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### **Richard P. McCormick, Roger McDonough, John T. Cunningham and the Writing of New Jersey History, 1947-1969**

Robin Brown

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RICHARD P. MCCORMICK, ROGER MCDONOUGH,  
JOHN T. CUNNINGHAM  
AND THE WRITING OF NEW JERSEY HISTORY, 1947-1969

By Robin E. Brown

A thesis submitted to the  
Graduate School – Newark  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

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For the degree of

Master of Arts

Graduate Program in History

Written under the direction of

Professor Richard Sher

And approved by

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## ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Richard P. McCormick, Roger McDonough, John T. Cunningham  
and the Writing of New Jersey History, 1947–1969

By Robin E. Brown

Thesis Director: Professor Richard Sher

Richard P. McCormick, John T. Cunningham, and Roger H. McDonough are often spoken of together as having a remarkable impact on the field of New Jersey history. Exploring that narrative demonstrated that the story was much more complicated than that. McCormick had a great gift for gathering allies. The most prominent of his allies, when dealing with public history, were Cunningham and McDonough, for very different reasons. The narrative also highlights the contributions of Donald Sinclair, Clifford Lord, Robert Lunny, Bernard Bush, Miriam Studley, Charles Cummings, Donald Cameron and many others. Together they renovated and reenergized the New Jersey Historical Society. They created, structured and supported the explosion of energy during the Tercentenary celebration. Finally, they left us with a long-term public history infrastructure, with the launching of the New Jersey Historical Commission, the Historic Sites Council and the New Jersey Historic Trust.

This story was also a reflection of a different era. New Jersey in the post World War II era was a smaller state, with a much more stable and homogeneous population. The post-war boom generated a golden age of building and expansion. It was an age

when the entrepreneurial spirit stimulated new programs and built mainly in concrete and marble. New libraries were built and several New Jersey history collections matured, a vital counterpoint to the growth of New Jersey history as a field.

## Preface:

This project began with an interest in the history of the book. It then became an opportunity to exercise my passion for library history. While exploring library history I came across the figure of Roger McDonough, who stands well above the other State Librarians in New Jersey. It was while researching Roger McDonough's life that I came across a random comment that sparked my interest. Why was it said that Richard P. McCormick, John T. Cunningham and Roger McDonough had invented New Jersey History as a field? I hope what follows provides some answers to that question.

In the process I have acquired many debts. The greatest of them is to the silent or unsung partners of any historical process. I have divided my time between the State Library, the New Jersey State Archives and the University Archives in Alexander Library. I am deeply grateful to each staff member at these wonderful collections, for bringing me piles and piles of things (and then sometimes bringing them back 5 minutes later because I forgot something). It is in their honor that I have found room in this essay for the accomplishments of Donald Sinclair, Charles Cummings, and Miriam Studley. I must also acknowledge Dr. Richard Sher for unfailingly courteous and generous guidance, while I have educated myself about many things on my way to this point.

I would be remiss if I did not list the people who have given generously of their time to explain things to me, and guide me on my way... Bonita Grant Craft, Ronald Becker, Karl J. Niederer, Howard Green, John T. Cunningham, Katheryne C. McCormick (Mrs. Richard P. McCormick), Richard L. McCormick, Marc Mappen, Robert Craig, Bernard Bush and Clement Price.

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### Source Abbreviations:

- Birkner: Michael J. Birkner. *McCormick of Rutgers: Scholar, Teacher, Public Historian*. Studies in historiography, no. 6. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2001.
- RNJTC : New Jersey Tercentenary Commission. *The New Jersey Tercentenary 1664-1994: Report of the New Jersey Tercentenary Commission*. Trenton: New Jersey Tercentenary Commission, 1966. [generally attributed to Bernard Bush]
- NJHS : New Jersey Historical Society

Prologue:

"My dad and John Cunningham were the two leaders - maybe 'co-conspirators' is a better word - in the study of New Jersey history," said Rutgers President Richard McCormick, whose father, the late Richard P. McCormick, was an esteemed history professor at the school.

"They got the formal study of New Jersey rolling," said McCormick, who came to the brunch with his mother, Katheryne, a longtime friend of Cunningham's. "If it wasn't respectable then, it sure is now. If there wasn't much archival material then, there sure is now."

Cunningham said he, the senior McCormick and state librarian Roger McDonough were "the Irish mob" who pushed to preserve and promote New Jersey history, making it academically acceptable and, to some extent, commercially profitable.

"John always said, 'Dick McCormick did the history wholesale, I did the retail,'" said author Marc Mappen, director of the New Jersey Historical Commission.

"Dick McCormick was unquestionably the leader," Cunningham said. "He brought such new energy to it. In 1964, he was the one who realized New Jersey was celebrating its tercentenary, from the time land was given to Berkeley and Carteret in 1664.

"I'd say that first meeting of what we wanted to do about bringing attention to the tercentenary was the day the study of New Jersey history began to take shape. We all had our jobs. Dick handled the academic study, I handled the publicity, and Roger handled the Legislature to get some money."

From "The Man Who Made N.J. History Worth Reading" by Marc DiIunno, May 1, 2007, *Newark Star Ledger*

## Chapter 1:

### Beginnings and the New Jersey Historical Society

“Cunningham said he, the senior McCormick and state librarian Roger McDonough were ‘the Irish mob’ who pushed to preserve and promote New Jersey history, making it academically acceptable and, to some extent, commercially profitable.”<sup>1</sup> That’s really where it began, with the idea that this “Irish Mob” did something remarkable for New Jersey history. The story of New Jersey history in the years between the end of the Second World War and escalation of the Vietnam War centered around some larger-than-life personalities. They either created or manipulated a wave of interest in state and local history. Richard P. McCormick, John T. Cunningham, and Roger H. McDonough were instrumental in the formation of the public history establishment in New Jersey that is still with us today.

Their roles were different; it is impossible to give precedence to one or the other. Richard P. McCormick (1916–2006) was the outstanding academic New Jersey historian of his time. With political acumen, and a gift for promoting his subject, he created the initiatives that are central to this account.

Yet McCormick’s greatest contribution was that he was able to gather allies, who made enormous contributions to New Jersey history in their own right. By his side was John T. Cunningham (1915– ), who came out of a newspaper background to become the preeminent popular writer of New Jersey history. Cunningham was the publicist; he took New Jersey history into the marketplace. Roger McDonough (1909–2001), who became

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<sup>1</sup> Marc DiIonna .“The Man Who Made N.J. History Worth Reading” *Newark Star Ledger*, May 1, 2007.

State Librarian in 1947, filled out the troika. McDonough was the “politician,” the master lobbyist who found the money to make things happen.<sup>2</sup> This account is focused on the collaboration between these three men and their joint contribution to New Jersey history.

In addition to the “Irish Mob,” several other friends and allies shine through in this narrative. As the roster grew, it became clear that the cast was much broader than it seemed at first. Robert Lunny, who had met McCormick in graduate school at the University of Pennsylvania, joined the New Jersey Historical Society at the end of McCormick’s tenure. Clifford Lord became McCormick’s mentor when he got involved in state and local history. He was Director of the Wisconsin Historical Society until 1958 and then came to New York to be Dean of the School of General Studies at Columbia University. Bernard Bush, who worked for McDonough at the State Library, went on to head the New Jersey Historical Commission. Donald Sinclair was hired as Curator of New Jerseyana for Rutgers Libraries. He built the collection that now bears his name.<sup>3</sup>

The challenge here is to describe and characterize what they accomplished. There was a field of New Jersey history in place when the post-war generation settled into their new roles. All three of them, as well as their allies, poured an enormous amount of energy into a renaissance. What follows is the story of that renaissance, as well as some of the most influential people, places, and trends that helped bring it about.

Finally, this is a narrative of a time when the economy was expanding exponentially, and the history was heroic and patriotic. Looking into this mirror gives a

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<sup>2</sup> With thanks to John Cunningham for his descriptions of this dynamic, March 18, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> “In Remembrance: Donald Arleigh Sinclair Memorial Service,” Rutgers University Libraries, Special Collections.

reflection on where we have been, and a measure of the changes—so that we can understand ourselves better.

### The World Breathed Again

The Second World War was an all-encompassing war that defined a generation. They were all caught up in it. Colleges and universities were largely used for training people in uniform.<sup>4</sup> Instructors and graduate students were generally either 4F or women.<sup>5</sup> Cunningham and McDonough, both college graduates, joined the Army Air Force and became officers. Cunningham, a graduate of Drew University, and a reporter for the *Morristown Record* when the war came, became a classification officer. McDonough, who was running the New Brunswick Public Library, ended up working for the Air Corps Historical Office in Ohio.<sup>6</sup> Donald Sinclair and McCormick were both class of 1938 at Rutgers. Sinclair, because he spoke Dutch and German, went to Europe to work for Military Intelligence.<sup>7</sup> McCormick was the only one of the group who was 4F (heart problems).<sup>8</sup> When the war came he was in Philadelphia, being rushed through his course work in the Ph.D. program at the University of Pennsylvania, sharing an office with Robert Lunny. He got a job as historian at the Philadelphia Quartermaster Depot.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Rutgers joined other universities in playing host to the Army Specialized Training Program (A.S.T.P.). Thomas J. Frusciano. “*Seminary of Learning*” to Public Research University: A Historical Sketch of Rutgers University. University Archives, Rutgers University Libraries [webpage] Accessed 4/7/2009.

<sup>5</sup> Interview, Katheryne C. McCormick, March 16, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> *Current Biography Yearbook*, 1968.

<sup>7</sup> ”In Remembrance: Donald Arleigh Sinclair Memorial Service” Rutgers University Libraries, Special Collections.

<sup>8</sup> Interview, Katheryne C. McCormick, March 16, 2009.

<sup>9</sup> Unless otherwise noted, biographical information on Richard P. McCormick is drawn from Birkner.

Changes came rapidly at the end of the War. Franklin Delano Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945, after serving as President for twelve years. V-E Day was May 8, 1945. The Atomic Age arrived that summer with the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. V-J day was in mid-August. Undoing the war machine was not easy. The year 1946 saw mutinous demobilization riots.<sup>10</sup> Slowly, those who had survived the war came home and were reintegrated, in many cases returning to their old jobs. John Cunningham returned to the *Morristown Record* but was recruited soon after his return by the Editor of the *Newark News*. Roger McDonough put away his uniform and returned to his job at New Brunswick Public Library. Richard P. McCormick returned to Rutgers in 1945 to teach history while finishing his Ph.D. Donald Sinclair was recruited as soon as he returned from Europe to be Curator of New Jerseyana for Rutgers Libraries.

Two events in the late 1940s had a direct impact on this group. In 1945 Rutgers was designated the State University of New Jersey. This was about the same time that Richard McCormick returned to Rutgers to take a post in the history department. In search of a topic for his dissertation, Roy Nichols (his mentor from the University of Pennsylvania) suggested that someone in the department should concentrate on New Jersey history. McCormick's dissertation was eventually published by Rutgers University Press as *Experiments in Independence: New Jersey in the Critical Period, 1783–1789* (1950). The second critical event followed from the constitutional convention that New Jersey held in 1947. As part of the reforms unleashed by that movement, the job of State Librarian was reorganized and professionalized. Roger McDonough was

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<sup>10</sup> For an overview of this period, see Part II of William Manchester, *The Glory and the Dream: A Narrative History of America 1932-1972* (New York: Bantam Books, 1975).

recruited to take up that position and build the Division of State Library, Archives and History. In retrospect, these were crucial events because they put in place the players who would forge a new era in New Jersey history.

### The Conference of New Jersey Historians

In the late 1940s, McCormick, though still a young Assistant Professor, persuaded Rutgers to support a series of conferences on New Jersey history. The first conference that is represented in McCormick's papers was held in 1948 and attracted about 45 people. The second conference was held in 1949, and doubled in size. This was an effort to bring together a broad range of stakeholders in New Jersey history, to talk about various issues of mutual interest.

These two conferences provide insight into the New Jersey history establishment at the moment that McCormick burst on the scene. Even the limited list of attendees at the first conference is a summary of the movers and shakers that McCormick needed to deal with and turn into his allies in order to build the field.

Table 1: Attendees at the New Jersey History Conference Sponsored by Rutgers, 1948<sup>11</sup>

Attendees:

Miss E. Marie Becker, NYHS  
 Alfred H. Bill, Princeton<sup>12</sup>  
 Julian P. Boyd, Librarian, Princeton<sup>13</sup>  
 Charles P. Bradley, President, NJHS  
 Robert L. Brunhouse, Drew University  
 Lyman H. Butterfield, Princeton University  
 Donald F. Cameron, University Librarian, Rutgers University  
 Helen McCracken Carpenter, Professor of History, Trenton State Teacher's College  
 Alden T. Cottrell, NJ State Department of Conservation  
 David L. Cowen, University College, Rutgers<sup>14</sup>  
 Dorothy Cross, Archeologist, New Jersey State Museum<sup>15</sup>  
 Philip A. Crowl, Professor of History, Princeton  
 Wm. H.S. Demarest, President, New Brunswick Historical Club  
 James E. Downes, Newark State Teachers College  
 William A. Elis, NJHS  
 Edward Fuhlbruegge, Newark Colleges, Rutgers  
 Lois Given, Historical Society of Pennsylvania  
 Sidney Goldmann, Director of the Bureau of Archives and History, State Library  
 Herbert B. Gooden, Montclair State  
 Maude H. Greene, Librarian, NJHS  
 Richard C. Haskett, Princeton University  
 Lenard B. Irwin, Haddon Heights High School  
 Kenneth Q. Jennings, Rutgers University  
 A. Korngut, Newark Clerk's Office  
 Irving S. Kull, Rutgers University<sup>16</sup>  
 Wheaton J. Lane, Princeton<sup>17</sup>  
 Richard P. McCormick, Rutgers University

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<sup>11</sup> RPM Papers, Box 60, Folder 7. With gratitude to Robert W. Craig for helping to identify some of the affiliations.

<sup>12</sup> *The campaign of Princeton, 1776–1777* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1948).

<sup>13</sup> Wrote *Fundamental Laws and Constitutions of New Jersey, 1664–1964* for the New Jersey Historical Series.

<sup>14</sup> Wrote *Medicine and Health in New Jersey: A History* for the New Jersey Historical Series.

<sup>15</sup> Amber M. Nichols, *Dorothy Cross Jensen: 1906–1972*. Emuseum@Minnesota State University Mankato [webpage] Accessed 4/16/2009.

<sup>16</sup> Irving Stoddard Kull. *New Jersey, a History ... Illustrated, 4 Volumes*. (New York: American Historical Society, 1930).

<sup>17</sup> Editor, New Jersey Historical Series.

Roger H. McDonough, State Librarian  
 Earl S. Miers, Director, Rutgers University Press  
 George J. Miller, East Jersey Board of Proprietors<sup>18</sup>  
 Raymond W. Miller, Paterson State Teachers College  
 Richard B. Morris, College of the City of New York  
 Robert H. Morrison, Asst. Commissioner for Higher Education  
 Ransom B. Noble, Pratt<sup>19</sup>  
 H. Clay Reed, University of Delaware  
 George P. Schmidt, New Jersey College for Women  
 Hubert G. Schmidt, Newark Colleges, Rutgers<sup>20</sup>  
 Helen L. Shaw, Trenton State Teachers College  
 Donald Sinclair, Curator of New Jerseyana, Rutgers Libraries  
 Rev. Walter E. Stowe, Ed, Hist. Mag. Protestant Episcopal Church, Historiographer for  
 the National Episcopal Church, Rector Christ Church (New Brunswick), 1929–  
 1966  
 Miriam V. Studley, Head of the New Jersey Collection, Newark Public Library  
 William Thomas, Rutgers  
 Charles A. Titus, Jersey City Teachers College  
 Rev. Harold P. Wayman, New Brunswick  
 Melvin Weig, Morristown National Historical Park  
 Harold Wilson, Glassboro State Teachers College  
 Howard K. Rice, Princeton University Library  
 Walter S. Oswald, Princeton  
 Ellis McCulloch

This was one of the major early opportunities for Richard McCormick to speak from the podium to the broader New Jersey history community. He worked strenuously in the months before the conferences to invite members of various historical societies and historians from all over the state. This became a way to build and strengthen the bonds between New Jersey historians, creating a network that would serve him well throughout his career.

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<sup>18</sup> Custodian of the records of the East Jersey Proprietors.

<sup>19</sup> *New Jersey Progressivism before Wilson* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1946).

<sup>20</sup> A prominent agricultural historian and chair of the History Advisory Committee for the Tercentenary Commission.

John T. Cunningham, who by that point was a reporter for the *Newark News*, came to see McCormick after one of these conferences.<sup>21</sup> Cunningham certainly attended the second conference in 1949, because he covered it for the *Newark News*,<sup>22</sup> so perhaps the conversation began around that time. Cunningham credits the presentations that McCormick and McDonough made that day with opening his eyes to the dynamic nature of New Jersey history.<sup>23</sup>

The collaboration between McCormick (the academic) and Cunningham (the popular writer) had a profound impact on New Jersey history for the next half-century. McCormick worked hard to energize New Jersey history as an academic field. Cunningham's exposure through the *Newark News*, and his involvement with launching the Tercentenary, would enable a prolific writing and public speaking career.<sup>24</sup> He launched New Jersey history as a topic in schoolbooks and in handsomely illustrated popular reference books.

It is not clear where or when McCormick and McDonough first got to know each other. They developed a partnership either just before or soon after McDonough left New Brunswick for Trenton in 1947. McDonough did speak at the Second New Jersey History Conference that was sponsored by Rutgers in 1949. By this point, they were on a first-name basis. McDonough spoke on "the general problem of setting up a coordinated

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<sup>21</sup> Cunningham says that it was in the "early fall of 1947" ("New Jersey Finds Its Ego," December 7, 1985, Rutgers University Library Special Collections) that he was sent by an editor of the *Newark News* to cover McCormick's first conference. He also refers to 300 people. It is possible that he was referring to an NJHS conference that was held in Burlington in June 1951. That drew about 300 people (Birkner, 70).

<sup>22</sup> "Snubs Snobs' History View," *Newark News*, December 4, 1949, RPM papers, Box 60, folder 6.

<sup>23</sup> Interview, John T. Cunningham, March 18, 2009.

<sup>24</sup> Interview, John T. Cunningham, March 18, 2009.

program on New Jersey history.”<sup>25</sup> This was the same conference that passed a resolution advocating the appointment of a State Archivist-Historian,<sup>26</sup> an issue that was important to McDonough.

Just after the first Rutgers Conference, McCormick put together under the masthead of “The Conference of New Jersey Historians” a newsletter entitled *Jersey Gazette* (published by the Rutgers University Library). The first issue came out in April 1949, described as a “direct outgrowth of the Conference of New Jersey Historians that was held at Rutgers University on November 20.”<sup>27</sup> This was a vigorous effort to pull together in a single place a list of special activities, new publications, and reviews. Also listed were studies in progress and recent acquisitions at various libraries. The editors were listed as McCormick, Lyman Butterfield,<sup>28</sup> Sidney Goldmann,<sup>29</sup> and Harold Wilson. McCormick was vigorously tackling what he saw as one of main problems in the New Jersey history community, a lack of information. The fact that McCormick recruited collaborators in this effort underlines the fact that he was a newcomer, and that he sought out allies within an infrastructure that was already in place.

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<sup>25</sup> “Summary of the talk given by Roger H. McDonough,” RPM papers Box 60, Folder 7.

<sup>26</sup> “Conference of New Jersey Historians,” RPM Papers, Box 60, Folder 7.

<sup>27</sup> *Jersey Gazette*, Rutgers University Library Special Collections.

<sup>28</sup> Either Assistant or Associate Editor, Thomas Jefferson Papers, Princeton (*Who Was Who in America* 8 [1982–1985]).

<sup>29</sup> Roger McDonough’s predecessor as State Librarian, Head of the Archives and History Bureau Division, State Library (*Who Was Who in America* 8 [1982-1985]).

### McCormick and the New Jersey Historical Society

This visibility in a public forum also generated an opportunity for Richard McCormick, who was still in his early thirties.<sup>30</sup> He was already familiar with the New Jersey Historical Society, having used its resources while working on his dissertation. Something about his performance, apparently at the second conference in 1949, caught the attention of Damon Douglass, an active trustee at the New Jersey Historical Society. McCormick wrote Douglass a long, thoughtful letter within two days of the 1949 conference, giving a blunt critique of the condition of the NJHS.<sup>31</sup> He charted a path that would energize and reorient the work of the NJHS.

Founded in 1845, The New Jersey Historical Society was the publisher of the *Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society*, “the oldest state history periodical in the state.”<sup>32</sup> The post Civil War period was incredibly productive under the guidance of William A. Whitehead and William Nelson. As it approached the middle of the twentieth century, it had lost its way. The NJHS appeared to McCormick to have become antiquated and introverted. He described it as a “mausoleum.”<sup>33</sup> Despite the name it had adopted, the NJHS had struggled to find an appropriate role.

McCormick advocated that the NJHS hire an outside consultant to submit “a business like appraisal.” He was then actively involved in selecting and negotiating with the consultant, Dr. Edward Alexander, Vice President of Colonial Williamsburg. The report was published in 1950. Although it was titled *The New Jersey Historical Society*

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<sup>30</sup> Birkner, 68.

<sup>31</sup> McCormick to Damon Douglass, December 5, 1949, RPM papers, Box 60, Folder 6; also McCormick to Edward Alexander, August 23, 1950, Box 85, Folder 11.

<sup>32</sup> “A History of New Jersey History,” 1; RPM Papers, Box 17, Folder 7.

<sup>33</sup> “A History of New Jersey History,” 5.

*and Its Future*, it became known as the *Alexander Survey*. This became a blueprint for NJHS programming. It was also a dynamic prescription for public history programming. It is worth comparing Alexander's recommendations with what was offered by the Tercentenary Commission ten years later.

Table 2: The Recommendations of the Alexander Survey<sup>34</sup>

1. An executive director. This they acted on immediately.
2. An active museum program with well thought out exhibits that are changed regularly. This would eventually become the main focus of the NJHS's programming.
3. A convention type annual meeting. This was one of the definitive characteristics of McCormick's tenure. The annual meeting each spring was a huge event.
4. Activities among young people. This was fulfilled by the Jerseymen program.
5. A dynamic publications program. This goal was also held by the Tercentenary.
6. A rejuvenated library with an oversight committee including Donald Sinclair, implementing the use of microfilm.
7. Membership matters. This was a meditation on how to increase the numbers of people who are members of the NJHS. It also advocated making women regular members and establishing a junior membership program.
8. Exploring the possibility of more state aid. An increase in state aid for public history is one of the greatest inheritances of the Tercentenary Commission.

McCormick's activism immediately shook up the NJHS. When the Board of Trustees met in November 1950, they elected McCormick President.<sup>35</sup> This gave him a central role in carrying out the proposals made by Alexander. He brought in new staff, updated the *Proceedings*, and instigated an annual conference (co-sponsorship of which rotated among many of the local historical societies). Table 3 is a snapshot of the active historical societies of that era which had the resources to host such a conference. This is another sign of the extent to which there was a history infrastructure in place in the mid-1950s.

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<sup>34</sup> *Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society* 69 (1951): 51–72.

<sup>35</sup> *Proceedings* 69 (1951): 72.

Table 3: Sponsoring Agencies for the Historical Conferences in the 1950s<sup>36</sup>

1st June 23, 1951: Burlington County Historical Society  
 2nd May 24, 1952: Morris County Historical Society  
 3rd June 6, 1953: Trenton Historical Society  
 4th May 22, 1954: Historical Society of Princeton  
 5th May 21, 1955: Monmouth County Historical Society  
 6th, May 19, 1956: Cumberland County Historical Society  
 7th June 8 (?), 1957: New Brunswick Historical Club  
 8th June 7, 1958: Bergen County Historical Society

McCormick spoke at a New Jersey Historical Society conference in 1951 on “The Future of Historical Activities in New Jersey.” This gave him a chance to articulate why he felt New Jersey history was important. He outlined a research agenda and praised the depth of historical resources and the potential for finding new stories in “every aspect of our little world.” He spoke of a “vast potential audience” for historical narratives.<sup>37</sup> He described “some forty organized county and local historical societies.” This was an important point, when considering what McCormick accomplished. He was speaking to an infrastructure that was already in place in the early stages of his career. He advocated a renewed focus on a “vigorous and imaginative program,” which was willing to examine many stages of New Jersey history, not just the tried-and-true revolutionary era programming. He injected the idea of “social responsibility” for a historical society, defined as serving the entire community, not just the membership. Here, even at this early date, he called for a junior historian program. Finally, McCormick advocated increased support from the state government.

Clifford Lord, who at that point was the Director of the Wisconsin Historical Society, gave the keynote speech at the same conference. This address was an energetic overview of all the challenges faced by public history in New Jersey in the post-war

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<sup>36</sup> See the *Proceedings* for an account of each conference.

<sup>37</sup> *Proceedings* 69 (1951): 231–34.

period. He urged cooperation between societies, lively displays, and colorful publications. He described both junior historian programs and traveling museums on wheels. Lord concluded his address with an appeal to classic 1950s nationalist motives. This was an important window on the type of history that was being advocated in this era.<sup>38</sup>

In terms of tracking what was going on beyond the borders of New Jersey, and the influences on the careers of McCormick and others, Clifford Lord should be acknowledged. Lord could be considered the sponsor of many of the specific ideas and innovations that were enacted in New Jersey. Lord contacted McCormick at Rutgers in March 1949, seeking permission to reprint “Unique Elements in State History”<sup>39</sup> in the *Magazine of History* (which was published by the Wisconsin Historical Society).<sup>40</sup> Based on common interests, their relationship blossomed.<sup>41</sup> By the time Lord visited New Jersey to speak at the New Jersey Historical Society conference in 1951, they were on a first name basis. (In the summer of 1951 Lord tried to persuade McCormick to move to Wisconsin to head the American Historical Research Center.<sup>42</sup>) Many of the programs that McCormick promoted in New Jersey were based on Lord’s record as Executive Director of the Wisconsin Historical Society. Ten years later, when the work of the Tercentenary Commission was well underway, Lord had moved to New York to be Dean of the School of General Studies at Columbia University. He became part of the

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<sup>38</sup> “Making Our Heritage Live,” *Proceedings* 69 (1951): 235–48.

<sup>39</sup> *American Heritage* 3 (Feb 1949): 15.

<sup>40</sup> RPM Papers, Box 5, folder 1.

<sup>41</sup> “We hit it off well together.” Birkner, 80.

<sup>42</sup> RPM Papers, Box 63, Folder 11.

Historymobile Committee and helped guide the committee through the design stages of that project.<sup>43</sup>

The lead recommendation of the Alexander Survey was to bring in an Executive Director to provide day-to-day management of the NJHS. The first Director was Alexander Wall.<sup>44</sup> In a column in the *Proceedings* entitled “Director’s Diary,” he gave glimpses of an invigorated society. Gradually the more elderly staff members retired, including Maude Greene, who had been Librarian at the NJHS for twenty-five years.<sup>45</sup> This was followed rapidly by an evaluation and weeding of the library collection.<sup>46</sup> Fred Shelley, previously of the Maryland Historical Society, was hired as Librarian by mid-1955.<sup>47</sup> Bernard Bush, who would be influential in later stages of New Jersey historiography, became the Librarian at the New Jersey Historical Society in 1961.<sup>48</sup>

By the middle of 1956, Alexander Wall had resigned. The new Director was a friend and companion of McCormick’s. Robert M. Lunny was Dick McCormick’s office mate while they attended the Ph.D. program at University of Pennsylvania.<sup>49</sup> Lunny would be the Executive Director of the New Jersey Historical Society until 1977. This appointment put Lunny in place to work on shared goals during the Tercentenary period.

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<sup>43</sup> Tercentenary Commission papers, box 45.

<sup>44</sup> “His father was the long-time director of the New York Historical Society... He was a professionally-trained person.” (Birkner, 69)

<sup>45</sup> Maude Greene was an interesting figure. McCormick described her as being the daughter of A. Van Doren Honeyman, “a prominent amateur Somerset County Historian.” (Birkner, 68). *Proceedings* 72 (1954): 210.

<sup>46</sup> *Proceedings* 72 (1954): 284. This followed up on one of the recommendations of the Alexander Survey.

<sup>47</sup> *Proceedings* 73 (1955): 215.

<sup>48</sup> Email message, Bernard Bush, March 5, 2009.

<sup>49</sup> McCormick’s remarks at Lunny’s memorial service, Box 17, folder 5, RPM Papers.

It also brought McCormick's seven-year tenure as President of the NJHS to a satisfying closure. By all measures McCormick's tenure at the NJHS reinvigorated and modernized the organization.<sup>50</sup>

When looking at McCormick's achievements, we must consider the support given to him by Rutgers University. More than once there were attempts to hire him away, and the response of Rutgers was to raise his salary and offer him a promotion. Rutgers supported the first two New Jersey History conferences, which gave McCormick a public forum that was hugely influential in his career. When he was offered an opportunity to become President of the NJHS, Rutgers allowed him to work at the NJHS offices in Newark one day a week.<sup>51</sup>

Before leaving McCormick's NJHS period, it is also worth pointing out the connections between the New Jersey public history renaissance and the work that was done at Colonial Williamsburg. Several times, particularly in the early 1950s, McCormick brought in experts from Colonial Williamsburg for consultations. Edward Alexander, who sparked the renaissance at the New Jersey Historical Society, was Vice President for Interpretation at Colonial Williamsburg. Kenneth Chorley, President of Colonial Williamsburg, spoke at the Third New Jersey History Conference in 1953. In the early days of the Tercentenary Commission, McCormick brought David Davies, the young Executive Director of the Commission, to Williamsburg for consultations.<sup>52</sup> This connection was quite strong and would reap benefits repeatedly over the years.

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<sup>50</sup>“Interpreters of History.” Kenneth Chorley described “an active and growing organization.” *Proceedings* 71 (1953): 165–73.

<sup>51</sup> Birkner, 70.

<sup>52</sup> Birkner, 97.

McCormick was a research consultant for Williamsburg from 1952 to 1961. He would use the contacts he made there again and again as the years went by.

Innovations and investment in public history sites and state historical societies really began to take off in the 1920s.<sup>53</sup> Although government investment would become increasingly important, two of the greatest philanthropists of that era had an immediate impact. Henry Ford opened a museum in Dearborn, Michigan in 1929. “Not to be outdone, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. invested nearly \$80 million in restoring, researching, and reconstructing buildings in Williamsburg, Virginia, to re-create a tidied-up version of the village as it appeared circa 1790.”<sup>54</sup> Colonial Williamsburg became one of the largest and best-known historical reconstruction sites. Caught up in the Cold War politics of the time, it was a “vocal non-governmental pulpit for patriotic discourse.”<sup>55</sup> As can be seen from McCormick’s contacts, it was also a large, experienced public history operation. What was going on in New Jersey was a reflection of a much broader renaissance in state, local, and public history. The American Association for State and Local History was founded in 1940,<sup>56</sup> and *American Heritage* was launched in 1947.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Ian R. Tyrrell, *Historians in Public: the Practice of American History, 1890–1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 172.

<sup>54</sup> Rebecca Conrad, *Benjamin Shambaugh and the Intellectual Foundations of Public History* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2002), 153.

<sup>55</sup> Michael G. Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1991), 583.

<sup>56</sup> Tyrrell, *Historians*, 225–26.

<sup>57</sup> Tyrrell, *Historians*, 227.

### The Silent Partners

It is impossible to talk about New Jersey History as it emerges from the Second World War without mentioning two special resources. Historians rely heavily on the libraries and librarians that collect on their behalf. In tandem with the energy being expended by McCormick and Cunningham, two extraordinary collections, and two exceptional librarians, began to make their mark on New Jersey history.

It has already been mentioned that Donald Sinclair became the curator for New Jerseyana at almost the same moment that Richard McCormick returned to Rutgers as an Assistant Professor. McCormick and Sinclair were classmates at Rutgers (Class of 1938).<sup>58</sup> They were friends and collaborators. Writing in 1972 when Sinclair was being considered for an alumni award, Donald Cameron wrote that "... the team of McCormick and Sinclair both working on New Jersey history although from different points of view is famous in the profession."<sup>59</sup> Sinclair built Rutgers University Special Collections and University Archives into the strongest local history collection in New Jersey, and one of the largest and most comprehensive state and local history collections in the country. Sinclair's impact on New Jersey history was twofold. First, he was an able partner for the generation of New Jersey historians doing dissertations under McCormick's guidance. Second, when he retired in 1982, he spent the next twenty-two years adding extraordinary bibliographies to the literature on New Jersey history.<sup>60</sup>

Sinclair also was a respected member of the New Jersey history community. He was active with the New Jersey Historical Society (and a long time Trustee) and the

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<sup>58</sup> Interview, Ronald Becker, March 9, 2009.

<sup>59</sup> Sinclair alumni file, Rutgers University Archives.

<sup>60</sup> With thanks to Ronald Becker for helping to make this point, March 9, 2009.

Genealogical Society of New Jersey. He edited journals for both of those organizations at different times. Sinclair stood as equal to the “Irish Mob” in impact and leadership. It is unfortunate that he left no papers that would allow us to understand his story, for which we now only have the barest of outlines.

The New Jersey Collection at Newark Public Library also became a much more useable and stronger resource after the War. When the library building was expanded and modernized in the late 1940s, the New Jersey Collection was gathered together in a dedicated space. Miriam V. Studley had transferred to the New Jersey division in 1944.<sup>61</sup> As her expertise grew, she became a valuable resource for writers (including Cunningham), students, and academics. She was also active in many of the New Jersey history activities sponsored by Richard McCormick. This was at a time when the prominence of Newark Public Library increased because of the work that Roger McDonough was doing to encourage library networks. Newark Public Library, with its many specialized divisions, became a statewide resource. When she retired in 1965, her successor was Charles Cummings. Cummings’ expertise in the history of Newark made him a valuable resource for the entire state. He developed an active, ongoing cooperation with Cunningham that extended to writing a book together.<sup>62</sup> The New Jersey Collection at Newark Public Library is now known as “The Charles F. Cummings New Jersey Information Center.”

One of the most significant moments in the development of this community happened just before the Tercentenary started to generate interest. On November 16 and

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<sup>61</sup> “Any Questions about Jersey,” *Newark News*, September 11, 1949, Newark Librarians Clipping File.

<sup>62</sup> John T. Cunningham and Charles F. Cummings, *Remembering Essex: A Pictorial History of Essex County, New Jersey* (Virginia Beach, VA: The Donning, 1995).

17, 1956, Rutgers dedicated the Alexander Library. McCormick wrote the speech made by Governor Meyner on that occasion.<sup>63</sup> Roger McDonough was there; Rutgers gave him an honorary doctorate for his service to the library community, which was awarded at the dedication. Julian Boyd, editor of the papers of Thomas Jefferson, who appeared repeatedly in the Tercentenary narrative, also received an honorary doctorate.<sup>64</sup> Of particular interest to Donald Sinclair and Richard McCormick, the New Jersey Room was a special highlight in the design of the building—strengthening the presence and the commitment to New Jersey history at the University. The program on Friday evening included speeches by the honorees and a reception in the New Jersey Room, previewing a new exhibit. Just outside the New Jersey Room was a landscaped garden celebrating New Jersey plants, structured around a brick representation of New Jersey.<sup>65</sup>

Why did Rutgers give McDonough an honorary degree in 1956? It has not been within the scope of this narrative to give sufficient attention to McDonough's service to the state of New Jersey as state librarian and a master lobbyist. An examination of his collaboration with McCormick gives only a glimpse of his distinguished career. As early as this point, in 1956, he already had two great accomplishments to his credit. In suggesting him, the Rutgers University Librarian, Donald "Scotty" Cameron, gave him credit for shepherding the funding for the new university library through the legislature and bringing the space problems of the library to the attention of the governor.<sup>66</sup> In addition, he had already helped found the Graduate School of Library Service at Rutgers,

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<sup>63</sup> Birkner, 96.

<sup>64</sup> Cameron papers, Box 32, Folder 8.

<sup>65</sup> With gratitude to Dr. Richard L. McCormick for suggesting I look at design of Alexander Library as it opened in 1956. Interview, March 13, 2009.

<sup>66</sup> Cameron Papers, Box 32, Folder 8.

which opened in 1953. McDonough was also credited for his activities with the American Library Association (in particular as an expert witness at hearings in Washington) and as President of the Association of State Libraries. Roger McDonough was on track to be one of McCormick's most essential allies in the Tercentenary Era.

## Chapter 2

### The Tercentenary Commission

#### Creating and Branding the Tercentenary

McCormick lobbied Governor Meyner to initiate the commemoration of the tercentenary of the founding of the New Jersey colony, which would be in 1964. He cited “considerable latent, but developing interest” in New Jersey history. He stressed the use of history to create “identification” with the state and local communities, to foster “responsible citizenship.” It was a huge vision, calling for “a grand mobilization of energies.”<sup>1</sup> McCormick’s plea in January 1958 was specific. He wanted the Governor’s approval for his work, and that of John T. Cunningham and Roger McDonough, to create a formal proposal for consideration.

McCormick was an academic, but even in his earliest correspondence on this matter, he knew how to persuade a politician. He stressed the economic benefits of a grand, yearlong festival for both tourism and positive publicity for the state. He touted other successful historical festivals. Indeed, in his files there are correspondence and newspaper articles from New York (1959 Year of History), Minnesota, Illinois, Connecticut, Oregon, and Rhode Island. McCormick, McDonough, and Cunningham looked across the country, not only to prove to the politicians that it *should* be done, but to look for clues about how to go about it. How much lead-time should be taken? How much money should be dedicated?

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<sup>1</sup> McCormick, January 25, 1958, RPM Papers, Box 58, Folder 5.

By mid-February 1958, they were “in business.”<sup>2</sup> This was a successful collaboration. By mid April, early drafts of the report were being worked over. The report was ready by mid-May. It was an urgent document.<sup>3</sup> Beginning with the 350th anniversary of Hudson’s landing at Sandy Hook, in September 1959, historically significant dates were rapidly approaching. It was a matter of pride. Should the only celebration of Hudson’s voyage be done by New York? Older colonies had already held “impressive observances” to mark their Tercentennials. Looking at that record, they determined that five years “is the minimum time needed” to plan a celebration with “substance.”

They proposed a state commission as a coordinating point for multiple local celebrations. The tercentenaries of New Jersey’s oldest communities (Elizabeth and Jersey City) were approaching. Managed by a central office, historical commemorations were offered as an opportunity to boast about “the strong economic and intellectual role of the state” in the modern era. A well-managed effort would save money by eliminating duplication.

The remarkable thing about this well-reasoned document (with a draft bill appended to it) was that, at least in the short run, they got what they wanted, i.e. \$25,000 to hire a staff and set up an office. Getting it passed was not smooth sailing, but McCormick’s powers of persuasion were considerable.<sup>4</sup>

There were not many specific programs in the report and the bill (Chapter 78, Laws of New Jersey, 1958) that was offered on June 2, 1958, by Assemblyman William

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<sup>2</sup> McCormick to McDonough, February 21, 1958, RPM Papers, Box 58, Folder 5.

<sup>3</sup> Memo to Meyner, May 16, 1958, RPM Papers, Box 58, Folder 5.

<sup>4</sup> In Birkner, McCormick described personally persuading Donald Fox to back the Bill (96–97).

Kurtz and Benjamin Franklin III. The Law was mostly concerned with structuring the commission. Specific programs included publication plans (including resumption of the publication of the *New Jersey Archives*), microfilming plans, work on “historic sites buildings and markers,” and provision for publicity.<sup>5</sup>

It was one thing to get the bill signed. For the rest of 1958, despite the urgency of McCormick, McDonough, and Cunningham, Meyner stalled on appointing the members of the commission. This was intensely frustrating. Balancing political affiliations, North Jersey vs. South Jersey, the Tercentenary Commission did not formally meet until September 1959. McCormick’s frustrations with this delay are easily documented.<sup>6</sup> When the meetings finally got underway, Richard McCormick was elected temporary chairman. Roger McDonough was not appointed to the commission but attended each meeting as State Librarian, an ex officio member who served as secretary. John Cunningham was not in the room. This was his choice. By this point, he already had several books out and chose to focus on his writing career. He would remain involved with the Tercentenary as a writer and as a member of the History Advisory Committee.<sup>7</sup>

McCormick remained chairman of the commission just long enough to get it well launched.<sup>8</sup> State Senator Robert Crane ably filled that role until he died of cancer in

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<sup>5</sup> RNJTC, 187–88.

<sup>6</sup> McCormick to Cunningham, October 8, 1958; McCormick to Meyner, October 28, 2008; RPM to Brendan Byrne (then an aide to the governor), December 19, 1958, RPM papers, Box 58, Folder 6.

<sup>7</sup> Cunningham was apparently offered the Executive Director position, but turned it down so that he could pursue his writing career. Cunningham to McCormick, January 15, 1960, RPM Papers, Box 58, Folder 7.

<sup>8</sup> McCormick went to Britain in the Summer of 1960 on behalf of the Colonial Records Project. He cut back on his participation in the commission at that point.

1962.<sup>9</sup> The obituaries collected and published by the Tercentenary Commission suggested that this was a great shock and he was sorely missed.<sup>10</sup> After Crane's death, Paul Troast filled the role of chairman for the rest of the commission. McCormick called this "[Meyner's] most important appointment." "Paul Troast became one of my dearest friends and heroes."<sup>11</sup> Troast shines in McCormick's recollection as a kind of expert, instinctive businessman, and manager, who was in charge of the construction of the New Jersey Turnpike.<sup>12</sup>

With considerable publicity, the New Jersey Congressional Delegation was able to get passed federal legislation (86–683) that created a parallel federal commission to commemorate the New Jersey Tercentenary. President Eisenhower signed the legislation, and appointments were duly made to the federal commission. The brief report of the federal commission was included as an appendix to the state *Report*.<sup>13</sup> What was not well known was that despite the excitement of the legislation and the appointments, there was no money appropriated to fund the federal commission. The achievements of the federal commission were funded entirely with private funds.

The most public gesture of the federal commission was to host a luncheon at the governor's residence for the Count and Countess LaFayette. Less well known is that this was done at Governor Hughes's expense. Other plans were made, and budgeted for, but got lost in the confusion after the assassination of President Kennedy in November 1963.

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<sup>9</sup> "Robert Crane, 41, Publisher, Dead," *New York Times*, April 25, 1962, 39.

<sup>10</sup> Scrapbook #4 (Tercentenary Commission Files); *New Jersey Heritage* #6 (Rutgers University Libraries, Special Collections).

<sup>11</sup> Birkner, 97.

<sup>12</sup> Birkner, 102.

<sup>13</sup> RNJTC, 209–11.

The Tercentenary Commission became a cog in the state bureaucracy. An office was obtained in the State House. David Davies was recruited to be Executive Director, and he hired several able assistants. When looking at the effort as a whole, most of the energy of the commission was spent on recruiting volunteer assistance and creating as much noise as possible. In the first year, for instance, the newspaper coverage was full of appointments to the advisory committee.<sup>14</sup> Local men (and they were mostly men, a reflection of the times) were selected as members of the advisory committee in their appropriate fields. The most distinguished historians, artists, educators, and businessmen in the state were drawn in. Some of the appointments were remarkable. Scholars who wish to identify the movers and shakers in New Jersey in a particular field in the early 1960s should examine these lists in great detail.<sup>15</sup>

The Advisory Ways and Means Committee, essentially a fundraising body, was packed with the leading businessmen of the state and led by Lee H. Bristol, Chairman of Bristol-Myers Company.

Dr. Mason W. Gross, President of Rutgers, led the Advisory Fine Arts Committee.

Thomas S. Ruzicka was the art director of New Jersey Bell Telephone (which also supported the Tercentenary as a corporation), and the chair of the Advisory Design Committee.

The Advisory History Committee was packed with historians who were McCormick's key allies in the promotion of public history in New Jersey. Professor Hubert G. Schmidt, from the History Department at Rutgers Newark, was the chair.

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<sup>14</sup> Scapbook #1, Tercentenary Commission Files.

<sup>15</sup> RNJTC, 20–36.

Some of the others on the History Committee were Dr. Wesley Frank Craven (who would write for the historical series, and lecture for the lecture series), John T. Cunningham, Judge Sidney Goldmann (who was one of the co-editors of the *Jersey Gazette* with McCormick in the 1950s), Francis S. Ronalds (Superintendent, Morristown National Historic Park), Robert Lunny (Executive Director of the NJHS and chair of the Historymobile committee), Donald Sinclair (Curator, Special Collections, Rutgers), and Miriam V. Studley (Principal Librarian, New Jersey Division, Newark Public Library). The Historymobile Committee that was chaired by Lunny also included Clifford Lord, who by this point was Dean, School of General Studies, Columbia University.<sup>16</sup>

Each advisory committee came up with a possible program within its discipline. Some programs, like the ones proposed by the Education Committee (chaired by Dr. Frank B. Stover, Superintendent, Bloomfield) and the History Advisory Committee, were funded and served as the backbone of the Tercentenary Celebration.

Before the commission could really begin its work, it worked conspicuously to develop a brand. Marketing was central to the work of the Tercentenary Commission. Symbols and slogans were needed. The design professionals who made up the Advisory Design Committee created the symbol, which consisted of “an equilateral triangle divided into three portion ... colored in a solid uniform shade.”<sup>17</sup> To find a suitable slogan, a competition was unveiled with great publicity in the fall of 1960. A traffic engineer for the State Highway department, Robert J. Nolan of Lambertville, won the competition

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<sup>16</sup> RNJTC, 24.

<sup>17</sup> RNJTC, 67.

with the phrase “people, purpose, progress.”<sup>18</sup> The prize, designed to appeal to the newspapers, was 300 silver dollars.<sup>19</sup>

Once the design stage was complete, the symbol was put on a flag that was flown all over the state. It was the background for the official stationery and was made into a pin that was proudly worn by the governor’s wife.<sup>20</sup> It became part of the masthead for a multitude of Tercentenary publications.

On the advice of its Advisory Licensing and Marketing Committee, the Commission licensed manufacturers of souvenirs to use the symbol but charged no fee. As a result by the end of 1964, some fifty licenses were issued for a wide variety of products.<sup>21</sup>

### The Publicity Machine

The publicity machine could now go into full swing. There were more than 30,000 articles published in New Jersey and surrounding states on the subject of the Tercentenary or its broad range of associated activities. Nine remarkable scrapbooks were filled before the Tercentenary year even began. “The Tercentenary was one of the best publicized events in the history of New Jersey.”<sup>22</sup> Judging from the outcome, one of the major functions of the Tercentenary office was to support a sustained publicity effort. Newspaper coverage reveled in everything from the profound to the silly. In the summer of 1960 the secretaries in the Tercentenary office got tired of saying “New Jersey Tercentenary” and switched to “Happy 300<sup>th</sup>.” UPI got hold of the story, and it was

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<sup>18</sup> RNJTC, 68.

<sup>19</sup> “Give this Gentleman 300 Silver Dollars,” *Trenton Times*, December 2, 1960.

<sup>20</sup> “Tercentenary Pin for Mrs. Meyner,” *Trenton Times Advertiser*, December 24, 1961.

<sup>21</sup> RNJTC, 68.

<sup>22</sup> RNJTC, 67.

republished again and again, in New Jersey and all over the country.<sup>23</sup> This happened more than once. When the Tercentenary Commission offered a Medallion Competition in the spring of 1962, similar articles appeared in over seventy newspapers all over the country.<sup>24</sup>

The Tercentenary program, as it then began to take shape, seemed to be primed to take place in the public eye. The Tercentenary Tales and the Historymobile, which are both discussed more fully below, drew in publicity for the Tercentenary very effectively. From 1962 to 1963 the majority of the newspaper coverage was focused on local events, local plans, the tour of the Historymobile, and the Tercentenary Tales.

The Tercentenary Tales were a series of “sketches”<sup>25</sup> written by John T. Cunningham. They were published weekly from November 1962 to the spring of 1964. There were eighty-three sketches, covering a wide range of topics from the field of New Jersey history. The Tercentenary Tales were carried by as many as 341 newspapers across the state. In 1964 fifty of the sketches were republished in *The New Jersey Sampler*.<sup>26</sup>

In 1963 The American Association for State and Local History made the following Award of Merit: “To John T. Cunningham, an individual surpassed by none in furthering popular interest in and knowledge of New Jersey and her history through his books, his work with youth, and currently for his Tercentenary Tales appearing in New Jersey newspapers.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Scrapbook #1, Tercentenary Commission Files.

<sup>24</sup> Scrapbook #2, Tercentenary Commission Files.

<sup>25</sup> RNJTC, 40.

<sup>26</sup> John T. Cunningham, *The New Jersey Sampler* (Upper Montclair, NJ: The New Jersey Almanac, 1964).

<sup>27</sup> RNJTC, 41.

The Tercentenary Tales were also distributed to schools throughout the state. In at least one case, they were republished in the school newspapers.<sup>28</sup>

The Tercentenary Tales had a specific impact on the course of New Jersey history as a popular topic. The contract for a weekly article, combined with the royalties for *This is New Jersey* (which was very successful), set John T. Cunningham free to leave the *Newark News* and become a freelance journalist and speaker. His commitment to the field full-time from this point on had a dramatic effect on the amount of material available on New Jersey history for the classroom and for public, nonacademic audiences.<sup>29</sup>

David Davies wrote a report on the Tercentenary that was never published. In it he made some very observant comments about what really made the program work. He recognized that “the key to the Tercentenary was getting people committed... all would have to make the Tercentenary their own before anything of substance could be accomplished.”<sup>30</sup> The commission staff did an enormous amount of work to recruit local and county tercentenary committees. The publicity machine brought an extraordinary amount of pressure on local officials to become a part of the celebration. One of several tools to apply pressure to local communities was the Historymobile. The Historymobile was one of the most obvious symbols that were used to persuade, cajole, and encourage local city and county officials to carry the brunt of the celebration.

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<sup>28</sup> RNJTC, 125.

<sup>29</sup> Interview, John T. Cunningham, March 18, 2009.

<sup>30</sup> “Has given...” (1), Box 48, Tercentenary Files.

A New Jersey Tercentenary Historymobile was created and became the advance man for the Tercentenary celebration. It also became the method whereby communities were encouraged to create local Tercentenary committees, for they were advised that the Historymobile would visit a community only under the aegis of a local Tercentenary committee.<sup>31</sup>

Once the Historymobile became available late in 1961, Tercentenary Committees were appointed in more than 450 of the 568 municipalities in New Jersey. Not all were formed to take advantage of the Historymobile, but word of the appointment of one committee prompted another community to act.<sup>32</sup>

If your town does not have a Tercentenary Committee, your mayor should appoint one now.<sup>33</sup>

The Historymobile was made possible by corporate donations of a three-quarter ton truck and a custom-built tractor-trailer that had previously been used by the Bell Telephone Company for traveling exhibitions. This was generous corporate largesse, made possible by the connections made through the Advisory Ways and Means Committee. Robert Lunny, Director of the NJHS, led the Historymobile advisory committee.

Three annual exhibitions were constructed within the trailer, which toured the state, bringing New Jersey history and the Tercentenary theme to local communities.<sup>34</sup> There were nine exhibit cases within the tractor-trailer and a safe for the historical documents that were selected to accompany each of the tours. Bernard Bush, then historical editor at the State Library, was loaned to the Historymobile “for the duration of the project each year,” and he was given “the task of planning and assembling” each

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<sup>31</sup> “Has given...” (3), Box 48, Tercentenary Files.

<sup>32</sup> “Has given...” 4, Box 48, Tercentenary Files.

<sup>33</sup> Historymobile brochure, Mason Gross papers, Box 110, file 1.

<sup>34</sup> RNJTC, 44–49.

year's exhibition.<sup>35</sup> The statistics of the program were impressive: "from September, 1961 to November, 1964 the Historymobile was in operation for twenty-seven months. The number of visitors recorded as 1,211,991."<sup>36</sup> When the season was over for the Historymobile, the exhibits found a home in the New Jersey State Museum. The Historymobile won an award from the Freedoms Foundation of Valley Forge in 1962.<sup>37</sup>

Table 4: The Historymobile Exhibits<sup>38</sup>

The First Exhibition: Fall 1961 and Spring–Fall 1962

"The first exhibition, "The Beginnings of New Jersey," "depicted the life of the Lenni Lappe Indians, the age of discovery, the colonization of the region ... and its settlement in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries." The diorama "depicted the purchase of Indian land on the site of Newark by Robert Treat in 1667."

The Second Exhibition: Spring–Fall 1963

"New Jersey from Colony to State, 1750–1850," covered the Revolutionary War and the founding of the republic, as well as New Jersey's prominent role in early agriculture, crafts, industries and transportation, and its cultural and intellectual life. The diorama depicted "the furnace of the Howell iron works at Allaire in the early nineteenth century."

The Third Exhibition: Spring–Fall 1964

Themes for each of the display cases: "The Brother's War," "Slavery Abolished," "Made in New Jersey," "The Crossroads State," "Edison's Invention Factory," "The Research State," "The Nation of Many Nations," "A Century of Social Progress," "Jerseymen at War," and "The Creative Vision" The Diorama depicted "Thomas A. Edison's laboratory in West Orange."

(A detailed outline of the Historymobile exhibitions was included in the commission *Report*.<sup>39</sup>)

The Historymobile also led the "Wagon Train West." This was a two-week journey of 3,539 miles to the Seattle World's Fair, leading a caravan of thirty-four

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<sup>35</sup> RNJTC, 48.

<sup>36</sup> RNJTC, 49.

<sup>37</sup> RNJTC, 49.

<sup>38</sup> RNJTC, 48–49.

<sup>39</sup> RNJTC, 212–19.

vehicles. They departed Salem, NJ on July 18, 1962, and followed the route of a group of nineteenth-century pioneers who left New Jersey for farmland in the West. The group was well received at various towns called New Salem.<sup>40</sup>

As successful as it was, the Historymobile must be seen within the context of the era. The mid-1960s was the peak of the highway culture and the automobile age.<sup>41</sup> The Historymobile was made possible by the fact that Bell Labs already had a custom-built tractor-trailer that was ideal for this purpose. This suggests that traveling museums inside tractor-trailers were not that unusual. The Tercentenary Commission readily documented that the idea came from Clifford Lord, who had used a Historymobile as part of the Wisconsin Centennial.<sup>42</sup>

The mobile museum had an even deeper heritage. The “Freedom Train” traveled America’s rail system between 1947 and 1949, visiting 322 cities.<sup>43</sup> The crowds that visited the train had the opportunity to see historic documents from the National Archives. Congressional advocates saw this as a powerful opportunity to give a boost to patriotism and advance the “internal war against subversive elements.”<sup>44</sup> The mobile museum as a tool for educating citizens was firmly fixed in the national psyche.

*New Jersey Heritage* was a periodic publication of the Tercentenary Commission. Like the Historymobile, its major theme was the stimulation of local participation. It was a place to present in a unified form the different activities taking place across the state to

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<sup>40</sup> Box 33 & 34, Tercentenary Commission Files, including itinerary and the list of travelers.

<sup>41</sup> Consumer Guide. *History of the American Auto* (Lincolnwood, Ill: Publications International, 2004), 396.

<sup>42</sup> RNJTC, 44.

<sup>43</sup> Kammen, *Mystic Chords*, 573–81.

<sup>44</sup> Kammen, *Mystic Chords*, 574.

commemorate the Tercentenary.<sup>45</sup> It even included a “scoreboard” that showed how many local and countywide committees were active. This is described in table 5 because it represented one measure of the penetration of this program throughout the state. The contents also represented a useful way to get an overview of the types of activities that went on throughout New Jersey in the years just before the Tercentenary. With the final issue, in the summer of 1963, there were 289 municipal committees, with 3213 people involved, and 21 countywide committees, with 525 people involved. At least on the county level, they had achieved one hundred percent participation.

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<sup>45</sup> RNJTC, 69.

Table 5: Summary of *New Jersey Heritage* Newsletter<sup>46</sup>

<p>#1 June 1961 Introductory articles: “Why 1964?”, “There are many ways to celebrate a birthday”, Backpage: “Tercentenary Architectural Competition.”</p>
<p>#2 Summer 1961 The New Jersey Tercentenary Symbol County Tercentenary Committees</p>
<p>#3 October 1961 New Jersey First: Tercentenary Historymobile Opens Then up went the Tercentenary Flag. McCormick Goes to England. Scoreboard: Municipal (106 Committees, 1042 Commiteemen; Counties: 14 committees, 214 Committees)</p>
<p>#4 December 1961 Headline: A new State Capitol for New Jersey’s 300th Birthday Inside Spread: Inside the New Jersey Tercentenary Historymobile Scoreboard: Municipal (126 Committees, 1208 Commiteemen; Counties:16 Committees, 244 Committeemen)</p>
<p>#5 March 1962 N. J. Pamphlets Planned: Lane and Huber Named Editors of the Tercentenary Series Legislature Pledges \$500,000 for State Pavilion at N.Y. World’s Fair (Picture with Headline, Hughes names Winning Architect) Scoreboard: Municipal (139 Committees, 11294 Commiteemen; Counties:18 Committees, 284 Committeemen)</p>
<p>#6 July 1962 There are Many Ways to Celebrate a Birthday; New Jersey’s Communities will Prove it in 1964 Inside: Memorial to Bob Crane ... and notes of the appointment of Paul Troast as Chairman of the Commission Scoreboard: Municipal (189 Committees, 1791 Commiteemen; Counties:18 Committees, 319 Committeemen)</p>
<p>#7 November 1962 Hackensack will Microfilm Bergen’s First Newspapers, Open Arts-Science Museum Picture: A Tercentenary Mosaic by Shewsbury Students Scoreboard: Municipal (216 Committees, 2321 Commiteemen) Counties: (20 Committees, 368 Committeemen)</p>

<sup>46</sup> *New Jersey Heritage*, Special Collections, Rutgers Libraries.

<p>#8 December 1962  Jerseymen to Talk Tercentenary Today, All Communities Invited  “Let’s Talk Tercentenary Day” Weds, December 5, 1962  Reprinted from the Cherry Hill News, November 20, 1962, a scathing critique of the Cherry Hill Tercentenary Committee.  Reprint of Editorial from the Merchantville Community News, November 15, 1962 “Lets Not be Left out”  Tercentenary Scoreboard:  Municipal: 241 Communities  2489 Committeemen  County: 20 Committees, 368 Committeemen</p>
<p>#9 March 1963  “History is Fun will be Theme of First All-State Junior Historians Session”  Tercentenary Scoreboard:  Municipal: 263 Communities, 2691 Committeemen  County: 21 Committees, 378 Committeemen</p>
<p>#10 Summer 1963  Picture with Caption: RFK is invited to New Jersey’s 300th Birthday  Delaware Indians will Return for State’s 300th  Tercentenary Scoreboard:  Municipal: 289 Communities, 3213 Committeemen  County: 21 Committees, 525 Committeemen</p>

The peak moment of the enormous effort to get local and county committees involved in the Tercentenary was the “Let’s Talk Tercentenary Day,” held in the Assembly Chamber of the State House on November 14, 1963. Local and county committee members from all over the state gathered to hear pep talks and to share the range of programs they were developing. As part of the program, Tercentenary Medallions were presented to groups that had put together particularly strong programs. In the newspaper coverage these became “Tercentenary Medals.”<sup>47</sup> To make the meeting

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<sup>47</sup> “Woodbridge Wins Award for Best County Program,” *The Independent Leader*, November 21, 1963.

even more spectacular, six visitors from the Isle of Jersey brought greetings and congratulations to the assembled group.<sup>48</sup>

### Getting Things Done

To get a sense of the scope of the Tercentenary efforts, it is also valuable to consider some of the specific programs that were enabled by the Tercentenary, many of which had been under consideration for a long time. The Jerseymen program, in particular, holds pride of place (along with the Historymobile) as a program that was recommended by both McCormick and Lord in 1951 at the first conference sponsored by the NJHS under McCormick's stewardship.<sup>49</sup> It was also funded for almost twenty years after the Tercentenary.

The Jerseymen program was begun by the NJHS, with an initial grant of \$20,000 from the Tercentenary Commission in March 1963. The NJHS hired Joan Hull to run the program.<sup>50</sup>

The variety of services and activities which Miss Hull provided to Jerseymen members in so short a time was phenomenal... she published a magazine, *The Cockpit*, and a bulletin, *The Crossroads*, which contained historical sketches. She organized annual state history fairs and conventions, technical workshops, field trips, a professional conference, picnics, and dances, and a host of other events.<sup>51</sup>

As the Commission mandate wound down, financial responsibility for the Jerseymen remained with the NJHS, which maintained it through the mid-1980s.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Let's Talk Tercentenary Day, Tercentenary Commission Files, Box 66.

<sup>49</sup> *Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society* 69 (1951): 231–48.

<sup>50</sup> Joan Hull actually remained with the NJHS and eventually became the Executive Director.

<sup>51</sup> RNJTC, 51.

<sup>52</sup> The State Department of Education provided \$15,000 to the NJHS in 1965–66 to continue the Jerseymen program (RNJTC, 51).

The success of the Jerseymen program for two decades, and then its disappearance, also raise another issue that is worth exploring. To what extent can the success of the Tercentenary program be attributed to social trends that made history popular or fashionable for a time? It is also possible that the Jerseymen fell victim to the decline in available state funds after the Great Society period. At the suggestion of the NJHS, the Jerseymen eventually became a dedicated line in the state budget. Shortly after that happened, the program was eliminated during a series of state budget cuts.<sup>53</sup>

When McCormick, McDonough, and Cunningham wrote the bill that enabled the Tercentenary, one of the major projects mandated by the legislation was the location of previously unknown primary sources relating to New Jersey history. The focus in particular was on colonial records. Henceforth the project was known informally as the “Colonial Records Project.” Having written this project into the bill, McCormick was the natural choice to travel to Europe to do some digging.<sup>54</sup> In 1960 McCormick spent the summer in Britain, following up leads to primary source documents connected to the colonial period. The idea was to get them microfilmed for access in New Jersey. Of the various projects that he recommended for the Tercentenary Commission, this was one of the most meaningful to him.<sup>55</sup> This was meant to do for New Jersey what was being done

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<sup>53</sup> Interview, Robert W. Craig, March 26, 2009.

<sup>54</sup> Scholars who are curious about his research process should consult the *Microfilm Report of Dr. Richard P. McCormick, Visit to Great Britain*, available through Special Collections, Rutgers Libraries.

<sup>55</sup> Letter from McCormick to Dr. George H. Reese, RPM papers, Box 58, Folder 1.

by the “Virginia Colonial Records Project.”<sup>56</sup> McCormick had become acquainted with that project as part of his work with Colonial Williamsburg.<sup>57</sup>

Dr. McCormick is personally acquainted with the work being done by Virginia’s agent in Europe—... and has been offered the full cooperation of the Virginia project in establishing the necessary rapport with European archivists, museum directors, and other curators of historic records.<sup>58</sup>

The Trip turned out to be a publicity bonanza. The energetic young professor headed for Britain caught the public’s imagination.<sup>59</sup> McCormick did find several pockets of previously unknown material that were newsworthy, including “Irish Quakers” and the beginnings of the cultivation of grapes.<sup>60</sup> Even more impressive was the discovery of a letter that suggested a plan for a South Jersey revolt against General Washington in the winter of 1778, while Washington was camped at Valley Forge.<sup>61</sup>

The results of the project were threefold. Previously unknown sources were made available on microfilm at the State Library and at Rutgers. McCormick was also able to set up a baseline understanding of what was available, and to suggest possible action in the future.<sup>62</sup> Finally, McCormick acknowledged the importance of the contacts he made while he was overseas: “The fact that some fifty librarians and archivists in all parts of Great Britain have been made directly aware of our interest in seeking out New Jersey

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<sup>56</sup> RPM Papers, Box 58, Folder 1.

<sup>57</sup> Birkner, 83–84.

<sup>58</sup> David Davies to John Kervick, May 17, 1960, RPM Papers, Box 58, Folder 1

<sup>59</sup> “Cobwebs for the Professor,” *Newark Evening News*, June 6, 1960; “Search for Jersey’s Roots May Extend to Windsor Castle,” *Daily Home News*, June 4, 1960 plus others, Scrapbook 1, Tercentenary Commission Files.

<sup>60</sup> Jersey’s History Traced to Dublin, *New York Times*, July 7, 1960, 33.

<sup>61</sup> “Rutgers Professor Uncovers Plan for NJ Revolt against Washington,” *Trenton Evening Times*, August 17, 1960, 22, plus others.

<sup>62</sup> RNJTC, 52.

source materials will continue to yield dividends in the future.”<sup>63</sup> Doris Brown of *The New Brunswick Home News* summed up the Colonial Records Project with warm congratulations: “McCormick’s Historical Treasure Hunt, in Preparation for the New Jersey Tercentenary, Termed a Big Success.”<sup>64</sup>

Another goal from the start was the creation of new scholarship in the area of New Jersey history. The New Jersey Historical Series was a thirty-one volume series, published in about two years by the D. Van Nostrand Company, supported by the commission staff, and edited by Dr. Richard M. Huber and Dr. Wheaton J. Lane. This was meant to update the academic literature on New Jersey history. To publish that number of books, while keeping an eye on the quality of the series, was a considerable accomplishment, both in terms of stamina and organization.<sup>65</sup>

It was difficult, at least at first, to find a publisher for the series. Rutgers University Press turned them down. During those negotiations, William Sloane of Rutgers University Press expressed doubts about whether or not the Tercentenary Commission was trying to “legislate scholarship.”<sup>66</sup> Whether or not Sloane was correct can be judged only by examining the impact of the series over time, which is a challenge. This problem highlights a specific problem with the Tercentenary as a whole: the impact, forty-five years later, is very difficult to measure.

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<sup>63</sup> Richard P. McCormick, *Microfilm Report of Dr. Richard P. McCormick : Visit to Great Britain, June to August 1960* (Trenton: New Jersey Tercentenary Commission, 1960).

<sup>64</sup> *New Brunswick Home News*, August 21, 1960.

<sup>65</sup> RNJTC, 38.

<sup>66</sup> Memorandum to Mason Gross, January 22, 1963, re: difficult negotiations with the David Davies, Mason Gross Papers, Box 110, Folder 1.

There were remarkable nuggets within the series. The first volume was Richard McCormick's *New Jersey from Colony to State, 1609–1789*, which is a standard in the field. Volume 16, *Medicine and Health in New Jersey: A History* by David L. Cowen, was “a model of synthesis.”<sup>67</sup>

The task of finding an expert in a particular subfield, who was agreeable to producing a text on schedule in time for inclusion in the series, must have been difficult. To their credit, in general they were dealing with experienced authors who would continue to produce in that field. Table 6 is a snapshot of the ten most prolific authors who wrote for the series. A close examination of their professional roots (as a sample of the broader group of authors) shows the intimate connection of this series with Rutgers University and Princeton University. It also shows that, although some were full-time writers, the majority were academics (6 out of the top 10). It is also interesting to note that the volume on *Painting and Sculpture in New Jersey* was written by the curator of painting and sculpture at the Newark Museum. They knew where to find the experts they needed. It is not clear whether this was due to the influence of McCormick or Huber and Lane.

Apparently the series was not commercially profitable. Van Nostrand went out of business soon after the series came out, but it is unknown if their collapse was due to the burden of the series.<sup>68</sup> This was a deep series, encompassing a huge range of topics. Indeed it was a mammoth effort to inject a new baseline of scholarship into the field of

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<sup>67</sup> Email message, Karen Reeds, February 28, 2009.

<sup>68</sup> Birkner, 98.

New Jersey history. What is not clear is whether all the books have held up over the years. Some have been important; others “will go to a well deserved oblivion.”<sup>69</sup>

Trying to sort out this series has been a challenge. Two ways of looking at it are included here. First, Table 6 contains a list of the ten most prolific writers in the series, since continuing to write is often a measure of success. In addition, in Appendix B, there is an analysis of the series, based on how many copies persist in libraries (as represented in World Cat) after more than forty years.

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<sup>69</sup> Birkner, 99.

Table 6: The Top Ten Most Prolific Authors in the Historical Series, Including Affiliations<sup>70</sup>

Author	# of titles	Historical Series title	Affiliation
William H Gerdts	156	<i>Painting and Sculpture in New Jersey</i>	Newark Museum, Newark, NJ, curator of painting and sculpture, 1954 –
Earl Schenck Miers	136	<i>New Jersey and the Civil War: an Album of Contemporary Accounts</i>	Previously director of Rutgers University Press; self-employed author and historian, 1953–72; member, New Jersey Civil War Centennial Commission
Harry B. Weiss	135	<i>Life in Early New Jersey</i>	Writer and historian, 1956–72; Proprietor, The Past Times Press, 1956–72.
Julian P. Boyd	88	<i>Fundamental Laws and Constitutions of New Jersey, 1664–1964</i> ; edited, with introduction	Princeton University, librarian, 1940–52; professor of history, 1952–72
John Robinson Pierce	68	<i>The Research State: A History of Science in New Jersey</i>	Bell Telephone Laboratories, Murray Hill, NJ, director of research communications principles, 1958–62; executive director, Research-Communications Principles and Communications Systems Divisions, 1962–65
Wesley Frank Craven	63	<i>New Jersey and the English Colonization of North America</i>	Princeton University, Edwards Professor of American History, 1950–64; George Henry Davis '86 Professor of American History, 1964–73
David L. Cowen	56	<i>Medicine and Health in New Jersey: A History</i>	Rutgers University, College of Pharmacy, professor of history, 1960–74
Alan Gowans	46	<i>Architecture in New Jersey: A Record of American Civilization</i>	Rutgers University, 1948–53; University of Delaware, Newark, associate professor, 1956–59; professor, 1959–66; chairman of department of art and art history, 1956–66
Duane Lockard	31	<i>The New Jersey Governor: A Study in Political Power</i>	Connecticut College, assistant professor of political science, 1951–61; Princeton University, associate professor, 1961–65; professor of political science, 1965–
Richard P. McCormick	28	<i>New Jersey from Colony to State, 1609–1789</i>	

<sup>70</sup> This analysis is based on the number of books for each author listed on [www.worldcat.org](http://www.worldcat.org). (The authors' background notes were drawn from Contemporary Authors Online, Rutgers University Libraries).

In a similar academic project to the Historical Series, with the support of the Advisory History Committee and the Advisory Education Committee, five scholars were commissioned to prepare lectures on topics in New Jersey history.

- Early Colonial Developments: Wesley Frank Craven (Princeton)
- New Jersey and the Founding of the Nation: Richard P. McCormick
- The 19th Century: Transition from Agrarian to Industrial State: John T. Cunningham
- Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Movement: Arthur S. Link (Princeton)
- New Jersey in the 20th Century: William Miller (Attorney, Princeton)

The opportunity to have the lecturer come and present was offered to all the colleges and universities in the state. Each speaker was paid \$250 to prepare the lecture, with an opportunity to collect a \$75 fee every time it was offered. This was a modest success.<sup>71</sup>

Twenty-five lectures were given at sixteen different institutions.<sup>72</sup>

#### Part of the Tercentenary, but Funded Separately

The two largest projects that came out of the Tercentenary Commission were not specifically named in the founding legislation, but were successfully lobbied for under the heading of the Tercentenary. The New Jersey Cultural Center was funded separately from the commission. Like so many other efforts, the need for new quarters for the State Library, the State Archives, and the State Museum was well known before the Tercentenary. With the additional impetus provided by the celebration, the legislature authorized borrowing just over seven million dollars from the New Jersey Teachers Pension and Annuity Fund, to build what was known as the New Jersey Cultural Center. The complex included a new State Library and a museum complex on State Street along

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<sup>71</sup> Tercentenary Commission Files, Box 13.

<sup>72</sup> RNJTC, 52.

the Delaware River, right next to the State Capitol. Ground was broken in January 1963, and the complex was dedicated in September 1965.<sup>73</sup> Roger McDonough got his new buildings.

The other big building project was added by the legislature in 1960, sponsored by the same legislators who sponsored the Tercentenary Bill two years earlier. The 1964–1965 New York World’s Fair had a common origin with the New Jersey Tercentenary Commission, in that both were meant to commemorate the historical roots of the colonization of the Middle Atlantic region.<sup>74</sup> When New Jersey committed to participation in the fair, legislation was passed making it part of the Tercentenary program.

The first piece of the World’s Fair program to be played out in the public eye was an architectural competition, to determine the design of the pavilion. Governor Meyner gave the finalists a luncheon at the fairgrounds on March 3, 1961. This intermediary stage seemed to be designed to feed the publicity machine. The finalist was announced almost a year later on February 10, 1962.<sup>75</sup> The winning design by Philip Sheridan Collins consisted of twenty-one pavilions around a central garden. Various live exhibits were done, particularly during the 1964 season.<sup>76</sup>

In a way that is similar to the success of the Historymobile, the World’s Fair New Jersey pavilion was largely funded by private industry:

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<sup>73</sup> RNJTC, 56–58.

<sup>74</sup> RNJTC, 91.

<sup>75</sup> RNJTC, 93–94.

<sup>76</sup> RNJTC, 95.

More than six hundred industrial firms contributed over \$1,200,000 to the New Jersey Tercentenary Fund, the major portion of which was used to build and operate the pavilion. In addition, at least \$100,000 worth of exhibits were contributed to the pavilion.<sup>77</sup>

This account is not meant to encompass the entire program, something that the *Report* did well. There was a certain amount of chaos, some of which promoted New Jersey history, and some of which was just plain fun. Because there were advisory committees planning programs and county committees planning programs and local committees planning programs, lots of stakeholders got many initiatives off the ground under the Tercentenary umbrella, each focusing on its particular area of expertise. Art exhibitions, photography contests, music festivals, and a new dahlia were created in honor of the Tercentenary.<sup>78</sup> Activities included planting the state tree, holding a Boy Scout Jamboree, and creating a Boy Scout patch honoring the Tercentenary, and creating a float honoring the Tercentenary in the Miss America pageant.

And then, of course, there were the local, grassroots celebrations. There was a boom in the publication of local histories. There were historical markers, flagpoles, and 300<sup>th</sup>-birthday parties, prizes for the first baby born in 1964, monuments to commemorate local events, beauty contests, and a beard-growing contest.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> RNJTC, 100.

<sup>78</sup> RNJTC, 79.

<sup>79</sup> RNJTC, 115–86.

### Did it Work?

How many of the projects that were sponsored by the Tercentenary were really appropriate? Was this about history or a way to shake loose support for various projects from the state government? David Davies, in his unpublished draft of the final report, thought it was the latter. Specifically he felt that McDonough had used the Tercentenary to reach his own goals:

And McDonough, though neither an author nor historian, saw in a statewide celebration the means for achieving a long sought archives-library-museum-auditorium-planetarium complex as part of the State Capitol Group in Trenton. He also thought that celebration plans could include a resumption of publication of the New Jersey Archives.<sup>80</sup>

This assertion by Davis is contradicted by McDonough's record. Davies may not have been aware of McDonough's avocation for the study of history and his support of public history. McDonough was truly interested in history. This was evident in the early part of his career and is confirmed by those who knew him.<sup>81</sup> Yet, he was also an opportunist and a gifted politician.

Perhaps Davies was right, at least in some cases. By placing it within the broader context of New Jersey historiography, the Tercentenary was used as a tool to accomplish many things that were already within the planning stage. The Historymobile, the Jerseymen History Club program, the Cultural Center, and the Colonial Records Project all have this in common. All these projects were being actively considered a long time before the Tercentenary project was drawn up. The Historymobile and the History clubs were both modeled after the achievements of Clifford Lord in Wisconsin. The Cultural

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<sup>80</sup> Foreword, Box 48, Tercentenary Files.

<sup>81</sup> Interview, Karl J. Niederer, March 5, 2009; Email message, Bernard Bush, March 12, 2009.

Center answered the long-cherished need for an expanded space for the service agencies under Roger McDonough's leadership. Richard McCormick had applied for a Fulbright scholarship to go to Europe to hunt up primary sources.<sup>82</sup> It was after that did not come through that he got funding for the same project from the Tercentenary Commission.

This could indicate that the Tercentenary was a *mélange* of projects that had been waiting for an opportunity, or it could be viewed as proof that getting these projects funded took stubborn persistence and should be honored as such. Just because the Tercentenary was used to fund projects that had been around for a while, does not those projects inappropriate.

A close examination of the local work that was done under the aegis of the Tercentenary turns up many projects that had been tabled due to lack of funding.

If your town or city needs a new public library building or an addition to a present library, it might pay to campaign for it now. Call it a "Tercentenary Library." Take advantage of the enthusiasm being generated by the State's 300th anniversary.<sup>83</sup>

This was part of a plug for the Tercentenary Celebration that was given in 1963. It constitutes evidence that on the grassroots level the energy of the Tercentenary was being used to fund neglected projects.

The Tercentenary structure was so diffuse that it became many different things for many different people. David Davies' office in Trenton handled several of the larger projects. For instance, he was actively engaged in trying to persuade Rutgers University Press to take on the publication of the Historical Series. Over all, however, the bulk of the activities emanated from the advisory committees and from the county and local

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<sup>82</sup> Birkner, 83.

<sup>83</sup> Arthur Wakeling, "How to get a Tercentenary Library." Let's Talk Tercentenary Day, Box 66, Tercentenary Files.

committees. The greatest amount of work done by the central office was to act as a clearinghouse and a kind of head cheerleader for many people. Each power base generated a program that reflected local or specialized priorities. Symphonies, art shows, photography contests: different people took ownership of the Tercentenary and used it in their own ways.

It was a statewide celebration that was uniquely suited to its time. There was time available for civic engagement that is harder to come by in the twenty-first century. There was money available. This was the expansionist era of the Great Society. The Vietnam War had begun but was not yet on the front pages. Lyndon Johnson was President. There was money for buildings and infrastructure (the New Jersey Turnpike and the Garden State Parkway both opened in the mid-1950s). Communities were smaller and less diverse.

What was the impact of the Tercentenary? Did it achieve what McCormick, McDonough, and Cunningham envisioned in May of 1958, when the original proposal was drafted for Governor Meyner? A diffuse celebration, with local communities bearing the cost for the local celebrations, was prescribed from the beginning.<sup>84</sup> The large, scholarly projects (the Colonial Records Project and the New Jersey Historical Series) are prominent in the original plan. McCormick, McDonough, and Cunningham also designed the administrative structure that was used (a liaison office and expert advisory committees).

There are two projects that were included in the enabling legislation that did not happen under the umbrella of the Tercentenary Commission. Historical preservation was

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<sup>84</sup> Memo to Meyner, May 16, 1958, RPM Papers, Box 58.

being pursued aggressively by McCormick, and it will be discussed in the next chapter. What happened to the idea of resuming publication of the *New Jersey Archives* series? The Third Series of the *New Jersey Archives* did not begin publication until 1974. Beginning in 1962, Bernard Bush spent seven years at the State Library, working for Roger McDonough as historical editor. The apparent intention of this position was to provide for the resumption of that series. Instead, Bush was assigned to a series of apparently more urgent projects. He was assigned to work on the Historymobile and eventually wrote the final report of the Tercentenary Commission. He was also directed to begin his work on the series with the “colonial laws volume,” which was enormously time-consuming. Without more papers from McDonough, it may be impossible to tell whether this project was delayed deliberately.<sup>85</sup>

To a certain extent, they got what they wanted, but that doesn’t answer the first question. What was the impact? That is difficult to measure. There are anecdotal accounts of children being drawn into history, but the Tercentenary was a useful tool in the hands of a dedicated teacher.<sup>86</sup>

Was it history? This is the fundamental question that must be asked about the Tercentenary Celebration, or any festival that is put on in the name of public history. The answer depends on who was doing the organizing and what their passion was. A Tercentenary picnic was still a picnic but with a historical footnote or reminder attached to it.

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<sup>85</sup> Email message, Bernard Bush, April 2, 2009.

<sup>86</sup> Interview, Karl J. Niederer, March 5, 2009.

Some of it was certainly history. Many towns took on the task of writing a local history, and collecting historical artifacts, through the lens of the Tercentenary. Classes all over the state set special projects inspired by the Tercentenary.

What kind of history was it? Part of the tone can be taken from Clifford Lord's address to the New Jersey Historical Society Conference in 1951. History in this long pause after the Second World War was intimately connected patriotism. It was heroic, filled with stories of success and progress of the majority. There was "an unabashed connection between history and patriotism."<sup>87</sup>

As we step back from 1964 and look at the issues involved with public history as a whole, the Tercentenary appears to be simply a case study, illustrating a common debate. Whether the product is a television series, a museum exhibit, or a coloring book, did the frills and the silliness make it any less real? Can history entertain?

This is an inevitable debate whenever history steps out of the classroom.

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<sup>87</sup> Kammen, *Mystic Chords*, 573.

### Chapter 3:

#### A Permanent Infrastructure for Public History

If the building of the Cultural Center and the opportunity to go to Europe in search of Colonial documents were the core reasons for the Tercentenary, it would have quickly disappeared. The Tercentenary is not the end of the story but the beginning of a new, more institutionalized phase in New Jersey public history. There are two narratives worth recounting, two other places that saw activity at least from Richard McCormick and Roger McDonough. The events were not sequential. Some of these efforts were taking place simultaneously with the Tercentenary, some immediately after.

McCormick's efforts to persuade the state bureaucracy to give additional time and attention to historic preservation began at virtually the same time as his push to establish the Tercentenary. The effort to establish a permanent state historical commission began during the Tercentenary year.

#### Historic Preservation

Preservation had deep roots in New Jersey. McCormick accounted for some of those roots in a speech he made to the History Issues Convention in 1995.

In 1902 the state acquired the Indian King Tavern in Haddonfield. Over the next forty-five years eleven other notable structures came under state custody. These responsibilities led to the creation of the Historic Sites Commission in 1931...<sup>1</sup>

The Historic Sites Commission was managed for most of the 1930s by George deBenneville Keim. The commission secured state ownership of several sites and

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<sup>1</sup> McCormick, "A History of New Jersey History," 4.

managed their care. They also placed an earlier series of historic markers. The last report (1944–45) described the commission being absorbed into the Division of Forestry, Geology, Parks and Historic Sites, as part of the state government reorganization in 1945. There are copies of four reports of this earlier commission on file at the State Library. They were a convincing argument that New Jersey history and historic preservation were being vigorously pursued before the Second World War.<sup>2</sup>

During the first decade after the War, it looked as if the preservation movement would get swept aside by the extraordinary amount of development that was going on. Richard McCormick wrote to Salvatore Bontempo (head of the Department of Conservation and Economic Development) in November 1958, urging an aggressive attack on the “Historic Sites Problem.”<sup>3</sup> The program proposed by McCormick became the New Jersey Committee for Historic Sites Evaluation. The core of this committee looked remarkably like the core of the Tercentenary. McCormick was Chairman, and Roger McDonough and Bob Lunny both had seats on the committee.<sup>4</sup>

The Historic Sites Evaluation program was undertaken in tandem with the Tercentenary, although it was funded separately.<sup>5</sup> The same committee also managed the installation of a new series of historical markers, most of which were placed in 1963 and 1964, to mark the Tercentenary. In the meantime, the Federal government passed several laws supporting historic preservation, including the “National Historic Preservation Act,

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<sup>2</sup> The *Report[s] of the Director* are available from the State Library for 1931–1932, 1932–1933, 1943–1944, 1944–1945.

<sup>3</sup> RPM Papers, Box 63, Folder 2.

<sup>4</sup> Based on minutes from a meeting in October 1960, RPM Papers, Box 63, Folder 2.

<sup>5</sup> Robert W. Craig, “New Jersey’s “Road” to the 66 Act,” *Historic Preservation Bulletin* (2007).

which established the National Register of Historic Places.”<sup>6</sup> This act provided both structure and a mandate to have a State Register.

In June 1967 Governor Hughes signed legislation that created the Historic Sites Council and the New Jersey Historic Trust.<sup>7</sup> This established the modern infrastructure for historic preservation in New Jersey. The activism of McCormick and McDonough, with the enthusiastic support of Cunningham, was a major part of the momentum that pushed the state toward a willingness to provide permanent infrastructure for this purpose.

#### The New Jersey Historical Commission

The Tercentenary was one of two commemorative celebrations done on the state level in the early 1960s. The other was the Civil War Centennial, which was directed by Everett J. Landers and ran simultaneously with the Tercentenary, from 1961 to 1965. The idea for the permanent Historical Commission did not come from McCormick, who credited Everett Landers with the idea.<sup>8</sup> Rather than create a new commission for each anniversary, support grew for creating a permanent commission to coordinate celebrations:

The Commission’s mandate, defined in the 1966 legislation that created it, included producing scholarly and educational materials; fostering museums, libraries, and other historical organizations; and holding public programs and commemorative events.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Constance M. Greiff, “The Past 40 Years of Historic Preservation by the State of New Jersey,” *Historic Preservation Bulletin* (2007). (With many thanks to Robert W. Craig.)

<sup>7</sup> Greiff, “The Past 40 Years.”

<sup>8</sup> This was confirmed by Lander’s files in the Civil War Centennial Files, Box 5.

<sup>9</sup> Howard L. Green, “Forty Years of the New Jersey Historical Commission,” 2–3.

Again, the “Irish Mob” and their allies were in the thick of things. There was an informal meeting to discuss the idea of the commission in March 1964.<sup>10</sup> Among the attendees at the initial meeting were McCormick and McDonough, as well as David Davies, the Executive Director of the Tercentenary. Among those who were invited but did not attend were Kenneth Chorley, Clifford Lord, Earl Schenck Miers, and Paul Troast, all familiar names from McCormick’s network. The minutes from this meeting are interesting because they show a wide-ranging discussion. Landers seemed determined to put the Civil War Centennial Commission out of business if he could get another agency to take over “unfinished business.”

Their original brainstorming was quite extensive. Bernard Bush wrote a long document entitled “Problems and Recommendations for the Attention of the New Jersey Historical Commission.” This was submitted to the Commission over the signature of McDonough. It was quite a shopping list, with significant roots in the successes of the Tercentenary. Particularly in the first section it clearly shows the influence of McDonough, who stressed library cooperation throughout his career.

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<sup>10</sup> RPM Papers, Box 63, Folder 2.

Table 7: Problems and Recommendations for the Attention of the New Jersey Historical Commission (Selective Summary)<sup>11</sup>

<p>1. Library and Archival Facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enlargement of the historical collections of the State Library</li> <li>• Cooperation among the various local history collections in the state (Annual Workshop on Library Resources in New Jersey History)</li> <li>• Work with County and Municipal Archives, Public Libraries, and School Libraries to maximize the effectiveness of each in meeting local history needs</li> </ul>
<p>2. Research and Publication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reaffirmation of intention to publish additional volumes of the <i>New Jersey Archives</i> series</li> <li>• Inauguration of a periodical emanating from the commission</li> <li>• Establishment at Rutgers University a Center for Research in New Jersey History</li> <li>• Offer of “advice and assistance” to the New Jersey Historical Society publication program (10)</li> <li>• Offer of financial support to the New Jersey Library Association Bibliography Committee</li> </ul>
<p>3. Museum facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversight of the State Museum’s efforts to cover New Jersey History</li> <li>• Intention to survey the other museum collections in the State</li> </ul>
<p>4. Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study of the K-12 curriculum in New Jersey History and the place of New Jersey History in the “teacher training curriculum”</li> <li>• “To expand the functions of the state colleges as centers for the study of state and local history, to be undertaken with their cooperation” (20)</li> <li>• Expansion of the educational mandate of the State Library, State Museum, and the Historic Sites office in this area</li> </ul>
<p>5. Historical Societies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close cooperation with the New Jersey Historical Society</li> <li>• Cooperation with the League of Historical Societies of New Jersey</li> </ul>
<p>6. Junior Historian Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looking for additional ways to support this very successful program</li> </ul>
<p>7. Commemorative Observances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeking an official mandate to be responsible for commemorating the American Revolution Bicentennial (including the funds)</li> <li>• Need for a survey that keeps track of local historical anniversaries</li> </ul>
<p>8. Historic preservation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of the role of the Office of Historic Sites, exploring ways to cooperate</li> <li>• Role of the commission in assuring the passage of the New Jersey Historic Trust legislation</li> </ul>

<sup>11</sup> RPM Papers, Box 73, Folder 5

<p>9. Special Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overviews of special projects already in process under the aegis of other organizations like the New Jersey Library Association and various historical societies</li> <li>• Suggestions that programs like the American History Workshop (from the Civil War Centennial) and the Historymobile be continued</li> <li>• Consideration of artistic programs</li> </ul>
<p>10. Supplementary Recommendations: Comments on Personnel, Legislation, and Financial Support. Observations about cooperating with other states.</p>



The original public members of the commission included McCormick, Cunningham, Julian Boyd, and Earl Schenck Miers (familiar names from the Tercentenary programs), along with several others. McDonough, as State Librarian, was an ex officio member.<sup>12</sup> McCormick was immediately elected chairman of the new commission. As is often true with many such bodies, it was relatively easy to dream, and much more difficult to get it funded. There was not much financial backing. McCormick commented, “We met for a year without any money and talked about what we we’d do if we got any money.”<sup>13</sup> This was not for lack of effort on McCormick’s part. Among his papers is a letter to Governor Richard Hughes in March 1967, speaking of “the urgency of securing funding.”<sup>14</sup> This is an important point when comparing the Tercentenary and the Historical Commission, and when observing the change in political reality over the course of the careers of McCormick, McDonough, and Cunningham. In the early 1960s, they usually got what they wanted. After a slow start, The Historical Commission thrived for a while in the 1970s, but during its second decade it began to struggle a lot harder to

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<sup>12</sup> Email message, Bernard Bush, March 12, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Birkner, 103.

<sup>14</sup> RPM Papers, Box 73, Folder 6.

be funded for even a portion of its possible activities. In the 1990s the commission struggled to survive.<sup>15</sup>

Measured by longevity, this is the most significant achievement of the “Irish Mob.” It has the feel of a capstone, twenty years after they first met during the time of the Conference of New Jersey Historians. All three of them were involved. McCormick’s involvement persisted until the mid-1980s, which makes it a much longer run than his active involvement in the Tercentenary Commission. When talking to Michael Birkner, McCormick called it “in one sense, the peak of all I had worked for.”<sup>16</sup>

In fiscal 1969, the commission, with a mandate to launch the Bicentennial celebrations, had enough money to hire staff. Bernard Bush was hired as the Executive Director of the Historical Commission in March 1969. His tenure there would last twenty-two years, making him a key figure in this phase of public New Jersey history.

Bush set up the programs that are still with us today. Following the example of McCormick in his early years at the New Jersey Historical Society, the Historical Commission conducts an annual meeting every fall. There continues to be a monthly newsletter, serving some of the same functions as the *Jersey Gazette*. In addition, there is a grant program, which has become one of the main aspects of the commission’s mandate.<sup>17</sup> Bush also began a publications program, which did not survive funding cuts.<sup>18</sup>

A close look at the enabling legislation of the Historical Commission over time shows the evolution of New Jersey history. In 1983 there was the additional mandate to conduct an African-American history program. In 1999 there was a significant infusion

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<sup>15</sup> Howard Green, “Forty Years of the New Jersey Historical Commission.”

<sup>16</sup> Birkner, 173.

<sup>17</sup> Interview, Marc Mappen, April 3, 2009.

<sup>18</sup> Howard L. Green, “Forty Years of the New Jersey Historical Commission.”

of money to fund a grant program through the Historical Commission, thus changing its primary mandate over time. There has been a shift away from the celebrations, and a greater focus on the grant program—something McCormick was very critical of.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, when separate celebratory commissions are convened (something the original mandate of the Historical Commission was supposed to prevent), they have often not been funded at all. This is reminiscent of what happened to the Federal Tercentenary Commission and highlights the reality of public history in the years since the Great Society. There is a stronger infrastructure but much less money.

To chase down the blossoming infrastructure of interest groups and institutions that now have a stake in New Jersey history would take another, equally complex study. The state bureaucracy (the Historical Commission, the State Museum, the Historic Preservation Office, and the Historic Trust, among others) has been well matched by interest groups that now advocate for preservation (Preservation, NJ) and state and local history (Advocates for New Jersey History and the New Jersey Studies Academic Alliance). Funding levels have never returned to the 1960s levels, but there are now vocal, organized stakeholders that will keep the field vibrant and alive.

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<sup>19</sup> Birkner, 103.

Chapter 4:  
Moving On

What was the influence of the “Irish Mob” in the 1960s, beyond these specific projects?

When looking at the career of Richard McCormick through the 1950s and the 1960s, it would be a misnomer to focus exclusively on his work at the New Jersey Historical Society and the considerable effort that he put into launching the Tercentenary Commission. He undertook a multitude of activities, but his focus was always on scholarship. Throughout this time, McCormick was actively pursuing a distinguished academic career. He withdrew significantly from the day-to-day management of the commission when he went to Britain for a summer on behalf of the Colonial Records Project in 1960. In 1961 McCormick received a Fulbright Fellowship, enabling him to go to Cambridge University for a year to teach American History.

Between his return from Cambridge and taking up (in a similar way) the initial chairmanship of the New Jersey Historical Commission, McCormick published one article and three books.<sup>1</sup> One of them, *Rutgers: A Bicentennial History*, came out of his appointment as University Historian. McCormick received the Lindback Award for distinguished teaching and research at Rutgers University in 1964. It can be inferred from that honor that the bulk of his time was probably spent on campus, continuing to

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<sup>1</sup> “New Perspectives on Jacksonian Politics” *The American Historical Review* 65 (1960) 288-301. *New Jersey from Colony to State, 1609-1789* published by Van Nostrand (1964); *The Second American Party System: Party Formation in the Jacksonian Era* published by the University of North Carolina Press in 1966; and *Rutgers, A Bicentennial History* published by Rutgers University Press (also in 1966).

teach. As we look at his accomplishments during that time period, it is important not to underestimate his commitment to scholarly writing and teaching, regardless how much service he was willing to give on the state and local level. In 1966 he was elected chairman of the History Department, which would not have happened if he had spent too much time in Trenton or Newark.<sup>2</sup>

It is impossible to consider the work of John Cunningham without confronting his bibliography, which is included as an appendix to this study. In 1963 he left the *Newark News* to work as a freelance writer and speaker. For almost two years he wrote a weekly Tercentenary Tale (at approximately \$200 each). At some level, the Tercentenary Tales launched his career as a popular writer about New Jersey history. The visibility was tremendously valuable. Through his collaboration with Richard McCormick, and many others whom he met through McCormick, he found his vocation as a spinner of New Jersey tales.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, he was also a working writer. Cunningham's bibliography is filled with promotional pieces, boosting the cause of hospitals, industries, libraries, and zoos. Cunningham accepted many opportunities to promote New Jersey, writing for utility companies, industry groups, banks, and professional associations. He refined the short illustrated essay into an art form. The most common comment about his writing from academics is that it has never had any footnotes or attributions. This places Cunningham's work firmly in the popular genre, unlike the work of McCormick, Donald Sinclair, Julian Boyd, and the rest of the cohort. Like the others, he was a hard worker.

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<sup>2</sup> Melinda Zack, *Guide to the Richard P. McCormick Papers, 1929–2006*. Rutgers Libraries. University Archives, 2005. [webpage] Accessed April 17, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Interview, John T Cunningham, March 18, 2009.

At the same time, he was different because he did not have an academic appointment. If he was going to write for a living, he needed to be paid directly for it.<sup>4</sup> In 1970 Cunningham founded Afton Publishing, to publish the wealth of fourth-grade curricular materials on New Jersey history that he was developing.<sup>5</sup> His long, distinguished, and unique career did more to popularize New Jersey history than any of these other luminaries.

Roger McDonough's career in the 1960s and beyond was similar to McCormick's in the sense that he continually worked on special projects that moved his career forward. Because his position provided him with an opportunity to provide excellent services to the State Legislature, he had the strongest political role of the three original members of the "Irish Mob." Throughout his career he worked as a lobbyist on both the State and the Federal level. This was McDonough's greatest strength and his greatest contribution to the "Irish Mob." As the ex-officio Secretary of the commission he was also involved with the entire Tercentenary process. When the Historical Commission was authorized, he held a similar role, secretary and master lobbyist.

McDonough's greatest achievement was shepherding the legislation to build the Cultural Center next to the State Capitol through the state legislature. Then there was the enormous task of moving the State Library and the State Museum into their new quarters. The new building opened in 1965. In 1967 McDonough pushed through a major comprehensive library-funding bill.<sup>6</sup> In addition, around the same time a huge spike in federal funding was coming through after President Johnson signed the Library Services

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<sup>4</sup> Interview, John T. Cunningham, March 18, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Email, John T. Cunningham, April 18, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> Edwin Beckerman, ed., *A History of New Jersey Libraries: 1750-1996* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1997), 45.

and Construction Act in 1964.<sup>7</sup> The 1960s saw a unique time of growth in library service in New Jersey, guided, formed and encouraged by Roger McDonough. As a consummate politician, he was intensely involved in getting funding, distributing funding, and fighting for the continuation of funding.

Roger McDonough remained as State Librarian until 1975. He saw the golden age of library funding come and go. As the lobbying got more difficult toward the end, it is possible that he retired out of frustration.<sup>8</sup> At the time he was one of the most influential people in Trenton.<sup>9</sup> The full story of his tenure as Director of the Division of State Library, Archives and History remains to be told.

Robert Lunny spent twenty-one years as Director of the New Jersey Historical Society. From that station he was a loyal ally, helping to create both the Historymobile and the Jerseymen program. Speaking at his memorial service in March 1989, McCormick gave this assessment of his tenure:

A strong educational program was launched... Substantial additions were made to the endowment. The Society's building was completely renovated... New impetus was given to the publication program ... Bob made the Society a bright ornament in the cultural life of our state.<sup>10</sup>

This group of men represented an extraordinary phenomenon in New Jersey history between the 1940s and the 1970s. They achieved career-long tenure in influential positions. They were friends, companions, and allies. Their stories weave together so much that it is sometimes impossible to avoid talking about one without the other.

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<sup>7</sup> Beckerman, *History*, 114.

<sup>8</sup> McDonough's papers are stored at the New Jersey State Library (Trenton), but they have not been processed by an archivist.

<sup>9</sup> Interview Karl J. Niederer, March 5, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> McCormick's remarks at Lunny's memorial service, RPM Papers, Box 17, folder 5.

Robert Lunny, who was hired by McCormick at the NJHS in 1956, remained there for twenty-one years. Donald Sinclair received a phone call from Donald Cameron more or less immediately after returning from service in Europe. He remained with Rutgers Libraries until 1982. Donald “Scotty” Cameron was University Librarian at Rutgers from 1944 to 1971. He had an incalculable impact on the development of New Jersey history, providing the funds to acquire and house a magnificent collection. Roger McDonough was hired as “State Librarian” in 1947 and retired in 1975. Richard P. McCormick was hired by Rutgers University in 1945 and retired in 1982. John Cunningham began a long career in writing about New Jersey history in the 1950s and is still going strong. This is just a glimpse of a remarkably stable and extraordinarily productive and proactive New Jersey history community.

What did they accomplish? One thing they did not do was to “create” New Jersey history. There was already an active group of New Jersey historians in place when McCormick arrived on the scene. This can be seen when looking at the Conference of the New Jersey Historians, the NJHS, and the pre-War Historic Sites Commission.

New Jersey history did receive from this core group of companions a restructuring and a tremendous influx of scholarly (and popular) attention for a time. They took advantage of the “Great Society,” when the tax base of the state (and of the nation) was expanding exponentially and there was money to be spent on libraries and archives. It was then possible to build new libraries and purchase collections. Archives were created during the two decades after the end of the war that enabled the study of New Jersey history to expand exponentially. Because of that single factor, it is impossible to compare current conditions with the ones that they faced.

This was also a moment in time when history was fashionable and popular. It was connected with 1950s patriotism and the need to educate the citizenry. History was heroic for a time, and optimistic. This was the hook that got government agencies on all levels to buy in at a new level. A specific kind of celebratory history became a tool in the Cold War. This was “consensus” history.<sup>11</sup>

And it was all about to come crashing down. The civil rights battle was playing out across the South. The summer of 1967 was deadly in many urban centers across the United States. The rioting in Newark made it immediate for New Jersey. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Bobby Kennedy were assassinated within months of each other in 1968. The cost of the Vietnam War brought the Great Society to a halt, and opposition to Vietnam swept across college campuses. In 1969 Richard Nixon was inaugurated as President.

Richard McCormick served as chair of a special faculty committee to deal with the aftermath of racial protests on all three Rutgers campuses. Roger McDonough was elected President of the American Library Association in 1969, the year that it was almost torn apart by generational shifts, women’s issues, and opposition to the war in Vietnam.<sup>12</sup> John Cunningham traveled the state much more than the others. He would write about Newark in the aftermath of the 1967 riots that tore that city apart. As a former reporter, he wrote effectively about the costs of urban decline.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Tyrrell, *Historians*, 245.

<sup>12</sup> Kenneth F. Kister, *Eric Moon: The Life and Library Times* (Jefferson, N.C.; London: McFarland & Co, 2002).

<sup>13</sup> John T. Cunningham and Homer Hill, *Newark* (Newark, N.J.: New Jersey Historical Society, 1988).

Sixties radicalism was not only about Vietnam; it gave us identity politics and liberation movements. History got a lot more complicated. The consensus was over. The “New Left” attacked the collaboration between historians and the government.<sup>14</sup> Views of what was (and was not) relevant history changed dramatically. The single narrative that was evident in the exhibits installed in the Historymobile, in 1960s K–12 history textbooks, and in the classroom pageants got a lot more complicated. The much more contentious experience of the Civil War Centennial Commission, simultaneous with the national civil rights struggle, is a reminder that history can be contentious and disruptive.

The connection between history and New Jersey state government was also institutionalized or systematized during this time. The New Jersey Historical Commission instituted an ongoing grant program, a newsletter, and an annual conference. Each county now had a Cultural and Heritage Commission. Local history and competition for state grant money to restore historic buildings are now commonplace. This is one of the greatest accomplishments of the entrepreneurial period. This infrastructure both shows progress since the Tercentenary and provides a structure for the entrepreneurial spirit that prevailed in the late 1950s, when programs were created on an ad hoc basis.

Public funding for history is now both more routine and more competitive. History has become wider, broader, and more complex. Most of the “buildings” that now need to be built are in cyberspace. We are a much more mobile society, lacking the stability that fostered relationships in the post-war era. McCormick, McDonough,

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<sup>14</sup> Tyrrell, *Historians*, 246.

Cunningham, and their allies inhabited a world very different from ours, and it is questionable if we shall ever see their like again.

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- Civil War Centennial Files, New Jersey State Archives, Trenton, NJ
- Sinclair Alumni File, University Archives, Rutgers University Libraries.
- Newark Librarians Clippings File, Newark Public Library, Newark, NJ

### Appendix list:

Appendix A: John T. Cunningham Selected Annotated Bibliography

Appendix B: New Jersey Historical Series Analysis

Appendix A:  
John T. Cunningham – Selected Annotated Bibliography

*New Jersey, the State of Variety.* Newark: Carteret Savings and Loan, 1950s.

This is a pamphlet published as a public service by Carteret Savings and Loan “New Jersey’s largest Savings and Loan Association, dedicated to the encouragement of thrift and home ownership.” This is an overview of the different regions of the state.

*Railroading in New Jersey.* New York: Associated Railroads of New Jersey, 1951.

The subtitle is “A series of seventeen articles written for the magazine of the Newark Sunday News January 7, to April 29, 1951.” This anthology is thoroughly illustrated, and very interesting. Mr. Cunningham returned to this subject in 1997 with “Railroads in New Jersey: The Formative Years.”(op.cit.)

*Made in New Jersey; The Industrial Story of a State.* New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1954.

This appeared first as an extended series in the *Newark Sunday News Magazine*. Like other volumes from the same time period, it is an interesting snapshot, but it needs to be updated.

*Garden State: The Story of Agriculture in New Jersey.* New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1955.

This is a survey of New Jersey agriculture, as it existed in the mid-1950s. It was well illustrated by Horace Porter, staff photographer at the *Newark News*. A very useful text when it was first published, it would be interesting to see it updated.

*The New Jersey Shore.* New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1958.

Like several other books from the same time period, these essays originally appeared in the *Newark News*, and are illustrated by the staff of the *News*. It is rich in detail, although some of it will be dated by this point.

*Woodlands of New Jersey.* Newark, N.J.: Newark News, 1958.

This pamphlet was reprinted from the *Newark News*, and distributed by Atlantic City Electric Company. “These four articles were published in the Sunday Newark News Magazine March 2, 9, 16, and 23, 1958.” The articles are on “The Woodlands of New Jersey,” “Forests of the North,” “The Pine Barrens,” and “Wonderlands in the Rough.”

*I'm from New Jersey*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 1960.

An overview of New Jersey history, culture, agriculture and industry... originally printed as an article for the magazine. This text is very broad in scope for something that is less than 50 pages in length. Probably out of date by now.

*Political Deadheads in New Jersey*. Washington, D.C.: Federation for Railway Progress, 1962.

This was an article in *Railway Progress* in April 1952. The author describes free rail-passes for politicians as a "racket."

*This is to be a People's Library: Newark Public Library, 1888-1963*. Newark: The Library, 1963.

Written at the request of the Trustees of Newark Public Library. Describes the history of the library since its inception in 1886. This is a precious document for the library history buff.

*New Jersey, the Adaptable State*. Trenton, N.J.: Dept. of Conservation and Economic Development, Division of Resource Development, Bureau of Commerce, State Promotion Section, 1964.

This was published by the State government as part of the celebration of the Tercentenary. Promoting New Jersey as a place to do business.

*The New Jersey Sampler; Historic Tales of Old New Jersey*. Upper Montclair: New Jersey Almanac, 1964.

This is a compilation of 50 Tercentenary Tales, illustrated by Homer Hill. This is wonderful reading, basically a storybook format.

*Can New Jersey afford, 1. Library Service Out of Reach of Three-Fourths of Its People?* Trenton: New Jersey Library Association. 1965.

This is folded sheet that looks like it was mailed to Library Association members. It promotes the publication of "Libraries for the People of New Jersey or Knowledge for all." It gives a digest of that report.

*New Jersey, America's Main Road*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966. (*New Jersey, America's main road*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976.)

Preface speaks of the need for "an attractive, readable one-volume history."(xiii) At least when it was originally published in 1966, he makes a case that there is nothing available that gives a one-volume history of New Jersey. So this was written to fill that gap. In it Cunningham stresses the central role New Jersey has played in US History, a crossroads where many have paused and accomplished extraordinary things. As is always true with texts that try to cover a lot of material, there are broad generalities here, but the text is well written and pleasantly illustrated.

*Chatham; At the Crossing of the Fishawack.* Chatham, N.J.: Chatham Historical Society, 1967.

The history of Chatham, New Jersey – sponsored by the residents, with an enthusiastic tone and Cunningham’s gift for storytelling. This is a longer text that covers the history of Chatham from the Revolution through the mid Sixties.

*This is New Jersey.* New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1953, 1968, 1978. After an introductory essay “The Spirit of New Jersey” -- this text is comprised of 21 essays, one for each county. Each essay is well illustrated with photographs, and line drawings to demonstrate historical points. This edition concluded with a New Jersey annotated book list, compiled by Charles Cummings and Robert Blackwell of the Newark Public Library.

*George Washington Stayed Awake Here: A speech.* Morristown, N.J.: Society of the Cincinnati, 1968.

An early and shorter (9 pages) description of the passion for Washington’s tenure at Morristown that eventually led to writing “An Uncertain Revolution” many years later.

*Clara Maass; a Nurse, a Hospital, a Spirit.* Cedar Grove, NJ: Rae Publishing Co, 1968.  
*Clara Maass; a Nurse, a Hospital, a Spirit.* Cedar Grove, NJ: Rae Publishing Co, 1976.  
 This is an idealistic commemoration of the life of Clara Maass, and the hospital that was renamed in her honor in Newark. It includes the story of the roots of that hospital in the German immigrant community in Newark.

*Teacher's Guide to On the Go in New Jersey.* Florham Park, N.J.: Afton Pub, 1970.

*On the Go in New Jersey.* Florham Park, N.J.: Afton Pub, 1970.

Clearly a textbook on New Jersey geography, with light touches of history, for (perhaps) 2nd or 3rd graders.

———, Public Service Electric and Gas Company. *Six cities forward: Expanding investment opportunities in New Jersey.* Newark: PSE & G, 1970.

This is a glossy promotional publication from the Electric Company. It promotes business opportunities in Newark, Elizabeth, Jersey City, Paterson, Trenton, and Camden.

*Colonial New Jersey.* New York: T. Nelson, 1971.

The Story of New Jersey from early European migration, to just before the Civil War. Begins with an essay that describes the geographical characteristics of New Jersey, and suggests the influence on the events that followed. This text is a popular length (150 aprox) and quite readable.

*Turtle Back Zoo: A Facility of the Essex County Park Commission.* Essex County Park Commission; Turtle Back Zoo, West Orange, N.J., 1971.

This is a children's book, aimed at the K-5 market. Colorful drawings and one or two page essays market the zoo to the county residents.

*University in the Forest; The Story of Drew University.* Florham Park, N.J.: Afton Pub, 1972.

Mr. Cunningham is a long time resident in Florham Park, and an alumnus of Drew University. This is quite a long, straightforward narrative history of the University, ending in 1970.

*Capsules of New Jersey History.* Trenton: New Jersey Manufacturers Insurance, 1974.

These are one page stories from New Jersey history, shorter but very similar to the Tercentenary Tales. There are approximately 20, bound together, but this was clearly done after they were published. Next to it on the shelf is a book of these things that says that they were originally published as part of the monthly ad by Manufacturers Insurance in New Jersey Business Magazine.

—— & Canfield, W. M. *The American Revolution in New Jersey* Florham Park, N.J.: Afton Pub, 1975.

—— & Canfield, B. *Where Ideas Grow!* Florham, N.J.: Afton Pub, 1975.

—— & Canfield, B. *Scenes of the American Revolution.* Florham Park, N.J.: Afton Publishing, 1975.

——, Ritzer, F. W., & Canfield, B. *The Afton Portfolio of Indians of the Forest.* Florham Park, N.J.: Afton Pub, 1975.

This is a group of large format charts for teachers. Bill Canfield drew them, and Cunningham wrote the text on the back. They were beautiful, colorful and very creative.

*Thomas Edison: They Called Him Wizard!* Newark, N.J.: Public Service Electric and Gas, 1979.

Based on a series of 18 articles written for the International Committee for the Centennial of Light. Each chapter or article is a two-page spread, nicely illustrated. Ends with a brief chronology.

*New Jersey's Rich Harvest: A Brief History of Agriculture in New Jersey.* Published in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the New Jersey Agricultural Society. Trenton: The Society, 1981.

Written for the society. Brief, illustrated essays on topics in the history of New Jersey Agriculture.

— & Sinclair, D. A. *Murder Did Pay: Nineteenth-century New Jersey Murders*. New Jersey historical classics. Newark: New Jersey Historical Society, 1982.

This is actually a compilation of 4 nineteenth century pamphlets, depicting notorious murder cases. Cunningham wrote an introduction, “The Righteous Profit” and explanatory notes for each case. He does an excellent job of explaining the moralistic purpose of such horrific stories. The volume concluded with Sinclair’s bibliography of materials related to murder in New Jersey that were published before the 20th century.

— & Choroszewski, W. *The Land Called New Jersey*. Jersey City, N.J.: First Jersey National Corp., 1983.

— & Choroszewski, W. *New Jersey, a State of Minds*. New Jersey: First Jersey National Corp, 1984.

— & Choroszewski, W. *Saving Our Best*. Jersey City, N.J.: First Jersey National Corp, 1985.

This was a series of glossy, promotional brochures illustrated by Walter Choroszewski, and written by Cunningham. Lots of photos and short paragraphs, upbeat promotional material.

*Miss Liberty Finds a Home*. Andover, N.J.: Afton Pub. 1985.

A brief pamphlet published by the New Jersey Bankers Association about the construction of the Statue of Liberty.

— & Homer Hill. *Newark*. Newark, N.J.: New Jersey Historical Society, 1988.

Introduction refers to finishing the first edition in 1966. It’s a coffee table book, copiously illustrated. Begins with the arrival of Europeans in 1666, an expedition led by Robert Treat. There are sidebars with additional material, including one entitled “The Original People.” The chapters are short and readable.

*New Jersey: A Mirror on America*. Florham Park, N.J.: Afton Pub, 1988.

The idea of this text is that the tremendous variations in New Jersey, and all phases, industries, politics and problems, make New Jersey a reflection of the United States as a whole. The location has made sure that New Jersey has played a central role in almost every major historical movement or event since colonization. This is an effective K-12 history text, with dose of geography and geographical determinism thrown in.

— & Governor's Council on New Jersey Outdoors. *Promises to Keep*. Trenton, N.J.: The Council, 1988.

An interpretation of the March 1987 report of the Governor’s Council on New Jersey outdoors — meant to appeal to the public. Beautiful, glossy pictures ... a polemic.

*The East of Jersey: A History of the General Board of Proprietors of the Eastern Division of New Jersey.* Newark: New Jersey Historical Society, 1992.

This is the story of the oldest business corporation in North America, written at the request of and with the help of the Society. Longer and more thorough than some of his other projects.

— & Cummings, C. F. *Remembering Essex: A Pictorial History of Essex County, New Jersey.* Virginia Beach, VA: The Donning, 1995.

Written with his friend and collaborator, Charles Cummings from the Newark Public Library. Glossy, and full of historic pictures.

*Baseball in New Jersey: The Game of History.* Trenton (N.J.): New Jersey State Museum, 1995.

An exhibition catalog, written for the State Museum. The history of baseball in New Jersey is long and fascinating. Some beautiful pictures.

*Railroads in New Jersey: The Formative Years.* Andover, NJ: Afton Pub, 1997.

This is a large format, well-illustrated text on the early years of railroads in New Jersey. Each chapter ends with a short bibliography.

*Chatham.* Images of America. Dover, N.H.: Arcadia, 1997.

A picturesque New Jersey town on the Passaic River is a beautiful case study for this series. Done at the encouragement and with the cooperation of the local historical society, this volume contains some beautiful historical photography.

— & Canfield, W. M. *You, New Jersey and the World.* Morristown, N.J.: Afton Pub. Co.; distributed by Silver Burdett, 1972.

—, Sarappo, A., & Cunningham, P. *You, New Jersey and the World.* Andover, NJ: Afton Pub, 1999.

—, Cunningham, P., & Zanzo, E. *Tu, New Jersey y el Mundo.* Andover, NJ: Afton Pub, 2000.

(1986 Edition) History, Geography, and Sociology... a textbook for 4th graders.

— & Diverio, R. *Drew University.* College history series. Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2000.

This is almost entirely a pictorial work with affectionate captions. Cunningham graduated from Drew in 1938 and wrote a much longer book on the same subject in 1972.

— & Cole, K. D. *Atlantic City.* Images of America. Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2000.

Part of the iconic “Scenes of America” series, this book is the size and shape of a postcard. Each spread included a picture, and a descriptive paragraph by Mr. Cunningham. (Bridgewater)

— & Murtha, H. *Portrait of a Century: A Photographic Retrospective of New Jersey, 1900-1999*. New Brunswick, NJ: The Commission, 2001.

This was part of a project by the Cornelius Low House in Middlesex County. It pinpoints the intersection between New Jersey history and the national narrative, with plenty of historic photographs.

*Chatham Township*. Images of America. Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2001.

Each of these volumes tell a similar story of rural to suburban progression. At the same time, each testifies to a unique history, unique pictures, and a special small town story.

*Florham Park*. Images of America. Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 1999

*Florham Park*. Images of America. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Pub, 2001.

This is part of a series that Mr. Cunningham did a lot of work for, but at the same time it is done with special affection, since he is a long time resident in Florham Park. The result is a compassionate case study of transition from a quiet country town to bustling suburbia.

*Ellis Island: Immigration's Shining Center*. The making of America. Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2003.

A well-written, popular history of Ellis Island, and its role in processing immigrants during the great migration. It's only limitations come from the length (about 150 pages), in contrast to the complexity of the subject matter.

*The Uncertain Revolution: Washington and the Continental Army at Morristown*. West Creek, NJ: Down The Shore Pub, 2007.

This is a longer narrative. The American Revolution as it played out in the mountains of Western New Jersey, and almost found disaster among broke, frozen, and starving troops in Jockey Hollow. We forget how close the revolution came to not succeeding. A great adventure and pleasantly illustrated.

## Appendix B: New Jersey Historical Series Analysis

<u>New Jersey Historical Series Titles</u>	<u>Author</u>	How Widely Held (library copies)? <sup>1</sup>
New Jersey From Colony to State, 1609-1789	Richard Patrick McCormick	565
Woodrow Wilson, Reform Governor: a Documentary Narrative	David W. Hirst	408
New Jersey and the English Colonization of North America	Wesley Frank Craven	280
Princeton and Rutgers: the Two Colonial Colleges of New Jersey	George P. Schmidt	249
New Jersey and the Revolutionary War	Alfred Hoyt Bill	246
The Geology and Geography of New Jersey	Kemble Widmer	243
The Early Dutch and Swedish Settlers of New Jersey	Adrian Coulter Leiby	233
Where Cities Meet: the Urbanization of New Jersey	John E Bebout;	
Architecture in New Jersey, a Record of American Civilization	Ronald J. Grele	214
Tours of Historic New Jersey	Alan Gowans	213
The New Jersey Governor; a Study in Political Power	Adeline Pepper	199
The New Jersey Proprietors and Their Lands, 1634-1776	Duane Lockard	198
Fundamental Laws and Constitutions of New Jersey, 1664-1964; edited, with introduction	John Edwin Pomfret	191
Religion in New Jersey: a Brief History	Julian P. Boyd	187
Medicine and Health in New Jersey: a History	Wallace N. Jamison	185
Organized Labor in New Jersey	David L. Cowen	181
New Jersey and the Civil War: an Album of Contemporary accounts	Leo Troy	173
The New Jersey High School: a History	Earl Schenck Miers	166
The Story of the Jersey Shore	Robert D. Bole;	
Elementary education in New Jersey: a History	Laurence Bicknell Johnson	162
Radicals and Visionaries; a History of Dissent in New Jersey	Harold Fisher Wilson	161
Painting and Sculpture in New Jersey	Roscoe L. West	161
The People of New Jersey	Morris Schonbach	157
The Research State: a History of Science in New Jersey	William H. Gerdtz	153
The Literary Heritage of New Jersey	Rudolph J. Vecoli	152
The Decorative Arts of Early New Jersey	John Robinson Pierce;	
Life in Early New Jersey	Arthur G Tressler	148
Banking and insurance in New Jersey: a History	Laurence Bedwell Holland;	
Historic New Jersey through Visitors' Eyes	Nathaniel Burt;	
New Jersey in the Automobile Age; a History of Transportation	A. Walton Litz	148
	Margaret E. White	146
	Harry B. Weiss	138
	Bruce H. French	133
	Miriam V. Studley	123
	Horace Jerome Cranmer	118

<sup>1</sup> Analysis is based on the holdings in WorldCat ([www.worldcat.org](http://www.worldcat.org)).