

# Moorestown and Her Neighbors

## Historical Sketches

By

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Member of the  
Burlington County Historical Society  
Friends Historical Association



in Moorestown about  
years on the face of

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### OLD MOORESTOWN FAMILIES

I SHALL endeavor in this sketch to give a complete list of the families living in or near Moorestown whose paternal ancestors arrived in Burlington County prior to 1700. The list is surprisingly long and I can do little more than give the names of the first arrivals, state whence they came and as nearly as possible where they first settled. Nearly all of the pioneer settlers in Burlington County were English Friends who suffered persecution in the Mother Country on account of their religious beliefs and sought a refuge in the wilderness of New Jersey where God could be worshipped according to the dictates of the individual conscience. They were self-reliant, God fearing men and women and we should ever hold their memory in honor for planting the banner of religious liberty on the banks of the Delaware River. In none of the early Colonial Charters is the principle of religious liberty more clearly or beautifully expressed than in the "Concessions and Agreements" which was the common law of West Jersey prior to the surrender of the Provinces to the Crown in 1702. "No man nor number of men upon earth have power or authority to rule over men's conscience in religious matters; therefore it is agreed and ordained that no person or persons whatsoever within the said Province shall at any time hereafter in any way or upon any pretense whatever be called in question or in the least punished or hurt either in person, privilege or estate for the sake of his opinion, judgment, faith or worship in matters of religion."

A few of the early arrivals had large estates in England but generally speaking they were yeoman, tradesmen or mechanics. Old deeds and documents show that not a few of our ancestors could neither read nor write. The founders of some of our most prominent and substantial families



Old Matlack H.



Reuben Matlack's B  
in the old Quail

veyor General in 1681 and served until 1710. He was also a member of the Assembly from Burlington in 1682 and Justice of the Supreme Court in 1709. He was mentioned as an astrologer by Franklin in his Poor Richard Almanac for 1735, and Allibone referred to him as the first author in the Provinces south of New York. The Moorestown Leeds and Henry W. and Samuel P. of Atlantic City, formerly of Westfield, are direct descendants of Japhet and Deborah Smith Leeds. Japhet was the eldest of the eight children of Daniel and Dorothy Young Leeds.

**MATLACK**—William Matlack, carpenter, from Cropwell Bishop Nottinghamshire, arrived on the "Kent" in 1677. He came over as a servant to Thomas Ollive, one of the Commissioners to whom he was indentured for his passage for four years. The Kent anchored down the river near the mouth of Raccoon Creek and the Commissioners immediately proceeded up the river in row boats to the present site of Burlington. Family tradition says that William Matlack accompanied Thomas Ollive in the first boat and that he was the first man to jump ashore when they arrived at the site of Burlington. William Matlack married Mary, sister of Timothy Hancock of Brayles, Warwickshire, who came over in the "Paradise" in 1682. On November 14th of that year, shortly after their marriage, a 100 acre farm was surveyed for him on the north branch of Pensauken Creek also 100 acres for Timothy and Rachel Hancock which joined his plantation on the west. This tract was granted to William Matlack by Thomas Ollive in recognition of his four years of faithful service. In 1687 he purchased 100 acres adjoining his original survey on the east for twelve pounds and in 1695 he also bought the Hancock farm, thus increasing the homestead farm to 300 acres. It is interesting to note that some of this land is still in the possession of the Matlack family.

The original homestead stood on the bank of Pensauken Creek where the Club House of the Valley Brook Country Club, formerly the residence of Charles C. Haines, now



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Harmony Hall

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The residence of Mr. and Mrs. J. Whitall Nicholson. The eastern end  
of this beautiful old Colonial residence was erected about 1790.



Harmony Hall erected in 1753 now the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph  
L. Freeman, 607 Chester Avenue.

stands. The central part of this old house was erected by Jeremiah Matlack, the grandson of the pioneer, in about 1753. The children of William and Rachel Matlack were John, George, Mary, William, Richard, Joseph, Timothy, Jane and Sarah. William Matlack, Sr. purchased 1000 acres in Waterford Township, Gloucester County (Gloucester County formerly included Camden County) in 1701 and his sons, with the exception of William, settled in that neighborhood. William, Jr. married Mary Antrim and settled on the old homestead. Samuel R., George and Miss Alice H. Matlack of Moorestown and Chalkley and William, of near Moorestown, are descended from William and Mary Antrim Matlack. The Matlacks have been active and influential in the affairs of old Chester Township from the earliest days.

PHARO—James and Ann Pharo, from Lincolnshire, arrived at Burlington on the "Shield" in 1678. The Shield was the first immigrant vessel to sail up the river as far as Burlington City and according to local tradition it was moored to the old Buttonwood still standing on the bank of the river near Wood Street. On September 13, 1680, James Pharo purchased 100 acres "along the Delaware River adjoining Thomas Wood." This evidently was in the neighborhood of Bordentown, as an early survey for Thomas Wood shows that he settled on Crosswicks Creek which empties into the Delaware a little above that town. In April, 1688, James Pharo purchased 181 acres on Black's Creek which flows into the Delaware River below Bordentown.

The children of James and Ann Pharo were Jarvis, Amos and Ann. Jarvis married Elizabeth Willits and settled in Springfield Township afterwards moving to Tuckerton early in the Eighteenth Century. A number of their descendants still live in that community. Eugene M. Pharo of Moorestown, is a direct descendant.

POWELL—Robert and Prudence Powell of LeGrand Street, London, arrived on the "Kent" in 1677. On Septem-

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