

HISTORY OF MONMOUTH COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

by Franklin Ellis, 1885

TINTON FALLS was known prior to 1673 as the "Falls of Shrewsbury." The land in its vicinity was first located by James Grover, one of the original Monmouth patentees. He had settled at Gravesend, Long Island, in 1646. On account of his opposition to the Dutch government and proclaiming in favor of Cromwell in 1655, he left Long Island, disposing of his plantation to Thomas Delavall in 1666. The following year he appears at Middletown, in this State, as one of the original patentees of the Monmouth patent, and is chosen the first town clerk and surveyor of the township. The position afforded him excellent opportunity for inspecting all the territory included in the patent, and enabled him to locate such lands for himself as he might select. Within a few years after taking up his portion of the land grant it was decided that the wet, boggy meadows contained valuable deposits of iron-ore, and he, with others, took means to secure a large tract of land at that place with a view to its development. He sent to New England for James and Henry Leonard, who were millwrights, and well skilled in the erection of iron-mills, furnaces and forges, and who had assisted in the construction of most of the iron-works in the Plymouth colony.

At this place began the first mining of iron ore in New Jersey. Soon after the building of the furnace by James Grover and others, they, under date of October 25, 1675, conveyed to Lewis Morris, of the island of Barbadoes, a triangular piece of land containing three thousand five hundred and forty acres, being part of the original patent obtained in 1667. This grant gave the purchaser and his associates "full liberty to dig, delve and carry away all such mines for iron as they shall find or see fit to dig and carry away to the iron-works, that shall be found in that tract of land that lies enclosed between the south-east branch of the Raritan river and the Whale pond on the sea side, and is bounded from thence by the sea and branch of the sea to the eastward to the Raritan river, he or they paying all such just damages to the owners of land where they shall dig, as shall be judged is done by trespass of cattle, or otherwise sustained by the carting and carrying of the said mine to the works."

From the earliest town records and other public documents it is ascertained that the smelting furnace and extensive iron-works in operation on this "ore tract" employed during 1680 seventy negroes and many white servants. The ore used was found in wet meadows and swamps, known as "bog ore," being a hydrous peroxide of iron, containing forty percent of metallic iron. These and other similar ores dug from undrained marshes of the eastern coast of the State furnished much of the material for the early iron-works of Massachusetts and Pennsylvania during the colonial times.

The iron made here was said by the resident proprietors to be of very good quality, and the trade was of great benefit to the province of East Jersey. The usual price obtained for a ton of the iron-ore was six dollars and a half, and a ton of bar-iron at that time brought in London eighteen pounds sterling. Of so much importance were these works thought to be for the development of the territory that, in response to a petition of the owner to the provincial authorities for public protection and encouragement, special legislation was adopted in his favor. By a vote of the General Assembly, April 6, 1676, it was enacted "as touching Colonel Morris' request, the Deputies are willing the lands and works belonging properly to the Iron-Works shall or may be rate-free for seven years, excepting in extraordinary cases, as war or the like."

It appears, from letters of early settlers in the towns of Shrewsbury and Middletown to their friends and relatives in England and Scotland, that during the whole length of time these iron-works were exempt from taxation (1676-1683) Colonel Morris was successfully pursuing this industry, encouraging skilled workmen and affording employment to a large number of laborers.

Colonel Lewis Morris was originally from Monmouthshire, England, and there inherited the paternal estate of Tintern. He raised a troop of horse for Parliament, for which Charles the First confiscated his estate. In return for his losses Cromwell subsequently indemnified him. He early embraced Cromwell's cause, and having signalized himself on several occasions so as to win Cromwell's regard, he was selected, in 1654, to proceed to the West Indies with an expedition intended to secure the mastery of these seas. While there he received a colonel's commission, and was second in command upon the attack on Jamaica. Having a nephew settled at Barbadoes, he was induced to purchase an estate on that island, and not deeming it advisable to return to England after the restoration, he subsequently became part owner of the Island of St. Lucia, and took up his abode permanently in the West Indies, remaining there until the death of his brother Richard in New York, when he came to that city in 1673. On his arrival he assumed the guardianship of his infant nephew, Lewis Morris, who was previously under the care of the Dutch government.

To the plantation which Colonel Morris bought of James Grover and others he gave the name of Tintern Manor (later corrupted to Tinton), after the family estate in Monmouthshire, Wales. He was appointed a justice of the court, and held the position several years. He was active in the organization of the county, and gave to it the name "Monmouth;" from his native county in Wales. He was a member of the Council until August 16, 1683. In February of the following year the minutes state that Colonel Lewis Morris "being mostly absent and living in New York," and Captain Palmer and Laurens Andriessen not able to attend, others were selected in their places. Upon his settlement in New York he was appointed a member of Governor

Dongan's Council, and was such until 1686. He died in May, 1691, at "his plantation over against Harlem" (Meaning Morrisania, N.Y.).

The iron-works were described in 1680 by Secretary Nichols, when speaking of Colonel Morris' plantation, as "his iron-mills, his manours and divers other buildings for his servants and dependants, together with sixty or seventy Negros about the mill and husbandry." The description of East Jersey by the proprietors in 1682 says: "What sort of mines or minerals are in the bowels of the earth after-time must produce, the inhabitants not having yet employed themselves in search thereof; but there is already a smelting furnace and forge set up in the colony where is made good iron, which is of great benefit to the country," this having reference to Colonel Morris' iron-works at Tinton. Oldmixon, writing in 1708, says: "Between this town (Shrewsbury) and Middletown is an Iron-Works, but we do not understand it has been any great benefit to the Proprietors."

It is evident that the works were not of much profit at this time. In 1714, Lewis Morris (afterward the Governor), to whom the property came from his uncle, asked "the Lords of Trade to encourage the Iron Interests in this Province." This is the latest mention found of the Morris iron-works, and it is probable that they were allowed to go down soon afterwards.

The property of Colonel Lewis Morris, who settled at Tinton Manor (now Tinton Falls) in 1673, was left by will to his nephew, Lewis Morris, the son of Richard. He had given or sold to "Lewis Morris, of Passage Point" (another nephew, and the son of Thomas Morris), a tract of land on Navarumsunk Neck, which was then known as Passage Point (now Black Point). This last-named Lewis Morris was appointed high sheriff of Monmouth County March 14, 1682-83, but did not serve. He was appointed commissioner of highways soon afterwards. He was a justice of the courts from 1691 to his death, in 1696. He is mentioned both as "Lewis Morris, of Passage Point," and as "Lewis Morris, Jr."

Lewis Morris, to whom Tinton Manor was left by Colonel Lewis Morris, was born at Morrisania, N.Y., in 1671. Bereft of his father and mother when very young, he was taken in charge of the Dutch government. Soon after the arrival of Colonel Lewis Morris from the Island of Barbadoes, in 1673, he assumed charge of the estate of his brother, Richard Morris, and of his nephew, the infant Lewis Morris. As he grew up, his strong passions and erratic disposition brought him into trouble with his uncle, and he ran away to Virginia and from thence went to the Island of Jamaica, but after a year or two returned and became reconciled with his uncle. His name first occurs in the records under date of June 25, 1689, when, at a Court of Sessions held at Middletown, information was presented by Benjamin Hick against John Jennings, John West, Edward Williams, Lewis Morris, Caleb Allen, Clement Masters, John Lippincott, Jr., William Hulett, Peter Parker and Thomas Wainwright "for running of races and playing at nyne-pins on the Sabbath Day."

On the 3rd of November, 1691, he was married to Isabella, daughter of James Graham, Attorney-General of the province, and settled at Tinton Manor. In 1692, at the age of twenty-one years, he was appointed judge of the Court of Common Right of East Jersey and became at the same time a member of Governor Andrew Hamilton's Council. He soon developed those qualities which in after-life gave him great influence in public affairs. On the arrival of Jeremiah Basse, in 1698, claiming the Governorship of the province by the appointment of only ten proprietors, instead of the requisite number of sixteen, Mr. Morris ranged himself with those who would not acknowledge his authority, and refused obedience to the legal tribunals and to those officials who upheld his claims as the chief functionary of the province. Basse's proclamation of his commission was made on the 8th of April, 1698, and a month thereafter Mr. Morris was fined fifty pounds for contemning the authority of the Court of Common Right, in session at Amboy. On the return of Andrew Hamilton as Governor, in 1700, Mr. Morris, was appointed president of the Council. Soon afterwards he addressed a letter to the bishop of London concerning the state of religion in the two provinces, and censuring the people of Middletown in particular for their immorality and evil practices.

This account of Lewis Morris (says Hon. George C. Beekman), should be received with considerable allowance, not alone because of his animosity to the people of this region, who had so frequently presented him and ignored his authority, but at the same time he wrote this letter he was anxious to secure the appointment of Governor from the British crown. He sought the influence of the Church of England, which would likely have some power. Andrew Bowne, whom he styles an Anabaptist, resided in Middletown township, as did also Richard Hartshorne, whom he styles a Quaker. Both of these men were prominently mentioned for the appointment of Governor. In this letter he adroitly poisons the minds of the great dignitaries of the Church of England against them, and parades his own zealous efforts in behalf of the church. He also gratifies his hatred of the people by abusing them. Lewis Morris was an ambitious and crafty man, and would have put the yoke of priestly tithes on the people of Monmouth without any scruples if it would have advanced his own interests. But the people of the county had as poor an opinion of him as he had of them, and when they broke up his court and arrested him they treated him like a common malefactor, holding both him and his court in the greatest contempt.

Mention of Lewis Morris is found in a communication by the Rev. Jacob Henderson, a missionary from London, dated June 12, 1712, and giving a representation of the state of the Church of England in New York and New Jersey, viz.:

"In New Jersey . . . the plurality of the Queen's Council are good churchmen, and have always opposed any attempts made to her prejudice by ye Quakers or other Dissenters, who have at their head one Coll. Lewis Morris, a professed churchman, but a man of noe manner of principles or credit; a man who calls the service of the church of England, Pageantry; who has joyned in en-

deavours to settle a conventicle in the city of New York, and whose practice it is to intercept letters, and let such as please him pass, and those ye doe not he destroys, as can be fully proved. This Coll. Lewis Morris, with the present Governour, Coll. Hunter, have written to the Lords Commissioners of Trade, to turn out of the Council six church of England men, and put in six others in their room, some of them Dissenters, and those that are of are such as will run into all the measures of the Assembly, and therefore of the worst consequences to the church in that Province."

In 1703, Morris was appointed a member of the Council of Lord Cornbury. He soon became prominent in opposition to the Governor, and in 1704 was suspended from the Council. He at once assumed the leadership of an opposition, being ably seconded by Thomas Gordon and Samuel Jennings. A remonstrance was made to the Queen setting forth the grievances under which they labored, and also a remonstrance to the Governor. This called forth from the Governor, in reply, a bitter denunciation of the men to whose agency he rightfully attributed the adopting of those views which so decidedly militated against the supremacy of his individual will. The member from Perth Amboy was referred to in disparaging terms as "one Thomas Gordon" and Morris and Jennings were stigmatized as men "known to have neither good principles nor good morals," notorious as "disturbers of the quiet and peace of the Province, possessed with passionate heats and the transports of most vindictive tempers." Lieutenant-Governor Ingoldsby and eight of the members of the Council presented a counter-memorial to Lord Lovelace, in which they said: "As to Mr. Morris, the whole County where he lived, namely the County of Monmouth, are witness to his troublesome temper, whereby he is a perfect torment to his neighbours; those who know him best have most reason of complaint, And since he came to write man, hath been Eminently concerned, if not Principall in all the Rebellious and disorders that have been in this Province, as may appear by his own hand writing . . . there is hardly a county in the Eastern Division wherein he did not succeed to stirr them to dangerous and notorious Riotts and Rebellions, but only the county of Bergen, where he did not faile for doing mischief for want of good will, But that the Dutch People therein were wiser, and treated him with that Contempt his Evill Designs Required . . . It was a werke they had no liking to, and so they closed their Resolutions among themselves, that they would not have to do with the Spiker-maker; that was the very term of Contempt (being Dutchmen) they used towards Morris, grounded upon the Iron-Works his Unkle left him." Elsewhere Morris and Samuel Jennings are characterized as "men known to be uneasy under all government, never consistent with themselves, and to whom all the factions and confusions in the governments of New Jersey and Pennsylvania for many years are wholly owing."

Mr. Morris was appointed chief justice of New Jersey in 1712, and of New York in 1720. In 1733 he was removed from the position of chief justice by Governor William Cosby, who, in giving his reasons for the removal, said, —

"But at another time, Mr. Morris having opened the Court, he adjourned it, according to his custome, to the next morning, but sitting up all that night and

drinking hard, he lay abed all the next day till near sunsett, when the people growing more uneasy at his delays, some of his friends, or his servants, awakened him, he got up, and Company being admitted into his Chamber, he asked what hour it was, they answered almost night; how can that be, said the Chief Justice, the sun has but just risen; and saying so he took up his Fiddle and played the Company a tune. These particulars, I assure you, I had from some of the Lawyers who were there at the times, and from several other persons of good Credit; the County was very uneasy, but not knowing how to get redress, were obliged to bear it."

Towards the close of 1734, the proceedings of Governor Cosby so exasperated his opponents that they determined to lay their grievances before the King, and they made Mr. Morris their messenger. He soon after visited England upon that mission, and remained until the death of Cosby in March, when he returned home and reached Morrisania October 7, 1736. The province was disturbed in its gubernational relations from that time to February 1738, when Lewis Morris was appointed Governor of New Jersey, he being the first Governor of the province separate from New York.

From about 1710, Lewis Morris was a resident of Morrisania, N.Y., though during his Governorship of New Jersey he resided at Kingsbury, near Trenton, where he died May 21, 1746. He was buried in the family vault at Morrisania. His property in Monmouth County was left to his son, Robert Hunter Morris, from whom it passed a few years later. In 1765 the mill property was owned by Daniel Hendrickson; later by Reuben Shive, and by William Remsen, who, in 1838, sold the mills to Pierson Hendrickson, who still owns them. After the property had passed from the Morris family there was a small foundry in operation upon it, at the Falls, for many years.

The first tavern at Tinton Falls was on the site of Nimrod Baulsir's residence. It was kept by Nicholas Van Brunt, who was sheriff of the county during the Revolution. In 1808 it was kept by Jacob Van Arsdale, and later by Forman Throckmorton, Gilbert Clayton, John Mount, Holmes Messler, and last by Nimrod Baulsir, from 1872 to 1883. The present hotel was changed to that use from a store about 1870, and kept by Edward Wilson, and at present by William Hendrickson.

The Tinton Falls post-office was established about 1840 with Pierson Hendrickson as post-master. He was succeeded by Daniel Holmes, William Smith, Nicholas Wilson, Samuel Bennet, David Haner and Benjamin Scott.

Tinton Falls was the home of Dr. Jacobus Hubbard, who is mentioned in a road record as residing there in 1713. His son, Jacobus Hubbard, also became a physician and also lived at Tinton Falls. Dr. William H. Hubbard, now of Red Bank, was a nephew of Dr. Jacobus Hubbard and settled at Tinton Falls in his early practice.

The mineral spring at the Falls is said to have been reserved by the Indians in their sale to the white settlers. It is strongly impregnated with iron, and is equal in flow and temperature in all seasons and weather. In

1838, Robert Morris opened a boarding-house within three hundred yards of the Spa Spring. In 1867 a company was organized to develop the property, and was later incorporated; nothing was done, and the company expired by limitation. The spring is now owned by men in New York.

THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH at Tinton Falls stood originally about half a mile south from the Falls, on land now owned by John Dean. A lot was given for the purpose in 1815 by James Withers. Trustees were appointed, but it does not appear that it was built until several years later. It was then used at that place until 1868, when it was moved to Tinton Falls, and used until 1872, when it was rebuilt, and was rededicated February 5, 1873. The pastors from that time have been James Moore, J. Lavelle, A.M. North, N.J. Wright, A.J. Gregory, W.H. Allen, and St.T. Grimes.

THE MADECONIAN ZION AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH was organized in 1854, and erected a building on Pine Brook, south of Tinton Falls, and on the line between Shrewsbury and Atlantic townships. The society was incorporated April 16, 1855. The church was placed under charge of the African Methodist Episcopal Church of Eatontown and is still in that connection. The house was used until 1884, when a new house was built, and dedicated December 14th in that year. The pastor in charge is the Rev. E. Hammett.