

Indecent II

Trenton, N.J. - August 14, 1922

Arrived at Trenton in time to get into the Court House to look for records. Found only two transfers, both of which I had copied and certified. Though they are in Lea and Stillwell, I made sure of getting them.

Curt guardian takes me to vault. Reproves me for taking out pen, - very skeptical, evidently, of intelligence of his clients. Changes his attitude entirely when I give him my address and he sees name. Becomes at once helpful. Advises I see Miss Rogers at the State Library. thinks that it has something, but the Historical Society of New Jersey at Newark the real place, the first I had thought of going there. I go to State Library as Court Houses closes at four.

Put in a couple of hours at Library. For the first time consult Mellick's "Story of an Old Farm." This is a store-house of color - only indirectly, but very much so, on my story. He describes the King's Highway (p. 182) as starting at Elizabethport, thence to New Brunswick, a ford over the Raritan, a straight line to Trenton. The Minisink path, ran from Sussex county and Delaware river, south-east to near Elizabethtown, west to Raritan, south-east to Middletown. This was a well-worn path of the Indians.

See Mellick's description of Perth Amboy and life there.

See p. 208 for ordinance passed by assembly, forbidding the early 18th century flappers from using perfumes, cosmetics, etc., to attract themen. Very amusing. Doubt if Hannah Salter was that kind.

See Mellick (p.29) for information on advertising for settlers.

On p. 43 there is something on the Germans in the Shenandoah Valley. They evidently were among the first there, which I had not realized.

ROADS & TRAVELING

See "Historical Collection of New Jersey" by J. W. Barbour and Harvey Howe (?). This is important.

The Acts and Laws of the General Assembly on Highways "surveyed and set forth" ought to be interesting. *10 men appointed in 1681*

Had to leave Library at six o'clock, had not found anything that I cannot get here.

Early next morning sent to State Library to see Miss Rogers. She recognized me. Says I spoke in Trenton two years ago, but I don't remember having done so. Told me something which I said which sounds like me, so I must have been there. Most competent person.

Among the valuable things that she brings out was "Old Times in Old Monmouth". Think this is one of the best. This is the book published by the Yards of Freehold. Spent a little time on Stillwell. The point that I found here that it would be well to go into more is the record of the Baptist church of Middletown. There is a note on a Hannah Salter having been held up in 1735 for not going to church. Those were Baptists. All of the notes on the discipline of church members are most interesting. Was pleased to note that they disciplined Obediah Bowne, for whom I have taken a great dislike. He was the one that brought suit against Mordecai. I think he didn't like his father's will - the will in which Hannah Salter among others gets money. There is a clue to this distribution in a remark that

that is quoted in "O.T.O.M.", from the testimony at the trial, I take it, to the effect that he had never had so much trouble in his life as with his wife who was a spendthrift, and he was going to leave his money so that she could only use the interest of her part.

There is an admirable letter of John Salter's in OTOM in which he speaks of his brother Mordecai and begs his uncle Obediah to be lenient in the matter of the money that both he and Mordecai seem to owe the uncle. There is material here to finish out the story of the suit, sufficiently, I think.

FORGE AND FURNACE

I ask for whatever there is on iron making at the beginning of the century in New Jersey. She gives me Bishop, Clark and Swank, also Peter Kalm's Travels.

I have had an excellent description of ore making from what he calls "moor" iron - the same, I take it, as bog iron. For details go back to these books.

MAPS

The best thing Miss Rogers gave me were the maps.
(See dictation and copies)

And now, all of this, interesting as it was, had not contributed anything more than I might have found in New York, I fancy. That is, I was not nearer Deborah, the location of the old forge, or the exact place where the Lincolns had lived in Monmouth Co., though it is quite possible that if I studied OTOM more carefully I might find something, though I don't want to take the time now. The night before I had turned up another clue.

One of my characterists, probably a fault, in this

to Mrs. , who, I found, had all the characteristics of those who have modernized Allentown, - her clothes, the treatment of her furniture, her flowers, her garage, etc. Gig-saw work, cement walks, and no end of cannas in formal beds - dreadful place. Yes, there was an old graveyard. Of course she had never been there, and she smiled pityingly at my low down taste. If I wanted, I could go up her drive. Was there no one, I asked, in this town that knew anything about its history. There used to be a man, but he is dead. But it cannot be that a town that has so interesting a history has nobody that knows anything about it. Yes, she thought, there was an old man down on such a street that might know something. It was evident that she was trying to pacify something which she considered very bad taste.

With that information I sought the graveyard. New Jersey ought to get a pummeling for the neglect of its dead. Behind their fine houses with their canna and cement, etc., lies a little neglected plot - 50 or more graves, with some fine old names on the head stones. A rickety wire fence surrounds it. In one corner brush and rocks and old papers and tin cans and old clothes - just what fine people on the street dump over into some place that doesn't belong to them. A little shed in one corner that looks like a chickenhouse for it opens into the adjoining field. Chickens, however, did run over the yard, and we found on one side a guinea hen pluckily sticking to her nest. The taxi driver resented her inattention to us, and took her up, to find that she had some 20 eggs under her. She was not setting on a grave stone, however, as he had thought might be possible, for we were turning over every stone, stones lying helter-skelter as well as those that were upright. No Deborah unless, as I concluded might be possible, the

stone had been buried under the debris somewhere, but I really could not bring myself, disgusted as I was, to dig up the yard or cut down the weeds.

I thought I would try the old gentleman on such a street, and without any hope in my heart, I found him.

The moment he came to the door I knew I had got one of them. I had the same kind of feeling I have when looking for china I come upon a Loewstorf or see a real Windsor or find a factory that I know is a labor factory or an employer that I know realizes what human beings are or a laborer that knows something besides his union - real things. I had found one. Charles Hutchinson - 25 years a store keeper in Freehold, 29 years insurance and land office work. Through all this time he had been gathering information about Monmouth - its history and its settlers, and putting it down in ledgers in a hand so precise and neat that it was like copper-plate - not an erasure, not a blot, not a crooked or hasty letter. Almost perfect type. These books, some of which were neatly placed in cases on the walls, others of which were in a drawer of his oak desk at his side, were lettered and numbered. Of course he knew about Deborah. Of course he had seen the grave. He could show me the inscription, and out he pulls a book, copied as nearly as he could make the letters.

"But is it in Allentown?"

"Oh, no," he said, "it is four or five miles from here, at a place called Covell's Hill" - the place in which I had started.

Such a blow to my pride. Why had I let a doubt of Maxim Applegate and a drizzling rain and the absence of the church which was nearby and the general ignorance of the neighborhood, turn me from my search. Here I had been around in an almost

complete circle, but I had not the least shadow of a doubt when I talked to C.H. that the grave was there.

"It is only two or three months ago that I saw it myself," he said. "It was found about 20 years ago by the sexton who had been cleaning out the yard. It had been buried. He built up the grave in a nice little mound and straightened up the stone and several of us went to see it and had a picture taken. You see it is in Robbin's private yard. There were no church yards, burial grounds, then and the Robbins family let Mordecai bring the little girl there evidently."

What a story! Poor Mordecai, fresh from Hingham where the church and the burial ground were the centre of the town, where every man had his head stone, where you might say life revolved around that little center, to come here where there was no church yard, and only by the grace of a kindly neighbor did he have a place to lay his little girl.

According to C.H. the head stone is of red sand stone, not cut, but the inscription perfectly clear.

How shall I leave it? Shall I make a song

I have never been to Covell's Hill,

To Covell's Hill,

To Covell's Hill,

Where Deborah lies,

Where Deborah lies,

Where Deborah lies,

Or shall I go back to Freehold or Trenton and spend \$25. or more to look on Deborah's grave? I suspect it is going to be the latter before I get through. Some day I must do it, and of course I am going to get the photograph.

But we went on. He has gotten everything and more than I have ever seen written down in these books.

One important thing is that Richard Salter had 2100 acres of land in Monmouth Co., a tract which was taken over by somebody - he will send me the name - and was to be called the Buckthorne Manor. but Richard Salter got it and it was of this land that he sold off and gave away. The Lawrences got some of it, and I think the Holmes must have some of it. John Salter had a tract by the Yellow Church and he gave 25 acres for the burying ground. Mordecai and Abraham were both in that vicinity, but Mr. H. doesn't know exactly where their houses were. Nor is he sure about the forge, only that they had a forge. What is really cleared up for me is the question of Richard Salter's holdings and the fact that Mordecai and Abraham never went to Freehold, that the Salters did not live there, that they lived in Freehold township, that they were real farmers.

A letter from Yard, the editor of the Democrat, received this morning, tells me that Mordecai probably lived in Mt. Holley, but where that is, I don't know. Probably OTOM will tell me. At all events, I can't get it from C.H.

I dare not overstay my time. C.H. is 83. He has been thrown into a good deal of flurry by my sudden arrival. He wants to give me everything, but, as he says, "when you are 83 it is not so easy to find things in your books. You better get all you can from me now for something might happen any day now. I don't know that anybody will care for all this that I have done. My son don't care for it."

I look about the immaculate room, and the immaculate old gentleman, at the files of books, archives of New Jersey, - (Most of his books, he tells me, are in Trenton) and I know I have another Gilbert Tracy. I think I shall have to write an article one of these days on Lovers of Lincoln and put in Lambert, Gilbert Tracy and possibly Charles Hutchinson.

I run for Trenton now, my driver being much gratified that though I have not found Deborah I know really where she is and that I got a good deal more than I expected to get. He is a nice man, and I think he is anxious to feel that my errand is fruitful else he would have had a sense that he had not earned his money.

When I get back to Trenton, I have to decide about what I shall do the next morning - stop in Philadelphia at the Historical Society where I must go; try to find the forge at what I suppose to be the junction of the Schuylkill river and French Creek; or go directly to Berks County. I didn't know where to go. I didn't remember the name of the county seat. Finally I buy an R & M map. It's Reading, of course. And I start for Reading.

Reading lies along the Schuylkill. What a land to have entered by post road in 1720 or so when Mordecai Lincoln did it. This beautiful river - these hills - these creeks - and what man has done to them! One has only to go into the centres of industry in this country and hit places like these Schuylkill towns with their acres and acres of furnaces, and miles of junk, to feel the tragedy of it. One understands perfectly why there must be movies and saloons and dance halls and shindigs for men and women who must work and live in these awful racking places. They have got to have something to make them forget. It never came over me more thoroughly, the need of this ugly false exciting amusement life than as I rode along this valley.

Why, when Mordecai had his forge here, the day's work done, he didn't have to go away from his thoughts. He had the beauty of things, the quiet of things there at hand, not like

the homes in this tormented, dirty, dust-ridden town, in small company houses. I get bitter enough when I see it going through, and then I remember what it might be.

I pass only one great plant in all this trip of 60 miles that seems to approach what I have seen plants become - order and cleanliness, grass in the yards, the company houses are back on the hills where there are trees and flowers.

The dreadful part of the thing is that we can have our steel and iron and have men and women healthy and happy if we will. But the Schuylkill valley is a terrible lesson of what not to do. There is junk, junk, junk from Philadelphia to Reading at every place where man has stopped to build his industries. It is a far cry from Mordecai's forge to these days. And so reflecting I arrive in Reading in anything but an adjustable mood.

But Reading is not so bad. Reading, on the contrary, for the most part is charming, and Reading has a charming hotel. The moment I stepped into its cool lobby and saw that the chances were I was going to get a comfortable bath and a good meal, I am not so hard on modern civilization.

I get my dinner and start for the court house. There is nothing doing. Lincolns there are all modern. Thence I go to the Historical Society, but the secretary is absent and somehow as I step in and see the accumulated oil paintings and statuary and furniture of two hundred years of Berks County, I don't feel hopeful about books. However, Montgomery's History of Berks Co. starts me right for it tells me that I suppose I had known but utterly forgotten that the site at least of Mordecai Lincoln's home there is still to be seen.

But I had had it in my head that Mordecai went to Oley first and then to a place called Amity, so that,

to be logical, I must go to Oley first. Here I was making the same mistake I had made in Monmouth Co., confusing townships with towns, and not taking the pains to find out just what Oley was and Amit was in 1730.

I started for Oley by trolley. Every minute of the way I envied M. L. and his first coming here. What a land of beautiful low mountains, wonderful valleys and trees! And how it has been developed! Here you have the real thing - great farms, the most substantial of buildings. One gets the sense of stability that you hardly get in any other state in the Union from this particular tract.

Oley has two names - Friedsberg is the preferred, being German.

Pennsylvania Dutch are all over the place. It lies on a hill, the streets running up from the trolley track. Old grey stone, old red brick, a pretty little church, - like a town in Central France,--indeed it is all so like Central France, only better buildings for the most part on the farms.

I don't recognize Friedsberg when they call it out as being Olney and go by and have to go on three-quarters of an hour to Boyertown, and then go straight back to Trenton, no other car that night and it will be 8 o'clock when I get in. Such are the adventures of the historical student who ventures outside documents and books, all stupid enough, but I shall always hug the memory of what Berks Co. looked like that August evening.

Back at the hotel, I took the telephone book and looked for Lincolns - three listed. First doesn't answer. The second a young woman, pleased to death when I gave her my name, seems to know something about me, makes an appointment for the next morning, says that they have some old books. She is

Harrison Lincoln's daughter, and he is dead. I asked of the homestead. "Yes, it is very near Lorraine, in Exeter". Exeter is a new one to me. "Well, how about Amity?" "Well," she says, "it is the same thing" - which I don't understand.

The next morning I start in a car - \$2.50 a hour - to find the homestead. After we get away from the millionaires' houses of Reading - Baer of hateful memory, the junk millionaire; a candy millionaire, etc.- and strike the side roads, it is delectable. We wind in and out and inquire and inquire and finally strike it - oh, so much better than I had dreamed.

You come down a long hill, pass a big barn, and snuggled under on the side of the hill is the hourse that Mordecai Lincoln built in 1733, - the red sand stone of the country - plastered - a basement opening out on to a little terrace held up by an old red stone wall. The whole thing is like something you find in Brittany. And how he had placed it! looking down to a valley. He must have seen the Schuylkill in those days, the railroad embankment hides it now, and a line of blue mountains beyond. The house is much as it was, nowned now by a family by the name of Hoffman - sold in sheriff'ssale, so Mr. Fox tells me, a few years ago by Richard Lincoln - of whom more later. A nice woman, three children, the husband in the fields. They had been there only a short time, glad to show me about. And then my predatory instincts get the better of me. I want a bit of the old iron work for Mordecai surely made it - probably in his force down the river. In the cellar there was an old door which they told me they are going to take off.

Would they take off one of the hinges for me - nails and all? I would pay them, and I venture three or four dollars,

with a bit of a shamed look and feeling like a sinner of sinners.

Well, they will go and ask "him." The boy cuts for the field, and he comes back and says he will try to take it off, and goes for it with hammer and chisel, that old, old door and old, old hinges. And I get it, that is, all but the stanchion, which I am to have later if they can get it out. I paid him \$4. and I gave the boy 50¢ and each of the children 10¢, to salve my conscience, and then I read them a lecture about preserving these things and cautioned them not to let anybody have a nail, etc., and I feel perfectly sure that nobody else is going to pay them \$4 for one of those old hinges. I feel that in a sense I have protected them. I promised to write them and send them the Boys' Life of Lincoln, etc. They gave me apples off a tree that they say Mordecai planted. But I shall not put this down as a fact until Mr. Fox tells me I may.

Then we looked for the place where Daniel Boone was born. And here again is a tragedy of neglect. We found it after much rambling, about a quarter of a mile down the side of the field - a good grey stone, two story house, with all the old iron work, the old chimneys, the floors, beams, everything in an excellent condition for restoration, but open and neglected. People have already begun to take souvenirs, and I took one. If anybody ever restores the house I will send it back.

Rogers

I rush for Trenton. See Miss Harrison/Lincoln, who shows me a genealogy from Abraham Lincoln and Ann Bowne down. This is a beautiful text and deserves considerable comment, although it is not in my direct line. Certainly the care with which he notes the exact moment of the birth of his numberless children and the exact different between births, down

to the minutes deserves comment. I wonder what Mrs. Sanger would think about it. They have the Bible, too, which evidently was Abraham Lincoln's - 1775. Will allow me to photograph. They have a set of silver spoons marked "M.L." - my guess is that these belonged to Mary Rogers Lincoln and were bought when Mordecai married her after Hannah's death.

Rush to Richard Lincoln's, and here I found a man with the Lincoln type of feature and the first one I have found with what I conceive to be the Lincoln eye. This I must go into more largely, and I certainly must see this man again. He is the one that let the farm and that old house only go at sheriff's sale - the vandal!

He tells me that Mordecai owned a thousand acre tract, that he has the map of it, given over by William Penn, that it had a frontage of nearly a mile on the Schuylkill river. There is not a rod of it now belonging to a Lincoln. He is going to let me photograph the map as soon as he can find it. Brings me his one precious record, a little keg of sassafras wood, holding a quart. Says he had another holding a gallon, which was broken. It is one of the most beautiful pieces of wood I have ever seen for the grain. Won't let anybody take out of the house anything he has. Says he loaned a paper once to an historical society. They kept it nine months and then he wrote them that the next time he loaned them anything it would be the cat because that would come home of itself.

Rush from Richard Lincoln's to Historical Society, and talk with Mr. Fox. A great character - 75 - been a newspaper man. Greatly interested in preserving both the Lincoln and Boone places. He tells me the forge was not at the juncture of French Creek and the Schuylkill river, but at the forks above.

Has himself written history and will send it. The important thing I get from him, however, is that I have been laboring under a misapprehension from the start about Oley and Amity. The township was Oley at the start, then Amity was taken off, and the spot where Mordecai settled became Amity, then a third township was formed which was called Exeter, so Mordecai, instead of being in three places had been in only one - first Oley, then Amity, then Exeter.

When I start out for John Lincoln's, the first thing I am going to do is to study the change in townships.