

“The West Jersey Society’s Great Tract in Hunterdon County”
by Henry Race, M.D.
Flemington, NJ

Published in “The Jerseyman”, Vol 3, No. 1, April, 1895
Transcribed verbatim by Rosalyn Bellis, July 2006

Daniel COXE, M.D., of London, was physician to Queen Catherine, wife of King Charles II., and also to Queen Anne. In February, 1686, he purchased five whole shares of the Province of West Jersey from Benjamin BARTLETT, the son-in-law of Edward BYLLYNGE. Subsequently, by various conveyances, and extensive purchases made by him from the natives, which were assented to by the Council of Proprietors, he assumed to be “Chiefe Proprietor of new west Jersey,” owning about one-fifth of its territory.

In 1691-2 the West New Jersey Society was organized. It was a joint stock company, composed of forty-eight members, mostly citizens of London. Their object was “Carrying on a Trade to the sd. Places in America as for the Promoting & Carrying on of several other Useful and necessary Designs for mutual Advantage.” Their capital was raised “from time to time & at all times when & as often as the major Part shall think fit to order the same signified by their Votes in a General Assembly Pay or Cause to be Paid to the Treasurer for the time being . . . all such sum or sums of money as the sd. General Assembly or the major Part of them by their Votes shall Order & appoint.” The capital stock was divided into *sixteen hundred* equal shares not to exceed ten Pounds Sterling each. The ownership of ten shares was made requisite for a vote in their proceedings. They held an annual meeting on the 25th of March for the election of officers and of a committee of eleven members authorized to represent the Society in business transactions. This organization has been continued to the present time, annual meetings being held regularly and officers elected in London.

On March 4, 1691-2, Dr. Daniel COXE conveyed to the West Jersey Society for the sum of £9,000 all his property in the Colony, except “that Tract of Land lying about the falls of Delaware River (in Hopewell and Maidenhead) in West New Jersey . . . Conteyning by Estimacon Sixty thousand Acres,” and two other tracts which he had previously conveyed to John COLOHAM.

The Society’s Committee of Eleven commissioned Jeremiah BASSE as their agent in West Jersey “To take up Lands there To inspect and direct ye selling and buying of our (their) Goods,” &c., August 19, 1699, he was succeeded by Andrew HAMILTON, and later, Col. Lewis MORRIS became the agent of the Society.

At a meeting of the Council of Proprietors on the 9th of September, 1708, “Mr. Lewis MORRIS was admitted to take up one hundred thousand Acres for the Society.” . . . On the 29th March, 1717, Mr. MORRIS produced to the Council a Return, recorded, of Ninety-one thousand and eight hundred & ninety-five Acres, Surveyed in the Month of June, 1711, which was allowed.” (*New Jersey Archives, VII., 325*).

The survey was made by Daniel LEEDS, and the following description of its boundaries is found in his return made to the Surveyor General’s Office at Burlington:

“Situate, and being in the county of Burlington in the Province of West Jersey, beginning at the north end of Coshanton (Cushetunk mountain;) thence north to Lamington Falls, on the North Branch of Raritan, where Peapack path crosses said river; thence along said path; thence west to the South Branch of Raritan River; thence southwest to Delaware River* (* This corner was a large rock projecting into the margin of the river. It was removed in grading the track for the Belvidere Delaware Railroad. It was 76 chains above the mouth of Milford Creek.); thence as the river goes to where the Sokaway (Nississackawick) comes into the Delaware, to the top of a

hill on the south side of the upper branch of the Reshasakaway (this corner was 9 chains and 50 links from the mouth of Nississackawick Creek); thence to a fork of a run (near Pittstown), being a branch of Capooaulong (Capolon); thence down said run to another fork (near EVERLE's, formerly Ishi BUTLER's house); thence up the same (southeasterly) to a fork of the said run, to a hickory sapling by the old field of Sekapus to a corner near his plantation (one mile N.E. of Quakertown); thence east to Raritan River (South Branch); thence northeast to the end of a run at the foot of the said mountain (Coshanton); thence southeast to Mr. WILLOCK's corner."

It seems probable, from Mr. LEED's description, that he made this survey on horseback, without compass or chain. Some of its lines were altered and their bearings more definitely described, in later surveys, by Dr. John ROCKHILL and Robert EMLEY. After Hunterdon county was set off from Burlington—1712-14—it was commonly called "THE WEST JERSEY SOCIETY'S GREAT TRACT IN HUNTERDON COUNTY."

There were, probably, some settlers on the tract before its allotment to the Society. Others came in and occupied the more desirable places without permission from the Society. The frequency and number of these settlements may be inferred from the circumstance that, as early as 1723, arrangements were being made for building St. Thomas' Church; and, about 1730, Bethlehem Presbyterian Church was organized both within the Society's borders.

In 1735, at the request of this father, who was agent for the Society, Lewis MORRIS, Jr., went several times to the tract to take leases from the settlers. He found 98 families seated on it beside those on the part claimed by COXE and KIRKBRIDE, called COXE's and KIRKBRIDE's 10,000 acres. They consented to sign leases, which were delivered to the succeeding agent, Mr. THYN. (See *Liber M, 361 Burlington Records*).

As the list of names of these settlers is of much genealogical interest—many of them being lineal ancestors of families still resident in the country—we copy them together with the number of acres occupied by each one: [Transcriber's note: Dr. Race listed only 97 names. An alphabetized version has been appended at the end of the article.]

Robert GREEN, 100 acres
John HENDRICKSON, 200 acres
Nathan PEG, 200 acres
Peter MOREAU, 200 acres
Isaac ASTOR, 160 acres
Abraham TRITBY, 200 acres
Martin STEYR, 100 acres
Daniel ROSE, 200 acres
Edward HORNET, 200 acres
Joseph JUSROW, 200 acres
Erie EYCK, 200 acres
Philip EYCK, 100 acres
Dennis RYLEY, 200 acres
Hugh HOWELL, 200 acres
John MERLATT, 100 acres
Solomon WILERICK, 100 acres
Miles BURM, 100 acres
John ALBURTUS, 200 acres
Michael HENESTRIST, 150 acres
Lomand, CALFE, 100 acres
Uriah William LAWRENCE, 50 acres
Cornelius JOHNSON for J. HENDRICKSON,
100 acres
Johannes HOFFMAN, 100 acres

John BASSETT, 200 acres
Adam HUNAN, 100 acres
Herman HAGERHAFF, 50 acres
Samuel FREEMAN, 100 acres
Henry FREEMAN, 100 acres
Christian JACOBS, 100 acres
William HERR, 100 acres
Adam DUVALERE, 100 acres
Joseph WILLITS, 200 acres
William OAKS, 200 acres
Joseph WEBSTER, 200 acres
Daniel ALLEN, 50 acres
Isaac OSMAN, 200 acres
Paul MARLAT, 100 acres
John OAKES, 100 acres
Uriah HEPPEN, 300 acres
Joost HEPPEN, 150 acres
Christopher VECAKT, 200 acres
Philip SHOUBE, 100 acres
William CRIST, 100 acres
Lawrence WOLLIFF, 150 acres
Peter BELIESFELT, 150 acres
Oliver SILVERTHORN, 200 acres
William BYLERFELT, 200 acres

Homer KLYN, 150 acres
William DIXE, 100 acres
Peter DELSIE, 150 acres
John THOMAS, 100 acres
William PHILIPS, 150 acres
Nathaniel PETTIT, 100 acres
Stephen CALVIN, 200 acres
Zachariah ALBACK, 100 acres
William ALBACK, 100 acres
Roeleff TRAPAGAN, 200 acres
Griffin THOMAS, 150 acres
William PEPINGER, 125 acres
Gasper HAWSHILL, 150 acres
Simon LEFRE, 100 acres
Edward HUNT, 200 acres
Jabis JARVIS, 200 acres
Samuel SWACKANSWEN, 100 acres
Johannes SYMORS, 100 acres
Paid DEWITT, 200 acres
Abraham SLOWN, 50 acres
Abraham MACDERARD, 150 acres
John RODER, 150 acres
Peter JARVIS, 150 acres
Christian JARVIS, 150 acres
Andrew BOUR, 200 acres

Daniel BORLAND, 100 acres
Jacob ANGELE, 100 acres
Robert WHEE, 100 acres
John MOORE, 100 acres
William OSMAN, 100 acres
Anthony KELSSE, 100 acres
Jacob BODIN, 200 acres
Thomas KIRBY, 100 acres
George MARBOT, 100 acres
Teunis HEPPEN, 106 acres
Johannes SEVRUFIRSTY, 150 acres
Nicholas ABELS, 100 acres
Aron PRICE, 200 acres
Cornelius JOHNSON, 100 acres
Jacob SHIPMAN, 150 acres
Zacharias SOMMENSFELT, 150 acres
Edward MANNING, 100 acres
Nicholas BICKLE (PICKEL), 100 acres
Michael HENESKIT, 60 acres
Uriah KIRDS, 100 acres
John CORKE, 100 acres
Thomas LEASLEY, 200 acres
Adam PATNER, 100 acres
Richard PELVER, 200 acres
James MACKASKY, 50 acres

Total, 13, 401 acres

In 1744, the Society, by their agents, Joseph HAYNES and Jeremiah LATTOUCH, sold to James ALEXANDER, father of Lord STERLING, 10,000 acres of land, "with usual allowances, to be elected, located and chosen in any number of parcels by the said James ALEXANDER." The conveyance was confirmed by deed, bearing date March 30, 1753, given by Henry LANE and Lewis JOHNSTON, attorneys for the Society. (*Book H, 2nd, 196, Burlington Records*).

August 16, 1794, Henry LANE, Lewis JOHNSTON and John FOYE were commissioned as "Agents Attorneys and Factors to the Society to manage their Affairs and Interests in the Jerseys," with instructions to "Dispose of such part (of the Society's tract) as is unoccupied and free from any contest at Sixty Pounds or more pr. Hundred Acres, New York money, but not under that price, and not less than One thousand Acres at a time and to be located, &c., all together in one place and not in different parts. And to make those easy that are Settled on our Lands and to whom Mr. Lewis MORRIS gave Leases, We agree you may grant to them the Freehold thereof on their paying Forty Pounds or more pr. Hundred Acres, And for those that are settled on our Lands, and refused to take a Lease from Mr. MORRIS, Junr, you may grant to them the Freehold thereof on their paying you Fifty Pounds pr. Hundred Acres, New York money, clear of all Charges. And for those that were settled on said Tract or claim under COXE or KERPRIGHT (KERKBRIDE?) or others on pretence of a Survey, &c., you may grant to them the Freehold thereof on their paying you Forty pounds pr. Hundred Acres clear of all charges."

October 11, 1752, the remaining unsold part of this tract was conveyed to an American company composed of Hon. John STEVENS, Andrew JOHNSTON and John JOHNSTON. The consideration obligated for was £20, 000. A joint stock company was formed and the capital divided into fifteen equal shares. Of these Andrew JOHNSON became the owner of four shares; Hon. John STEVENS of four; William ALEXANDER (Lord STIRLING) of two; John JOHNSTON of two; Thomas BARTON of two; and Francis McEVERS of one. Some of this stock changed hands, and in 1766 William ALEXANDER held two shares; Hon. John STEVENS five; James

PARKER three; Executors of Andrew JOHNSTON two; Patrick McEVERS one; Nathaniel MARSTON, Jacob LUDLOW, and Henry CUYLER two.

A survey of the whole tract was made by Johnathan HAMPTON, and it was found to contain 92,513 acres, strict measure.

By Feb. 1761 the following claims had been admitted:

ALLEN and TURNER's purchase, 10,880 acres
COXE and KERKBRIDE's purchase, 11,337 acres
HOFF and BOUNEL's purchase, 500 acres
ROSECRANT's purchase, 598 acres
COXE and KING's claim, 1,527 acres

In 1762, '3 and '4, 32,000 acres were surveyed into farm lots, mapped and numbered by Mr. Hampton. By a deed of partition, dated October 5, 1765, all the parties having right to the same "allotted a part of the same great tract into 15 allotments." (*Burlington Records, Liber X of Deeds, 47*).

Each of the owners of these several allotments commissioned John EMLEY as agent and attorney to lease, receive rents, or sell and make conveyance of their lands in the tract.

We copy from Mr. EMLEY's MSS, the following list of names of tenants in 1757, "to the Westward of PIERCE's Road." (Pierce's Road is now called the "Hickory Road," leading from Pittstown to Bloomsbury by way of the old Hickory Tavern).

ARMSTRONG, Thomas
BEAVER, Thomas
BENNET, Henry
BROCK, Daniel
BIRD, Elisha
BIRD, Elisha, Jun.
BIRD, James
BLAIR, Robert
BARTON, Clark
BARTON, Thomas
BODINE, John
BRINSON, John
BREEDEN, John
BRUNSON, Barefoot
CALVIN, Luther
COTTON, Henry
CAFFREY, Patrick
CALWELL, Joseph
CLYNE, William
DILTS, Philip Peter
DAVIDSON, Alexander
EMELL, Peter
FERGUSON, Samuel
FLEMING, William
FREEMAN, Samuel
FREEMAN, Abraham
GOODWIN, Amos
HOMER, Jacob

HANDS, Peter
HAND (HANN) Matthias
HARRISON, John
HENDERSON, John
HENDRICKSON, John
HIENER (HINER) William
HERRING & CLAIR
HAIR (HARE) Joseph
HERMAN, John
HOWELL, Sampson
KEMPLE, Peter
KELLY, John
KIMMINS, Thomas
KEYS, Peter
LONGLEY, Joseph
LACOCK, Nathan
LOWDEN, Samuel
LENNARD, Paul
McRICKEN, George
McFARLANE, James
McINTOSH, Daniel
NEWTON, Robert
OSMUND, Sarah
OLIVER, Daniel
OAKS (OAKES) William
OPDYCK, Benjamin
OAKS, Isaac
OTTO, Peter

PARTIER, John
PALMER, Jonathan
PARKE, John
PRICE, Thomson
PETTIT, Nathaniel
QUEEN, John
REU, Robert
ROSECRANS, Harman
STRAYLE, Jacob
SMITH, Peter
SYGNE (SINE) Philip
SCHOOLEY, Samuel
SLOUT, Philip
TODD, John Peter
TIMBLER, George
USSELTON, Samuel
Van SICKLEN (Van SICKLE)
Garrett
WILKINSON, John
WEYER, Peter
WINEGARDEN & SHOEMAKER
WAGGONER, Adam
WAGGONER, William
WINEGARDEN, Peter
WEBSTER, Benjamin
WEBSTER, Joseph
WARNER (WARNE) & VEERT
YOUNG, Peter

Tenants between PIERCE's Road and the South Branch of the Raritan:

ALLEN, William
ADAER (ADAIR), Alexander
BIGGER, Joseph
BEAVERS, Joseph
BATEY, Robert
BUCKALEW, Samuel
BARTHOLOMEW, John
BEAM, John Richard
BIGGEN, James
CLIFFORD, James
CEIPHER, Michael
CHRISTIE, William
CARR, John
CARR, Hugh
FLEMING, Andrew

FLEMING, Thomas
FITZGERALD, John
FARI, Valentine
GORDON, Joseph
HUBEY, Elmer
HAGEMAN, Joseph
HAGEMAN, Aram
HENRY, Johannes
HEGEL, Peter
JOHNSTON, John
LIKENS, John
LAREW, Peter
LITTLE, Thomas
MILLER, William
McSHANE, Francis

ORD, Johannes
PETERSON, John
REDMAN, Joseph
SYGNE (SINE) Philip
SHAW, Robert
SAUNDERS, John
STEVENSE, Cornelius
TROY, John
TAYLOR, Robert Runyon
WILLIAMS, Edward
WILSON, John
WATSON, John
WEYNEN, William

Transcriber's **alphabetized** version of Dr. Race's list of names of the 1735 settlers:

ABELS, Nicholas 100 acres	JUSROW, Joseph 200 acres
ALBACK, William 100 acres	KELSSE, Anthony 100 acres
ALBACK, Zachariah 100 acres	KIRBY, Thomas 100 acres
ALBURTUS, John 200 acres	KIRDS, Uriah 100 acres
ALLEN, Daniel 50 acres	KLYN, Homer 150 acres
ANGELE, Jacob 100 acres	LAWRENCE, Uriah William 50 acres
ASTOR, Isaac 160 acres	LEASLEY, Thomas 200 acres
BASSETT, John 200 acres	LEFRE, Simon 100 acres
BELIESFELT, Peter 150 acres	MACDERARD, Abraham 150 acres
BICKLE (PICKEL), Nicholas 100 acres	MACKASKY, James 50 acres
BODIN, Jacob 200 acres	MANNING, Edward 100 acres
BORLAND, Daniel 100 acres	MARBOT, George 100 acres
BOUR, Andrew 200 acres	MARLAT, Paul 100 acres
BURM, Miles 100 acres	MERLATT, John 100 acres
BYLERFELT, William 200 acres	MOORE, John 100 acres
CALFE, Lomand 100 acres	MOREAU, Peter 200 acres
CALVIN, Stephen 200 acres	OAKES, John 100 acres
CORKE, John 100 acres	OAKS, William 200 acres
CRIST, William 100 acres	OSMAN, Isaac 200 acres
DELSIE, Peter 150 acres	OSMAN, William 100 acres
DEWITT, Paid 200 acres	PATNER, Adam 100 acres
DIXE, William 100 acres	PEG, Nathan 200 acres
DUVALERE, Adam 100 acres	PELVER, Richard 200 acres
EYCK, Erie 200 acres	PEPINGER, William 125 acres
EYCK, Philip 100 acres	PETTIT, Nathaniel 100 acres
FREEMAN, Henry 100 acres	PHILIPS, William 150 acres
FREEMAN, Samuel 100 acres	PRICE, Aron 200 acres
GREEN, Robert 100 acres	RODER, John 150 acres
HAGERHAFF, Herman 50 acres	ROSE, Daniel 200 acres
HAWSHILL, Gasper 150 acres	RYLEY, Dennis 200 acres
HENDRICKSON, John 200 acres	SEVRUFIRSTY, Johannes 150 acres
Cornelius JOHNSON for J. HENDRICKSON, 100 acres	SHIPMAN, Jacob 150 acres
HENESKIT, Michael 60 acres	SHOOBE, Philip 100 acres
HENESTRIST, Michael 150 acres	SILVERTHORN, Oliver 200 acres
HEPPEN, Joost 150 acres	SLOWN, Abraham 50 acres
HEPPEN, Teunis 106 acres	SOMMENSFELT, Zacharias 150 acres
HEPPEN, Uriah 300 acres	STEYR, Martin 100 acres
HERR, William 100 acres	SWACKANSWEN, Samuel 100 acres
HOFFMAN, Johannes 100 acres	SYMORS, Johannes 100 acres
HORNET, Edward 200 acres	THOMAS, Griffin 150 acres
HOWELL, Hugh 200 acres	THOMAS, John 100 acres
HUNAN, Adam 100 acres	TRAPAGAN, Roeleff 200 acres
HUNT, Edward 200 acres	TRITBY, Abraham 200 acres
JACOBS, Christian 100 acres	WEBSTER, Joseph 200 acres
JARVIS, Christian 150 acres	WHEE, Robert 100 acres
JARVIS, Jabis 200 acres	WILERICK, Solomon 100 acres
JARVIS, Peter 150 acres	WILLITS, Joseph 200 acres
JOHNSON, Cornelius 100 acres	WOLLIFF, Lawrence 150 acres
	VECAKT, Christopher 200 acres