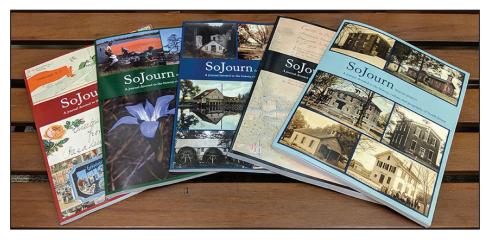
In the Time of Coronavirus

Annual Report of The South Jersey Culture & History Center at Stockton University, 2019–2020

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The South Jersey Culture & History Center at Stockton University, Annual Report 2019–2020



Background of the South Jersey Culture & History Center

Established in 2011, the South Jersey Culture & History Center (SJCHC) promotes awareness of the rich cultural and historical heritage of South Jersey,¹ believing that such awareness fosters appreciation and understanding within our local communities. We engage a diverse audience as we produce regionally relevant books and journals; participate in exhibitions of both art and artifacts; engage the public in South Jersey centric events and symposia; supervise Stockton students in meaningful internships with historical societies or historical sites; and conduct oral history interviews and video production to document the cultural and physical landscape around us.

The lower eight counties of New Jersey include the Pine Barrens with its environmental wonders and history of natural resource exploitation; the bayshore, with oystering, fishing, and shipbuilding traditions; agricultural belts that include a number of late nineteenth-century farming communities established by Russian Jews escaping from czarist pogroms; the many seaside resorts; and urbanized manufacturing centers. SJCHC uses each of the methods detailed above to explore and share our rich culture and history. *SoJourn*, our biannual journal, provides the opportunity for devotees of local history to write for an enthusiastic readership. Our book publishing efforts include new full-length treatises and biographical works, along with republications of important texts about South Jersey, long out of print and difficult to find.

Tom Kinsella, Professor of Literature, has directed the center since its inception. Paul W. Schopp joined as Assistant Director in 2014. Together, and working with approximately 40 students per year, they have developed and maintain a local history press that is supported by related exhibitions, symposia and digital media.

Student Internships at a Glance

Since spring 2014 (when Paul W. Schopp joined the center), nearly 200 Stockton students have enrolled in various SJCHC internships:

 16 students at the graduate and undergraduate level have enrolled in external internships at historical societies, museums and cultural sites including Atlantic County Historical Society, Atlantic County Veterans Museum, Batsto, Cold Spring Village,

1 South Jersey, by our definition, comprises the eight southernmost counties of New Jersey: Burlington, Ocean, Camden, Gloucester, Atlantic, Salem, Cumberland and Cape May.

Museum of the American Revolution, Rancocas Nature Center, Vineland Historical & Antiquarian Society and the Whitesbog Preservation Trust.

- 25 students at the graduate and undergraduate level have completed internships on campus, not including editing and library internships. Student projects have included oral history projects (seven students), library exhibitions, research into the Alliance Colony (efforts that paved the way for the Alliance Heritage Center), and research on various South Jersey topics.
- 14 students, largely undergraduates, have completed internships at Special Collections & Archives within the Bjork Library. These students have benefited from the excellent tutelage of Heather Perez and Louise Tillstrom with oversight by Tom Kinsella.
- Finally, 137 students, largely undergraduates, have enrolled as editing interns.

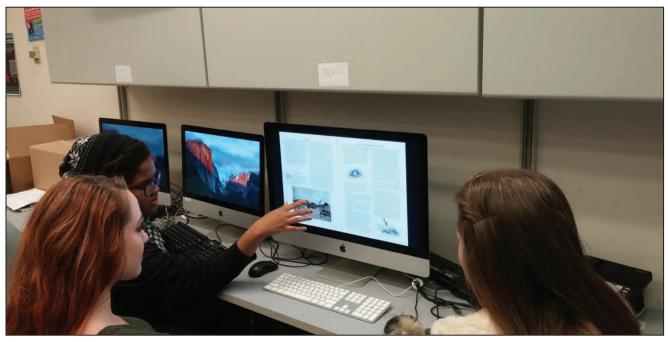
Since 2014, under the supervision of Tom Kinsella, 192 students have enrolled in internships related to the study of South Jersey. During that same period, Kinsella twice offered senior seminars to Literature majors on South Jersey topics that enrolled an additional 41 students. As a result, the total number of students introduced to systematic consideration of local history is over 230. While most of these students fall into the traditional 18–22year demographic, several students have been much older. The gender of students is approximately 2 to 1 female to male; they are diverse in racial and sexual orientation.

The Editing Internship

In spring 2016, with the encouragement of his Dean, Tom Kinsella inaugurated an ongoing *Editing Internship*. He established strategies through which Stockton students assist in the creation of publications, and today, proudly, SJCHC maintains a student-staffed local history press. To date we have published eighteen titles and seven issues of *SoJourn*, our biannual local history journal.

During their internship, editing interns are provided with instruction in copy- and line editing as well as layout and design concepts using Adobe InDesign. In this production-oriented course, students quickly join work on publishing projects: some interns inaugurate new projects, establishing the initial text and completing copy editing; others join projects underway, completing necessary editing and beginning layout and design; still others complete work begun one or two semesters previously. Students have often contributed new forwards which are printed in our republished titles.

In summer 2019, fall 2019 and spring 2020, SJCHC worked with many talented editing interns. Those students helped complete work on the impressive list of publications listed here:



Editing Interns at work on SoJourn.

Ken Tompkins and Robert Gregg. *Blogging 40*. Eds. Taylor Cills, Diondra Meningall-Burney and Margaret Simek. Galloway, NJ: South Jersey Culture & History Center, 2019. 225 pp.

- Moses Klein. Migdal Zophim & Farming in the Jewish Colonies of South Jersey. Foreword by Tom Kinsella. Eds. Devyn Brown and Sara Brown. Galloway, NJ: South Jersey Culture & History Center, 2019. xxiv + 266pp.
- William Stainsby. *The Jewish Colonies of South Jersey; Historical Sketch of Their Establishment and Growth.* Foreword by Tom Kinsella. Eds. Sviatlana Buslovich and Katie Cushinotto. Galloway, NJ: Alliance Heritage Center, 2019. 54 pp.
- Ruth Weinstein. *Back to the Land: Alliance Colony to the Ozarks in Four Generations*. Eds. Tom Kinsella, Sara Brown, Raymond Dudo. Galloway, NJ: Alliance Heritage Center, 2020. 226pp.
- Daniel L. Risley. *Views of Pioneer Life*. Galloway, NJ: South Jersey Culture & History Center, 2020. 26 pp.
- SoJourn: A Journal Devoted to the History, Culture, and Geography of South Jersey. Many student editors. 4.1 (Summer 2019). 102 pp.

The broad variety of articles published in *SoJourn*, seventy-five articles to date with more on the way, helps to illustrate our contribution to the exploration, enjoyment, interpretation, understanding, and preservation of New Jersey history. Articles such as "School Segregation in the Post-Civil War Era: Burlington

County, New Jersey, 1865–1915," "The Southern Pine Barrens: An Ethnic Archipelago" and "The Great Island Lying Before Shackamaxon: Petty Island, Lenape-Colonist Relations, and Provincial Rivalries, 1678-1701" present new and vital studies of New Jersey history. Other articles, including "From Butcher Knife to Scalpel: Four Generations of South Jersey Physicians,""The First African American Excursion to Atlantic City," and "Made in Nesco: The Inter-Generational Project of Place-Making," capture slices of South Jersey life and culture in times past. The audience for Solourn is the educated common reader. We are not publishing academic texts for

specialists, but rather attempting to provide readable, historically accurate, scholarly, and enjoyable texts for all.

We have the same goals of historic preservation and dissemination in mind when selecting standalone publications. Robert Thompson's Burlington Biographies (2016) provides a fresh look at the history of Burlington, New Jersey, with its rich heritage and longstanding lore. Production of this hardcover study was partially supported with a grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission. Garment Workers of South Jersey: Nine Oral Histories (2016) collects personal recollections from workers of various ethnicities in South Jersey's garment industry during the mid-twentieth century. Charles K. Landis' A Trip to Mars (2015), co-published with the Vineland Historical and Antiquarian Society, made available to the public for the first time the sci-fi fiction of the founder of Vineland, New Jersey. Landis used this text as a vehicle to explore and express his Utopian townplanning viewpoints. Ted Gordon's Herbert Payne: Last of the Old-Time Charcoal Makers and His Coaling *Process* (2015) relates the charcoal-making process of Herbie Payne, an African American who, by the mid 1960s (the time of the description), had been making charcoal in a traditional Pinelands method for decades.

You can find the SJCHC Summer 2020 sales catalog, rewritten and redesigned by two-semester editing intern Lindsay Wilson, here: <u>https://stockton.</u> <u>edu/sjchc/publications/documents/Summer_</u> <u>Cat_2020_online.pdf</u>.



Herbert Payne working a charcoal pit, from Last of the Old-Time Charcoal Makers.

Impact of the Coronavirus Event on Publication

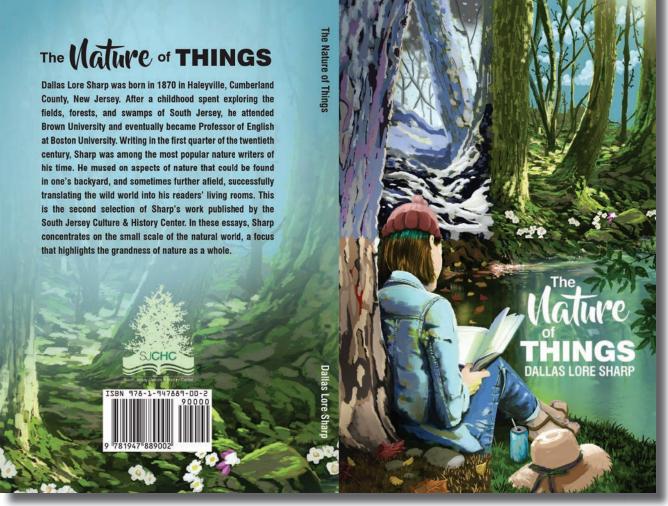
The coronavirus event, taking full hold in mid-March 2020, made it necessary for Stockton to restrict nearly all remaining funding in the SJCHC annual budget. This lack of funding has delayed the publication of our latest title: *The Nature of Things* by Dallas Lore Sharp.

We have several other titles nearly completed and ready for publication, including the next issue of *SoJourn*. We hope that a least a portion of our budget can be supplied for the approaching fiscal year. Aware of the difficult economic realities, however, we have looked for other sources of short-term funding.

On June 19, 2020, SJCHC submitted a grant proposal to the New Jersey Historical Commission asking for support for the publication of four further titles, each nearly ready for publication. If the grant is successful, four additional titles, described below, should be in print by the summer of 2021.

No Wild Rivers. By Claude Epstein, Stockton Professor Emeritus of Environmental Studies. A 300page study providing detailed environmental history of the major waterways and tributaries in South Jersey, including in-depth descriptions of the cultural impacts on those waterways across time.

The Still Family Trilogy. A boxed set containing the republished works of the African American Still brothers. We have previously published James



Dallas Lore Sharp, *The Nature of Things* (Galloway: South Jersey Culture & History Center, forthcoming). Essays for this volume were selected from Dallas Lore Sharp's *The Whole Year Round* by student editor Marie Durar. The text was established and edited by Na'Mira Crosby and Lindsay Wilson. Additional proofreading and editing by Brad Bacchetti, Sara DiLello, Jack Kahvejian, Paul Kayser, Sarah Augustine, Ashley Cranmer, Mitch Aponte, Ana Beste, Brendan Honick, Taylor Ketcham, Nicholas Matousch, Rosemary Reidy and Somaillan Slack. Cover design was suggested by Lindsay Wilson, with comments by other interns, and completed by Gary Schenck.



Early Recollections and Life of Dr. James Still (2015) and *William Still: His Life and Work to this Time* (2017). Born and raised near modern-day Shamong Township, Burlington County, New Jersey, James Still was a highly successful self-trained physician; his brother James Still was a prime mover in the Philadelphia Underground Railroad during the 1850s.

Still's autobiography and James Boyd's biography of William Still. We are now preparing for the press Kate Pickard's 1856 biographical work about Peter Still and his family, *The Kidnapped and the Ransomed*.

The Still Family trilogy is our most ambitious publishing undertaking to date. Together, the stories of the Still brothers—James, William, and Peter demonstrate the complexity of African American life in nineteenth-century South Jersey, with its difficulties, but also its successes. Our republications of the autobiography of James Still (2015) and the biography of William (2017) have sold hundreds of copies and have been especially useful to Samuel C. Still III, chairman of the Dr. James Still Education Center, in his community outreach. These three titles have never been published together and remain less well-known than they deserve to be.

In 2017, SJCHC sponsored a well-attended African American History and Genealogy Symposium at Stockton University's Kramer Hall. We intend to hold a similar event in 2021, centered on the lives of the Still brothers. We expect the publication of these three works as a collection to generate considerable interest in universities and, perhaps, high schools across New Jersey. The trilogy will be available for sale through the Dr. James Still Education Center, directly from SJCHC, through Second Time Books in Mount Laurel, NJ, and Amazon.com. Making them available together, we believe, will introduce an important and generally unknown aspect of African American life in South Jersey, and New Jersey, to a new and diverse audience.

Adventures in Idealism. Katharine Sabsovich details the life and career of her husband, H. L. Sabsovich, director of the Woodbine Agricultural School and later general agent for the Baron de Hirsch Fund in Adventures in Idealism (1922). This will be our fourth title relating to the history of Jewish farming in South Jersey. The excellent and moving story of H. L. Sabsovich provides an additional, important perspective to the challenges Russian Jewish immigrants faced upon arrival in the United States during the last decades of the nineteenth century and the opening decades of the twentieth century. Each of these titles provides implicit commentary on the immigration situation facing our country today, and, perhaps, provides lessons to be learned. SJCHC, in cooperation with the Alliance Heritage Center of Stockton, is committed to the continued publication of works documenting Jewish farming in South Jersey. In the future, we also expect to publish works documenting other immigrant groups in the region.

Beauty is Never Enough. The first-time publication of the autobiography of Elizabeth B. Alton chronicles the life of an influential Atlantic County woman. Born into a successful Atlantic City family, Alton describes in engaging detail a life that included walking in the very first Miss America boardwalk parade, marriage and motherhood, her activity in the Women's Clubs of New Jersey (including becoming president of that organization) as well as her pivotal role in founding Stockton University. But the most intriguing aspect of her biography is the behind-thescenes look at her forty-year career working as part of the Miss America Pageant, rising to the secondhighest position of authority. You will remember a few years ago when the Pageant had a scandal that induced more than one editorialist to muse: "This wouldn't happen if women were in charge." Alton tells the very interesting story of a previous time when women were, indeed, in charge. We believe this title has an opportunity to add a historic perspective not only to the history of Atlantic City and the Miss America Pageant, but also to the long-term women's movement and today's #MeToo movement as well.

Other titles scheduled for future publication (at various stages of preparation) include *With Eager Hands: A Biography of Elizabeth Coleman White* of Whitesbog; a monograph with the working title *Pious Palaces: Patterned Brick Architecture in West New Jersey*; a collection of poetry representing the viewpoints of activists in *Welcome to the Resistance: Poetry as Protest*; an archaeological report on Native American cultural practices in *Savich Farm: A 4000-Year-Old Ceremonial Site in South Jersey*; and a gazetteer of South Jersey's African American settlements, readily usable for Black History, Africana Studies, and local history.

The contributions of Paul W. Schopp to SJCHC publications are invaluable. Our pipeline of current and future titles is full and impressive. Without Paul's efforts, the quality and quantity of our work could not be maintained.

Exhibitions

In the recent past, 2017–2018, SJCHC played a key role in developing a Noyes Museum exhibition at Kramer Hall in Hammonton titled *The Lure of South Jersey: The Resettlement of Migrants*, which explored the motivations behind immigration and accounts of those who emigrated to South Jersey over time. The SJCHC also provided a series of public lectures in conjunction with the exhibition.

During fall 2019 and spring 2020, Tom Kinsella and SJCHC teamed up with the Noyes Museum, University Archivist Heather Perez, several local historical societies² and student interns to curate a splendid exhibition entitled Estell Empire: Ships, Settlements, Suffrage and Society to be shown at Kramer Hall in Hammonton, New Jersey. Centered around the loan of four early nineteenth-century portraits of the Estell family, completed by Philadelphia portrait painter George Washington Conarroe, the exhibition is an in-depth look at the Estell-Bourgeois family, important figures in Southern Atlantic Country from the early eighteenth century through the early twentieth century. The exhibition focuses on Daniel Estell, landowner and merchant (1802–1858), his wives, daughters, and granddaughter Rebecca Estell Bourgeois (1887–1933), a powerful political figure in South Jersey and New Jersey's first female mayor.

It is with deep regret, given the work put into this exhibition, the loan of important display items, and the quality of the exhibition, that the coronavirus event prevented the exhibit from opening (it was slated to open March 13, 2020, with a grand reception on April 16). The Noyes Museum has done a very good job of transferring part of the exhibition online and we have permission from the chief donor to extend the date of the exhibition through the fall of 2020. We hope to have an opening in fall 2020. Tom Kinsella would like to recognize all the excellent collaboration that took place in preparation for this exhibition, especially the work of Mike Cagno, Saskia Schmidt and their Noyes museum staff.

Relation to Alliance Heritage Center at Stockton

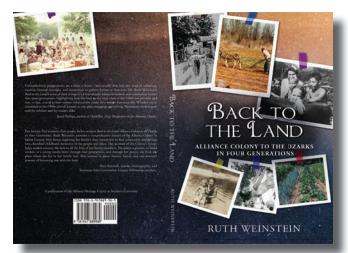
Over the past year, Tom Kinsella has divided his work between directing SJCHC, teaching, and serving as the Elizabeth and Samuel Levin director of the Alliance Heritage Center. Announcement of this newest history and culture center occurred on September 26, 2019. The Alliance Colony was the first successful Jewish farming community in America. In an effort to preserve the history and tell the story of Alliance, the Center has received loans of approximately 400 letters, photographs and other family records that have been digitized and returned to owners. The work of three research fellows was abruptly terminated by the coronavirus event. Still, over the past year in a joint effort between SJCHC and AHC, Tom Kinsella and research fellows Sara Brown and Ray Dudo edited and published a



Alliance Heritage Center Research Fellows Ray Dudo and Sara Brown chatting with Tom Kinsella at the announcement of the Center.

² Atlantic County Historical Society; Atlantic County Park at Estell Manor; Atlantic County Veterans Museum; Estell Manor Historical Society; Hamilton Historical Society; Estell Manor Historical Preservation Commission; Friends of the Park, Inc.; Weymouth Township; Wheaton Arts & Cultural Center.

Menyark May 18 the 1838. Mr. S. S. Estell Diamonds, so longer pected they are the best ever 50's say Onea un 3 os send he mail as or will at esilo naia Views of the Estell Empire exhibition, Kramer Hall, March 13, 2020 – December 2020. The Estell-Bourgeois family of southern Atlantic County, NJ, was influential in the area for nearly two hundred years.



Ruth Weinstein's *Back to the Land*, published spring 2020. Cover by Jena Brignola.

wonderful memoir written by Alliance Colony descendant Ruth Weinstein, *Back to the Land: Alliance Colony to the Ozarks in Four Generations.*

Ruth Weinstein, who lives on her 40-acre farm in Arkansas, was slated to visit South Jersey for two readings from her book, on April 15, 2020, for a Visiting Writers Series Reading, and on April 17 at the Alliance synagogue. Unfortunately, the coronavirus necessitated the cancellation of these events, which are tentatively rescheduled for October 2020.

Relation to Stockton's 50th Anniversary Commemoration Project

Tom Kinsella is proud to have completed his fifth semester working with Stockton 50th Anniversary interns. These talented students, working as a strike team, have helped to identify, research and write (or create) stories that attempt to capture the essence of Stockton throughout its history. Working with Ken Tompkins, the inaugural dean of General Studies and Professor Emeritus of Literature, Kinsella and the interns have developed 30 Stockton stories in a variety of formats (text, audio and video), with more on the way. They can be found at Stockton.edu/stories/. The fall 2020 team is in place, with a final group of interns to be selected for spring 2021. The following semester, fall 2021, Stockton will have been teaching and learning for 50 years, an accomplishment worth celebrating. The upcoming anniversary is also an opportunity to encourage the Stockton community to submit appropriate documents and mementos for preservation in the growing Stockton Archives.

Kinsella and Tompkins's team has amassed a trove of documentation, beyond the work presented on the Stories site, that is now preserved in the Archives. In this preservation work, the team is looking forward to Stockton's 100th anniversary.

Lines on the Pines

A very sad consequence of the need to close the University during the coronavirus event was the necessary cancellation of the annual Lines on the Pines gathering, slated to occur throughout the campus center on March 15, 2020. "It's a Sign of the Pines," led by Linda and Jim Stanton, organizes the event, with the assistance of SJCHC and several other Stockton offices and departments. Anticipation for this the fifteenth annual event (its third year hosted by Stockton) was running high. Approximately 100 vendors were to be present. Pre-press announcements were widespread and we expected upwards of 1500 people in attendance. With the Pinelands Short Course on the preceding day, also canceled, the first weekend of Stockton's spring break has become the premiere weekend for learning about and celebrating the cultural, environmental and historical significance of the New Jersey Pine Barrens. We look forward to rescheduling for March 2021.

Special Collections

The relationship between SJCHC and the Bjork Library's Special Collections & Archives remains close and fruitful. Heather Perez, Louise Tillstrom, and other librarians, with the full support of Library Director Joe Toth, have worked hard to develop the South Jersey collections and Stockton archives. They have created meaningful learning experiences for student interns (now averaging between 6 to 10 per year) and for all students who are, in increasing numbers, being introduced to archival research as part of their coursework. The students within the History, Literature and Political Science programs have made especially good use of the collections, but other majors have also begun to recognize the possibilities for archival research available on campus. Some recent gifts to the collections that were assisted (or made) by SJCHC include:

• Thomas Story, A Journal of the Life of Thomas Story: Containing an Account of his Remarkable Convincement of and Embracing the Principles of Truth as Held by the People Called Quakers and also of his Travels and Labours in the Service of the Gospel, with Many other Occurrences and Observations (Newcastle upon Tyne: Printed by I. Thompson, 1747). A voluminous journal by Story, a traveling minister to the Quakers, opening during the reign of England's King James II, c. 1665 and encompassing Story's visits to North America where he chronicled his visits up and down the East coast, especially through West (South) Jersey. This folio volume retains its mid-eighteenth-century leather binding and is a good example of English period printing.

- *Willits Estelville-Port Elizabeth Map*. Drawn on linen by Dr. Reuben Willits, dated approximately to 1830. Willits was a wealthy landowner who resided in the Estell-Port Elizabeth area. The map depicts several landmarks still identifiable today, notably, the road from Mays Landing to Doughty's Tavern and Millville, which is now County Route 552. The community of Milmay is located at the intersection of Pilgrim Road and Grassy Pond, now Route 557. The road diverging from it, Tuckahoe Road to Grassy Pond, also still exists, running into Route 548. This map, originally donated to the Cumberland County Historical Society, was turned over to Special Collections of the Bjork Library, where it augments the Rebecca Estell Bourgeois collection.
- Poets of America Anthology: A Collection of Verses by American Poets, ed. George Scheftel (3 vols.: 1957, 1958, 1962). Donated to Special Collections in support of the Budd Wilson gift of correspondence between A. Hollis Koster and Emma Van Sant Moore, both of whom published in Poets of America.
- *The Jewish Exponent* (Federation of Jewish Charities., April 15, 1887 –July 5, 1912). Microfilm of the first fifteen years of Philadelphia's weekly Jewish newspaper; the issues are filled with news from South Jersey and the Jewish farming communities.
- Additional materials donated and added to the already established *Steven Eichinger Wading River Collection*.
- South Jersey Jewish Archive Collections. Scrapbooks, photographs, programs relating to activities conducted by the membership of the Jewish Federation of Southern New Jersey, dating from approximately 1949 to 1997. Included is information about the fundraising for the construction of Jewish Community Centers and the humanitarian efforts to assist survivors of World War II.
- *Buzby's Chatsworth General Store Collection*. With the death of R. Marilyn Schmidt in February 2019, Tom Kinsella helped to facilitate final donations from

Schmidt's estate that shed important light on both her relation to Buzby's but also to her long and noteworthy life.

• *Alliance Heritage Center Collection*. Since the announcement of the Alliance Heritage Center, other descendants have donated materials, many in physical form, which are preserved in Stockton's Bjork Library South Jersey Collections.

Looking Forward

Over the next two years we plan to operate much as we have done recently. We will continue to offer meaningful learning experiences to students who assist SJCHC publishing endeavors and who want to undertake various history-related internships. In addition to a Still family – African American genealogy symposium, we hope to offer a similar symposium for community members with local South Jersey Jewish ancestry. In fall 2021, we will team up with the Noyes Museum to create an exhibition on the Alliance Colony. We are also in the early planning stages for a student-staffed production team that uses local history as the subject for video documentaries.

Closing Thoughts

In 2019, SJCHC reconstituted its advisory board to include Linda Stanton, Mark Demitroff, Samuel C. Still III, and Heather Perez. The board assists in planning events for the Center and—as it has always done—provides valuable advice to the director and assistant director.

In summer of 2019, the office space that SJCHC had held at Kramer Hall was reallocated to a program with greater need. Now, with our increased focus on publishing, the Center requires additional storage space. Stop by Tom Kinsella's office sometime and the scope of the problem will become clear. We understand that space on campus is at a premium; still, the allocation of a faculty office or other space for book storage would help us to maintain a working inventory for our ever increasing number of books in print. We trust that some portion of our annual budget will be available, enabling us to continue preserving and celebrating the local history of South Jersey.







(Left) Gabriela Siwiec holding copies of *Blogging 40*. Note Kinsella's office. (Right) Painting by R. Marilyn Schmidt donated to Special Collections. (Below) Intern Raymond Reichardt interviewing James Pullaro and William Hamilton about the history of Stockton's campus, pre-1969.







(Above) Editing interns gathered in F-218, waiting for Kinsella to arrive. (Left) Student employees in the Stockton bookstore showing off copies of *SoJourn* for sale. (Below) The Alliance Cemetery on the day that Stockton's Alliance Heritage Center was announced. Photo by Sara Brown.



South Jersey Culture & History Center, Annual Report 2019–2020 II



Since *Lines on the Pines* was not held in 2020, here is a photo from the 2019 event. Student interns are selling the full range of SJCHC publications.



The mission of the South Jersey Culture & History Center is to help foster awareness within local communities of the rich cultural and historical heritage of southern New Jersey, to promote the study of this heritage, especially among area students, and to produce publishable materials that provide lasting and deepened understanding of this heritage.



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Oil paintings of the Estell and West family; advertisement of burnt-over timber for sale; letter from the Estell collection. (Front Cover) Stockton campus on the Tuesday of

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