

## Salem County Office of Archives

## and Records Management

90 Market Street, Salem, NJ 08079 856-935-7510 ext. 8550 FAX 856-935-0961



## TIME LINE I

Seventeenth Century Salem County, New Jersey – 1600 through 1699

Please refer to original documents for confirmation.

## Early Settlement:

The First European Settlers to arrive on the eastern shores of the Delaware were the Swedes. The New Sweden Company was established as a commercial venture by two Dutchmen, Peter Minuit and Samuel Blommaert. Minuit led the first expedition for the New Sweden Co. on two ships, the Kalmar Nyckel and the Fogel Gripf. They traded peacefully with the Native Americans and acquired land for settlement.

1638 3/29/1638 The first group settled on the west bank of the Delaware River in what is now New Castle, Delaware.

Anders Sinicka arrived with this group and was an early settler in Lower Penn's Neck, then Obisquahasit, His heavy iron chest that he brought to hold his valuables has survived and today resides in the Swedish Museum in Philadelphia.

- In the spring another expedition arrived from Sweden giving renewed life to the young and fragile colony; they brought domestic animals, trade goods, soldiers, and a minister, Rev. Rorus Torkillus. The Commander, Peter Ridder, secured land on the east side of the Delaware River from Raccoon Creek (Narraticons Kill) to Cape May.
- English settlers from New Haven arrived in the spring and summer of this year and established a colony on the banks of the Salem River (Varkens Kill) in Elsinboro. The New Haven Colony was perceived as a threat by the settlers of New Sweden.
- With the arrival of Governor Printz in the Colony he asserted his authority with the English settlers and incorporated them into the Swedish Colony as "our English at Varkins Kill". A few settlers survived but as a colony they had disappeared by 1648.
- Gov. Printz ordered the construction of Fort Elfsborg under the command of Lt. Sven Skute. There were 14 soldiers, 4 support personnel, and canons mounted on a log and earthworks enclosure. The fort was evidently very

successful as a Dutch Commander Hudde reported that Gov. Printz "held the river locked for himself". Unfortunately, those who held the Fort were plagued by mosquitoes day and night and it was abandoned by 1654.

The Swedes had established 3 forts, with Ft. Elfsborg being the southernmost, a second was at Lampan's Houck or Ffyne Town Hook (in lower Penn's Neck), and at Narraticons Kill (on Raccoon Creek in Gloucester Co.). The area at Lampan's Hook became known as Finn's Point because it was settled by Finns.

- The Dutch were major investors in New Sweden and the Dutch government from the beginning asserted their claim over the Delaware Valley, basing these claims on an earlier but now gone Fort Nassau on Big Timber Creek in Gloucester County.
- On May 20th, the Swedish ship Orn, battered and broken, arrived at Fort Christina (near Wilmington, DE) with the last group of Swedish settlers.
- Peter Stuyvesant arrived with a force of soldiers from New Amsterdam and forced the Swedes to concede and accept Dutch Rule of New Sweden. He arrived at the now deserted Ft. Elfsborg and because of the fierce mosquito attack renamed it Mygeenborg (gnat fort). Some Swedes were taken prisoner and carried back to New Amsterdam. Dutch rule was short-lived.
- The English, under the Rule of Charles II, had visions of empire and decided to move in on the Dutch Colonial territories in America. New Amsterdam was taken by the English Governor Andross and renamed New York, for the Duke of York.
- New Sweden was renamed New Jersey and divided into two halves, the southern half was called West Jersey and was given to Lord Berkeley and Sir George Carteret jointly. Sir Robert Carr obtained the submission of the Swedes settled along the Delaware. \*
- John Fenwick and Edward Byllinge purchased from Lord Berkeley land on the east side of the Delaware river for a 1,000 £. Fenwick makes plans to establish a colony of English Quakers. He had to borrow the money and this would be the cause of his later losing the Colony. The portion that Fenwick was allotted became known as the Salem Tenth or one tenth of the territory of West Jersey.
- May 7, 1675 John Fenwick drew numbers for his land in West Jersey and acquired numbers 20, 21, 26, 27, 36, 47, 50, 57, 63 & 72 as his share.
  - In 1675 49 settlers, most Quakers arrived in West Jersey on the Shippe Griffin. Two more ships, the Kent and the Jonathan & Mary, fol-

lowed almost immediately afterwards expanding the number of early settlers and insuring the health of the colony. (Exact dates in question?)

Fenwick, now the Proprietor of Salem Tenth, summons the 13 Sachems or Chiefs of the local Native American tribes to a general council held under the Salem Oak and through friendly negotiations makes three satisfactory purchases of land; which, today includes all of Salem and Cumberland Counties. The first deed was dated November 17, 1675.

June 25, 1676 An agreement for the division of land by the chief purchasers of Fenwick's Colony and others now residing there was signed by John Fenwick, Edward Wade, John Smith, Richard Noble, Samuel Nicholson, John Adams, Hipoolite Lefevre, Edward Chamneys, Richard Whitacar, William Malster, and Robert Wade.

Fenwick lays out his design for Salem Towne on 1,700 acres surroundhis estate at Ivey Point on the Salem river and Fenwick's Creek. He intends for the Town of New Salem to become the capital of South Jersey. Some of the boundaries are very quickly in dispute. Salem is the oldest English speaking settlement in the Delaware Valley.

May 31, 1676 the First Friends Meeting is organized near the Salem Oak.

and 1678 Two more ships, The Willing Mind and The Surrey arrive with more Quakers and other settlers.

West Jersey's "Laws, Concessions and Agreements," are written by Wm. Penn; they "included absolute religious freedom, trial by jury, right of petition, a ban on capital punishment, and a secret ballot. The Assembly was given wide powers."

The first officers of Salem Town are appointed.

In this year the ship Surrey arrived from London with settler John Denn and among his proudest possessions was a magnificent carved oak arm chair. This chair is today one of the prize artifacts in the collection of the Salem Co. Historical Society.

- Alloway's Creek Meeting of Friends is organized.
- Salem Friends offered house of Samuel and Ann Nicholson for monthly Meeting. In 1681 the Nicholsons deeded 16 acres on Bradway St., this is the land around the Salem Oak, for the use and benefit of the Salem Monthly Meeting forever, for a meeting house, graveyard, etc.
- The General Assembly orders a survey to be initiated for the King's

Highway, to connect Salem Town and Burlington. This was laid out in 1682.

November 25, 1681 The Fundamental Agreements of the Governor, Proprietors, Freeholders, and Inhabitants of the Province of West Jersey is established.

Court is established in Salem County.

The General Assembly on meeting May 2 through 6, 1682 made the first division of the Jersies into counties creating Salem and Burlington at that time. Included in this first Salem County was the land that now makes up Cumberland, Gloucester, Atlantic and Cape May Counties.

March 23, 1682 William Penn purchases John Fenwick's Proprietorship with the exception of 150,000 acres which Fenwick retains. Fenwick's legal woes are very complicated and well recorded. Penn is the new Proprietor of Salem.

Salem is made a Port of Entry subject to the payment of tolls and recognition of the county is fixed by law under the "terms" of court in Salem.

A market in Salem was established by law in 1682, and to be held every Tuesday, near the old wharf in Salem Town

First Sheriff of Salem County Thomas Woodruff is appointed.

John Fenwick dies at Fenwick's Grove sometime before December 17<sup>th</sup>.

In March, 1683 the West Jersey Assembly enacted a law to maintain a standard for bricklaying that is responsible, because of the high standard it maintained, for the survival of so many early houses that still exist in Salem County to this day.

Ferry service between New Castle, DE and Craven's Ferry (later named Pennsville) is established, give or take a few years.

- 1685 The Hancock's Bridge Friends build a meeting house of logs.
- Ships arrive from England with more settlers in 1681, 1682, 1685 & 1686

Gloucester Co. (which then included what would become Atlantic Co.) was withdrawn from Salem County.

First County Clerk is Samuel Hedge, a Pioneer and husband of John Fenwick's daughter Ann. He is also a major landowner.

- Survey to lay out one acre in Salem Town for the Courthouse and Jail. The first Courthouse was constructed between Tilbury Road and the foot of Broadway. (of what materials has not been resolved?)
- Proprietor William Penn visits Salem County and is speaker at public dinner.
- The first water powered grist mill in Salem Co. was owned and operated by William Forest at Mill Hollow on Pledgers's Creek and about the same time a tide mill was in operation on Stowe Creek.
  - Cape May Co. is withdrawn from Salem County.
- Benjamin Acton is named Clerk of Record, after Samuel Hedge's tenure.
- Salem County was established from what was known as Salem Tenth and the County was governed by Chosen Freeholders and Justices of the Peace.
- Salem Town is incorporated and officers are appointed; First Burgess is John Worlidge and first Recorder is Benjamin Acton.
- 1696 The Friends make an attempt to discourage the traffic in slaves.

Today there are remnants of a few of the seventeenth century houses built in Salem County: Obisquahassit was built by the Sinnecksons in Lower Penn's Neck, 1678, the Samuel Hedge House was built for the daughter of John Fenwick, 1680, the Richard Johnson house, Guilford Hall, was built in 1687 (now in Salem City), and the last three houses built in Elsinboro; the Redoe Morris House, 1688, the John Mason House, 1695, and the Isaac Smart House, 1696.

- A Law is passed authorizing the construction of tide-banks.

  The first tide-banks built in Salem Co. were in Penn's Neck, Lower Mannington, Fenwick's Point, Elsinboro, and Upper Penn's Neck.
- A law is enacted appointing a Chief Ranger who can appoint deputies to assist in rounding up roaming cattle. The Rangers were also expected to suppress horse stealing.
- Fairs for the sale of all lawful goods were appointed by law at Salem to be held on May 1 & 2, and October 20 & 21 in each year.