

In 1879 the population of Salem County had grown to 23,940. The county was divided into townships of Elsinboro, East Fenwick, (now Mannington), West Fenwick (afterwards Penn's Neck and now Upper and Lower Penn's Neck), Pilesgrove (which included both the Pittsgroves). and Monmouth (which embraced the territory now included in Upper and Lower Alloways Creek and Quinton).

Fenwick Colony has not grown without turbulence. There were numerous capital crimes. On Christmas Eve, 1916, Sheriff A. Lincoln Fox had to deal with the brutal murder of Joseph Westcott. The convicted men were the first criminals from Salem County to be executed by electricity. This was the first capital case since the execution of Sullivan in 1884.

During the terms of Sheriffs Hubert Layton and Norris Williams new jails were built in 1957 and 1994 respectively.

Salem County enters the Twenty-First century with a population of approximately 66,000 people. The last sixty years saw the sheriff's office held by just four men. Sheriff, Hubert P. Layton, served for over thirty years, Sheriff Norris B. Williams for over twenty years, Sheriff John B. Cooksey for twelve years and Sheriff Charles M. Miller presently holds the position. Sheriff Miller looks forward to increase police presence in all communities within Salem County.



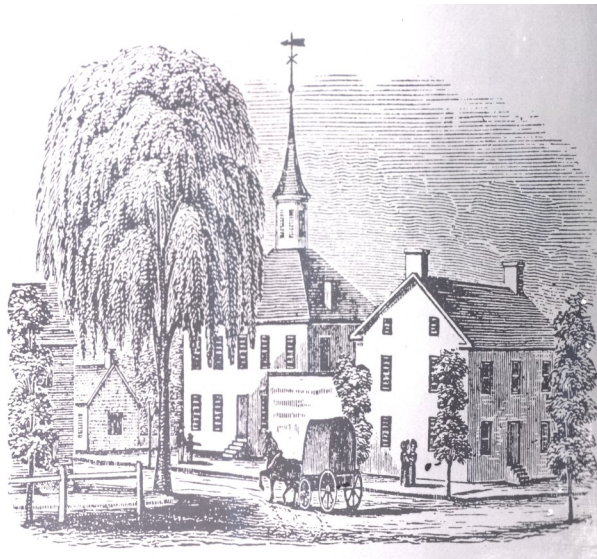
Present jail built in 1994 in Mannington at a cost of \$17 million dollars, is the 6th Salem County jail.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- *Written and created: Janina Patrus
- *Research: Christina Patrus
- *Photographs: Curt Harker & Collection of the Salem County (NJ) Historical Society.
- * History of the counties of Gloucester Salem & Cumberland NJ by Thomas Crushing; Charles Sheppard; Philadelphia:Everston Peck 1883
- * The History of Salem County NJ by Joseph S. Sickler; Sunbeam Publishing Company 1937

HISTORY OF SALEM COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

CHARLES M. MILLER SHERIFF



Courthouse & Jail c.1775

Sheriff's Roster

- 1682 Thomas Woodruff
- 1693 John Jeffery
- 1694 Hugh Middleton
- 1697 Rodger Milton
- 1698 John Dickson
- 1700 & 1705, 1715, 1720 William Griffin
- 1701 Rodger Milton
- 1703 William Dare
- 1709 & 1723, 1732 George Trenchard
- 1712 Daniel Rumsey & John Rolph
- 1716 James Skerron
- 1717 & 1727 Robert Johnson
- 1728 Joseph Gregory
- 1735 John Hunt
- 1741 Nicholas Gibbon
- 1748 William Barker
- 1752 John Nicholson
- 1755 Robert Johnson
- 1758 & 1764 John Budd
- 1762 & 1769 Joseph Burroughs
- 1765 Edward Test
- 1771 George Trenchard
- 1773 Bateman Lloyd
- 1774 Edmund Wetherby
- 1783 & 1789 Whitten Cripps
- 1786 Benjamin Cripps
- 1792 Edward Hall
- 1795 Clement Acton
- 1798 John Tuft
- 1800 Jacob Hufty
- 1804 Samuel L. James
- 1807 Thomas Bines
- 1810 Henry Freas
- 1813 Richard Craven
- 1816 Samuel Miller
- 1819 Jonathan Richman
- 1822 Joseph Kille
- 1825 Edward Smith
- 1828 John Hackett & Issac Johnson
- 1831 James Logue

- 1834 David S. English
- 1837 Thomas I. Casper
- 1840 Isaac Johnson (2nd)
- 1843 Robert Newell
- 1846 Isaiah Conklin
- 1849 Joseph S. Blackwood
- 1852 Samuel Plummer
- 1855 Richard C. Ballinger
- 1858 Samuel W. Miller
- 1861 Owen L. Jones
- 1864 John Hunt
- 1867 George Hires, Jr.
- 1870 William A. Casper
- 1873 John Hires
- 1878 George D. Barton
- 1881 Charles D. Coles
- 1884 Clinton Kelty
- 1887 James Butcher
- 1890 James Newell
- 1893 Oliver, T. Wiggins
- 1896 Benjamin B. Westcott
- 1899 Robert N. Vanneman
- 1902 William Johnson
- 1905 Collins B. Allen
- 1908 Albert Batten
- 1911 John E. Ayres
- 1914 A. Lincoln Fox
- 1917 William T. Mifflin
- 1920 A.K. Brandriff
- 1923 Robert W. Kidd
- 1926 J. Emmor Robinson
- 1929 George P. Dixon
- 1932 Hubert P. Layton
- 1935 Hildreth S. Reeves
- 1936 Peter B. Hoff
- 1940 Hubert P. Layton
- 1943 William H. Morris
- 1946 to 1973 Hubert P. Layton
- 1974 to 1994 Norris B. Williams
- 1995 to 2007 John B. Cooksey
- 2007 Charles M. Miller

The Office of the Sheriff is the oldest law enforcement office known within the common law system. From the beginning of English and Scottish law, the sheriff's office was the center of the local administration of justice. The most popular concept of the origin of Sheriff is that it came from England. The office of the Sheriff was brought to this country by the Pilgrims. The Sheriff's duties in the colonies was to collect taxes and make sure local elections ran smoothly. The word Sheriff evolved from the Saxon word 'scyre' signifying 'shire' meaning county, and word 'reeve' signifying keeper or administrative office. Shire-reeve evolved into the present word, Sheriff.

The office of the Sheriff is the only elected law enforcement position in the state of New Jersey. The sale of property had been the responsibility of the Sheriff's office for over seven hundred years and this function is still performed. The authority over constables, wardens and the jail are a continuing responsibility along with court safety, transportation of inmates and the service of warrants.

Salem, known as John Fenwick's colony, is the oldest English speaking settlement on the Delaware River. The Sheriff's office in Salem County dates back to 1682. The General Free Assembly of the province made the first division of West New Jersey into judicial districts or counties at its session in May 1682. At that time a sheriff, recorder and justices were appointed for the jurisdiction of Salem though the act did not define the limits of the jurisdiction. An interesting fact that up to 1693, there was no tribunal in West Jersey competent to try offenses of a capital nature. The first settlers, the Quakers almost seemed unwilling to suppose that a capital crime could be committed in their community. It was provided, however, that when a person should be found guilty of murder or treason, the sentence and punishment was left to the General Assembly "to determine as they, in the wisdom of the lord, should judge meet and expedite".

The jail was built because the thinking at the time was that physical punishment would frighten one into a God fearing lifestyle. The jail was merely a holding place until the offender could be flogged at the whipping post or placed in the stocks which were located just outside the jail.

Thomas Woodruff and his wife, Edith arrived in Salem on the ship "Surrey" in 1679. In 1682 Woodruff was appointed the first High Sheriff for Salem County. Towards the end of his term, in 1691, Woodruff walked Thomas Lutherland to his execution for the murder of John Clark.

With the increase of population it soon became necessary to create another county and Gloucester was organized in 1686. Oldman's Creek and a line from its headwaters to the Delaware River became the northern boundary of Salem County.

In 1692 during the term of High Sheriff John Jeffery, the county of Cape May was enacted by an act of the Provincial Legislature with a boundary between it and Salem County on the East side of the Morris River.

The original jail was built of logs and stood until 1709, when George Trenchard served as Sheriff. It was then replaced by a stone building and this building in 1775 was replaced by yet another, also of stone on the corner of Fenwick and Market Streets.

In 1747-48 an act was passed that incorporated Cumberland County from the southern parts of Salem. During the terms of Sheriffs Nicolas Gibbon and William Barker, the Act of 1747 was passed. It required that all Sheriffs should be residents and freeholders in the county for three years, and that no one hold office for longer than three years. (Freeholder is a term signifying that the person so designated was the owner of property and had the authority to vote.)

In the 1790 census the population of Salem County had grown to 10,437 persons. During the term of Sheriff Clement Acton, in 1795 the jail was damaged but not utterly destroyed by a fire, which was set by a prisoner named McIntyre. The jail was rebuilt. It was a plain substantial building, encroaching slightly as did its predecessor on the street. It was two stories high and contained not only

cells for the prisoners, but also the sheriff's residence. A high stone wall surrounded a spacious jail-yard.

In 1825 Sheriff Edward Smith married a daughter of Andrew Sinnickson. In the 1830's they would be just one family of the many who emigrated west when crops failed.

By 1842 while Sheriff Isaac Johnson was serving as Sheriff, an addition was built to the jail. Action was finally taken in 1851 during Sheriff John blackwood's tenure, to build a new jail. A committee consisting of Joseph Kille, Samuel P. Carpenter and William H. Nelson was appointed to report estimates as to the probable cost of the building and proposal for the erection if it. They reported back to the Board of Freeholder in 1852, but no action was taken in the matter.

On New Years day 1853, Justice Elmer sentenced Samuel Treadway to the gallows. Treadway was convicted of shooting his estranged wife. Once convicted he made a full confession and on March 1, noon the hanging took place in the rear of the old jail. The hanging was witnessed by three sheriffs, four doctors and over one hundred invited 'guests'; and afterwards the entire populace was allowed to view the swinging remains. The trial and event were well covered by the local and Philadelphia newspapers.

In 1854 during the term if Sheriff Samuel Plummer, a committee was appointed to procure plans and estimates of the cost of a new jail and workhouse. In August that year the committee's reports were placed in the hands of the clerk of the County John N. Cooper and once again the project slept.



Jail Built in 1867

In January 1866, after the Civil War, a special meeting was called for the purpose of considering the matter. It was resolved by vote that the old jail should be torn down and a new one built. A Committee was appointed to procure plans and specifications to select a site on some part of the county ground, advertise for and receive proposals for work. It was not until John Hunt was Sheriff, that this plan was finally approved. The committee was ordered to "build a new county jail by contract or otherwise with a house on the front brick or stone and to dispose of the old jail and materials there of to the best interests of the county." It was directed that the building should front on Market Street, north of the clerk and surrogate's office. At the annual meeting in May 1866 this committee reported that a contractor had been found for the building of a jail and sheriff's house.

The jail was completed early in 1867 and the materials of the old jail were sold. The jail was a stone building with thirty-two brick cells opening into spacious corridors, each cell having a capacity for one prisoner. The Sheriff's house stood in front of the jail, on Market Street. It was a brick structure, tastefully finished; two stories in height, and it had the necessary sheriff's and jailer's offices, as well as the office of the mayor of Salem. The cost of these buildings was forty thousand dollars in 1869. Where the old jail stood at the corner of Fenwick and Market Streets, the area was cleared and enclosed. The space would eventually become the site of the 1908 expansion of the old courthouse. The new Sheriff George Hires took residence in 1869.

A curious feature of elections in those times was that the sheriffs were elected for one year only but once a man was successful like Sheriff Casper, both parties re-nominated him by courtesy for the next two years. This continued until the 1880's when a three-year term was established by new amendments to the State constitution. Not until 1947 could you succeed yourself in office.