

**Local Spotlight: Repository Holdings
Hackettstown Historical Society
106 Church St., Hackettstown, New Jersey**

by Carole Flatley & Marianne Totaro

A trip up the Rt. 80 west corridor on a crisp fall day led us to the Hackettstown Historical Society Museum, located at 106 Church St., Hackettstown, NJ. The house museum was built in 1915 for the Theodore G. Plate family and houses several in-depth historical exhibits and themed rooms for display of local artifacts and samples of bygone family life in Warren County. The museum holds over thirteen thousand items in its collection of artifacts and memorabilia. Of particular interest to those seeking information on Hackettstown's ancestral families and local industries in this lovely Musconetcong River valley town is the museum's Reference Library and History Room. Their holdings exceed 800 titles of state, county, genealogical and local interest, over 200 genealogical files, and over 1000 photographs and postcards. The Society has grown into a self-contained resource and research center for Northwest NJ since its inception in 1975 due to the dedication of numerous long-term devoted members.



We met with President Gwen Chaar and Archivist and Trustee Ray Lemasters for an overview of the Historical Society in the pleasant library and history room. A large conference table allows members and visitors a comfortable workspace to review materials. One wall in the library includes numerous binders containing archives of local businesses, photographs of historic homes, wedding and birth announcements, thousands of obituaries, First and Second Presbyterian Church bulletins, Trinity Methodist church records, Centenary College and local high school yearbooks, and over 100 maps including the Sanborn insurance maps. Large filing cabinets house the family files stored by surname. Many of these family files include an original or copy of property deeds associated with the family, and oral histories. Other files include those of local businesses and organizations, such as the Union Cemetery records. The cemetery records may include date of interment and cause of death. Each document and artifact obtained by or donated to the Society receives an accession number noting

the item, source and date of acquisition. The historical group does not maintain a digital listing of each document, but does maintain a card catalogue allowing a visitor to locate a topic or surname. Additionally, it has back issues of the Hackettstown *Gazette* on microfilm.



The Society has a robust website found at www.hackettstownhistory.com. The researcher can find a breakdown of the Collections held. There is also a Search box where visitors may enter a surname, business name or topic that may yield digitized content such as a photo of a family home, a listing of Revolutionary and Civil War soldiers, an obituary or yearbook photo. Not all materials have yet been imaged and linked to the website but it's worth a visit if you have an interest in the area.

Ray Lemasters gave us a tour of the two-floor museum and its current exhibits. All are professionally displayed and contain signage that makes the museum a popular stop for the local school visits. The museum is open Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays from 2-4 pm and by appointment. The Society offers monthly meetings with historical presentations on the first Tuesday of each month, 7:30pm, at the American Legion Post 164, Willow Grove St., Hackettstown, NJ. Its most recent offering was "The Doughboys of Hackettstown". It also sponsors events such as their late October Fall Lantern Tour of the local downtown area, and occasional walking tours of their historical district. The Society may be reached at info@hackettstownhistory.com or at (908) 852-8797.

The Special Projects Group (SPG) members have been 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 the 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. Visit the *Special Projects* page at <https://mags-public.weebly.com/> to read the sixteen previous spotlight articles and to view the compiled inventories. If you know of a local repository that the SPG should visit, or one that you wish to cover with us for a future article, please contact the Special Projects Group Committee at maryjosolomon@gmail.com