

## **Local Spotlight: Repository Holdings Borough of Rockaway – Historical Society, Library and the First Presbyterian Church & Cemetery**

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The Special Projects Group members are visiting local repositories to learn what genealogy related materials might be available for review by our members in researching their ancestors and/or gaining historical context to enhance their stories. In a series of articles we share the main features of our interviews with repository members spotlighting the information, collections and features available for research at each location. In this issue we cover our visits to three repositories in Rockaway Borough, Morris County, New Jersey.

The Borough of Rockaway Historical Society is located at 199 West Main Street. The museum is open the last weekend of the month from 1 to 4 pm. It holds a large collection of photographs, documents and artifacts from the residents and businesses in the borough. There are a small number of family documents, Bibles, journals and local business records including ledgers. Currently there is no index of these materials but the museum plans to create one over time. The pamphlet "Historic Highlights of Rockaway Borough" has a county map, the borough map, photos and information of eight historical buildings. Using this information you could complete a walking tour of these buildings and the neighborhood. A list of their meeting dates, photos of Rockaway Borough and the Military Honor Roll is on the website [www.rockawayhistoricalcommittee.org](http://www.rockawayhistoricalcommittee.org). It also lists the contact information for scheduling an appointment outside their monthly open house schedule.

The Rockaway Borough Library at 82 East Main Street has a New Jersey History room with many local reference books only found at this location. The library is in the restored home of Colonel Joseph Jackson, the Iron King of Morris County, which was built in the early 1800's. Later Dr. and Mrs. George Foster lived there from 1885 to 1939. The Doctor's office was in the lower level of the home. The top floor of the library has furnishings from around 1900; these rooms are open by appointment to groups and for special programs to the community. The building is a designated National Historic Site. The library's Historical Images Collection is available only on the library's website, [www.rblibrary.org](http://www.rblibrary.org). Archived are the digitized letters and photographs of Allen Eaton Jenkins who was an employee of Dr. and Mrs. Foster from the late 1890s to 1909 and Edmund Drake Halsey (1840 -1896), a life long borough resident and a Civil War soldier. Mr. Eaton's letters tell of life in Rockaway Borough and letters of Lt. Halsey tell of life on the battlefields.

The borough has memorials to all Rockaway soldiers that served in the Wars. The Civil War Monument is in the First Presbyterian Church. All other soldiers are recognized in the Veterans Memorial Park that is adjacent to the library.

The First Presbyterian Church (FPC) located at 33 Church Street is a short distance from both the museum and the library. The church archives include birth/marriage/death records starting in 1809. The 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Program of the church (1758 – 2008) contains the church history, many family names and it documents the growth of the parish and community. Most of the previous pastors have written booklets about their tenure. There are membership books from some of the earliest years. Fortunately a number of the church records are copied and held in the Morristown – Morris Township Library in the North Jersey Genealogy & History Center (MMTL). You should look for the information first at the MMTL since the church staff time is limited. Check their finding aids at the website, [www.jfpl.org](http://www.jfpl.org). On the FPC website, [www.fpcrockaway.org](http://www.fpcrockaway.org) under “more” you’ll find the FPC Historic Cemetery link and a listing Revolutionary War Soldiers buried in the cemetery on the church grounds. Every soldier buried in the cemetery has a military footstone. Requests for FPC historical document searches of materials not held at the MMTL can be made by contacting their office at (973) 627-1050 between 9am to 1pm, Monday through Friday. Limited staff will impact receipt time and a nominal donation will be requested.