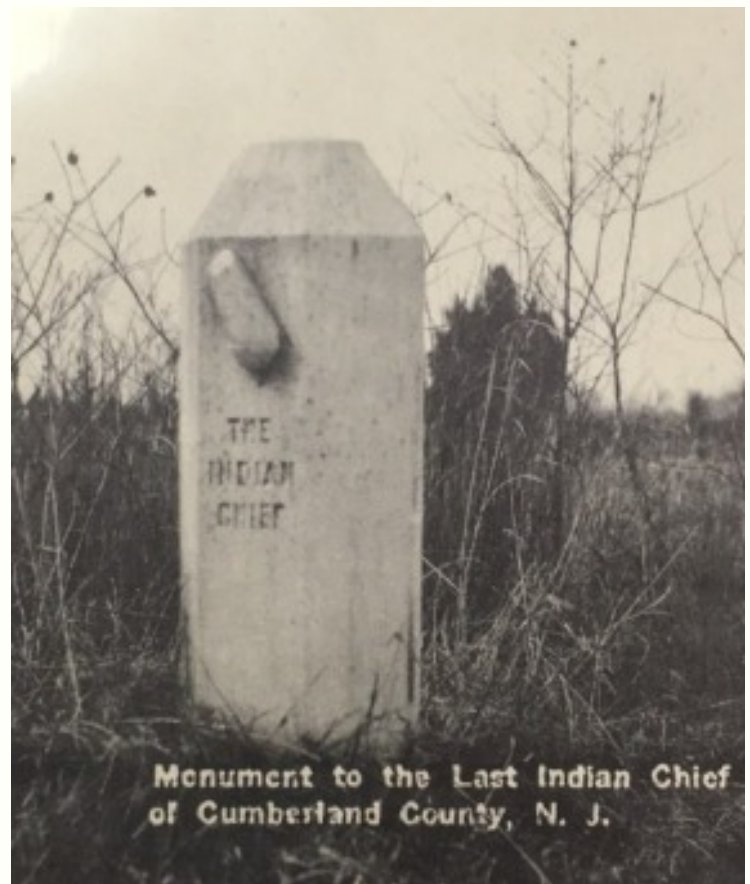
By Bill Saunderlin

Earlier this year, after a two-years lapse, I wanted to show my wife another local historic landmark. The site is believed to be the final resting place of Chief Cohanzick. The beloved Chief who may have lived between Bridgeton and Greenwich, New Jersey. Very little is known about the Chief of this area and whether his name was actually Cohanzick is up for debate. I first learned of the discovery of the gravesite from an October 1900 Bridgeton Evening News column. Another more detailed article with a photo, was featured on the front page of an October 1956 Bridgeton Evening News edition. Both newspaper articles describe the story as follows.

Dr. George B. Wood, a Philadelphia physician, often came back to his old family farm in Greenwich, Cumberland County, New Jersey. He took on as a hobby, the cultivation of cranberries. One day in 1870, his workmen, while cleaning up a cranberry bog, uncovered what was believed to be an Indigenous burial spot. They summoned Dr. Wood to inspect their findings. In the grave was a full intact skeleton, plus an unusual high number of objects. Included inside the grave was a tomahawk, arrowheads, beads, and various implements. Dr. Wood then contacted local historian, Thomas Shourds of Salem County, N.J. Together they were

convinced that this find was the remains of a Native American Chief of the highest rank. Mr. Shourds strongly believed that it the final resting spot of the great Lenni-Lenape's Chief Cohanzick.

To secure the grounds for the future, Dr. Wood ordered his men to give the Chief what he believed was a decent burial. A vault was built, and the skeletal remains were carefully placed in an iron casket, along with the artifacts that were found. Dr. Wood then had a 3-foot-high monument erected in his honor, on the site. Inscribed on one side is "The Indian Chief" with a broken tomahawk on the other side, which might have been in tact years ago. On the third side was written "Erected by Dr. G. B. Wood---1870."



Other Adoptions of the Name Cohansey:

1. Cohansey Bridge—Early name of Bridgeton before 1765.
2. Cohansey Corner—Early name of Shiloh.
3. Cohansey Lighthouse—was located in Greenwich Twp. at the entrance to the Cohansey River, along the Delaware Bay [near Tindall's Island].
4. Cohansey River—still named.
5. Old Cohansey Baptist Church and Cemetery—At Roadstown.
6. Cohanzick Country Club & Golf Course—now defunct.
7. Cohanzick Zoo---In the Bridgeton Park.
8. Cohansey Street—In Bridgeton from Washington Street.
9. Cohansey—small section in Hopewell Twp. which borders Salem County, formerly called New Boston.
10. Cohansey Tire—My old Bridgeton Babe Ruth team's sponsor in the 1960's. It was located in Bridgeton.
11. Cohansey Glass Manufacturing Company—Produced glass in Bridgeton starting in 1836 and lasted a few short years. It was located on South Pearl Street along the Cohansey River.
12. The Cohanzick Tribe, No. 14—A local organization started in March of 1869.
13. Cohansey Township—1848—1865 Part of Hopewell Twp. & the 3rd Ward of Bridgeton.

14. Cohansey Shirt Company—Was located at 32 East Commerce Street
Cohansey Steam Fire Company—Name of Bridgeton's Fire Department

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Bill Saunderlin graduated from Bridgeton High School in 1968. After retiring from E.I. DuPont with 35 years service, his passion has been researching local history, and genealogy. He has served both the Salem County and Cumberland County Historical Societies on their Library Committees for the past 15 years. He is a member of the Salem County Genealogy Society, Millville Historical Society, and the Gloucester County, Salem County, and Cumberland County Historical Societies. Both sides of his family has lived in this area for over 300 years. Bill lives with his wife Beth, just outside of the village of Alloway, in Salem County, N.J.



**It is that time of year again
Membership Renewal!**

**Please fill out and mail in
the next page or renew on
our website at
cchistsoc.org/join**

Sources:

Bridgeton Evening News—Friday October 19, 1900 page 2

Bridgeton Evening News---Saturday October 20, 1956 Front Page & page 5

“Cohanzick The Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribal Grounds Reclaiming WhatWas“TakenOut,” <https://nanticoke-lenape.info/images/cohanzick.pdf>

It is Time to Renew! - Membership Application

If you are interested in the preservation of your community’s history, then we invite you to become a member of the Cumberland County Historical Society. Your membership helps the Society in fulfilling its mission “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.”

Your membership is valid for one year and is up for renewal every January. The fees for the membership are tax deductible. Those who join late in the year will receive past copies of the Cumberland Patriot newsletter of that year. Letters and emails will go out notifying you when your membership needs to be renewed.

Benefits:

- *Member must present membership card
- Periodic issues of The Cumberland Patriot newsletter
- Free photocopies at the Lummis Library
- Discount for Hearthside Dinners (Except January)
- Members receive Hearthside Dinner dates prior to non-members
- \$2.00 discount to Annual Craft Faire admission
- Discount for the Annual Dinner
- Member-only events with 1 Free Pass for a non-member
- 10% discount on merchandise (books/t-shirts, etc.)
- Discount on workshops (3 workshops per year)

Membership Fees:

- Individual \$25
- Couple \$35
- College Student (w/ID) \$20
- Under 18 years of age \$10
- Digital Membership \$10

*Digital membership gives members access to digital copies of the Cumberland Patriot newsletter; no other membership benefits are included in the digital membership

CUT HERE

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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Address: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

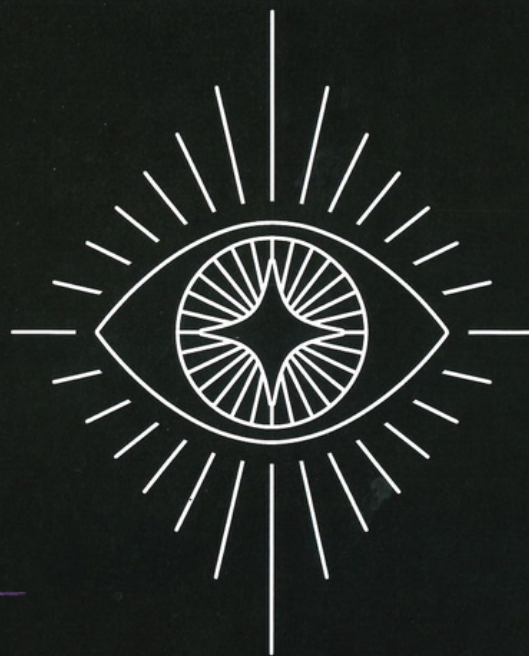
Phone Number: _____

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JOIN US FOR A NIGHT BENEATH THE STARS

DARK FESTIVAL

CUMBERLAND COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



OCT 21, 9PM-MIDNIGHT
THE GIBBON HOUSE
960 YE GREATE STREET
GREENWICH NJ 08323



You and a guest are invited to attend the
Cumberland County Historical Society's

ANNUAL BUSINESS AND DINNER MEETING

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2023

to be held at the

Greenwich Presbyterian Church
630 Ye Greate Street, Greenwich, New Jersey 08323

4:30 P.M.—Business Meeting

5 P.M.—Ham Dinner with all the Trimmings

6 P.M.—Featuring Guest Speaker— Annie Oakley

\$25 per person for members and \$30 per person for non-members.

Reservations must be received by October 29, 2023.

Please call the office (856-455-8580) for additional information.



Henry Box Brown: Abolitionist and Showman
(Portrayed by Keith Henley from the American Historical Theater in Philadelphia.)

Henry Box Brown was a Slave on Virginia plantation. When his wife and children were sold to the owner of a South Carolina plantation owner he began to devise a way to escape to freedom. With the help of James C. A. Smith, a local shop keeper and a member of the Philadelphia Abolitionist he mailed himself in a crate traveling from Richmond, VA to Philadelphia PA. The trip was a success, but was a great hardship as the journey lasted twenty-seven hours. Once in Philadelphia he became a noted abolitionist and eventually a showman. Themes addressed in this program are:

Overcoming the Odds, Determination vs Bondage and Faith

↓ *Cut Here* ↓

Name(s) _____

Phone number _____

Number of Tickets _____ Total Enclosed _____

Please return this form with your check by October 29, 2023.

CCHS, PO Box 16, Greenwich, NJ 08323

Cumberland County Historical Society

856-455-8580

www.cchistsoc.org



ARTISANS'

Faire

960 Ye Greate Street
Greenwich, NJ 08323

NOVEMBER 11TH & 12TH

10 A M - 5 P M | 10 A M - 4 P M

MUSIC | \$5 TICKETS | FOOD**

****\$3 FOR MEMBERS; FREE FOR 12 & UNDER**



House & Lights Tour

Christmas in
Greenwich

Saturday, December 17, 2023
3pm-8pm

Cumberland County
Historical Society
PO Box 16
Greenwich, NJ 08323

<https://www.cchistsoc.org>
856-455-8580

2024 Speaker Series

Warren & Reba Lummis Library
981 Ye Greate Street
Greenwich, NJ 08323

January 28, 2024

2pm

“Tribal Rights are Important Rights”: The Origins, Travails, and Impact of the Nanticoke Leni-Lenape Tribe V. The State of New Jersey

Brianna Dagostino, MA

Dagostino’s published thesis details the history of her tribe and how modern-day racism over Indian casino gaming has affected not just her tribe but indigenous nations all throughout Turtle Island.

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Brianna Dagostino is one of the Cumberland County Historical Society's docents at the Alan Carman Prehistoric Museum. Brianna is also a part of the local Nanticoke Leni Lenape Tribal Nation of South Jersey. Throughout Brianna’s life, her main goal has been to always spread the knowledge and culture of her people and their existence on Lenapehoking land. Throughout Brianna’s academic career, she has been able to create an Indigenous studies minor program at Montclair State University, has been around the East Coast giving presentations to universities, museums, and schools, and has recently completed her Master's degree in Indigenous studies. Currently, Brianna is a high school history teacher and an employee at the Cumberland County Historical Society and the Penn Museum.

February 25, 2024

"Man's Best Frenemy"

Tia Antonelli

"Man's Best Frenemy" will unpack how Cumberland County reacted to rabies and the wild dogs that were accused of spreading the disease. Rabies has been a threat to humans since the dawn of our existence -- so why was there such an uptick in fear in the late 19th century?

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Tia Antonelli is a graduate student at Villanova University, currently pursuing her Master's degree in History. She works at the Cumberland County Historical Society both as an Administrative Assistant at the Lummis Library and a Docent at the Gibbon House.

March 24, 2024

Crap: A History of Cheap Stuff in American

Dr. Wendy A. Woloson

Woloson tells the history of crap from the late eighteenth century up through today, exploring its many categories: gadgets, knickknacks, novelty goods, mass-produced collectibles, giftware, variety store merchandise. As Woloson shows, not all crap is crappy in the same way—bric-a-brac is crappy in a different way from, say, advertising giveaways, which are differently crappy from commemorative plates. Taking on the full brilliant and depressing array of crappy material goods, the book explores the overlooked corners of the American market and mindset, revealing the complexity of our relationship with commodity culture over time.

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Wendy A. Woloson is a professor of history at Rutgers University-Camden and the author, most recently, of *In Hock: Pawning in America from Independence through the Great Depression*, also published by the University of Chicago Press, and co-editor of the collection *Capitalism by Gaslight: Illuminating the Economy of 19th-Century America*.