

Chapter 8

Early Days Around Tinton Falls

Legends tell of natives, known as Toponomese Indians, living in the area around Tinton Falls and Eatontown, sold land to Thomas Eaton for a barrel of cider. The natives did not understand the concept of selling land or land ownership. They thought they were renting or leasing the land, allowing the settlers to use it for a time, and they would be able to hunt and fish on their land. These natives were in the Unami Clan, a was part of the Lenni Lenape, later called Delaware.

The English and Dutch settlers continued to purchase land near the Shrewsbury River from the Indians in defiance of Dutch authority, which had claimed most of New York and New Jersey. The area around Tinton Falls, called the Falls of Shrewsbury, changed ownership many times when special grants were made to the proprietors by the English king.



A 1673 survey map shows a five hundred acre tract of land east of the falls bought by Lewis Morris of Barbados. He also owned land in Jamaica and St. Lucia. Lewis Morris of Tintern Manor in Monmouthshire, England, bought six thousand two hundred acres around the falls. Other landowners from Monmouthshire were Bartholemew Applegate and millwrights James, Henry and Samuel Leonard, who purchased five

hundred acres a half mile south of the falls. The brothers constructed the ironworks, iron mills, furnaces and forges. James Grover, Richard Hartshorne and Richard Gardinier were the original Monmouth Patentees of Shrewsbury, the area we call Monmouth County.

Using the raw material, bog iron ore, which was dug from the swamps and streams of the riverbanks, Tinton Iron Works, owned by Lewis Morris, was granted three thousand, five hundred and forty acres of land between the falls of the river and the Swimming River and Hop (Hop Brook) Rivers. Ore found in wet meadows and swamps, and consisted of hydrous peroxide of iron, containing metallic iron. During colonial times, the ore furnished material for the early iron works of neighboring colonies to produce nails, horseshoes, tools, wheel tires, utensils and bullets.

An account published by the proprietors of East Jersey, states that the Iron Works began operation in 1675 as a single hammer forge. A forge was a small furnace that heated iron until it was malleable and could be hammered. Its function was to change pig iron into wrought iron and shape the metal by using a hammer to force out the excess carbon and impurities.

A bar of iron ore was worth eighteen pounds of sterling. To support the iron works gristmills and housing were built for workmen and slaves, mostly carpenters and millwrights. From James Grover's account we read of "ye corn Mill at Plantacon and ye Corn Mill at Iron Works", indicating two gristmills located at Tintern Manor. Corn meant any grain. Plantation was the English word for colony. The account mentions the work on the finery, chagery and corn mill wheels. James Grover worked as a tavern keeper and

held local official positions. He was one of the negotiators with the proprietors in 1685 for settlement of land rights in the area.

A map of Tintern shows a stone house, cordwood and coles (charcoals), the fuel used for iron smelting and refining ores. It shows “ ye Negro house, carpenter shop and ye white men’s house”, including a bunkhouse type of accommodation. Within fifty years three additions had been made to the Tinton Manor property. It received tax exemption for seven years and anytime during war.

Governor Lewis Morris’ will of 1746 indicates that the properties were left to his son, Robert Morris and to a nephew, Lewis Morris, whose names appear in 1689 records of the Court of Sessions at Middletown. He was accused of “running races and playing nyne-pins (bowling) on the Sabbath.”

Another account in 1765 of a grandson of Lewis Morris shows a thousand acre property for sale in Shrewsbury Township. It describes a house near a spa spring, one hundred feet north of the brook. This property by the Tinton Falls Spring became the first tavern and resort for summer tourists searching for therapeutic effects of mineral water.

In 1838, another relative, Robert Morris, opened a boarding house on the corner of Tinton and Sycamore Avenues, which became known as the Mineral Springs Hotel. By 1840, a post office and general store were established there and in 1867 became the Tinton Falls Mineral Spring Company. Lasting until 1943, the original firehouse had been the stable for the hotel.

Many prominent men in New Jersey history were related to Lewis Morris. From three brothers, Lewis, Richard and Thomas, we trace the historical figures of our local history.

Colonel Lewis Morris, 1601-1691, founded the Tintern Iron Works in 1676. His brother, Richard, was a New York merchant.

Lewis Morris, 1671-1746, was Richard's son, and became the first colonial governor of New Jersey. He inherited Tintern Manor estate from his uncle, Lewis Morris.

Lewis Morris was Thomas's son, received the estate called Passage Point in Rumson in 1689 and was murdered by a slave in 1696. Two slaves were punished for the murder by having their hand cut off and then burning them alive until death.

Lewis Morris, 1698-1762, was born at Tintern Manor and became a member of the Council of New York and New Jersey, belonged to the New Jersey Assembly and was governor of the colony of New Jersey in 1750s.

Lewis Morris, 1762-1798, was a member of the Continental Congress and signed the Declaration of Independence.

The Morris lands at Tintern Manor were conveyed to John Salter and John Hartshorne, who made an agreement with the local Indians in August 1678 that they could fish, hunt, pick plums and take dry trees for their canoes from Sandy Hook.

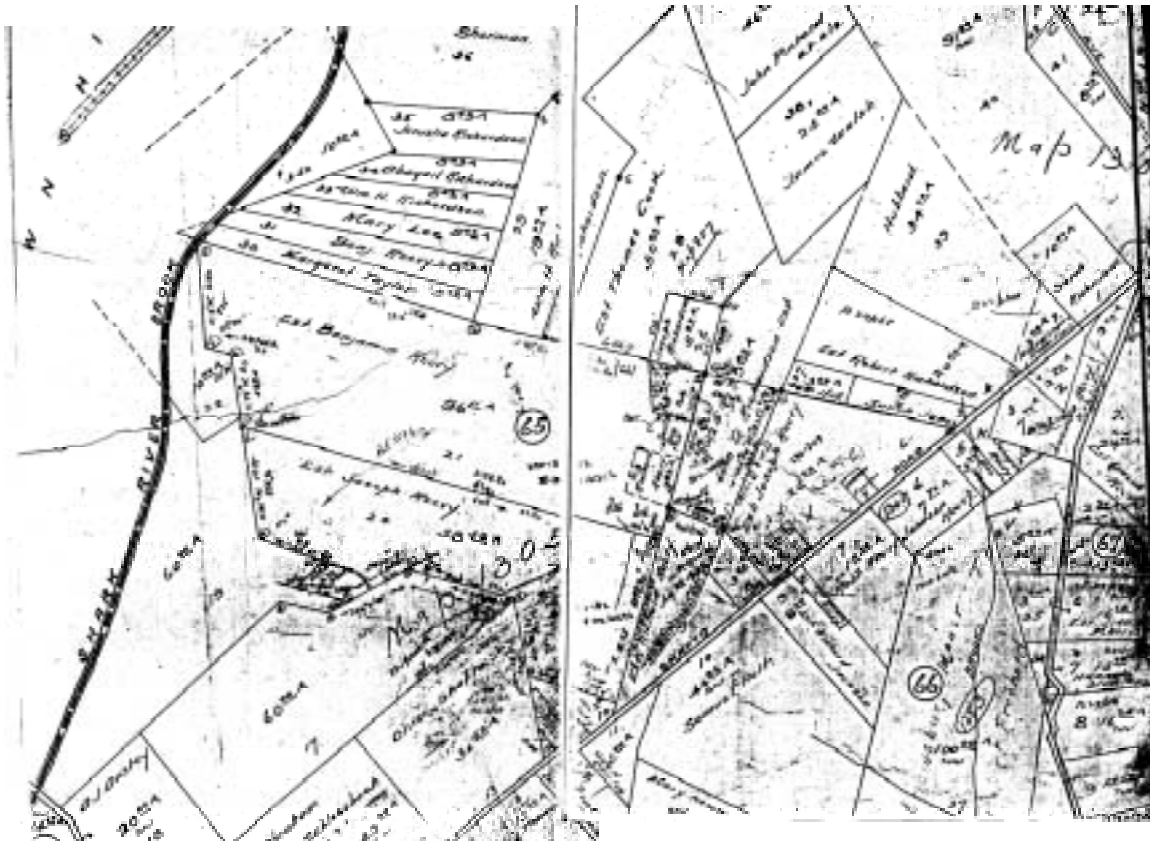
A later deed, signed with an X by Vowavapon and Tocus, natives living in Navesink area, records paying thirteen shillings to buy the land, end any trouble with the Indians. To end the Indian dogs from killing Hartshorne's sheep and to stop the Indians from "hunting, fishing, fouling, pluming, taking timber or any other privilege", the natives agreed to leave the land. Witnessing the signing of the deed were John Stout and Hendricks, Vovwavapon's son.

Gradually by 1685 all the lands in Shrewsbury were purchased from the local Indians at the shore. A deed dated 1747 notes property of Justice John Little of Tinton Falls as the boundary line of one hundred acres purchased by Thomas Reavy, ancestor of Elizabeth Revey Richardson.

A 1750 deed mentions payment “yearly upon demand of the Proprietors of the Eastern Division of New Jersey of one pint of spring water.” Monmouth Court of Session records that a bridge over the Falls of the Shrewsbury, Swimming River be made new, at equal charge of the town to Middletown and Shrewsbury and Tinton Manor and supervisors be appointed from each. The branches of the river are named Pine Brook and Hockhockson Brook.

In 1757 the legislators purchased three thousand acres for a reservation at Edgepelick, now known as Pemberton, for Indian removal. In 1797 a deed mentions a Negro burial ground at the rear of the Crawford property. By 1804 many Indians moved to Oneida, New York. By 1824 the remaining tribes were moved to Lake Michigan. In 1832, the state paid \$2000 to forty Indians to end all property disputes.

During the 1770s, Tinton Falls was raided by British troops and Tory sympathizers as residents divided by the revolution fought against each other. There were three raids in 1779 when seven hundred British troops attacked Middletown, Red Bank, Shrewsbury and Tinton Falls, taking prisoners and supplies. Fifty men attacked Daniel Hendrickson’s gristmill, which was being used as a magazine for powder, arms and military stores by the continental army. British raiders broke the guns, threw the powder into the millpond, captured several prisoners and stole all the horse and wagons.



Properties were sold at auction because their owners were British sympathizers.

Lands of Reverend Dr. Samuel Cook, an Episcopal minister, Judge Wardell and Captain

Richard Lippincott were sold when Joshua Huddy of Colts Neck was executed by hanging. The British burned the house of Sheriff Nicholas Van Brunt along with barns and buildings belonging to Colonel Hendrickson. They looted and destroyed houses of patriots, Captain Richard McKnight and Justice John Little, Esquire.

As they made their way to Shrewsbury village every house was ransacked. Crossing the river to Middletown they met the Monmouth militia at Nut Swamp. The last raids ended in 1782, when the British ransacked every house from Tinton Falls to Colts Neck.

In 1815, James Withers donated land one half a mile south of the falls to the Methodist Episcopal church at Tinton Falls. The church was moved next to the Tinton

Falls School in 1872. When the school expanded in 1962, the church was torn down and is now the driveway of the school.

Gordon's Gazetteer described Tinton Falls Village in 1834 as "the mill site of Shrewsbury Township, Monmouth County, upon a branch of the Navisink (Navesink) River, nine miles east of Freehold containing fifteen to twenty dwellings, a grist mill and sawmill, one tavern and two stores. The water of the southeast branch of Swimming River falls over a sand rock filled with animal remains and forming a cascade about thirty feet high. From this rock flows a copious chalybeate spring, which is frequently visited by those who seek health or amusement at boarding house near the coast."

An 1845 account from Barber and Howe describes Tinton Falls as "two and a half miles southwest of Shrewsbury, contains about twenty-five dwellings, a furnace, gristmill and saw mill, two stores and a Methodist church. It is named from the cascade in the river. The stream winds for some distance through a romantic dell overhung by trees of variegated foliage.

The Indians, who, after selling to the whites, reserved a small strip of surrounding land for public benefit, held the spring in high regard. The water is composed of iron copper, sulfur and c. When taken from the spring it is clear, but on standing a few hours, it assumes the color of cider and discolors glasses in which it is placed."

In 1854, the Macedonia Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church was built near the Pine Brook one half mile south of Tinton Falls village. A larger building was constructed in 1884 for an active congregation. Near the church off Squankum Road are located the Indian burial grounds for burial of people of color. In 1862, Isaac Richardson

built the John D. Marshall Tabernacle No. 7, I.O. Brother and Sisters of Love and Charity in Eatontown, NJ.

The 1885 business directory of Tinton Falls lists three dozen farmers, three blacksmiths; Keeler, Padden and Tilton; three millers, Bennett, Hance and William Hendrickson; one car man, D.Valentine; one distiller, A.Wilson; a peddler, W.Wilson; one wheelwright, Holmes Hendrickson; a sawyer, Barzillia Hendrickson; a milkman, Eugene Magee; a butcher, John Mack; a toll gate keeper, John Peer; saw mill, D. Cook; postmaster and grocer, David Hance.

The population of the state continued to grow from 19,872 in 1800 to 33,000 in 1840. Population expansion meant increased demand for the construction skills of Richardson men, who were able to accumulate property and wealth as they raised their families in Eatontown and Tinton Falls.