

**De Olde  
Middlesex  
Courts**



# The Olde Middlesex Courts

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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EARLY COURT  
SYSTEM IN ONE OF THE ORIGINAL  
COUNTIES OF NEW JERSEY

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GEORGE J. MILLER

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PERTH AMBOY, N. J.

1932

H. E. PICKERSGILL

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No. ....

# The First County Court

Held att Pascataway June ye 19<sup>th</sup> 1683: by act of the  
Generall assembly and by vertue of a Commission then pub-  
lished under the Seale of the Province & Signed by Order  
of Councell by Tho: Ruddyard bearing date y<sup>e</sup> 28<sup>th</sup> of  
march 1683

The members of the sd Court were as followeth

Mr Sam <sup>l</sup> Dennis	} assistants
Mr Dwan Slater	
Mr James Giles	
Capt John Bishop	
Mr Sam <sup>l</sup> Hale	
Mr Benjamin Hull	

John Pike Jun<sup>r</sup> of Woodbridge Clerk of the County  
Court - authorised by vertue of a Commission from the Hon<sup>ble</sup>  
Governor & Councell bearing Date the 28<sup>th</sup> Day of March  
Anno Domi. 1683 & allowed by the sd Court

Before making made choyce of & appointed to be murphal  
or Cryer of the sd Court

June the 19<sup>th</sup> 1683

Rules or Orders for the County Court of Middle

- 1<sup>st</sup> That the Declaration shall be entered att the taking  
out of the writt: or att least the Declaration to be entered  
in the Clerks office eight days excludive before the Court;
- 2<sup>d</sup> That the plea of the Defon<sup>t</sup> be entered <sup>two</sup> ~~three~~ <sup>five</sup> ~~four~~ days  
before the Court: if not: the plan<sup>t</sup> not to be Depri-  
of his triall that Court;
- 3<sup>d</sup> If the Declaration be not entered <sup>five</sup> ~~eight~~ days by  
Court then the Defon<sup>t</sup> Desiring it shall have a nonse
- 4<sup>th</sup> That to the County Court there shall not be allowed  
more than one Case

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FIRST PAGE OF THE COURT MINUTE BOOK



## FOREWORD



MIDDLESEX COUNTY in New Jersey became a political entity in 1682, just fifty years before the birth of George Washington. Nation wide celebrations of every conceivable plan, far beyond his fondest dreams or anticipated hopes for the future of the United States, will mark the occasion. The 250th anniversary of the birth of this County may well be included in the plans. As soon as the pioneers had organized this County, they provided a court system for it. The lapse of time has miraculously saved the record of those times in the original court minutes. The book was found in the attic of the Clerk's office, and through the kindly interest and intervention of that genial County Clerk, George Cathers, a series of articles culled from it, have been published in *The New Brunswick Sunday Times*.

Though it is hard to arouse historical interest of the past in this busy heyday of the present, favorable comment has been heard on all sides about the fascinating episodes and events disclosed by the old court book.

In those early days, almost every function of government necessary in a new county was exercised by the judiciary. The record, therefore, gives a cross-section of how those pioneers lived, hewing the forests, clearing places for their habitation, and eking out their meagre existence from the soil and surroundings. It is a simile of the manner in which our first courts were hewn out of the rough stone, gradually shaped by the adoption of rules as their needs arose, and gained the respect of the citizenry.

The material has been revised, enlarged and re-arranged as originally published. Sketches of the lives of the moving shadows on the stage of those early days, the cases they considered and decided, with their dispensation of justice solving all types of problems, read like story books. All spelling has been modernized except in those instances where verbatim repetition is made.

## THE FIRST COUNTY COURT

AT a meeting of the Governor and Council on March 7, 1683, a bill for dividing the Province of New Jersey was agreed upon. The establishment of courts were then made a week later. On that day the Small Cause Courts, Courts of Common right, and County Courts or Quarter Sessions were provided. Samuel Moore was appointed High Sheriff of Middlesex County.

Two weeks thereafter, on the 28th day of March, 1683, the commissions to hold the court were made in council. Twelve justices of the peace, among them five of the members of the court were designated together with the sheriff and Thomas Blomfield, first Coroner of the County.

The first County Court in Middlesex was held June 19, 1683, at Piscataway. The members were Mr. Samuel Dennis, President or Judge; Edward Slater, James Giles, Capt. John Bishop, Sam<sup>l</sup> Hale, and Benjamin Hull, assistants. John Pike, Junr., of Woodbridge, was the first clerk and Jeffery Manning was the Marshall. Three of the Justices resided in Woodbridge and the other three in Piscataway—the only two towns of any importance in the County. Perth Amboy did not come into its own and was not considered of sufficient importance to establish a court until 1685. New Brunswick had not risen on the banks of the Raritan beyond Indian's Ferry.

### FIRST COURT RULES IN NEW JERSEY

THE earliest rules of court in our state of which there is any record were adopted by the court at its initial sitting. They are interesting and significant, deserving to be copied exactly as recorded in the minutes:

#### RULE OR ORDERS FOR THE COUNTY COURT OF MIDLX

1st That the Declaration shall be entred att the takeing out of the writt; or att least the Declaration to be entred in



the Clerks office five days exclusive before the court;  
 2ly That the plea of the defendant bee entred two days before the Court; if not; the plantf not to be deprived of his triall that court;  
 3ly If the Declaration be not entered five days before the Court then the defendant desiring it shall have a nonsuite;  
 4ly That to the county court there shall not bee allowed more than one essoine.  
 5ly That in causes wherein the defent is arrested in account of debt, detinue, trespass for goods actions upon the case except slander if the debt or damages amount to five pounds speciall baile to be given except it be against an heir executor or administrator;  
 6ly That in batter conspiracy false imprisonment noe speciall baile or course without speciall order of the court;  
 7ly Spetiall bail in all cases or causes above mentioned shall be understood double the debt or damages demanded laide or recouured; comon baile tenn pound.  
 8ly That the principle rendring himselff at any time after baile put in; and before or on the day of appearance of the scieri facias returned nihill or in case there be any account of debt brought upon the bond or recognizance against the baile then if the principle shall render himself upon or before ye process—returned served no further proceedings to be against the baile.  
 9ly In case the plantf after ishue joyned shall refuse to goe to triall the next court after the ishue joyned nor shall discontinuew his accon on record the defendnt mouving the court to proceed may bring on the case to triall by provisoe and if the plantf be non-suited at triall or discontinuew his action the defendnt shall be allowed reasonable costs by the court.

Rules and orders for the fees were adopted and equally merit printing:

	s.	d.
For the writt capias sciene facias		
or by what other name &c	2	
For serving ye writt capias	3	
For filing the declaration		6
For the coppie of ye declaration	2	6
For the venire facias	1	
For the sheriff for the baile bond	2	
Or writ to summon the jury	1	
For serving the venire facias	2	

	s.	d.
To the clerk for entring & filing ye issue		6
To each jury man	1	
To jury not attending upon summons pr each day	5	
For impaniling the jury each action		9
For recording ye jury verdict		9
A sciery facias or a writt to show reasons why the execution should not pass	2	
Serving the scieri facias	2	
A subpoena for evidence if but one name & if more than one & the first the rest & per name		9
For recording an imparlance		6
For recording an essoyn		6
For all other writings according to the judgment of the court.		
The marshall or cryor of the court for each action	1	6
For swearing an evidence in court		4
For clerk for an execution	2	6
To attorneyes fees	4	
If an imparlance or essoine double	8	
If an action be prosecuted to the taking out of execution double &c.	3	4
To the members of the court	7	6

### THE FIRST COUNTY CASE

IN the early days of our country, imprisonment for a debt was the common procedure. A man would give bail for his appearance and in that manner obtain his release. Thomas Lawrance of New York sued Otto Lawrance. Edward Slater, one of the judges, and later Clerk of Court, gave bail for Otto's appearance when the case was called the first day of the newly organized court. The plaintiff did not appear and the bail was then "delivered up." This disposition of the case did not satisfy either Thomas or Otto, for another case was instituted a few months later. In May of the following year Thomas gave Doctor Henry Greenland, of Piscataway, a power of attorney which is recorded in full in page 20 of the record.

At the sessions held in June, 1685, Otto sued Thomas in two cases for trespass; first, "by force of arms" and secondly, "upon

ye case." The jury gave Otto the judgment in one, and Thomas the other. Undoubtedly, they gave neither one the better side of the argument. The court and jury, however, collected its fees and costs in both instances.

## THE FIRST COUNTY JUDGES

### SAMUEL DENNIS.

FROM existing records, the president of the first court was a pioneer among pioneers. He lived at Woodbridge, on a twelve acre lot near Strawberry Hill. He was a weaver, but public duties made it impossible to devote much of his time to his trade. A deed from Rehoboth Gannet names him a planter. The Board of Proprietors granted him a patent to 94 acres on March 18, 1670. As early as 1671 he was a member on the first jury of the Township Court and one of the special court at Elizabethtown. When the Dutch recaptured New Amsterdam two years later, he was chosen by the Freeholders as one of the schepens or delegates to the council of war. He was also an ensign in the militia, elected and sworn in by the Dutch officers. When Woodbridge sought a minister, he was one of those chosen to cut and make 1000 pipe staves to defray expenses for procuring one. When two others made the same amount, it fell to the lot of Samuel Dennis to sell them. They laid on the public landing for a year until Samuel Edsall paid "12 pounds of powder" for them, and the scheme of securing a minister went up in smoke.

In 1675, 1679 to 1682, 1688, 1698 and 1699, he was a deputy to the General Assembly and accredited himself to the satisfaction of his constituency in Woodbridge. An interesting episode occurred to him in 1680. The constable received a warrant for his arrest for contemptuously refusing Governor Andros' choice of him to be the Clerk of the Court of Sessions, he being one of those chosen as Justice of the Peace. He was ordered to be taken to New York and there confined. Records show his relenting from his attitude when we find him signing as clerk to

the deputies in 1681. A year later, he was on the Board to settle highways for this county in the Province.

His services to Woodbridge were many, important and numerous. Hardly a committee was appointed without him.

His duties included the construction of a causeway over the meadows, guarding common property, establishing the school system, building a pound, fixing fees of court, gathering taxes to pay the minister, attempting to prohibit the sale of liquor to Indians. In 1676 he was Sergeant to the Town court. From 1688 to 1692 he served as Town Clerk and also clerk to the Township court at the same time. He was President of the township court in 1686 and 1687. He was also an assistant to that court both before and after that date. In 1694 he was an Overseer of the Highways, a rate maker for many years and for one year a tax gatherer. He occupied his seat in the county courts from 1683 to 1686 and December 16, 1692 to September 19, 1699.

On April 29, 1703, he signed the dispatch to Lord Cornbury announcing the death of Andrew Hamilton. This is a facsimile of his signature.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Saml Edsall". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent 'S' at the beginning and a long, sweeping tail on the 'l'.

He rendered the same sterling service to the Province of East Jersey. He was appointed one of the assessors in 1682 to raise ten pounds from the county towards the support of the Government. They were permitted to collect the rate in kind, as wheat and corn. In 1683 he was one of a court of four to try Henry Greenland, Sam<sup>l</sup> Edsall, Robert Vanquillan and Capt. Vickars for seditions causing trouble in the Province. In addition to the years already mentioned as a deputy to the General Assembly, he was a member of the Governor's Council in 1684 to Deputy Governor Rudyard. He held a similar office with Gawen Lawrie the next year. He was among the Councillors with Deputy Governor Andrew Hamilton in 1687 and 1692. Five years later he was electer speaker of the House of Deputies.

He was "recommended as one of the patrons of ye Best Estates in East Jersie" at about this period.

When the first court convened he was chosen President Judge and held office many years, wisely and carefully molding the work of the court. Samuel Hale, another member, and Samuel Moore, the first sheriff, were his brothers-in-law, the family giving him great assistance.

In December of 1686, a warrant was issued for his arrest for holding a court at Piscataway illegally, earlier in the month. The sheriff, under orders, hailed him before the Governor and Council, where he was rather roughly examined, denying the accusation. He was given one week to obtain security in £300 for his appearance at the Court of Common Right—similar to our Supreme Court—to be held at Perth Amboy in the following May.

The whole question arose as to the proper town or place for the court to be held. It seems the Governor considered a law passed in 1675 as the act that should be followed, but Dennis considered the law of 1682 virtually annulled the former, and the judge was right.

When the judges arrived in Piscataway to hold a court of Sessions in March of 1700, they found the doors closed against them. The mob refused them admittance, saying the place of assembly belonged to the people. The sheriff was assaulted when he attempted entry by breaking in the doors. Edward Slater and John Langstaff were among the mob. Justice Dennis forced himself through another door. He was also assaulted and told he had no lawful authority to hold any courts there. Finding the resistance too strong and the opposition determined, they withdrew and went to a constable's home to record the occurrence.

In the records of wills, we find his name among several estates. He acted on numerous occasions as a witness to wills, an administrator, executor, bondsman, appraiser or making inventories in estates. His last record is as a division lot layer on a survey March 12, 1715.

The subject of our sketch died between March and August, 1715, leaving surviving his wife Mary, and several sons and daughters. The inventory of his estate included a Bible and other books. In some respects he was not a peer to Samuel Moore, but both were held in high esteem by the people. Dennis achieved a great deal of his popularity after Moore's death. The people regarded him as the only man qualified to succeed Moore. He figured prominently in public affairs of early East Jersey until he died.

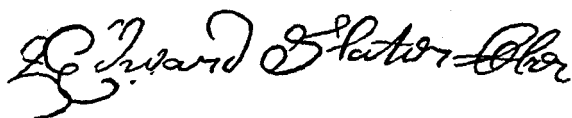
### EDWARD SLATER

Edward Slater, a judge of the first Court, and later clerk after the suspension of John Pike, Jr., was also among the first lawyers in the County courts. Slater was born about 1644, and must have come to Piscataway with its first settlers. On April 7, 1676, he received a patent for 150 acres and meadow in Piscataway, and on March 14, 1677, he received a survey for 164 acres which was patented July 30, 1678, and another tract of 200 acres on July 18, 1686. At the age of 32, he was appointed a Justice of the Peace of the monthly court at Piscataway. In 1680, he was returned as a deputy to the Provincial House of Deputies from the same place, the Governor also appointing him overseer and a member of the small cause court of the town. He was one of the committee to settle highways in the County in 1682-1694 and also a rate gatherer to collect taxes when the County was founded.

He sat as an assistant judge at four sittings on March 28, 1683, September 18, 1683, June 20, 1687 and October 20, 1687. Slater, like Dr. Greenland, had a tempestuous career. In 1681 he was sentenced for rioting and causing the people to assemble for that purpose. A few months later he was pardoned, eight months of his prison sentence being remitted, but then he was compelled to pay the fine of £10 sterling.

We find him petitioning the council to return his bond as he

had given it for payment of a fine and one for good behavior for a "pretended ryott." The general assembly granted his petition. Thereafter he subscribed an oath of allegiance to the King. He became clerk first in 1686 and again in 1690, serving many years. As an attorney, he represented John Docent when John Robinson, merchant of New York, sued him. Nine years later, we find him repeating the same course. He refused to permit admission, on March 18, 1700, to the justices to the common meeting house in Piscataway to hold court. The old records say, "The sheriff and Edward Slater wrestled together, ye people called out, 'let them have room & fair place,' & ye Sheriff geting Clear of sd Edward Slater, went to ye house doore and pushed it up with his foot & went into ye house. . . . Severall persons said to Justice Dennis "will you stand here and lett ye sheriff be murdered in ye house", upon which ye sd Justice went to another doore of ye sd house & pushed upon it with his foot & Entring

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Edward Slater". The signature is written in dark ink on a light background. The first letter "E" is large and ornate, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left. The name "Slater" follows in a similar cursive style, with the final "er" ending in a small loop.

in, some persons of sd Towne whom he knew not, layd hold on him & Edward Slater Came to him & took him by the Collar with design as he Supposed to choke him & sd 'what do you come here for,' to whom ye sd Justice answered only in peace to keep his majesties Court, but finding yt not acceptable, he called Yelverton Crowell and Wm. Englie to his assistance who accordingly relieved him from ye sd Edward Slater."

It seems strange, indeed, that a member of the first court with Samuel Dennis, later Clerk of the Court, a deputy to the council; in 1698 Clerk of the Court of Common Right, should have aligned himself with the rioters. There is a very interesting story behind the scene that eventually resulted in the filing of that famous Elizabethtown Bill in Chancery.

In 1683, he sued Henry Greenland in the Essex County Court, & the Doctor appealed upon a writ of error to the Court of Com-

mon Right, and then to the Governor & Council, losing the decision in each instance.

While a member of the General Assembly from Piscataway, Slater presented several petitions on behalf of the Township. He obtained a grant of three plots for use of burial places, drilling the Town Company, and laying out roads and commons. I believe this land is in the rear of the present St. James' Episcopal Church and is now used for township purposes. When disputes arose as to the boundary of the Township, he sought to settle them. As clerk of the County Court or Court of Sessions, he often served both as attorney and in his official capacity at the same time. In 1698 he was a clerk of the Court of Common Right, when Lewis Morris was fined £50 for contempt. His name appears frequently among the will books as a witness to wills, making appraisals and inventory, and furnishing bonds and acting as guardian in such cases.

In September, 1692, he is recorded as being the Sheriff. A few months later, he gave a receipt to John Carrington for books & papers of the Court. He resumed his old position of Clerk after James Emott in 1690.

He died between February, 1702, and May 29, 1704. On the later date his widow, Elizabeth, was granted administration on his estate of about £85 personal property.

#### CAPT. JOHN BISHOP

Capt. John Bishop was the son of John Bishop, one of the original associates with Daniel Pierce in the settlement of Woodbridge. The adage "like father like son," was true of the Bishops. The father held important and influential positions in public office, being a member, on May 26, 1668, of the first Burgesses or Assembly for Woodbridge and a member of the Council on May 28, 1672 and November 5, 1675. So did his son. From an affidavit on record, I believe he was born about 1648. He came to Woodbridge with his father, taking the oath of allegiance to the government and fidelity to the King on February 27, 1667.



At the same time he was granted five tracts of land in Woodbridge comprising 92 acres. Even at this early age, he was assistant to the township court. On May 18, 1671, he was a member of a jury trying William Hackett for violation of a navigation act in not recording the entry of his vessel after his arrival in Woodbridge, while his father was a witness for the prosecution.

When the Dutch recaptured New Amsterdam from the English, he was made first ensign of the military company formed at Woodbridge, then Lieutenant and later Captain, which title followed him to his grave.

He held many public offices in the early days of the Township. In 1674 he was on a committee to build a pound. Later he was viewer and sealer of leather. Leather hides from Woodbridge bore a distinctive mark as was true of other places to identify the place of origin. It was the capitals "W D" and the sealer of leather made the impression after examining the hides. In 1689 and 1692, he was a rate gatherer, engaged in finding a suitable warehouse to store the taxes, which were paid in kind, as beef, grain, pork, etc. At the same time he was a justice of the monthly court, a rate maker and on June 2, 1680, elected for the first time as a deputy to the Assembly of East Jersey from Woodbridge.

On March 24, 1682, he was nominated a Justice of the Peace for Middlesex County and so became one of the Judges who sat at the institution of the Middlesex County Courts. For many years, he graced the County Bench, dispensing justice with pioneering law, making the remedies and decisions fit the necessities of each case. He was ready to hold court in Piscataway in 1699, when admission to the meeting chamber was resisted by the inhabitants. He sat on the bench from 1683 until 1699 and again from 1711 until a short time prior to his death in 1722.

The year 1683 was a busy one for him. Besides being judge to hear and determine cases in the court for small causes in Woodbridge, he also was captain of the military company, overseer of the highways and a rate maker. He was a member of a committee to examine the powder and shot stock and provide

ammunition should the Indians or another enemy attack. He was also chosen to discuss quit rents, which was disturbing the colonists, with the Governor and the Proprietors. On October 2, 1694, he was also appointed a commissioner of highways for Middlesex County.

From 1688 until 1700, he was President of the Township Court. He sat in the Colonial Council from September, 1692, until November, 1693, and then again from July, 1695, until April, 1703, when the records of the Governor and Council under the Proprietary Government end and it was taken over by the Queen. It is hardly conceivable that his public services ended at this time.

While holding public offices, he acted as guardian for infants and minors, witnessed many wills and became land agent for original settlers who returned to New England.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Bishop". The signature is written in dark ink on a light background. The first letter "J" is large and loops around the first part of the name. The last letter "P" has a long, sweeping tail that extends downwards and to the right.

When William Webster, "pretending that it was contrary to his conscience to pay anything towards ye maintenance of a minister," refused to share in his support, it was Capt. John Bishop who agreed to pay his share as long as he would live.

The Captain was the intimate of Governors and Deputies during his long career. In May of 1698 he signs an affidavit with Governor Basse concerning John Elston, a member of a crew of a vessel about which there were difficulties. He was an associate of the Governor in the Council and member of the court of Common Right held at Perth Amboy.

When sentiment arose for the change in the governorship, he was among the first in the Council to petition the King to choose Andrew Hamilton, the incumbent. He was among the signers of a letter to the Board of Proprietors objecting to the appointment of Andrew Bowne as governor.

The Earl of Nottingham opposed Bishop in 1702 as unfit to

be a member of the Council. Nottingham's survey of the situation resulted in a report against the Quakers, the Scotch and four others among whom were Capt. John Bishop.

In 1703, he announced the death of Governor Andrew Hamilton to Lord Cornbury. Six years later, he was Clerk of the Peace of Middlesex County. The year following, he complained to Governor Hunter about the actions of Peter Sonmans at the elections to the Assembly. In 1713, he was among those requesting a license to build a church for worship after the "manner of the Church of England, in his Towne."

Capt. John Bishop died shortly before April 3, 1722, leaving his wife Mary, and children, Moses, Anne Coburn, Rebekka, his son-in-law, Amos Gooden, and two grandchildren, and finally, his oldest son John. He, too, was destined to carry on the illustrious career of his father. Our early pioneers deserve great praise for their crude, but many, accomplishments of their limited lifetimes. Both in public and private life, the Bishops were exceedingly useful, doing good service in their day and generation. Many descendants of this family, still in this vicinity, attest the many, many acorns that have fallen from the mighty oaks.

#### SAMUEL HALE.

By the change of Government in 1704, we lose trace of a man named among the justices of the first court and who sat as a judge for over thirty six years. He became affectionately known as "Olde Judge Hale."

He was born February 2, 1630. There is no record of the place. He came to Woodbridge, a young man of thirty six, with its first settlers. Originally he was a mechanic. He was granted 167 acres of land in four different tracts, (the original patent is dated March 18, 1669, and here names him a planter.) The grants consist of meadow land, pastures and a home site. His connection with courts commenced in 1671 and 1672 when he was elected Marshal of the Town Court. For 15 years, from 1682 to 1697, he was a lieutenant in the military company of the town.

He also served his community very well. When defense

squads had to be organized, he was one of the leaders to protect the town from attack by Indians. In 1680, he was elected constable. A year later, he was on the committee establishing the rates of fees for the town court. This stood him in good stead when the first rules of the court were adopted.

When the settlers began to cut down the fine trees in the commons, Hale was on the licensing committee to regulate their work. In 1683, 1697 and 1692 he was an assistant justice of the Town Court.

In 1688 Governor Andros issued a commission to him as one of the Justices of the County. During this same period he sat on the bench of the Court of Sessions until, as the record shows, 1704, being mentioned in Lord Cornbury's commission to the justices of the County, dated August 20, 1703. His sittings in Middlesex County extend from March 28, 1683 to September 19, 1699.

*Sam<sup>l</sup> Hale*

On May 11, 1698, he is listed as a member of the Court of Common Right held at Amboy. Governor Jeremiah Basse held his first court at the time and Hale sat with him.

For five years succeeding he was a member of the council for East New Jersey, the last record dated April 29, 1703, including his name. He was often called upon to witness wills, make inventories, act as executor and sit on Coroner's Jury inquiring into the cases of death. Samuel Moore, the first Sheriff, was his brother-in-law, as was also Samuel Dennis. Hale refused to act as executor of Moore's will.

Samuel Hale was among the petitioners to the King for the retention of Andrew Hamilton as Governor until the Proprietors had a trial at Westminster as to their rights to govern. On account of this petition, the Earl of Nottingham may have included him in his list of bad characters in the colony, so as to render him unfit to serve in the many public offices he held.

In 1703, he was one of the signers announcing the death of his friend Andrew Hamilton.

Four years later, he was also among the signers of a petition that the records of the province of East New Jersey were in the custody of Peter Sonmans who called himself agent of the proprietors. And the petition claims he was a bankrupt, absconded from his creditors in England, and a person of no general good reputation. The Province records were lost and it prays that steps be taken to procure them and place them where they belong, and that Sonmans be taken into custody and committed to some prison where he may be kept. Sonmans was President Judge of the Court from 1708 on, and it is strange that Hale should have been a party to the petition. He was a sympathizer with the colonists and Sonmans belonged to the new era of the government after it was taken over by the Queen Anne of England in 1704. Historians date the beginning of the colonial times from this day.

Samuel Hale died of smallpox on November 5, 1709. His wife, Sarah, had predeceased him on January 16, 1681. He left surviving him two daughters, Sarah and Mary, to carry on the fine reputation for good and faithful service by the father, a first justice in Middlesex County.

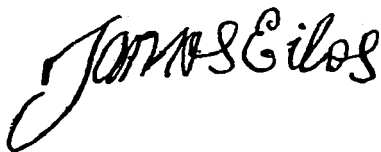
#### MAJOR JAMES GILES.

The earliest mention of this judge is March 20, 1683, when he petitioned the Council of the Province for land for himself, his wife, children and two servants. The matter was referred to the Proprietors. Four days later he was appointed one of the first justices to sit on the County Court bench. He sat in the March and September terms, three terms in 1685 and all of the four terms in 1686. His home was in Piscataway where he must have been officer of the military company, being mentioned in the records and his will as a Major.

He is largely mentioned in the court cases, colonial documents and in the Journal of the Governor and Council. All his real property consisted of two patents of 180 and 100 acres of land granted to him on January 6, 1681 and April 25, 1688 respectively, and land in Kinniebeck River.

His will is dated June 17, 1688, and proven the third Tuesday of March, 1690. He deceased shortly before August 6, 1688.

leaving his wife, Elizabeth, and children, Mathew Giles, Elizabeth Olden, the wife of William Olden and Mary Booth. In addition to the real property mentioned above, his personal estate was inventoried by Edward Slater and Charles Gilman at £137.3. He appointed his wife and son-in-law, William Olden, as executors.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "James Giles". The signature is written in dark ink on a light background. The first letter "J" is large and loops around the rest of the name. The "G" is also large and loops around the "I" and "L". The "S" is written with a series of loops. The "E" is written with a large loop. The "I" and "L" are simple vertical strokes. The "S" and "E" are written with a series of loops. The "I" and "L" are simple vertical strokes.

The latter, on July 24, 1690, as surviving executor, refused to act and asked that his son Mathew Giles be made executor. In April of 1693, his son, being administrator of his estate, sold all of the Piscataway land to John Peterson Melot of Perth Amboy, a blacksmith. There is another deed on record, dated December 21, 1698, that is made by Mathew Giles to his brother-in-law, William Olden and sister, Elizabeth James Olden, for 120 acres in Piscataway lying between Ambrose Brook and Bound Brook, which is mentioned as part of the estate of their father. Perhaps this is the same land Mathew petitioned the Council of Province for, on February 26, 1685, when they ordered the Surveyor General to lay out such a tract in Piscataway to him.

#### BENJAMIN HULL.

This justice sat in the county courts on March 28, 1683 and September 18, 1683. As early as September 2, 1678, he was licensed to keep an ordinary at New Piscataway. I can picture a lively colonial inn where the countryside gathered for their discussions of the topics of the day, enjoying the recreation that the inns of the day made famous. From the evidence in the records, several of which are mentioned as cases, it was the center of the life of the day. On April 28, 1676, he obtained a patent for 120 acres and meadow in Piscataway and another for 148 acres on March 27, 1677. Later in the same year he purchased a 70 acre lot fronting on Raritan River in Piscataway from Nicholas Bonham. He was on the committee to provide a pound for Piscataway in 1684.

In 1687, there is an exchange of land between him and Isaac Smalley for 72 acres in Piscataway and a tract on the Raritan River. In 1688, he obtained a patent from the Board of Proprietors for 250 acres, later sold to Elisha Parker in 1700, and another patent on April 10, 1696 for 100 acres at Sacunck on Bound Brook, both in Middlesex County. He also purchased 20 acres of meadow at Raritan from Samuel Moore. In 1690 he sold 144 acres on the north side of the river to Matthew Giles. In 1694, he sold John Chambers of Somerset, 14 acres in Piscataway. In 1696 he sold the tract at Sacunck, to Samuel Dotie, a relative. In May, 1679, he witnessed the will of Benaiah Dunham, a weaver. In March, 1693, he was an executor of his brother Hopewell Hull's estate. Three years later, he was one of the patentees of lots, given in trust, for the freeholders of Piscataway to be used for burials, drilling the town company, roads and commons.

*Benia: Hull*

In 1700 and 1701, he was among the many signers to the large petition to the Governor and Council, remonstrating against the oppressive acts of the Proprietors, and asking for the appointment of a new Governor. He must have been involved in the movement, for in 1708 Joseph Fitzrandolph, Samuel Dennis, George Drake, John Langstaff and John Drake all made affidavits that sometime in March, 1704, Richard Saltar came to the house of Benjamin Hull in Piscataway, attempting to incite the listeners against the payment of quit rents and attempted to raise money for that purpose. Hull was "by means of cunning subtle and crafty insinuation and fair promises" induced to grant a bond to John Bowne for three pounds upon which a suit was threatened. He petitioned the House of Representatives asking to be relieved from his obligation.

Hull's will is dated June 7, 1731, and probated January 4, 1733.

He names his sons therein as Benjamin, Trustram, Jacob, Reuben, Meshach and Joseph. His wife, Sarah, and Joseph Fitzrandolph and John Skillman are named as executors. Benjamin Hull, Hugh Dun, Abraham Drake, Junior and Rachel Drake were witnesses.

### SAMUEL MOORE.

The first Sheriff of the County, equally with Samuel Dennis, was a prominent figure in the early days of this County. We can live with him as he wrote the minutes of the court in his clear, small and legible hand, (Pp. 21, 22, 23). Dally, in his book *Woodbridge and Vicinity*, describes it as a nervous penmanship. Coming from Massachusetts, he resided on a 16 acre plot of ground near Strawberry Hill and owned considerable land in and about the township.

He was a member of the first General Assembly on November 3, 1668. At this session, he was appointed on a committee to force Bergen, Elizabeth, Newark, Woodbridge, Middletown and Shrewsbury to pay £5 each toward the support of the Province. He was authorized to distrain upon refusal of payment of the rate.

In February, 1669, he took the oath of allegiance and fidelity to King Charles II, with other freeholders of Woodbridge. Freeholders at that time were men who owned property, and not Freeholders as we now designate those who conduct the county business. Toward the end of that year, he was elected constable of Woodbridge Township, then moderator and later, town clerk. This was the beginning of a long public service to his Township, County and Province. At this early time, he was a member of a committee to procure a minister to preach in the town, ordered to fit up a room in his home for him and a member of committees to settle the dispute over the boundary lines between Piscataway and Woodbridge.

He was one of the most distinguished citizens of Woodbridge and wielded considerable influence in the Province. He exhibited, in his new home, much of the enterprise and public spirit which made the people of New England famous. He was



very popular, being chosen deputy to the General Assembly five times: 1668, to the first Legislature held in the Province, as heretofore mentioned, 1669, 1670, 1682, 1687. In 1671, he was also chosen as marshal of the Town Court. He became one of the assistants, then president of the Town Court, and also the town clerk, which position he held from 1669 to 1688, a period of official service almost without a parallel in these days.

In 1672 and 1673, he was Marshall of the Province under Governor Carteret. On December 5, 1675, he was appointed to be Treasurer of East Jersey and kept the position several years. He received a pence per pound as his salary. On December 7, 1672, the Lords Proprietors of the Province, Governors Berkeley and Carteret, ordered payment to him of £10 annually for the next seven years, and, in addition, gave him sixty acres of upland for each person in his family, in addition to the land he had taken up as a settler. A proportionate amount of meadow land was

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John Mark Clarke". The signature is written in dark ink on a light background.

also ordered, to be donated to him. He must have had ten people in his family, for we later find him petitioning the General Council (March 16, 1684) for a patent of 600 acres of land formerly granted to him. The Council agreed to go to the Proprietor's office with him and obtain the patent.

No reason for this liberality is given in the papers, but it was undoubtedly the reward for some public service. Land was often given by the Proprietors to stimulate the enterprise of the inhabitants. However this may be, he grew in favor with the authorities.

A signal honor was conferred upon him at this time as the man to go to England and represent the Council of New Jersey in matters pertaining to them.

Moore was loyal to the British Government. The Dutch, capturing New York and the surrounding territory at this time, sought allegiance to their flag. He was nearly imprisoned by

them, a warrant being issued for his arrest. It was in regard to a certain promissory note, at first; then, bail-bonds held by him as Marshal under Governor Carteret, which he wished to retain from the new government.

The case came into court through John Ogden, the Schout, who was authorized to carry out the arrest. There is some intimation that Moore carried the case into court also. He presented a petition to the New York authorities in which he claimed to be aggrieved of the judgment of the Schout and Magistrates of Woodbridge who were interested. The decision was unfavorable to him, the Dutch authorities, referring the whole matter back to the local judiciary, who were also instructed to be impartial and fair.

After five years' service to the Town as its Clerk, he became dissatisfied at not receiving a salary, and refused to spend any more time writing the proceedings. He then received £25 for his past services, and 20 shillings for the year 1674.

A dispute arose between the Township officials and the Province about the right to appoint officers. In 1675, Moore addressed the Governor and Council about their privileges. The same thing occurred in 1680. Governor Andross ordered a warrant issued for his refusing to obey his orders by choosing certain officers for their town instead of those appointed by him. Samuel Dennis, his brother-in-law, was involved in the same difficulty. Moore was apprehended and brought to New York, being imprisoned in the fort there for nine days. The Council took "his mean condition and many children" into consideration, ordered him released to go home about his business, after acknowledging his error and mistake in disobedience.

As a rate gatherer (now tax collector) of the Township, he was authorized to find a room for taxes. These were not in coin or notes as we know them today, but quarters of beef and mutton, bushels of grain, or barrels of pork, or other provisions that were available. There is a great deal of the same now in the press. Admission to fairs, college tuitions and places where formerly money was required, are oftentimes paid in eggs, corn and wheat, etc.

Moore was also a rate maker and gatherer, overseer of the poor, overseer of the highways, in 1682 and constable of the

Township in addition to the other offices already mentioned.

We now come to the formation of Middlesex County, in 1682. Notwithstanding his duties to his Town, he took a leading part in County affairs. On March 20, 1683 he was sworn in as the first high sheriff and his first official duty was the arrest of Capt. Robert Vickars who was ordered placed in his custody and confined to the jail at Woodbridge. Vickars was the Secretary of the Province and committed several fraudulent acts in his office. He had a confrere in crime. Robert Vanquillan, the Surveyor General, had made irregular and false surveys and was also committed to Moore's custody. The sheriff was ordered to search his home and take all records and surveys he might find. When John Pike got into difficulties as the first clerk of the court, he acted as its temporary clerk for a term.

In 1683, he opened a tavern in Woodbridge. Exact prices were set as to his charges for rum in accordance with the quantity sold. For a gallon, two or three shillings six pence; a gill, three pence; a half pint, six pence; and eighteen pence a quart; and "if he gives more, then to raise the price." This was a busy year for the Sheriff, for he also held the office of Deputy to the Assembly, Messenger of the House of Deputies, Town Clerk and Rate Gatherer at the same time. This latter position he held until his death.

He married in New England, Hannah Plumer, who died eighteen months later, in December of 1654. In September, 1656, he married again, Mary Insley becoming his wife, and removing to Woodbridge. By her he had six children, four sons and two daughters. The historian Whitehead considered it possible that he married a third time (December, 1678) to Ann (or Hannah) Jaques. His wife Mary was living in June, 1678, as we learn from existing birth records in which her name appears in connection with the birth of twins; but it would seem improbable that he married in December, even if his former wife died after June, which is not chronicled. But he did marry a third time and to Ann. By her he had one child who was born September 16, 1681.

Moore was scrupulously exact in all his transactions with the

local and provincial government, and a man of great financial and executive ability. He was, in fact, one of the greatest men of Woodbridge, and the central figure in the days of the settlement. His many years of public office did not diminish his reputation or influence. If any envied him, as no doubt some did, they were unable to sully his fair name, or win the proud place he occupied in the hearts of the people.

His will is dated November 13, 1683, and he died before April, 1688. Here his vocation is set out as a yeoman. He left four sons and four daughters and named his brothers-in-law, Samuel Dennis and Samuel Hale, and his son-in-law John Blumfield, as executors. No less than ten witnessed the execution of his will, among them many prominent in the Township. The executors he appointed refused to act. Among the inventory was one negro boy of 15, and two negro girls; also a book called "A collection of replies by Henry Hamond, D.D.," and another "Concerning ye settling of Corporations by William Shepards." He liberated his negro slave "Nanny."

## THE FIRST COUNTY CLERK

### JOHN PIKE, JR.

JOHN PIKE, JR., whose hand made the first records in our County Courts, had a prominent part in the settlement of Woodbridge. His father, of the same name, was one of the original grantees with Daniel Pierce, in 1666, for the settlement of the town, receiving a grant of 30 acres of land. The ancestral home was established on the east side of "Strawberry Hill," (also known as the Sheep Common) on a plot of 10 acres. Strawberry Hill still bears the same name, and is graced by the Cutter-Prall House, an old red brick building just north of the junction of Route 25 of the Shore route with the Amboy Road at Woodbridge. After occupying several high positions in the Province, being a member of the Governor's Council in 1672, 1675 and 1679, the father died in January, 1688, leaving several sons and daughters.

Our first county clerk was born in 1639 at Newberry, Massa-

chusetts. He came to Woodbridge in 1666, with his father. On February 2, 1675, he married Elizabeth Stout of Middletown.

About this time he was elected constable after every one else refused the position. He made 1000 pipe staves to defray the expenses of procuring a minister for the town. In 1681, he was President of the Township Court, a rate maker, a rate gatherer, and three years later a deputy to the General Assembly.

In September, 1684, Capt. John Pike Sr., was indicted, tried and convicted of stealing "one lanthorne (lantern) of tin and horn to the value of three shillings," and his son, John Pike, Jr., of "feleonious takeing and carrying away of one Holand Sheet, value of twelve shillings; the top of a cushion of the value of one shilling; and one remant of homespun (commonly called linsey wolsey) of value of four shillings," all of the property of Abraham Tappen. The entire value of the goods was 20 shillings or about the sum of \$5.00 in our present currency. The sentence of the court was for the Pikes to pay double the value of the goods, return the goods, and pay fees and court charges.

*John Pike Clerk*

At the same session, the justice took the matter into consideration and "suspended the said Pike from officiating as Clerke of ye said Court, till the Governor's pleasure be known." Samuel Moore then became temporary clerk, until Edward Slater, one of the members of the Court, was sworn in as clerk in the December term. Considering the fact that Abraham Tappen, a son-in-law and brother-in-law, having married Ruth Pike, was the moving party, the case takes on a strange aspect, and the future discloses the reasons.

There is a document in the early records at Trenton indicating that Tappen was not always sane. In 1678, he agreed with his wife that she should return to her father's home with her children, and with such necessary articles in consequence of the extremity

of her distressed condition and sickness. On the 14th of April, witnesses testified that Tappen was then "in his senses." In 1680, the Elder Pike deeded his son and son-in-law a tract of land "they were living together on."

In the General Assembly of the Province, which was held in Perth Amboy on the 2nd day of October, 1694, a law was enacted to relieve John Pike and his son John from the opprobrium of felony. This act and the following ones are reprinted in Leaming Spicer's *Grants and Concessions of New Jersey*.

It was enacted that "the said John Pike together with the family aforesaid be restored to their former good name, and to all other immunities, equal with any of their majesties liege people, as if never any such thing had been."

The missing goods had been found on their premises. Subsequently it was proved that the Pikes were ignorant of the presence of the stolen goods in their house. The object of this act was to restore the Pikes to their former standing in Woodbridge and to punish any publication of the unfortunate affair which might injure the reputation of the family. But this was misconstrued by some evil-minded persons, as an act of favor and pardon; which, of course, would indicate that the parties concerned were guilty. When the Legislature met at Perth Amboy in February, 1698, it was enacted that the General Assembly intended by the former act "to publish and make known to the world, that the said Captain John Pike, deceased, and his son, John Pike, were innocent, clear and free of the said felony in the said act mentioned." And, "Whoever should defame the family directly or indirectly or by implication, words, speeches, reports, libels, revilings, or any other manner or way whatsoever, by reason, cause, or occasion of the said judgment should be liable to prosecution at the instance of the posterity of the said Captain John Pike and his son."

In 1693, '94, and '98, John Pike, Jr., was a member of the House of Deputies. On October 2, 1694, he was appointed a highway commissioner for the County and at one time he was chosen to discuss quit rents with the Governor. In his latter

years it was not beneath him to whitewash the walls of the meeting house, and assisted greatly in furthering the interests of Woodbridge. In 1709, he built a grist-mill on the north side of the "then" ditch. In March of 1714, he protested further division of public lands until the land already divided was properly assigned.

He died shortly afterwards. His will was proven November 18, 1714. He left surviving him his wife, Sarah, and children, John, Zebulon, Joseph, Hannah and Penelope, and Mary, the wife of Richard Cutter. He was a man of considerable judicial acumen. He threw himself heartily into the township business, and displayed so much wisdom in his counsels that his fellow citizens made him a judge.

Major Zebulon Pike, of the Revolutionary War and General Zebulon Montgomery Pike, of the War of 1812, were of this family.

## THE EARLY LAWYERS

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sam Winder". The signature is written in dark ink and features a large, flowing loop at the end.

SAMUEL WINDER was the first county, or, rather, provincial prosecutor according to the old minute book. He was appointed by the members of the court to "appear in the King's behalfe to prosecute such matters as may concerne the Kings Majestie," in September, 1683, becoming the county's first prosecutor. No record of his appearing in a criminal case appears. Winder also appears to be the first attorney representing any litigant, when he acknowledges satisfaction of a judgment for one penny damages with costs of suit in the case of William Welch against John Blomfield. When the court considered the verdict, how-

ever, it allowed the recovery of £6 1d. Winder resided at Cheesquakes and was one of the council to Lord Neil Campbell, the Deputy Governor. In 1688, he was one of the justices of this court. He married Margaret, the daughter of Thomas Rudyard, the succeeding Deputy Governor, and removed to a plantation near Middletown where he died. Margaret, in 1699, married George Willocks, who was one of the administrators of her father's estate and lived in the vicinity of her home. George Willocks was the benefactor of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Perth Amboy, donating several pieces of land to it. Winder died at Boston before February 15, 1688-9, leaving a daughter, Sarah, besides his wife, who was the sole executrix. He owned several tracts of land, especially a thousand acre farm near Middletown.

#### DAVID VILANT.

David Vilant, very similar to the name of a present practitioner, appears as attorney for Richard Powell in March, 1686, wherein he was sued by Peter Bellu upon a bond. He also represented David Mudie of Perth at the same term. At the next term, Vilant was a defendant when Robert Rosier sued him, and, lawyerlike, he found flaw in the form of the declaration, and nonsuited the plaintiff.

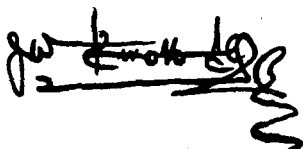
There is very little in the records as to his personal life, no trace being found of his will. In all probability he left for another state. In 1685, he purchased Jack Mackdonald who had lately been imported from Scotland by Capt. Thomas Pearson in his ship Thomas & Benjamin, as a servant. At the end of the year, Samuel Guthrie gave him a bond of £200 for a debt. He was sole heir and executor of the estate of Richard Paull. The next year he purchased a tenth of a forty-eight share in the Board of Proprietors from David Mudie. In 1688, he is stated as being from South River, where he obtained 100 acres of land and another 100 acres being deeded to him by James Emott. The Mudie mentioned mortgaged to him six servants, and cattle, a stone house and two acres of land facing the bay in Perth



Amboy, after being sued by Vilant. In 1691, he is stated as from Piscataway in a deed to Captain Henry Greenland for Mudie's protection.

### JAMES EMOTT.

James Emott appears as an attorney of the Court for the first time in the sessions of June, 1686, acknowledging payment of fifty pounds for Richard Townley against Richard Powell. Very little is known of his early or late history. He must have come to Amboy from Elizabeth Towne for he witnessed the will of Philip Carteret in 1682 and Samuel Sturridge in 1683. The next year he received a deed of twelve acres there. But in 1685, he was a witness to the will of Gilbert Innes of Amboy. The first public house in Amboy, the Long Ferry Tavern at the foot of High Street was kept by him as early as 1685. His name appears as a lieutenant in the first notice of the Amboy militia. He was the only officer mentioned in the records as being recommissioned by Andros when East Jersey came under his authority.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'James Emott', with a long, flowing flourish extending from the bottom right.

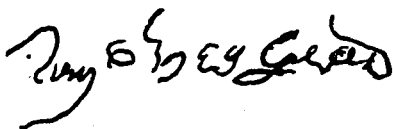
He was appointed Clerk of the County Court on December 10, 1686 after Edward Slater, serving until September, 1690. He was appointed secretary of the Province in the same year. Two years later he was licensed to practice as an attorney at law in all courts of New England, commissioned Deputy Register of East Jersey, and Clerk of Peace in both Essex and Middlesex County.

The tavern business was profitable in those days. He purchased considerable property both in Essex and Middlesex Counties. The one hundred acre piece he purchased from his fellow attorney Vilant, has been mentioned. In the same year, he received a patent for twenty-five acres, on the Rahway

River, three hundred acres in Bergen County, a deed from Capt. Richard Townley for five hundred acres, three acres in Elizabeth and forty acres near the Two Miles Brook. He also purchased two lots in Perth Amboy, one from the Proprietors and another adjoining it. They were bounded on the east by Market Place, west by the burying place (now the site of the Perth Amboy High School), south by Market street and north by Robert Hardie's lot. Emott must have build a house thereon. In 1690, and 1693, we find him again as of Elizabeth, leasing his mansion in Perth Amboy to John Cockburn. In 1692, he is stated as of New York City in a deed of forty acres to William Cramer. I can find no trace of his death.

Emott's greatest bid for fame is as the attorney for Captain Kidd in his trial for piracy. I would give him another bid. His handwriting is the most abominable I have ever seen, it is a sort of a back hand, old English, with a style of letters all his own. It is hardly legible, oftentimes baffling the most expert in deciphering it. As a scribe, which a clerk of a court should be, he was little qualified in that respect.

#### THE EARLY DOCTORS

A handwritten signature in a cursive, old English style, which appears to read "Henry Greenland". The ink is dark and the script is somewhat stylized and difficult to decipher.

CAPTAIN HENRY GREENLAND was of a very litigious nature. He came from Piscataqua, New Hampshire, and was among the early settlers of our Piscataway. On February 14, 1678, he was one of the members of the Monthly Court at Piscataway. He was a doctor, being described in his case against Michael Simons as a "practioner in phisick & chyrurgory." Although he sued Simons for trespass on the case for £20 sterling, the jury brought a verdict of one pound and costs. In May, 1684, there is recorded a "letter of attorney" from Thomas Lawrence to the doctor. In the following September we find the doctor as plaintiff against Otto Lawrence in a suit for debt, the

jury awarding him two shillings. In 1686, he sued Hugh Stamland for trespass and was nonsuited for not filing the complaint according to "ye reule of ye court." Stamland accused the doctor of buying and receiving stolen and marked hogs of the Indians. At the next term, Stamland acknowledged that he had foully and maliciously slandered the doctor and desired "God and ye Court to foregive him." Gawen Lawrie sued the doctor in September, 1686, he confessing judgment for £25. The records contain many cases both for and against Greenland.

His will is dated December 11, 1694, and probated February 7, 1694. He left a son of the same name and two daughters, one the wife of Cornelius Longfield and the other of Daniel Brynson. His servant, John Dittfervour, was willed to serve his son until the expiration of his term. Edward Slater and Benjamin Hull were the witnesses to it. These old records also state Will Robinson, George Lockhart and Peter DeSeigney were of the medical profession.

Lockhart resided in Woodbridge as early as 1679 as "practitioner in physic." In 1683, while in England, he sought to obtain the "Marshal's place" in Perth town. Later Lockhart sued David Mudie, a Perth Amboy merchant. Mudie was in court frequently.

George Keith sued Dr. Peter DeSeigney for the cost of one hogshead of molasses and the doctor admitted the debt. Dr. DeSeigney treated Joyse Clove. In 1688, the judges, upon the application of several inhabitants of New Perth, ordered a county tax of £20 to be raised to defray the expenses of her cure. The method is clearly set forth in the minutes. The tax was raised partially, "in winter wheat att four shillings ye bushell, and Indian Corne att two shillings ye bushell." DeSeigney also resided in Woodbridge as "chirurgion."

The George Keith mentioned was Surveyor General of the Province, arriving in 1685. He was a native of Scotland, an eminent Quaker, although originally a Scotch Presbyterian. He ousted William Haige from the office, he having held it under appointment from Deputy Governor Rudyard. The Council later appointed Keith. As Surveyor General, he ran the division

line between East and West Jersey. He soon removed to Philadelphia, taught school, became a preacher and writer among the Quakers. His talents and energy soon gathered a large following, yet his strong character soon brought the authorities to proclaim him as a seditious person and enemy of the government. He went to London in 1694, appealed his own case, lost it, and returned to America, preaching under the auspices of the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts." He was now a zealous clergyman of the Church of England, traveling through the different provinces. He preached from Massachusetts to North Carolina, and especially at the recently established Episcopal church in Perth Amboy. His travels are preserved in his diary. The oldest house still standing, on the corner of Fayette Street and Willocks Lane, in Perth Amboy, was built by him.

### THE FIRST MURDER CASE

THE first tax list in December, 1693, also contains several items concerning the first murder case tried in the county, although no entry of it is made in the minutes. David Lange was tried and convicted of the crime. He was imprisoned in the jail, but, it being continually out of repair, he escaped. Elisha Parker then sold the county a lot of iron for three shillings to make fetters for him. Edward Haynes received six shillings for making them. Samuel Dennis was paid nine pence for a pound of spike for the prison and John Dennis, three shillings for mending it. Lange, having escaped in the meanwhile, was recaptured and securely imprisoned for a long time. Those who furnished food for him received three shillings for a week. Edward Slater, who was then Sheriff, obtained three pounds for his trouble in taking care of the prisoner, while the executioner received two pounds three shilling.

### THE FIRST DIVORCE CASE

JUST before Christmas of 1692, Rebecca Seaton petitioned the Court that, notwithstanding she had been lawfully married to James Seaton and had lived with him two years and had had a child by her said husband, yet he deserted her and betook

himself to the company of Mary Ross. Her husband even declared in the presence of several witnesses that Mary was his wife, and that they had lived together as such. The Court ordered his appearance at the next term by a summons set up at the public meeting house at Woodbridge and also at his late residence. Should he fail to appear, the Court would pass judgment according to the merits of the case. As it was ordered he be secured if he came into the county, in all probability he escaped with his paramour. He did not appear, nor was he expected, and the case proceeded. Several witnesses were sworn and gave evidence that would, today, easily find proper place in the head lines of our daily papers. John Allen, son of the minister at Woodbridge, attempted to bring the unhappy couple together, but failed. The evidence was so damaging that "after a serious debate and consideration of ye heinous adulteries committed by the said James Seaton, husband of ye above said Rebecca Seaton, this Court declares that she ought not any longer to stand bound to ye said James Seaton in ye conjugiall bonds of marriage but that she ought to be discharged, set free and devorst from ye said James Seaton \* \* \* and that it be recorded accordingly." This is the language of our first divorce decree in the county courts. The method of examining into the facts and obtaining the separation seems expeditious and logical, compared with our present systems.

### FIRST JUSTICE'S APPEAL

THE first record of an appeal from a justice of the peace decision is that of Joseph Martin against James Committ in November, 1713. In the lower court, Justice Pike gave judgment in favor of the plaintiff. As is usual with a great many such decisions the upper "Court saw course to reverse" the judgment. On the other hand, two other decisions that were appealed at the same time were confirmed. These appeals seem

to have been heard in the Quarter Sessions of the Court and not in the Common Pleas.

### THE EARLY JURORS

The second County Court was held at Woodbridge on September 18, 1683. A jury convicted Captain Henry Greenland, Cornelius Longfeild and John Stevens of a riot, and fined them £5, £4 10s, and £3 respectively. In the meantime, the Sheriff was ordered to take them into custody and "them there safely keep until ye sd fine be payed and security given for their good behauviour for one whole year next ensuing."

It is to be regretted that the names of this first jury have been lost to posterity. Not until the following year were the jurors' names written in the record. James Stuart and Joseph Trowall were found guilty of breaking from jail, at the September term in 1684. The jurymen, which is the first of which we have any record, were John Dennis, Halick Codriack, William Bingle, John Warlock, John Conger, Thomas Alger, Isaac Smalley, Thomas Fitz Randolph, Charles Gilman, Elihu Higgins, Joseph Martin and Samuel Dotey. The same jury tried every case during the term, regardless of whether it was criminal or civil.

The first grand jury listed at the same time consisted of seventeen members. They were Ephrim Andros, Israel Thornill, Jacob Tappin, Obadiah Aires, John Adams, Nathaniel Bloomfield, John Jones, Jediah Higgins, Hugh Dun, Thomas Higgins, Rehoboth Gannet, Nicholas Munday, John Langstaff, Andrew Wooden, John Drake, Richard Smith, Jr., and Joseph Fitz Randolph. The two lists given show names of old families still in existence in Middlesex County.

William Jones, tailor, was indicted for assaulting Rebecca Bishop, pleaded guilty and was sentenced to be "whipped 30 and 9 lashes" in March, 1684. The next year John Jones was indicted "for attempting and using severall evill and unseemly practices, actions and gestures" to the same lady, and several other women. The jury, however, found him not guilty, but the

court looking upon him to be a man of bad life and evil conversations, ordered him under bond for one year to his good behavior.

### JOHN ALLEN, CLERIC.

The early settlers found difficulty in procuring spiritual and religious guidance. Colonies sought in every quarter in America and then turned their eyes toward England. Woodbridge was successful in this respect in September, 1680, when Mr. John Allen commenced preaching among them. He received £50 per annum and voluntary subscriptions had to be resorted to for his permanent support.

In February he was admitted as a freeholder, receiving a house lot of one hundred acres. He also received a grant of ninety-seven acres. In September, 1682, a request was made to the Governor and council that he be inducted formally as their minister.

He died a short time prior to January 2, 1683-4, Dally being in error when he states 1715, confusing a son of the same name with the father. The same mistake is made when Rev. John Allen is named as the "meat packer" of the town. He had already deceased at the time of the appointment and the reference must be to his son. The inventory of his estate includes over £148. Several articles of silver, a library of religious, medical and historical books of 252 volumes, and many debts due by fifty prominent persons of Woodbridge and vicinity.

John Dennis was appointed administrator of his estate. In the June term of the County Court, 1684, there is recorded several suits against the estate by Samuel Dennis, £8 4s; Capt. John Pike £6 7s 7d; Obadiah Ayres £2, 6s 5d; Moses Colier £7 18s; Samuel Hale £3, 3s, 8d and John Ilsley, £7, 10s. The administrator was allowed one pound for his appearance in defense of these suits.

## EARLY CASES

IN 1684, ranging the woods and rearing a horse contrary to law was charged against Otto Lawrence by Samuel Dctey, but the jury failed to find him guilty. However, John Ronsha of Burlington, William Johnson and John Cramer of Elizabeth Town were all convicted of ranging the woods.

John Thomson, negro servant to Mr. Daniell Hooper, "livinge up ye Raritan River was indicted by ye grand inquest, for sellinge, giveinge or otherwayes disposing of so much rum to certain Indians as to make them drunk and for beatinge wonnderinge and cruelly treateinge the said Indians." The jury found him not guilty, yet his master had to pay the jury and court cryer.

James Stuart was apprehended under a warrant of the Governor for enticing servants from their masters at Amboy and gave bond for £200 for his good behaviour of one whole year. The Grand Inquest however, found the bill "ignoramus," and the court ordered him discharged upon payment of the fees.

During the year 1684, when Samuell Moore, the Sheriff, was temporarily designated as clerk of the County Court. Walter Newman, an apprentice to Stephen Warne of Amboy, complained that he did not receive sufficient lodging and other necessities. The court ordered the master to "provide as a master ought to do for an apprentice."

At the same time three lads who were apprenticed to Wm. Dockwra and under the care of his agent, John Carrington, of Perth Amboy, complained they "were used very hard and suffered for want of clothing and provision." The court admonished the overseer and threatened to release the servants when hearing of another complaint. Mr. Dockwra was a merchant in London and chief Secretary of the Board of Proprietors. He shipped the first cargo of people and goods to Perth Amboy.

Gregory Mark was a non-resident in June, 1685, when Benjamin Hull issued an attachment upon his horse. Hull's claim was six pounds and ten shillings. He collected but half his claim.

John Smith, ship carpenter, later of Perth Amboy, said to



belong to Capt. Pearson's ship, was arrested in June, 1685, at Piscataway "by virtue of a hue & cry granted by Major James Giles," one of the justices. This order provided for his being carried and conveyed to his ship. When Smith presented to the court that the captain had altered his first proposed voyage and by law and custom of navigation, he was not bound to go along, they considered they had no jurisdiction and referred the whole matter to the Governor. At the next term of Court there were three cases against the Captain, and John Smith was one of the plaintiffs. All were transferred to the court of Common Right.

Subsequently, John Smith recovered a verdict of £18 10s against him, after the action had been brought back from the Court of Common Right by "providendo."

John English, a servant to Hopewell Hull of Piscataway, was drowned in the Raritan River. A jury was impanelled upon a coroner's inquest on May 25, 1685 and "after strict search and enquiry found ye water ye only cause of his death."

Thomas Laute, late of Amboy, a laborer was accused of stealing an axe of Robert Cole, and bound over by Justice Warren of Amboy to appear at the next County Court, but being "called once, twice and thrice upon ye forfeiture of his recognizance appeared not." His bondsman suffered the same penalty.

John Robinson attached a negro slave in the hands of James Cole when Daniell Hooper was the defendant in a case. The court determined that all attachments against non-resident effects were illegal.

An interesting case came before the court for decision in September, 1686. Miles Forster of Perth Amboy gave a barrel of rum and a barrel of molasses to William Looker on account of a certain parcel of land that he had bought of Looker. Looker failed to fetch the rum and molasses away before it was burned when Forster's house went up in flames. Looker denied the receipt of the rum and molasses and both mutually agreed to let the jury decide the differences between them. The jury decided for the defendant.

On October 20, 1687, New Perth was created a free port and so proclaimed in open court.

John Watson sued James Clarkson for a "cow and calfe," the jury finding for the defendant. When John Inians sued Thomas Smith "for a broune hourse," the jury also found the same way. At the next session of court the same Smith sued Inians in retaliation and obtained a judgment for £11 40s against him.

Oftimes peculiar things were resorted to, to settle a debtt. For instance, Benjamin Hull sued John Jennings for £12. The Sheriff arrested him and brought him before the Court, where he stated he had no money to discharge the debt and tendered himself as a servant to Hull for three years to work off his debt. The clerk drew up such an agreement, but stated that whenever Hull received the money, he would be discharged from further service.

There was an interesting case tried in June, 1688, that may settle the date of the erection of the Billop or Conference House in Tottenville, Staten Island.

It will be recalled that Lord Howe of the British forces met Benjamin Franklin, Edward Rutledge and John Adams, the Colonial Commissioners in an effort to establish peace, in his house on September 11, 1776. At this term of County Court John Tomkins sued Capt. Christopher Billop for "painting his house att Staten Island." Samuel Winder was the attorney for the defendant. Eleven witnesses were sworn and the jury gave the plaintiff a verdict. A few days later Billop obtained an injunction from the Court of Chancery to stay all proceedings until the upper court heard the case, which was allowed when he gave a security for the costs.

Billop received a grant for the land upon which the house is erected in 1687. I assume from these two dates that the house was erected between 1687 and 1688.

## THE WOMEN IN COURT

**WOMEN** are mentioned frequently in these early court records. Sarah Gannet, wife of Rehoboth Gannet of Piscataway, was bound to "keep the peace and appear at the next session." Her husband's license to sell "drinke by retail" was called in, presumably on account of his wife's trouble. Later Mary Dike of Amboy, spinster, was indicted for stealing silver money out of a trunk belonging to the said Benjamin Clarke. Upon being found guilty by the jury, the court decreed that she pay double the value of the goods stolen and fees of court and court charges. Catherine Curry, wife of Thomas Curry of Amboy, was accused by Benjamin Clark of possessing stolen goods and committed to "pryson" until the next session. Benjamin Clark conducted a stationery and book store in Amboy. She was indicted for being an accessory to the felony, but was cleared by Proclamation. Elizabeth Munday was indicted for being an accessory to a felony committed by Anne Pane, but the indictment was quashed when the principal did not appear. Anne Pane was indicted for stealing three gallons of molasses to the value of six shillings of the goods of Benjamin Hull. She was also in the courts charged with having a bastard. "The Court doth order that ye said John Cooper shall give in sufficient security to save ye Towne of Piscataway harmless from the said woman and child." The colonial days saw women blamed more than men in cases of such nature. It always is the "woman who pays."

### ANCIENT INDICTMENTS

**MARGARET THOMSON**, wife of William, a carpenter, and **Eliza Walker**, wife of Alexander, a barber, all of Perth Amboy were indicted for stealing sundry goods belonging to one George Atkinson, at the December term of court, 1688. The wording, archaic and ancient, deserves to be repeated as James Emott wrote in the record.

"Midlx. The jurors for our Lord the King upon oath

doe present that Eliza Walker, wife of Alexander Walker of Amboy Perth in the said County and Margaret Thompson wife of William Thomson of the same, on the 20th day of October last att Amboy Perth Aforesaid with force and arms, thirty-eight yards of linen cloath to the value of £2 4d, one linen Hud with some remnants of lineing to the value of 1s and 6d, three yards of woolen cloath three s, two pair of men shoues 8s, 2 pair of plading stockings, 2s 3d, and a quarter of nett yarnes to the value of 5s of the goods and chattels which were late of one George Atkinson deceased and did then belong to the Governor of this Dominion and Territory of New England to grant the administration thereof from and out of the house of James Millar att Amboy Perth above sd, did feloniously take, stale and carry away in contempt of the laws &c and agt the peace of our Souveraigne Lord the King his Crowne and Dignity"

The defendants pleaded not guilty, and upon trial the petit jury found them both guilty "excepting the three pounds and a quarter of nett yarne of which there wer not full prooffe." The court ordered them to make double restitution, pay costs, and give a bond for their good behaviour for one year.

#### MARY TENNENT

The indictment against Mary Tennent is interesting both for its form and also deserving repetition.

"We, the jorors of our soveraigne Lord the King upon oath doe presenet Mary Tennant wife of William Tennant of Amboy Perth in the said County having not the feare of God before her eyes but by the justification of the divill, on the 29th day of August lastpast (1687) att Amboy Perth aforesaid, did steale, take and carry away from and out of the house of Myles Forster merchant, severall pieces or parcells of linen, casteele sope, Sundry silks, ribon, candles, nutmegs, mace, cloves, and sundrey small jars of spices, allome, manchester binding and powder blew being the proper goods and chattells of the said Myles Forster to ye value of five pounds against the peace of our Souveraigne Lord, the King his Majesty and dignity &c."

Poor Mary pleaded guilty to the indictment and was ordered to be immediately conveyed to the whipping post and "theare

receive upon her bare backe nine lashes by the sherife or his order." She was then confined to the Common Goal until security would be given for her good behaviour for one whole year and paid the fees of the court.

### JOYSE CLOVE.

In those old days, the courts had an effective way in dealing with unemployment and relief problems. The case of Joyse Clove of New Perth is recorded in September of 1688. The inhabitants of New Perth made application to the court that a tax be raised within the county to defray the charges that would accrue for the cure of her sore leg, "she being a poor and indigent woman in great distress and misery." A committee was appointed to make the rate and means provided for its payment. Anyone refusing to pay was made subject to distress proceedings. The payment in kind is also interesting. The tax was £20 at the rate "in winter wheat att four shillings ye bushell, and Indian corne att two shillings ye bushell." Doctor DeSeigney was employed by Myles Forster and James Emott to affect the cure. Joyse must have been very sick. Five years later, in December, 1693, the good doctor complained to the court that he had not as yet been paid. The court made him show the order to do the cure before payment would be ordered.

### ISABELL THOMPSON.

In March, 1689, the grand jury found an indictment against Isabell Thompson for feloniously stealing sundry goods of Matthew Gannett of Woodbridge. The list of articles is curious. For instance, the first item is "Vaughan's meditations." Then there is one brass needle case, one silver bodkine, four laced capes, three rushed sleeves, a musling apron, worth then 37½c tufted holland sleeves, two pairs of showes, a white "petty coate," a pair of calicoe sleeves, a silk "stumager" and three laced covers, a primer, head bands, two plain capes, and a small roll of hanked silk. Upon the trial, the pettit jury found her guilty and the

court imposed upon her the sentence of paying the costs of court, securing her good behaviour for one year, and making double restitution.



It was customary to publish public matters in open court. In January, 1688, the King sent a letter to the Governor of the Province, concerning several disputes and differences that arose in various parts of the King's lands and those of the subjects of the King of France. Both Kings appointed commissioners to settle and determine the bounds and limits of the colonies, islands and territories within their respective dominions in America and required all his subjects to treat the commissioners of the French King with civility, and "without putting any curb on them or their persons, estates untill the first day of January, 1689," and the colonists were especially requested to prevent all acts of hostility or violence.

At the same session of court, another letter was read from the King. It was a printed proclamation dated January 20, 1687, and concerned pirates and privateers. They were ordered "apprehended wheresoever found and his majties subjects sought to aid and assist Sir Robert Homes whom his Majty hath constituted and appointed sole commissioner in that affaire."

The early days of the courts compared favorably with the early days of the country. As new laws were enacted to meet the colonial conditions, so the courts had to make new rules. In December of 1687 the defendant was compelled to file a plea to the plaintiff's declaration two days before the first day of the Session. A year later, additional rules had to be adopted to make the court function more orderly. Just as at this time the various constables of each "Towne in and throughout this county of Middlesex" were ordered to attend the court at the respective towns where the same was held. They were penalized thirteen shillings and four pence for every day's neglect to attend. This was levied and collected by the Sheriff.

## COUNTY TAXES AND RATES

THE first record of a county tax is the one imposed on March 17, 1683-4. The month of March was considered as the first month of the year, and all through the record we find the dates written as above until the calendar was changed. At this session of the court, the justices taxed the county £45 toward the building of a county prison and for erecting a pound in each town. They were to cost fifty shillings a piece, one being provided in Woodbridge and the other in Piscataway. It was a long while before the orders were carried out. In 1686, the court had to order the goal built, the old order having been neglected.

At the end of each year, the Justices of the Court of Sessions or County Court, assisted by at least two freemen of each town, would meet to make up the list of County debts and set the rate to be made, amount raised, and debts paid. The first list contains a list of the County debts. A bounty of fifteen shillings was paid to each person killing a wolf. There are several freemen who received this bounty. Jonathan Bishop, John Blomfield, Captain George Drake and William Clauson received one pound each for going to meet the Indians when they were reported coming upon the colonists.

Gowen Lockart received seven shillings for transporting Rush, "ye monie Coyner" from Woodbridge to Piscataway and George Drake was paid one pound five shillings for taking him to Delaware Falls. Benjamin Hull, Joseph Fraley, Benjamin Clarke at Amboy, and William Thornill were paid various sums for marking out Roads and highways. Elisha Parker obtained 12s 9d for transporting Middlesex soldiers to New York upon their going to Albany. John Pike compared laws with the Secretary and Thomas Gordon copied them, receiving two pounds for the county's portion.

## YE SHIPPE UNITY

IN 1688, David Mudie, a merchant in Amboy Perth imported in the vessel called the Unity, fifty servants "which were shipt and taken in att Montross in the kingdom of Scotland." Mudie came from there himself. The vessel was then riding the harbor in Amboy. As the vessel was of Dutch build, it was contrary to the statute of the Parliament passed March 25, 1664. This law provided that "noe comodity of the growth, production and manufacture of Europe should be imported into any land, island, plantation, colloney, territory or place to his Majestie belonging or which after should belong unto him \* \* \* in Asia, Africa or America (Tangier only excepted) but what should bonafide and without fraud be laden and shipped in England, Wales or the Towne of Brunswick upon wooden and in English built ships or which were bona fide bought before October 1, 1662, and etc. \* \* \*"

At this session of Court, Thomas Gordon informed the court against the vessel. Under the statute he thereby became entitled to one-third of all her guns, tackle, furniture, ammunition, apparell and the hull itself. The other two-thirds were divided equally between his Majesty, his heirs and successors, and the Governor of the Province. The act allowed one to ship and navigate from any port of Europe, salt for the fisheries of New England and New Foundland, Madiera wines or wines from the Azores, and servants or horses, and all sorts of victualls from Scotland or Ireland provided it was in a British built ship or one acquired before the law was passed.

David Mudie "in his owne person came and defends the force and injury when &c. saith that the sd Information or plaint exhibited against him by the said Thomas Gordon" was true in every respect. The court considered his confession against a violation of the law and invoked the penalty provided thereunder. The vessel was forfeited. Thomas Warne of Amboy Perth and Edward Slater were ordered to go on board her and make an inventory and appraisement, and return the same, under oath, forthwith.



The old court record gives the inventory in this manner:

"Apparrell of old Rope in the hold .....	£1	
In the cabine apparrell of old sailes .....	£5	
A piece of old Cable upon the decke .....		10s
About 20 fathoms of New Juth rope .....		5s
Rigging or standing geare .....	£3	
The Hull or vessell .....	£25	
Total		£34 15s"

Imagine a vessel that had brought 50 persons over the Atlantic Ocean, and, in addition, manned by a crew of sailors, being appraised at about \$150.00 in our present rate of exchange. Either the appraisement was extremely low, or the vessel very small.

### MORE OF THE CASES.

The Courts of Sessions or County Court had many matters under their jurisdiction. Besides deciding civil and criminal cases, they made the county tax rates, ordered roads laid out and repaired, procured jails, heard cases concerning master and servants, guardians, matrimonial matters and even duelling cases. The Grand Jury called the Towne of Piscataway to task for not providing a sufficient way between it and Bound Brook. John Quish petitioned for the appointment of Samuel Hale and Isabel Blomfield as his guardian during his minority.

The Constable at Piscataway was abused by Thomas Canwood in the execution of his office and he was bound over to answer the complaint at the next session.

### MASTER AND SERVANT CASES

GAWEN LAWRIE'S widow, Mary, sued Captain Thomas Codrington, in 1688, for the trover of a negro man called "Robin Hudd." The Jury found, however, for the defendant and Mrs. Laurie had to pay costs. At the following March session, Myles Forster, as administrator of William Haige's estate, sued the same Captain Thomas Codrington in an action of detinue,—

unlawfully holding—the same negro. The jury found for the plaintiff in this action and awarded “Robin Hudd” to him.

In 1692, Mark Dosoway sued David Mudie in an action of trespass for taking away a servant boy belonging to him. The case was transferred to the Court of Common Right.

The Court had a difficult case to decide at the June, 1689, term. Thomas Warne of Perth Amboy brought Thomas, Peter and Richard Hankinson, servants, into court for having left his service without obtaining his consent. Their mother, Jane Hankinson asked the court to set her children free as their master had no indenture for them. Warne then showed that he imported the three boys from Ireland, at his own expense, upon their agreeing to serve him until they reached the age of twenty-one years. They were ordered to return to his service until they reached that age.

George Johnson petitioned the court to be set free from David Mudie after serving him four years according to his contract, and that he receive his discharge. The court adjourned the case until the next session in order to give Mudie a chance to show the service was for a space of six years instead of four.

Maria was an Indian girl formerly belonging to Captain John Palmer and was sold by him to Capt. Andrew Hamilton in 1692. She was let as an apprentice to Robert Vanquillan, alias Le Prairie, for ten years, from July, 1690. Vanquillan was the Surveyor General of the province until he found himself in difficulties with the authorities on account of false surveys. At this time, Thomas Gordon asked the court for his bail bond which he gave for the Indian girl's appearance at court. Vanquillan did not appear after being called and the court ordered Gordon discharged from his bond and the “Indian girl” to be delivered up to be Capt. Hamilton's servant according to the bill of sale he received from Capt. Palmer.

Another master and servant case occurred in March, 1694, when Joseph Crow, a married man, who was apprenticed to Thomas Grub of Piscataway, complained that his master failed in four respects. First, that he did not “teach and informe the

said Joseph Crow in the science and art of a blacksmith and lock finisher." Secondly, that the master did not give him sufficient food, but the "qualitie and quantitie which he hath received hath been more like to starve a dogge suddenly than to nourish such a youth sufficiently." Thirdly, he was receiving "from ye hand of ye wife of ye said Thomas Grub, harsh and unreasonable Blowes, not knowinge, nor being able to judge for what cause they were given by her, and when in all immaginable meeknesse & submission, hath intereated her to tell him wherefore she gave him such blowes, all he could get of answer was, that it was enough that she saw cause for itt." Fourthly, the servant complained that his master did not teach him to write and "cast accounts" as he was able and as his indenture required. This was the only means available for servants to obtain any education in those early days. The practice was common for these indentures of contracts to contain clauses requiring the master to give the servants some education. Joseph Crow was the son-in-law of Samuel Dennis. The court ordered the father-in-law to pay the master seven pounds and ten shillings when the said Crow was to be discharged from his apprenticeship. Grub was ordered to pay court costs.

### THE EARLY PRISONS

THE records are replete with the difficulties in furnishing sufficient prisons. As early as 1684, the court ordered the prison repaired. When it was not done by October, 1687, the court went to Amboy to inspect it and see it repaired. In September of the following year, the Court ordered a tax imposed in the county for building a common goal, and "that the same be raised upon live stock, as cows, oxen, hogs and horses" at a penny on the pound. The rate could be paid either in winter wheat at four shillings the bushel or Indian corn at two shillings the bushel. If one refused to pay his goods were ordered distrained, properly sold and his proportion taken for the tax, and the surplus after paying the necessary expense, if any, returned to the owner.

In making the County tax rate for 1692, there is included four days work at the prison by Benjamin Cromwell, hauling fencing to the prison by John Blomfield, and five days work by Samuel Hale. He was one of the judges, and supervised the repairs, charging one shilling per day for his "foremanship."

Conditions at the prison must have been very serious. In March, 1693, the grand jury presented "our souverainge Lord & Lady ye Kinge & Queene's Majesties," the County of Middlesex for not having a sufficient prison or goal. This may, perhaps, have been due to the escape of the muredrer, David Lange. The court immediately ordered Jonathan Bishop, then Sheriff, with the advise of Captain John Bishop and Justice Hale to repair the prison again, and include its cost in the following year's tax.

### **MATRIMONIAL TROUBLES**

OUR Doctor Henry Greenland again appears in the record, this time as complainant against his son-in-law, Daniel Brynson of Fox Hall on behalf of his daughter Frances, whom he abused. Daniel was bound over by Justice Inians to appear on his wife's complaint. The court was undecided as to what disposition to make with their case and adjourned it until the December term of 1694; in the meantime both parties were to be of good behaviour. It is often said that time is a healer of wounds. At the next session both were discharged.

### **TAVERNS AND BLUE LAWS**

THESE problems occupied the court from a very early date. In 1688 John Carrington, Richard Powell, Benjamin Hull and Vincent Runion were granted licenses for keeping an "ordinary" in their respective dwelling houses upon giving the security required by law. In 1692, John Carrington of Amboy, and Richard Powell of Woodbridge, had their licenses renewed. William Loveridge of Amboy and the others were then permitted to sell "all sorts of strong dirnke or liquers" at retail upon giving bonds. At the same session, Samuel Dennis was appointed Treasurer of the Excise for the county, the first mention of such an office.

On the other side of the picture, the grand jury presented John Taylor and Francis Walker of Woodbridge for being drunk and Daniel Robins of the same place for "breach of ye Sabath." In March of 1693, the grand jury presented "ye widow Blomfield for selling strong drinke by retail without license." John Hooks of Amboy Perth also received a similar presentment.

Daniel Robins, Jr., and Nathaniel Robins were also presented by the grand jury for carting wood on the Lord's day or Sabbath day, in September of the same year. Shortly thereafter, Thomas Moore, Thomas Collier and Mathew Moore were charged with a breach of the Sabath by pressing men to go to Albany on that day.

In June, 1694, Benjamin Hull of Piscataway was presented for "keeping and allowinge gameing att Cards and Boule and Pins at his house." This must have been a violation of the Sabbath, as this was not illegal on week days. Richard Powell and William Loveridge, who are mentioned above, were also charged with the same crime. Their cases were laid over to the next term when they suffered a severe rebuke and were dismissed.

At one session of court, all persons having licenses "for ye selling of drinke and keepcing of ordinary in the County" were ordered to bring and produce their licenses before the justices to be inspected as to whether they should be continued or disallowed. This may have been the beginning of our old Courts keeping jurisdiction over county inns and taverns, a practise existing until the Constitutional amendment relieved courts of this work.

When the grand jury brought in a presentment against William Thompson of Amboy Perth for "selling drinke by retaile contrary to law," the court ordered him to appear at the next session.

### MISCELLANEOUS CASES

THERE is a long series of cases against Thomas Gordon as "Administrator of all and singular the goods and chattels of Samuell Moore". The sheriff must have kept open house to the

politicians of the day, and became heavily indebted. You will recall he kept a tavern in Woodbridge. There are twenty-five cases against his estate, many by prominent men of the colony. Dr. DeSeigney obtained a judgment of £3 and 13s for medicines, "had and received in his life time." Will Dockwra claimed for "taylor worke." This was partly offset by the verdict rendered in favor of Moore's estate in a suit against Dockwra. Several of the cases were for guaranties on others' accounts. Judgment was confessed by the administrator in many cases. James Emott and David Vilant were among the plaintiffs.

In September, 1695, Thomas Carhart, as attorney for Samuel Dennis, under pretence of Declarations against Edward Slater, Clerk of the Court, filed and read two papers in open Court. The clerk refused to answer them as no original process was issued.

In retaliation Carhart was presented to the Court for profane cursing and swearing. John Langstaff was brought before the Court for working on the Lord's day. John Carrington cursed "twice att ye time of this Court's sitting and was presented by the Grand Jury.

Andrew, a negro slave living with George Drake, was accused of stealing monies from Mrs. Neary Hooper and John Inians of Piscataway. He acknowledged he had the money, and what he had remaining was divided between the owners "according to the proportion yt each had lost." His punishment took him to the whipping post in said Towne of Piscataway and "then and there received one and thirty lashes upon ye bare backe well layd on by ye Sheriff or his order and ye said Negro's master to pay costs."

David Dunham of Woodbridge was indicted for having an illegitimate child by a woman of the same place there in the September, 1697, term. The jury found him guilty and the court ordered him to pay five pounds, to be carried to the whipping post and receive ten lashes on his bare back, and pay two shillings every week for seven weeks for the support of the child. At the same court another woman charged the same man with the same offence and the court ordered the same punishment in

the second case. Since he did not carry out the order of the court, the sheriff was ordered to compel him to do so a year afterwards.

John Hogge was indicted for being a "lude, wicked and an adultrouse man." Upon being found guilty, he, also, received the forty lashes upon his back. The woman in the case received the same punishment.

At the September term of 1698, the court published a proclamation against any subject of the King entering into the service of a foreign prince or state.

At the succeeding term John Horner and Francis, his wife, were indicted for assaulting and beating a constable of Piscataway who was then executing a duty of his office. They pleaded guilty and the husband was ordered to pay a fine. The wife however, received an odd sentence. Beyond giving a bond for security, she was ordered "not to keep company with Joseph Charley of Delaware Falls by night or by day upon ye forfeiture of her Recognizance." The Joseph Charley mentioned was also charged with resisting the constable and uttering "reproachful and contumacious words & actions contrary to the Laws of the Province," to the evil example of others and against the Peace of the Country. He was fined ten pounds and ordered to give a bond for his good behaviour for one whole year and "not dureing ye said time to keep companie directly or indirectly with Fraunces Horner." Later Horner and Charley were charged with stealing hogs from the woods, but after several adjournments, they were tried and acquitted. Horner was further indicted for selling strong drink by retail, without a license, and also to the Indians, which was contrary to the laws of the Province.

### PREJUDICE AND BIAS

AS soon as lawyers came to represent clients in the early court cases, all sorts of technical objections were made to pleadings, judges, and the court. In the case of Samuel Fitz Randolph against John Ilsley, Mr. Gordon, representing the plaintiff,

charged that three of the Justices lived in Woodbridge, and that they signed the warrant of the defendant as one of the constables of the town, upon a distress for goods mentioned in the moving papers. This seems to have disqualified the justices from considering the case.

## DUELS, ROUTS AND RIOTS

IN the Fall of 1699, Samuel Dennis and Samuel Hale, two of the justices, directed the sheriff to summon a jury to inquire about the riot at Woodbridge. Nathaniel Fitz Randolph was the Sheriff. The jury found that Joseph Woodruffe, Ebenezer Lyons, John Meakes, Jonathan Ogden, Jr., Capt. Sam Whitehead, Justice Benjamin Price and Samuel Winions, between two and four in the morning, with clubs and staves and other weapons, assembled at the jail and broke into it and set at liberty, Lewis Morris and George Willocks who were imprisoned for several high crimes and misdemeanors. George Willocks has been mentioned before.

By virtue of another warrant, another jury was impanelled and charged those mentioned, together with William Whitehead, David Woodruff, Samuel Carter, William Looker, Jr., Andrew Cragg, William Oliver, Alexander Rennie, John Harriman, and several others for assembling at the same place and rescuing Isaac Whitehead from the prison.

There is no further record of the results of these riots. A little resumé of the time would not be amiss. The Provincial Government was under the Board of Proprietors who were having a hard time to govern properly besides disposing their vast real estate holdings. A system of quit rents was in vogue, much to the dislike of the settlers. Efforts were made to surrender the Government to the Crown and relieve the Board of one of its burdens.

Both Capt. John Bishop and Samuel Dennis were present and sat as justices at the December term of court in 1693. They must have come to blows about some of their decisions for in the following June, the Grand Jury brought in a presentment



against Samuel Dennis "for assulting the said Bishop and challenging to meet him ye next morning att a piece of ground near ye meetinge house with a back sworde." They also complained that he acted both as judge and attorney in the same court. There was also another presentment against Capt. John Bishop "for acceptinge the said Dennis's challenge as to give the same Samuell Dennis his glove in exchange." In 1694 Dennis was brought to trial, after two motions attacking the sufficiency of the indictment were overruled by the court. The jury brought in a verdict of not guilty. On the challenge indictment, the court was without jurisdiction and set aside the presentment.

In December, 1694, the season was so cold and violent that the court adjourned from the public meeting house to Mr. Powell's.

At this time Jonathan Dunham was ordered to serve as attorney to prosecute in behalf of the Government. He refused to serve and was fined 40s for his contempt. In his stead, John Pike was appointed. He was, therefore, the prosecutor in the Bishop and Dennis cases, both of whom were friendly to him.

The court record has no entry from September, 1699, the time of the riots, until 1703, when Viscount Cornbury issued his warrant of the appointment of 19 justices of the peace for the County. Among whom were the familiar names of Myles Forster, John Bishop, Samuel Hale and Samuell Dennis. The copy in the minute book is in a different handwriting, uniformly beautiful. It contains a grant of authority and power, finely worded and is written with an exceptionally clear penmanship. A second warrant is recorded appointing John White as "Clerk of ye Peace and Clerk of ye Court of Common Plea" for this County. I assume the handwriting is that of John White.

## MIDDLESEX AND SOMERSET

BEGINNING with the year 1708, the title of the County Court is divided into two new courts. The court of Common Pleas and the Court of Sessions for the Counties of Middlesex and Somerset. This is the first record of the court being held

for the two counties since Somerset was set off from Middlesex in 1688. Peter Sonmans was President Judge and Cornelius Longfield, John Drake and John Tunesen were his assistants, John Bishop was clerk. Their commission required at least three to sit as a quorum. The old system of rotating the place where the court was held was changed and all terms were held at Perth Amboy.

There must have been cases in the county courts from 1703 to 1708, between which dates the record is blank. *The New Jersey Archives* print a copy of a case held in 1707. The riot cases are in the *Archives* as copied from the court minute book, yet the original does not contain them.

### FAILURE TO SERVE AS A JUROR

IN 1708 the Grand Jury was called and none of them appeared. After adjournment until three in the afternoon, none of them appeared again. The court adjourned until the following morning and they failed to appear again, but one, and that was William Sharpe. The record lists George Willocks, with whom there had been a great deal of difficulty with the courts, as one of the recalcitrant jurors. The twenty-one jurors were fined thirteen shillings and four pence each for their failure to do their duty, were discharged and a new precept given to the Sheriff.

The record now becomes uninteresting. It does not contain the style and type of cases as described previously. Occasionally, there is a human interest story aptly recorded in the records.

At the session held on the fourth Tuesday in May, 1710, the Court "Ordered that John Brown for his contempt in laughing in the face of and at the Court be fined four dollars & to continue in Custody till he hath pd his fine." This is the first time that dollars are mentioned in the record, instead of pounds, shillings and pence.

In 1708 Thomas Pike complained that David Donham was detaining the daughter of William Ellison, deceased. The court

compelled him to turn her over to Mr. Pike as Executor of Ellison's estate.

At the November term of 1710, the Grand Jury indicted Caleb Winget for abusing Nicholas Munday, a constable, who was serving a writ. He pleaded guilty and was fined twenty shillings and put on his good behaviour.

Peter Sonmans had served as the County Judge for two years when Thomas Farmar and Elisha Parker were appointed Judges of the Inferiour Court of Common Pleas by a proclamation of her Majesty Queen Anne, on February 14, 1710. Governor Robert Hunter signed it. It covered both counties of Middlesex and Somerset. Adam Hudd, Machiele Vanweightie, John Harrison, Thomas Leonard and John Bishop were appointed Justices of the Peace by the same proclamation.

Thomas Farmar, it seems, was residing in the Billop or Manor House on Staten Island in 1707 when his first son, Jasper, was born to his wife, Anne Billop, the second daughter of Captain Billop. In 1701 Farmar was High Sheriff of Philadelphia, holding the office three years. He then left to go to England to sue for the hand of his future wife. He also held the office of Collector of the Port of Amboy. In 1708 he was a member of the New Jersey Assembly. He was Mayor of New Brunswick. In 1711, it seems a complaint was made by some of the Freeholders of Middlesex that his election, together with Adam Hudd's to the House of Representatives of New Jersey was fraudulent. In 1716, he was again a member of the New Jersey Council, and also from 1736 to 1738 and 1743 to 1744. He held the County bench for nearly six years, until May 16, 1716. He officiated as Chief Justice of the province from 1728 to 1729. At one time he kept a country store in Amboy. In New Brunswick, he lived on lots formerly belonging to John Inian, and foreclosed by his wife's father. This site is to the north of Livingston Avenue as it is now laid out. His son Thomas and all three of his daughters married and settled in New Brunswick. For some time before his death in 1752, at the age of almost eighty years, he was insane.

John Barclay was appointed clerk of the Court of Common Pleas and Quarter Sessions for both counties, taking office early in 1711.

In August, 1712, the Judges petitioned the governor about the records of East Jersey that were stolen and removed to Burlington. The previous governor, Mr. Basse, is mentioned in it. I presume the former Judge, Peter Sonmans, also had a hand in the removal, as the subsequent indictment will show. The contents of the petition are interesting enough to secure repetition in this book.

The petition to the Governor is in the following manner:

May it Please Your Excellency.

Tho we are senseably yt complaints are ungratefull to your Excellency's good disposition, yet knowing your readiness to doe justice to ye Injur'd Imboldens us to lay before your Excell. Ye Extreame wrong done to ye Easterne Devision of this Her Majesties Collony of New Jersey by ye most Daring Act yt ever was done (we presume) in any of her Majesties Dominion which ye first, ye concealing or carryeing out of ye Province all our Publick Records—which is not only ye greatest Affront to Government but of ye last consequence to many of Her Majesties good subject, whose properties Entirely depends on them, secondly when they were brought to light, it was in ye Western Devision, tho there is an Express order of Gouvernour & Councill against there being removed out of this, & their lodged with Mr. Basse, who we feare was privie to ye removing of them, & now as we are informed designs to keep them there, which not only laye ye Inhabitants of this Province under a very great expense when they want ye use of them, but under a very great apprehension yet they are not secure in their properties while they are in ye hands of a person yt they have great reason to suspect had a hand in ye conveying them away, & which we feare was done with some ill Designe.

Your Excellencies Care & vigilance to discover them where first concealed, as it justly merits ye thanks of all good subjects so it obliges us with all Humility to render ours, to begg your Excell. will take such methods, as in your wisdom shall seem proper to prevent ye like for ye future, which we shall

esteame an addition to ye many favours under your Excellencies Administration conferr'd upon.

May it please your Excellency:

Your Excellencies most dutifull & obedient servants:

EDMOND DUNHAM

JOHN PIKE

THO. YATES

THO. FARMAR

AD. HUDD

MICHEL VANWEICHTIE

JOHN HARRISON

THOMAS LEONARD

JO CAMPBLE, *Sheriff*

WILL HARRISON, *Coroner*

JOHN BARCLAY, *Clerk.*

Immorality was rampant throughout the Province for a number of years. At the opening of the Court Terms in February of 1711 and 1712, May and November, 1713, August and November, 1714, February and August, 1715, the Governor's Proclamation against "immoralitie" was read. A study of the criminal cases discloses that about sixty per cent. of the cases heard by the court were of this nature.

On May 27, 1712, the record reads: "The Grand Jury came into court again and brought three indictments: (viz) one against Elizabeth Huey for adultery; one against Thomas Frost for fornication; one against Peter Sonmans, Esqr., for contempt of authority. Mr. Vernon moved on behalf of Alexander Grif-fith, Esqr.," Her Majesties attorney general who prosecutes for her Sovereigne Lady, ye Queen, for process on ye three fore-mentioned Indictments," and process was accordingly granted.

When the Attorney General took no action against those indicted for half a year, the court issued a *capias* to the Sheriff to bind over the defendants to answer their indictments at the next session.

At that term, Thomas Frost and Elizabeth Huey had married and upon a trial of the indictments against both of them, the jury brought in a verdict of not guilty. William Frost and William Stone were the witnesses against them. Due to the result of the jury decision, the Grand Jury then indicted the witnesses

for the crime of false swearing and, upon trial, the petty jury found them guilty.

The indictment against Peter Sonmans, the former Judge, for contempt of authority was carried in the court records for over two years when there was no additional entry made, and presumably, the case dropped.

In the early days of this colony, the church and government were well nigh inseparable. Permission had to be obtained from authority for the conduct of services, and the government oftentimes subsidized the erection of church edifices for worship.

At the time, a Mr. Dunham, "a dissenting teacher", had to satisfy the court that he had qualified himself under an "Act of Parliament for exempting their Majesties Protestant subjects dissenting from the Church of England under penalties of certain laws," before he was given a license to "keepe a meeting howse."

When a witness refused to take the oath offered by the court, he was fined twenty shillings and taken into custody by the Sheriff until he had paid his fine.

Edward Jones confessed his guilt in assaulting and battering his mother and was fined six shillings and eight pence besides cost of court.

Justice Hudd bound Jonathan Jaquish to his good behaviour to answer on the complaint of Henry Ralph who made oath that he and his family were in danger of bodily harm.

### **ERECTING A NEW COURT HOUSE**

[IN May, 1714, money was sought for the erection of a court house and jail for the county under the terms of an act of the legislature entitled, "An Act for building & repairing of goals & court houses in each county of this province," by which act the General Quarter Sessions of the Peace had power to nominate freeholders for that purpose. The townships of the County refused to appoint them and the court then nominated for Perth Amboy, Capt. Samuel Leonard and David Herriott; for Woodbridge, John Kinsey and Capt. John Moore; for Piscataway, Mr. Robert Hudsons and James Manner.

Two years later, May 15, 1716, the court ordered notices to be posted in each of the townships of this county to meet on Tuesday, May 29, to consult what is to be done concerning building a court house and jail. In August, William Eire and John Steven were appointed for the town of Perth Amboy to join with the justices about finishing the building.

In May of the following year, public notices were set up in the most public places in the several townships of the county, for all justices and freeholders of each respective township to meet together at the court house in Perth Amboy on Saturday, the first day of June, 1717, in order to raise money for finishing the court house and jail. The managers and collectors were ordered to attend and render an account of their proceedings to the citizens of the county.

#### UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF

SYMON BRIMLEY prayed for relief, being "a poore man living in Piscataway," at the November term of the court in 1714. The court gave him leave to receive what any of the inhabitants of the Towne were willing to give him, and also that the overseers of the town supply his present necessity.

Matthew More was allowed two hours to find sureties for his good behaviour or committed until he does, when brought before the court for contempt.

John Rowly was found guilty of adultery and sentenced to be kept in custody until he either pay thirty pounds, with costs, for the offense or be whipped at three several courts with thirty lashes each time.

Thomas Gordon, as attorney for Rowly's wife, complained that she was afraid of being murdered by her husband. The court committed him to prison until he found security in the sum of £50, not to murder his wife. He could not raise it and the court then took his own bond for £25, Samuel Burwell's for 12½ and another Samuel's for the remaining 12½, conditioned that he be of good behaviour for one year and a day, and keep

the peace towards all his Majestie's people, but more specially towards his wife, Elizabeth Rowly.

Jacob Bodine gave ten pounds bond "to keep an orderly house of entertainment according to law for ye space of one yeare after ye date hereof in ye house where he now lives." Andrew Robeson of Perth Amboy did likewise. The other licenses granted at this term were John Herriott, John Autrie, William Thickstum of Piscataway, William Rogers and John Kinsey, Jr.

At every term nearest the beginning of the year, overseers of the highways and of the poor and constables were appointed for each town in Middlesex and Somerset counties.

In May, 1717, the county collector was ordered to provide staves for all the constables in the county out of the jail and wolf tax. The freeholders were ordered to raise money for that purpose. The constables were admonished to take good care of their staves and hand them over to their successors.

At the next session in the afternoon, the court met and settled the prices of liquors and other provisions for men and horses. The rate of exchange was in current money at eight shillings the ounce. The rates set were:

Wine .....	13½s per pint
Strong beer and "syder" .....	4d per gill
Victuals .....	as has been regularly taken formerly
Lodging .....	3d per night
Hay to horses .....	as has been formerly taken
Oats .....	3d per quart

and so in proportion for a larger quantity to be taken by those who live at Cranberry Brook, Millstone River, South River bridge and other remote places from water transportation, such prices for what liquors, etc., they retail, as they have formerly taken.

### ESCAPING TAXES

THE tax assessors failed to include their own property in the tax lists, and the court, upon the complaint of David Lyell, in August, 1717, ordered them to show cause why they did not include themselves in the tax lists.



At the next term of the court, the assessors answered that it was not the custom of England for assessors to assess themselves and for that reason, they did not levy any tax upon their own property. The court investigated their answer, and found "by credible information" that the custom prevailed in the mother land, and, therefore, dismissed the complaint against the assessors. Many must have sought the position as a means of escape from the onerous burden of taxes.

In the olden days, if one was a runaway, the sheriff could arrest him. A John Rice was committed on suspicion of being such a person, but as no one appeared against him, he was discharged.

Our old friend, George Willocks, appeared in court and made oath "on ye Holy Evangelist of Almighty God that the contents of a certain writing he then produced and to which he signed his name was true and further said not."

The justices and the Attorney General then put their names to the paper as witnesses. I assume it was to be used as evidence in a foreign court. The peculiarity of the oath is seen in a great many ancient archives.

When John Rinder did not properly care for Henry Berry's son who was apprenticed to him to learn his trade, Mr. Berry was given permission to take his son home and keep him until the master returned from New York. The record discloses that Rinder was compelled to leave Amboy rather hurriedly when charged with a crime involving immorality with a certain young lady of the community. At the following court term, he was ordered not to remove his apprentice until further orders. When John Rinder finally removed to New York, the court discharged the apprentice from his contract with him.

About the same time Joseph Harrison sued John Privie and James Stratford for their passage from England to America in his ship. A witness swore that he received five pounds of one Edward Howard at New York on the receipt of the plaintiff or his attorney. The suit was for the same sum, and if that

was the cost of the passage, it was certainly cheap. The defendants gave bail for six pounds to stand trial at the next court.

I have extracted all the interesting cases from the old records. They contain many names that a book of this nature must necessarily omit. Genealogists and historians would find a wealth of treasure by culling the ancient family names of our ancestral pioneers. Some day the entire book will be available for research.

The last court session record in the old minute book was on February 23, 1721, ending the first chapter of Middlesex's history. A record of the trials and tribulations of pioneer colonists hewing their existence out of the wild and undeveloped country that hemmed them in on all sides. Their means were necessarily crude and rough. Their courts followed the same course, and it was not for a few years that the system began to develop and take shape with more rules and regulations necessitating the employment of attorneys and segregating the cases that came before the courts. It is an old history, deserving of perpetuation for future students and historians. Those ancient settlers did their bit toward the civilization we enjoy today.



**LIST OF JUSTICES AND ASSISTANTS  
OF THE  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY COURTS OF  
COMMON PLEAS AND QUARTER SESSIONS  
1683 TO 1736**

Edward Antill	1735	Adam Hude	1711 to 1736
John Ayres	1715, 1716	James Hude	1722 to 1735
Jeremiah Bass	1710	Benjamin Hull	1683
Capt. John Bishop	1683, 1688	Benjamin Hull, Jr.	1730 to 1736
	1692, 1699, 1711, 1718	John Inians	1687, 1689 to 1696
Ezekiell Bloomfield	1722, 1730, 1736	Andrew Johnston	1735
Daniell Brittain	1724, 1731	Michael Kearny	1724 to 1726, 1731
John Burrow	1713 to 1720	Samuel Leonard	1718 to 1730
John Campbell	1687 to 1690	Thomas Leonard	1712 to 1719
Benjamin Clarke	1687 to 1688	Cornelius Longfield	1708 to 1710
Capt. Thomas Codrington	1688, 1690	John Moore	1715, 1716
William Cox	1724, 1732	David Muthie (Mudie)	1692, 1695
Edward Crowell	1722 to 1730	Daniel Nunez	1722
Richard Cutter	1734 to 1736	Capt. John Palmer	1683
Daniel Brinton Davison	1730	Elisha Parker	1711 to 1714
Samuel Dennis	1683 to 1699	John Parker	1727
James Dundas	1692 to 1698	John Pike	1711 to 1714
William Eier	1718 to 1719	Thomas Pike	1715 to 1725
John Drake	1708 to 1714	George Rescarrick	1727 to 1728
Edmund Dunham	1710 to 1713	Henry Rolph	1715
Thomas Farmer	1711 to 1718	Moses Rolfe	1713 to 1721, 1727 to 1734
Jeremiah Field	1727 to 1730	John Royce	1693 to 1699
John Field	1711 to 1720	Edward Slater	1683 to 1687
Joseph Field	1724 to 1727	Isaac Smalley	1711 to 1713
Benjamin Fitz Randolph	1723, 1727	Lawrence Smith	1734
John Fitz Randolph	1685	Peter Sonmans	1708 to 1710
Henry Freeman	1722 to 1736	Cole Stelle	1735
Robert Gilchrist	1718, 1721	William Thomson	1722 to 1725
James Giles	1683, 1686	John Tuneson	1708 to 1710
Thomas Grubs	1711	Robert Vanquillan	1687 to 1689
(Dolius) Dollie Hagerman	1722 to 1724, 1727 to 1730	Michiel VanWechite	1711 to 1718
Samuel Hale	1683 to 1699	Samuel Walker	1718 to 1736
Col. And. Hamilton	1688 to 1690	Stephen Warne	1735
John Harrison	1711 to 1714	John White	1730 to 1735
John Herd	1724 to 1736	Samuel Winders	1687 to 1688
William Hodgson	1728 to 1730	Thomas Yeats	1712 to 1720
James Hooper	1734		

**LIST OF OFFICE HOLDERS  
OF MIDDLESEX COUNTY TOWNS  
FROM 1683 TO 1736**

**PISCATAWAY**

<b>Constables</b>			
John Applegate	1713	Joseph Martin	1690
Thomas Ashley	1718	George Mount, Jr.	1714, 1716
John Blackford	1724, 1725	Nicholas Munday, Jr.	1709
Peter Bodine	1727	Rowlef Nephew	1718
Richard Brittain	1711	Jacob Oakie	1720
John Chambers, Jr.	1712	Joha Pound	1713
Richard Cheesman	1729	Peter Runyon	1717
Benjamin Clarke	1695	Isaac Smalley	1697
Francis Dildine	1723	Leonard Smock	1715
James Dotie	1712	John Sutton	1711
Isaac Doty	1730, 1732, 1734	William Sutton	1693
	1735, 1736	John Vandike	1719
Francis Drake	1711	Thomas Weatherill	1719, 1720, 1721
John Drake	1696	Peter White	1721
Hugh Dun	1710	Laurence Williamson	1714
Edmond Dunham, Jr.,	1717		
Thomas Fitzrandolph	1688	<b>Rate Collector</b>	
Johannes Folkstone	1716	Edward Slater	1684
Henry Fourott	1732		
Benjamin From	1729	<b>Overseers</b>	
Edward Gannet	1716	Conrad Barkeliew	1720
Thomas Grub	1698	Abraham Bend	1716
Charles Gilman	1712, 1687	Abraham Bennett	1715
Daniel Harkutt	1714	Peter Bodine	1734
Jabez Hendricks	1692	John Borrow	1714, 1715
Jedidah Higgins	1685	Thomas Bound	1736
Hopewell Hull,	1684	Moses Burges	1735
	1722 to 1726 inc.	Benjamin Clarke	1689, 1692
Benjamin Hull	1713, 1723, 1726	Samuel Converse	1725
	1727, 1729, 1730	William Covenhoven	1735
Benjamin James	1694	Abraham Drake	1719 to 1721, 1724
John Laffton	1709	Francis Drake	1724
Henry Langstaff	1729, 1736	George Drake	1683, 1686, 1687
Nathaniel Leonard	1719	John Drake, Jr.	1710
Benjamin Martin	1712	John Drake	1695, 1696, 1698
John Martin	1689	Hugh Dun	1709
		Samuel Dun	1725
		Benajah Dunham	1695, 1696
		Edmond Dunham	1727

## OVERSEERS FOR PISCATAWAY

John Field	1698	Joseph Worth	1717
Jonathan Fitzrandolph	1734	William Wright	1688
Matthew Giles	1690		
Charles Gilman	1684	<b>Surveyors</b>	
Peter Groom	1716	John Blackford	1735
Thomas Gruhs	1695, 1696	Benjamin Bond	1734
Thomas Higgins	1688, 1690	Job Conger	1728, 1729 to 1736
Benjamin Hull	1689, 1719, 1721	Dorick Connie	1736
Benjamin Hull, Jr.	1724	Samuel Converse	1727
Hopewell Hull	1683, 1686, 1687, 1717	David Corriel	1735
		John Dennis	1729
William Laing	1730	Ebenezer Drake	1734
John Le Forge	1735	Francis Drake	1732
Joseph Manning	1710, 1712	Edward Dunham, Jr.	1732
Benjamin Martin	1714	David Fitzrandolph	1722
Benjamin Martin, Jr.	1732	James Hudie	1723
John Martin	1684	Benjamin Hull	1718
Doric Molleat	1719	John Laing	1722
Richard Mount, Jr.	1712	Gideon Molleat	1730
William Oulden	1713	Nicholas Munday	1727
Henry Peratt, Jr.	1729	William Oulden	1730
Robert Roe	1713	Peter Runyon	1736
Leonard Smith	1732	Vincent Runyon	1718
Peter White	1721	Daniel Sutton	1724
William Williamson	1724, 1727	Hendrick Vroom	1729

## WOODBRIIDGE

### Constables

		John Coddington	1692
John Allen	1687	John Coddington, Jr.	1735
John Allen	1713	John Compton	1697
Samuel Allen	1734	Thomas Collier	1696
John Allwood	1736	John Conger (Belconger)	1691
John Alston	1709	Edward Crowell	1712
Obadiah Ayres	1686-1699	Tho. Davis	1710
Samuel Ayres	1710	Samuel Dennis, Jr.	1700
Samuel Bacon	1678	Thomas Dennis	1709
Elisha Barnes	1713	Nath'l. Donham	1711
Noah Bishop	1693	David Dunham	1730
Ezekiel Bloomfield	1685	William Ellison	1694
Jeremiah Bloomfield	1725-1726	Peter Elstone	1700
Joseph Bloomfield	1729	Nathaniel Fitzrandolph	1680
Thomas Bloomfield	1672	Jonothan Freeman	1730
Richard Carman	1734	Joseph Gilman	1715

# CONSTABLES FOR WOODBRIDGE

John Robinson Glover	1711	Will Stone	1730
John Gosney	1732	Isaac Tappen	1683
Joseph Gray	1720	Moses Tappen	1721
Nathan Hale	1722	Abraham Thorn	1725
Samuel Hale	1680	Israel Thornell	1681
John Herd	1714	Daniel Thorp	1694
William Hunt	1719	Joseph Thorp	1698
John Ilsley, Jr.	1698	Thomas Thorp	1690
Jonathan Ilsley	1714	William Thorpe	1687
James Jackson	1735, 1736	Stephen Tuttle	1697
Richard Jones	1712	Francis Walker	1688
Gawen Lockhart	1691	John Warlock	1687
Samuel Martin	1725, 1726	Joseph Webster	1726
Thomas Martin	1711	Ebenezer Williams	1727-1729
Matthew Moore	1682	Richard Worth	1670
Matthew Moore, Jr.	1692	Robert Wright	1689
Thomas Moore	1710		
Samuel Moore, Jr.	1693		
Mathew More	1732	<b>Overseers</b>	
John Mores	1697	Eph. Andrews	1684, 1689, 1690
William Mores	1699	Capt. John Bishop	1684, 1689
John Murtie	1715		1692, 1696
Elisha Parker	1689	Jonathan Bishop	1700
John Pike, Jr.	1675	Noah Bishop	1698
Zebulon Pike	1721	Ezekiel Bloomfield	1689
Thomas Pike	1690	Joseph Bloomfield	1692
William Post	1713	Thomas Bloomfield, Jr.	1671
Jacob Randolph	1736		1669, 1670
Andrew Robeson	1715	Henry Brotherton	1721
John Robeson	1713 to 1717	George Brown	1713
Daniel Robbins	1688	James Brown	1726
John Robison	1695	William Bunn	1727
Joseph Rolf	1695	James Clawson	1736
John Sergeant	1732	John Clawson	1736
John Skinner	1729	John Compton	1698, 1700
Richard Skinner	1696	Edward Crowell	1716
John Slatwood	1732	Robert Dennis	1669, 1670
Ichabod Smith, Jr.	1717	John Dennis	1688, 1696
James Smith	1736	Samuel Dennis	1680, 1690, 1709
John Smith	1669	Robert Dideau	1719
Samuel Smith	1684, 1717	Benjamin Dunham	1715
Shubael Smith	1727	David Dunham	1712
William Spence	1721	Jonathan Dunham	1671
		Nathaniel Dunham	1726

## OVERSEERS FOR WOODBRIDGE

William Ellison	1700	Daniel Robbins	1680, 1690
Peter Elston	1712	Benjamin Rolph	1713
Edward Fitzrandolph	1710 to 1716	Jonh Sergeant	1735
Nathaniel Fitzrandolph	1690, 1698	John Skinner	1714
Samuel Fitzrandolph	1717, 1724, 1730	Samuel Smith	1688, 1684
Benjamin Force	1723, 1729	Dr. David Stewart	1729
Thomas Gage	1734	Samuel Stone	1710
John Goslin	1724	William Stone	1730
Thomas Hatch	1719, 1720	Isaac Tappen	1682, 1692, 1700
John Herd	1717	Israel Thornall	1682, 1684
David Herriott	1723	Daniel Thorpe	1709
John Ilsly, Jr.	1700	fames Wilkinson	1735
Gawen Lockhart	1694, 1696		
Gershom Martin	1719, 1720	<b>Surveyors</b>	
J. Martin	1670	Jonathan Bishop	1724
John Moore	1716, 1721	Ezekiel Bloomfield	1735
Matthew Moore	1688, 1696	Joseph Bloomfield	1735
Capt. Matthew Moore	1732	Daniel Bittain	1718
Samuel Moore	1669, 1670	John Clarkson	1732
John Moores	1727	Samuel Fitzrandolph	1718, 1736
David Moorehouse	1711	Edward Freeman	1734
Peter Noe	1732	Henry Freeman	1722, 1723
John Nowinie	1719		1724, 1728, 1729
Elisha Parker	1714	Dolly Hagerman	1723
Joshua Pierce	1669	James Herd	1714
Thomas Pike	1694, 1715	Richard Karman	1730
William Post	1715	Samuel Martin	1724
Marmaduke Potter	1682	James Moore	1722
Thomas Presole	1723	Robert Moore	1732
Jacob Randolph	1734	Zebulon Pike	1730
John Robeson	1719, 1720	James Smith	1734
		James Thompson	1724

## PERTH AMBOY

### Constables

John Browne	1716	John Loffbury	1726
Peter Buckley	1713, 1717	Charles Morgan, Jr.	1715
William Frost	1711 to 1717	Andrew Redford	1711, 1712
Jacob Hale	1712	Andrew Robeson	1717
Benjamin Hull	1711	John Robinson	1712
David Herriott	1709, 1710	Thomas South	1723
Mato Ishton	1723	Alexander Thomson	1726
Francis Letts	1709, 1710	Thomas Warne	1684
		Stephen Warne	1723
		Reese Williams	1723

## PERTH AMBOY OFFICE HOLDERS

Rate Collectors			
John Carrington	1684	Mindail Johnston	1724
John Rudyard	1711	Samuel Leonard	1715
		Francis Letts	1713, 1720
		Andrew Redford	1709, 1710
Surveyors			1719, 1721
William Hudson	1718	Andrew Robeson	1719
Francis Letts	1718	John Sharp	1713
Overseers		William Thompson	1719, 1720
John Browne	1711	John Thomson	1725
Frederick Bucklew	1714	Thomas Turnbull	1714
George Buckalew	1724	Thomas Warne	1716
Jonathan Drake	1716	Alexander Walker	1717
Thomas Frost	1724	George Willocks	1715
John Herriott	1716		
Richard Huas	1725		
John Ireland	1717		
		Assessor	
		William Thomason	1711, 1721

## MIDDLESEX COUNTY

John Bishop	Commissioner of Highways	1694
Benjamin Hull	County Collector	1684
Cornelius Longfield	Rate Collector	1684
Peter Nanos	Overseer of Highways	1708
Thomas Pike	Assessor	1711
George Rescarrick	Constable remote parts of Middlesex	1711
Henrik Reynorson	Overseer of the Highways	1708
Isaac Smalley	Assessor	1711
Samuel Hale	Coroner	1684

## NEW BRUNSWICK

Constables			
Samuel Belknap	1729	Nicholas Veycolfe	1727
Benjamin Clark	1727	Giles Worth	1729
Isaac Corado	1729	Peter Worthman	1724
Henry Davis	1726	Surveyors	
Joseph Deally	1728	William Chelsman	1729
John Dean	1728	Daniel Fits	1730
Nicholas Lake	1725	Peter Groom	1724
David Lee	1730	Jacob Oakie	1724
Benjamin Maple	1728	Ruliff Sotry	1728
Thomas South	1724	John Van Dike	1728
John Stevens	1730	Ormand Van Vorg	1730
		Johanne Voorehouse	1729



# NEW WINDSOR OFFICE HOLDERS

## NEW WINDSOR

Constables		Overseers	
Benjamin Applegate	1732	James Chambers	1734
John Rogers	1735	John Clark	1732, 1734, 1736
Josiah Van Roone	1734	William Hankin	1732
Surveyors		Benjamin Sutton	1736
Benjamin Clark, Jr.,	1732, 1734	James Worke	1736
	1736		
William Tindell	1732, 1734, 1736		



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