



Monmouth  
County  
Historical  
Association

70 Court Street • Freehold NJ 07728 • (732) 462-1466 • [www.monmouthhistory.org](http://www.monmouthhistory.org)

**The Covenhoven House  
150 West Main Street  
Freehold, New Jersey**

**Construction Date: Circa 1752-1753**

On a sweltering Friday in late June, British General Sir Henry Clinton and his exhausted men arrived in Freehold, then known as Monmouth Courthouse. Less than a month before, General Howe had been ordered back to England, and the command of the British troops stationed at Philadelphia was given to General Clinton. Along with his new command came orders to evacuate the troops to New York. Disobeying orders to go by water, Clinton marched his troops across New Jersey. The marching British soldiers and the accompanying line of baggage trains stretched almost twelve miles.<sup>1</sup>

Upon their Freehold, the exhausted British Army pitched their tents along the road they had just traveled, stretching in a long line from four miles west of the court house in Freehold to the junction of what are now Routes 79 and 537. Clinton first chose the stone house of Thomas Thomson Sr., four miles west of Freehold, as his headquarters but left this location late in the afternoon of 26 June. He and his staff made their way to the home of William and Elizabeth Covenhoven. The house, one of the finest in the immediate area and much closer to the main body of the British army, would serve as Clinton's headquarters for the next two days.

Clinton's reason for halting his troops in Freehold was clear. In the oppressive weather, the men required a rest. Freehold's terrain offered the British an impressive defensive position, crucial in light of the proximity of the American forces, which were approaching Freehold from Englishtown to the west.

The approach of the British army terrified the residents of Freehold and its surrounding countryside, many of whom fled their homes as quickly as they could. A letter from "the patriot Dr. Thomas Henderson," which appeared in the *Jersey Gazette* on 18 July 1778, dramatically recounted just why local residents feared the approach of the British forces:

*The devastation they [the British] have made in some parts of Freehold exceeds perhaps any they have made for the distance in their route thro' this State, having in the neighborhood above the Court-House burnt and destroyed eight dwelling-houses, all on farms adjoining each other, besides barns and out-houses... The first they burnt was my own, then Benjamin Covenhoven's, George Walker's, Hannah Solomon's, Benjamin Van Cleave's, David Covenhoven's and Garrit Vanderveer's; John Benham's house and barn they wantonly tore and broke down so as to render them useless... It may not be*

*improper to observe that the two first mentioned houses that were burnt adjoined the farm, and were in full view of the place wherein Gen. Clinton quartered. In the neighborhood below the Court-house they burnt the house of Matthew Lane, Cornelius Covenhoven, John Autonidas, and one Emmans; these were burnt the morning before their defeat.<sup>2</sup>*

The smoke from the burning farmhouses must have been visible to seventy-three-year-old Elizabeth Covenhoven from the doorway of her beloved home. Instead, she decided to stay and attempt to save the house from destruction. The house represented both success and security for the elderly couple and Elizabeth was not about to abandon the structure. Instead, she decided to stay and attempt to save the house from destruction. As the British approached, Elizabeth prepared for their arrival.

Elizabeth Van Cleaf, or Libertje as she was christened, was the daughter of Benjamin Van Cleaf (1683-1747) and Hentrickje Sutphen (b. 1681). In 1723 she married William Albertse Covenhoven (1702- ). William, the oldest of twelve children of Albert Covenhoven (1676-1748) and Neelte Schenck (1680-1750), was a fifth-generation American; his great-great grandfather Wolfert emigrated from the Netherlands and settled in New Amsterdam in 1630.<sup>3</sup> William was a farmer, and the couple welcomed their first child later that same year, in a small farmhouse on approximately 100 acres William had purchased in 1723 from John Reid (1677-1770). The property fronted the Burlington Road.<sup>4</sup>

In his will of 1747, Elizabeth Covenhoven's father, Benjamin Van Cleaf, left his daughter the substantial sum of £300. The following year, William Covenhoven received his share of his father's estate.<sup>5</sup> The Covenhovens found themselves with a large amount of ready cash and in 1751 decided to use the money to build a fine new home. William purchased 100 acres from Nicholas Cook and in the summer of 1752, construction began on the Covenhoven's house.

Ledger books kept by local merchants Jonathan Holmes and partners John Wikoff and David Rhea include William Covenhoven's purchases of nails, hinges, glass, and paint, indicating that construction took place from early 1752 through June of 1753. The purchase of eighteen thousand nails in September indicates the house was being shingled. In November Covenhoven paid for panes of glass, sprigs (the 18<sup>th</sup> century term for glazier's points) and paint, indicating that work on the house had moved to the interior. During the winter, finishing items such as H-hinges for thirteen doors and other hardware were bought.<sup>6</sup>

When construction began on the house, Elizabeth was already 47, William 50. Of their ten children, at least three were already grown and married, with families of their own. Their youngest, Maria, born in 1746, was seven when the family moved into their new house. This was clearly not a starter home with the needs of a growing family to consider. And when General Sir Henry Clinton rode up to the front door of the house with his entourage, all of Elizabeth's and William's children were grown and married.<sup>7</sup>

Elizabeth had enough warning of the British Army's approach. She was able, with the help of servants and possibly other family members, to cart away almost the household goods, including the furniture. The farm animals, including milk cows and horses, remained on the

property. Once her possessions were hidden, Elizabeth waited for the enemy's arrival. When Clinton and his staff arrived at the house, hot and tired, they were frustrated to find that the house was empty, with only an elderly woman and her servants in residence. Apparently, General Clinton spoke directly to Elizabeth, promising her that if she told them where the household goods were hidden, nothing would be taken and the house would be left standing. Elizabeth, gambling on Clinton's word, revealed the whereabouts of at least part of her possessions.

On July 30, 1778, Elizabeth Covenhoven appeared before Justice of the Peace Peter Schenck and gave a detailed account of what happened next:

...some time after they [the British] had been there, she saw a soldier driving her horses away, upon which she applied to them to perform their promises, and one of the General's Aids said she should be paid for them; she answered that she could not spare them; he then took down the marks, and declared they should be returned; but she heard no more of them. Some little time after she perceived all her cattle, including her milk cows, driven by the same manner; she then made alike application and said, they must go without milk themselves if their cows were taken away; he then gave orders to have them stopped; but before they went off they killed and took every one of them, not leaving her a single hoof. This deponent further saith, That the General and his Aids finding her furniture chiefly sent away, were exceedingly urgent to have them sent for, declaring it likely they would be destroyed where they were concealed, but if they were in the house they should be safe; she told them she had no way to send for them; upon which they ordered a waggon and guard to go with the Negro wench to bring the goods, and they brought one waggon load home and placed a guard over it, and refused absolutely suffering her to have any thing out of it; That the next morning she found almost everything of value was taken out of the waggon, and only a bible and some books, with a few trifles, left, which were scattered on the ground; she then applied to the General himself to have liberty to take these few things his *Honor* had left her – he ordered one of his Aids to go to the guards and suffer her to have them – she followed him, and he said, here you damned old rebel, with one foot in the grave, take them. This deponent also saith, That though a very old woman, she was obliged to sleep on a cellar door in her milk room for two nights, and when she applied for only a coverlet it was refused her; That by the time they went away her house was stripped of her beds, bedding, the cloaths of her whole family, and every thing of any value. The farm was also left in the same situation; and that at moderate computation, her loss amounted to 3000 pounds, and that she lost this in trusting to the *personal honor* of Sir Henry Clinton, which threw her off her guard...<sup>8</sup>

One mystery which surfaces after reading Elizabeth's dramatic and poignant account of her treatment at the hands of the British Army is this: where was her husband, William Covenhoven, while this was happening? William was seventy-six at this time, but Elizabeth never mentions him in her deposition. It is somewhat unlikely that at almost eighty, William had taken up arms against the enemy. Instead, it is a possibility that he was unwell or ailing, and Elizabeth had made sure he was out of the house, perhaps at the home of one of their

children, to make sure he was safe if the British set fire to their home. William may have taken refuge at his sister Rachel's house nearby.<sup>9</sup>

Another account of the same incident also fails to mention William's whereabouts and seems to indicate that Elizabeth Covenhoven was alone:

...During the time of Sir Henry Clinton's occupancy, it [the house] was owned by a Mrs. William Conover, an elderly lady who lived there with her slaves. Hearing of the approach of the British, she buried her plate and china under some lilac and rose bushes in the garden, and secreted her fine furniture in the nearby woods. When Sir Henry arrived, noting the absence of much of the furniture in the house, he assured her it would have been secure had she left it there, and asked her if the goods could not be brought back. Upon his assurance, she was induced to send for the furniture. Arriving at the door, Sir Henry set a guard over them and would not allow them to be brought into the house. The morning following she found most of the goods had been stolen.<sup>10</sup>

The presence of a "Negro wench" in Elizabeth Covenhoven's 1778 deposition statement indicates the Covenhovens, like many Dutch farmers of Monmouth at the time, also owned slaves. Although the term "wench" was used in the eighteenth century to indicate female indentured servants or young, unmarried local women working as household help, it more commonly appeared in Colonial-era documents to refer specifically to female slaves.<sup>11</sup>

At the time of William Covenhoven's death in 1790, he owned four slaves. Their names appeared in the inventory of his belongings: "Negro man Cyro," valued at £30; "Negro wench Nanny [Nancy]," valued at £22.10; "Negro boy Bross," valued at £65; and "Negro boy Hercules," valued at £40. In William Covenhoven's original 1786 will, mention was also made of "the Negro wench Yan," who was the mother of Cyro and Nancy.<sup>12</sup>

### **History of the House and Property**

The history of the property upon which Covenhoven stands today goes back to at least 1690, when a 500-acre tract of land, patented to Thomas Warne (1652-1722) was shown on a map of proprietary land grants prepared by surveyor John Reid (1655-1723) during the 1680s and 1690s.<sup>13</sup> The property was originally L-shaped, fronted on the west by the Manalapan River, and on the Southeast by the Old Burlington Path. Other properties bounding it included those of Governor James Barclay and James Miller.<sup>14</sup> The Covenhoven House was built on the portion of the property which ran along the Burlington Path, facing the road. At the time of the house's construction, the Burlington Path ran about 375 feet Southeast of where Main Street now passes the house. Although he owned the property, it is unlikely that original owner Thomas Warne ever lived there, as he had already settled in Topanemus.<sup>15</sup>

On March 12, 1690, before even receiving formal confirmation of his ownership from the East Jersey Proprietors, Thomas Warne deeded his land to John Reid, the property's surveyor.<sup>16</sup> A week after acquiring the land from Thomas Warne, John Reid transferred title of the property to his brother James.<sup>17</sup> James Reid (d. 1711) was a yeoman, and the first owner of the Warne tract to make his home there.<sup>18</sup> On July 30, 1706, James Reid sold 100 acres along Burlington

Road to Benjamin Cook for the sum of £150. The parcel of land purchased by Cook had about 3,000 feet of frontage along the main road and was apparently vacant or undeveloped property, as the deed made no mention of structures, outbuildings, or other improvements. On July 20, 1710, James conveyed the rest of his property to his son John (1677-1770). James continued to live on the property until his death in 1711, and was buried in a small plot on the land alongside his wife.

Benjamin Cook, now the owner of the property on which the Covenhoven House would eventually stand, built a small dwelling structure measuring approximately 17 by 20 feet, about 400 feet back from the Burlington Path, on the land sometime between the 1706 purchase and Cook's death in 1710.<sup>19</sup> Cook was apparently a man not to be trifled with, and was one of several men indicted in August of 1700 by the Grand Jury for "riotously assembling" and assaulting Sheriff John Stewart and Henry Leonard near the home of Alexander Adam. The assault allegedly included both Stewart and Leonard being beaten and their swords taken. Court records do not reveal other details of the case. Less than a year later, Cook was again up on charges as one of a hundred men who participated in a riot in Middletown during the trial of Moses Butterworth, who was accused of piracy and confessed to sailing with Captain William Kidd.<sup>20</sup> Although indicted, neither Cook nor any of the other rioters were effectively prosecuted, so high was the public feeling against the British government.<sup>21</sup>

Upon his death, Benjamin Cook left most of his material estate, valued at £267 and comprising all his land, furnishings, and other small items, to his son Nicholas Cook (1703/4-1785.) Nicholas Cook's ownership of the property is somewhat uncertain; it appears he transferred the property to William A. Covenhoven sometime in the mid-eighteenth century, but the deed was not registered and the exact date of the property sale is unknown.<sup>22</sup>

### **The Architecture of the Covenhoven House**

The builder of Covenhoven House may be the same man responsible for the construction of Old Tennent Church, also in Freehold and built the year before the Covenhovens' new house. Old Tennent Church in Freehold was constructed between the spring of 1751 and the spring of 1752, and the architectural similarities of the church and the house have long been noted. It was not until the discovery of the Wikoff and Rhea account books containing Covenhoven's purchases for his house's construction that the relationship between the two structures was made clear. Church records show that the construction of Old Tennent began in February or March of 1751 and was finished in the spring of 1752, immediately prior to the beginning of construction on the Covenhoven's new residence. The master builder for Old Tennent was John Davies, chosen to be "Chief Carpenter to Carry on the Work of the Meetinghouse or Church...at four shillings and Six pence light money a Day and his Accomodation..."<sup>23</sup> The provision of room and board suggests that Davies was not from the Freehold area. The surname Davies was not a common one anywhere in New Jersey during the eighteenth century, and no carpenters named John Davies have been identified, either in New Jersey or in the membership rolls of the Carpenters' Company of Philadelphia.<sup>24</sup> There is also the possibility that the name of Old Tennent Church's carpenter was misspelled as "Davies" and was actually Davis. If this is the case, he may have been a member of the Davis family of Monmouth County, whose last name is occasionally found spelled "Davies." Much of the

Davis family of Shrewsbury belonged to the New Jersey Seventh Day Baptist Church. In 1789, the church and its members, including many of the Davis family, left Shrewsbury “in order to settle in the state of Virginey.”<sup>25</sup> While there is no mention in the Davis genealogy of a carpenter, it is possible that carpentry was a sideline, and that John Davis was better known for some other profession.

While many have suggested that Old Tennent Church was the first Georgian style structure built in Monmouth County, and that the Covenhoven House was the first Georgian style home<sup>26</sup>, recent research in the region indicates that the Rhea-Applegate House on Monmouth Battlefield was constructed in the Georgian style in 1743, almost ten years earlier.<sup>27</sup>

When the Covenhovens’ house was completed, it was extraordinary for the time and place it was built. In the mid-eighteenth century, Freehold was still a small community:

...after an existence of more than sixty years, the little settlement at Monmouth Court House was still but an insignificant hamlet, containing less than one hundred inhabitants...<sup>28</sup> At the time of its construction, compared to the smaller homes of the other settlers, the Covenhoven house must have seemed a great mansion. When William Covenhoven died in 1789 or early 1790, at the age of 87 or 88, he listed five sons, four daughters, and several grandchildren. He left “the farm on I live on” to his son William Jr.<sup>29</sup>

Recent deed research has established the following chain of ownership for the property after the death of Elizabeth Covenhoven. The property changed hands numerous times. Her son, William Jr., married Lydia, probably the daughter of Thomas Hankinson of Shrewsbury.<sup>30</sup> William Jr. served as a Member of Detachment, First Regiment, Monmouth County Militia, under the command of Colonel Asher Holmes. It was this Regiment which captured the British brig *Britannia* off the Jersey Coast. For his part in the capture, William was awarded a portion of the prize money in the Court of Admiralty of New Jersey in February of 1780.<sup>31</sup>

During late 1792 and early 1793 however, William Jr. found himself in severe financial difficulty and had judgements against him for more than £500.<sup>32</sup> In 1793, William Covenhoven sold the bulk of his property, including the house itself, to Kenneth Hankinson Jr., for a total of £750.<sup>33</sup> Kenneth Hankinson Jr. (1772-1827) was the son of Captain Kenneth Hankinson. He married Catherine Bowne in 1797, and the couple had five children.<sup>34</sup>

In 1796, the State Legislature authorized construction of a new, straight road from the court house in Freehold to the new Burlington County court house in Mount Holly. This new road, now Main Street, ran behind the Covenhoven House, turning what was originally the back of the structure into the façade that drivers along the road see today.

Hankinson, like William Covenhoven, experienced financial difficulties and in his turn first mortgaged the property in 1810. In 1812, the property was seized and sold at auction by he Sheriff to pay Hankinson’s long list of debts. Joseph Stillwell purchased the property at that sale.<sup>35</sup> Joseph Stillwell lived only a year after purchasing the property, and died intestate in 1813, survived by four sons, Joseph W., Abraham, Jeremiah, and Daniel. The first three sons sold their shares of the land to Daniel on 30 August 1815.<sup>36</sup> Daniel held ownership of the

property for only three years and in 1818 sold it to Samuel Forman.<sup>37</sup> Forman, like Covenhoven and Hankinson before him, experienced financial difficulties. After mortgaging the property to his relative, Dr. Samuel Forman (1764-1845), Daniel Forman lost the property when it was foreclosed and sold at a sheriff's sale on 2 February 1829. Another relative, Captain William W. Forman, purchased it for \$1,000. Captain Forman sold off portions of the land over a period of years, selling the last acreage in 1835, to Joseph Murphy.<sup>38</sup> Murphy owned the property for several decades, but again the property changed hands when it was seized and sold at another sheriff's sale in 1874, this time to Charles A. Webster. Webster passed away five years after acquiring the property, and it passed to Webster's son, William J. Webster, in 1879.<sup>39</sup>

William Webster owned the property for four years, then sold it to Margaret Moreau in 1883, who lived in the house until her death in 1903.<sup>40</sup> On 14 October 1903, the executors of her will, sons William M. and Alexander, transferred the property to George J. Taylor. That same day, Taylor deeded the property entirely to William.<sup>41</sup> This procedure was followed apparently because William, as an executor of the estate, could not purchase the property directly from the estate. Both William and his wife, Elizabeth Jones Moreau, took an active interest in the history of the house, and frequently held costumed "colonial" tea parties. William remained the owner of the house until his death in October of 1921, at which time his wife was granted a life right.<sup>42</sup> Upon Elizabeth Moreau's death in 1925, the property descended to her five sons, W. Rhea, Joseph L., Frank J., Theodore P., and D. Howard Moreau. On 27 September 1924, Joseph conveyed his one-fifth interest in the property to Rhea, and on 2 July 1925, Frank, Theodore, and Howard followed suit.<sup>43</sup>

William Rhea Moreau was born in the Covenhoven House. At that time, the property was "a 90 acre farm in the open country."<sup>44</sup> Rhea was active in the local community, particularly in the area of agriculture. He served on the Monmouth County Board of Agriculture, and was at various times director and president of the Monmouth County Farmer's Exchange. Moreau studied art while in school, and was awarded three consecutive yearly scholarships for best drawing and painting from life in his class at the Art Student's League in New York. Upon gaining title to the land, Rhea started a herd of Guernsey cattle, and continued dairy farming until 1938. He was an active member of the First Presbyterian Church of Freehold and served as Sunday School teacher, deacon, trustee, ruling elder, clerk, and trustee of the Presbytery of Monmouth. He also published many agriculturally-related articles in the *Freehold Transcript*. He was survived by his wife, Maude Smith Moreau and brothers Frank and Theodore. Joseph and D. Howard had predeceased their brother, dying between 1962 and 1964.<sup>45</sup> There were no children to inherit the property.

After Maude Moreau's death, her executor Raymond S. Smith conveyed the house and a small portion of land to Monmouth County Historical Association on 1 March 1966. Shortly thereafter, on 1 May 1966, a small adjoining lot of 1/10<sup>th</sup> of an acre was deeded to the Association by the Moreau Plant Company.<sup>46</sup>

## Restoring The Covenhoven House

Restoration of the house began in 1968, under the guidance of Monmouth County Historical Association's Restoration Committee, comprised of the Association's Director, Edwin H. Feltus III, George J. Dittmar Jr., and James S. Brown. The project was completed in 1970, restoring the building to its appearance as it would have been in the mid- to late eighteenth century.<sup>47</sup> The first steps of the restoration included the removal of additions and features dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, including a Victorian porch, floor length windows on the north side of the house, second-floor living quarters, additions to the kitchen wing, electrical wiring and plumbing throughout the house, machine-cut shingles and siding, and modern brickwork on the fireplaces. Also removed were all the trees and shrubbery not native to the Freehold area in the eighteenth century.<sup>48</sup> During the restoration process, some surprises were uncovered. When a false ceiling was removed from a walk-in closet to the right of the first-floor fireplace, two ornate fluted shellbacks which had been joined to form a round dome were revealed.<sup>49</sup> The shellbacks were replaced in their original positions, each above a pair of glass-door display cabinets flanking the parlor's fireplace.

Appropriate colors for the interior woodwork were identified by scraping down portions of the remaining trim. Additional testing done in 2003 revealed that the fluted pilaster posts on either side of the fireplace were originally painted blue with black marbled ornamentation. Elizabeth and William Covenhoven spared no expense for their home and apparently chose painted decoration in several rooms. In the second floor bedroom, paint was removed to reveal breathtaking blue and white painted panels resembling the blue and white delft tiles and ceramic ware so beloved of the early Dutch. A team of specialists worked for over a month, painstakingly removing the layers of paint covering the original decorations.<sup>50</sup> Furnishings for the house were chosen based upon William Covenhoven's 1790 probate inventory compiled after his death. The inventory, more than six pages long, gives a detailed list of furnishings and housewares which, under the stipulations of William's will, were to be divided among his daughters Hendricka, Ellinor, and Elizabeth, as well as his daughter Mary's children.<sup>51</sup> Many of the furniture items and household goods may well have been purchased to replace those objects looted by the British during their stay in 1778.

Covenhoven House is one of the finest surviving rural architectural interpretations of the Georgian style, deliberately chosen by descendants of some of the earliest Dutch settlers of the area. William and Elizabeth Covenhoven decided to spend the money accumulated from multiple inheritances in a visible and powerful way, through the construction of an impressive home which served not as a residence for a growing family but as the house in which Elizabeth and William planned to spend the rest of their days. It is through Elizabeth's bravery, certainly motivated by her love for her home and all it represented, that the Covenhoven House was saved from almost certain destruction by the British Army. As it did 260 years ago, the Covenhovens' house stands beside the Burlington Path, welcoming visitors to Freehold with its charm and elegance.

---

<sup>1</sup> Henry Clinton was born in about 1738 in New York, the son of Admiral George Clinton. In 1751, the family moved back to England. William B. Wilcox, editor, *The American Rebellion: Sir Henry Clinton's Narrative of his Campaigns, 1775-1782, with an Appendix of Original Documents*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1954. Xiii-xiv. France's entry into the American Revolution on the side of the Continental army led to the withdrawal of

---

the British army from Philadelphia. Clinton felt that the orders to evacuate by water were impractical, given the sheer numbers of soldiers and supplies and decided instead to take a land route through New Jersey, heading for Sandy Hook and British ships. The army left Philadelphia on 18 June 1778 and arrived in Freehold on 26 June 1778. M. B. Gilman, *Monmouth Road To Glory*, Red Bank, NJ: Arlington Laboratory for Clinical and Historical Research, 1964. P. 18. William S. Stryker, *The Battle of Monmouth*, Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1970 reprint of 19207 original. P. 25-28.

<sup>2</sup>A number of Covenhoven family members lived near each other. Cornelius Covenhoven (1728-1802) was William Covenhoven's brother. The other two Covenhoven landowners mentioned in Dr. Henderson's description were cousins. Francis B. Lee, editor. *Documents Relating to the Revolutionary History of the State of New Jersey: Extracts from American Newspapers Vol. 2 1778*(Trenton, NJ: John L. Murphy Publishing Company, 1903. P. 333-335.

<sup>3</sup> Albert (1676-1748) moved from Flatlands, Long Island, to Monmouth County in 1700 and purchased 161 acres from James Bowne near Pleasant Valley (Holmdel). Nine of Albert's brothers and sisters also eventually moved from Long Island to Monmouth. George C. Beekman, *Early Dutch Settlers of Monmouth County New Jersey* (New Orleans, LA: Polyanthos Books, 1974 reprint of 1915 original) p. 27. Albert and his wife Neeltje Schenck (1680-1750) were among the original members of the Reformed Dutch Church in Marlboro, formally organized in 1709 as the Reformed Church of the Navesink. Albert served as Deacon in 1717 and as an Elder in 1725. Joseph W. Hammond, *The Covenhoven House: A Study in Cultural Transmission*, unpublished monograph, 1979. Monmouth County Historical Association: Curatorial Files.

<sup>4</sup> The Burlington Road was also known as the Burlington Path, The Great Road, or the Old Indian Trail. It was originally constructed following Lenape pathway to the shore for the seasonal gathering of shellfish. The road connected Perth Amboy, originally the capital of East Jersey, with Burlington, the capital of West Jersey. Well traveled, the Burlington Road offered the British Army an easy direction from Philadelphia to Sandy Hook. The Burlington Road was renamed Route 537 in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Lillian Lauler Wilber, *The Early Schools of Freehold New Jersey 1667-1928* (Schuyler Press, 1969).

<sup>5</sup> Under her father's will of September 1747, Elizabeth received a gift of £300 payable in annual £50 increments beginning six years after his death. That same year, William's father, Albert Covenhoven, wrote his will only weeks before his death, leaving life rights to his estate to his wife, Neeltje. William's mother died the following year in 1750, and the estate was then divided between William and his siblings. William, as the eldest, received an addition three shillings.

<sup>6</sup> *Account Book of Jonathan Holmes, Merchant New York City*, Monmouth County Historical Association: Library & Archives Collection. Jonathan Holmes grew up in Holmdel and ran a lumber and seed business in both Freehold and New York City. *Journal A of US. Rhea & Wikoff Merchants, Middletown Point in East New Jersey Commencing May 1752*. Winterthur Library Collection. Hammond, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth and William Covenhoven had ten children, all of whom seem to have reached adulthood: Helena, who later anglicized her name to Ellinor, born in 1723; Albert, born in 1724; Benjamin and Hendricka, apparently twins, born in 1726; David, born circa 1730-31; Joseph, born 1733; Isaac, who seems to have been born after 1733 and before 1741; Elizabeth, born in 1741; William, born in 1742; and Maria, born in 1746. Ann Pette Miles, *Monmouth Families* (New Jersey: Ann Pette Miles, 1980) Vol. 2, 54-55.

<sup>8</sup> Francis B. Lee, editor, *Documents Relating to the Revolutionary History of the State of New Jersey: Extracts from American Newspapers Vol. 2 1778* (Trenton, NJ: John L. Murphy Publishing Company, 1903.

<sup>9</sup> William's sister Rachel had a much more pleasant encounter with the forces present at the Battle of Monmouth. Rachel later told with pride "of the good-night visit after the battle made to her family by General Washington, accompanied by General LaFayette. The former shook hands with them, followed by a kiss from LaFayette..." Dr. Albert Vander Veer, "Three Generations from the Battle of Monmouth," *Proceedings of the New York State Historical Association: The Twenty-Eighth Annual Meeting, Glens Falls, 1927*. Volume 26, Quarterly Journal, Vol. 9, pp. 280-284.

<sup>10</sup> *History of Monmouth County, New Jersey 1664-1920* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1922) Volume 1, p. 360. A similar story is recounted in W. J. Mills, *Historic Houses of New Jersey* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1902) pp. 183-184. Elizabeth Covenhoven was called by the anglicized version of her surname, "Conover."

<sup>11</sup> Paul Drake, *What Did They Mean By That? A Dictionary of Historical Terms for Genealogists* (Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, Inc., 1994) p. 227.

<sup>12</sup> *Will of William A. Covenhoven of Freehold. Made November 18, 1786; Probated March 1790*. New Jersey State Archives, Trenton, NJ. Monmouth Wills 6323. Cyro, Nancy, Bross, and Hercules were also all mentioned in

---

Williams' will. On March 19, 1738, Yan (whose name also appeared as Yana) "a Negro Wench of William Covenhoven...[was] baptized on profession of her faith...her children Mach, Cyro, and Nancy presented by said Yana their mother, March 8, 1747." Symmes, 1904, p. 223.

<sup>13</sup> James S. Brown, "Historical Background on Clinton's Headquarters," Monmouth County Historical Association: unpublished research paper, Curatorial Department, 31 Decemer 1968, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Brown, 1968, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> Brown, 1968, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> Horner, *This Old Monmouth of Ours* (Cottonport, LA: Polyanthos Books 1974 reprint of 1934 original) p. 318.

<sup>17</sup> East Jersey Deeds, Vol. D, p. 384. James and his wife, Joan, had at least four children. Horner, p. 320.

<sup>18</sup> The term "yeoman" indicated someone who owned or had previously owned a small quantity of land; the term "farmer" was used prior to about 1825 to describe someone who did not own the land they worked, but rather leased or rented the acreage. Drake, p. 88, 92.

<sup>19</sup> Brown, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> Salter and Beekman, 1887, pp. 263-264.

<sup>21</sup> Brown, 1968, p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> Brown, 1968, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> Hammond, p. ?.

<sup>24</sup> There are indications that one John Davies lived in Middletown, with a death date of 1736. He had at least two or three children, only one of whom was identified by name as Robert. Craig, p. 44.

<sup>25</sup> Susie Davis Nicholson. *Davis: The Settlers of Salem, West Virginia, Their Ancestors and Some of Their Descendants* (Salem, WV: Salem Seventh Day Baptist Church, 1992) p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> Craig, p. 40.

<sup>27</sup> Telephone conversation between Bernadette Rogoff, Curator of Collections, Monmouth County Historical Association, and Gail Hunton, Architectural Historian, Monmouth County Park System, 27 October 1998. Curatorial files.

<sup>28</sup> *History of Monmouth County*, 1922, p. 359.

<sup>29</sup> The property inherited by William Covenhoven Jr. included the Covenhoven House and its property as well as Benjamin Cook's portion of the Warn property which William Sr. had acquired by 1751. Brown, p. 8; Hammond, p. ?, NEH Report, p. 35.

<sup>30</sup> In his will of 1783, Thomas Hankinson left a colt to his daughter Lydia Covenhoven. New Jersey Archives Vol. VI, Wills, p. 179.

<sup>31</sup> Ref MSS 7628, p. 10.

<sup>32</sup> New Jersey State Archives. Judiciary: Chancery Court, 1743-1824, Box 31. See also Chancery Court Register Vol. I, pp. 202, 204, 205.

<sup>33</sup> Monmouth County Clerk: Deeds Book M, p. 383.

<sup>34</sup> Horner, *This Old Monmouth of Ours*, p. 158-159.

<sup>35</sup> Monmouth County Clerk: Monmouth Mortgages, Book E, p. 214; Monmouth Deeds, Book V, p. 275.

<sup>36</sup> Monmouth County Clerk: Monmouth Deeds, Book Y, p. 268.

<sup>37</sup> Monmouth County Clerk: Monmouth Deeds, Book A2, p. 468, 471.

<sup>38</sup> Monmouth County Clerk: Monmouth Deeds, Book H3, p. 411.

<sup>39</sup> Brown, 1968, p. 11-12.

<sup>40</sup> Monmouth County Clerk: Monmouth Deeds, Book 372, p. 239.

<sup>41</sup> Monmouth County Clerk: Monmouth Deeds, Book 718, p. 312, 315

<sup>42</sup> "W. Rhea Moreau, Farmer, Artist, Historian, Dies," *Freehold Transcript* 20 February 1964

<sup>43</sup> Monmouth County Clerk: Monmouth Wills, Book 77, p. 163; Monmouth Deeds, Book 1316, p. 42. Note that while Joseph conveyed his interest to Rhea prior to their mother's death, both deeds (27 September 1924 and 2 July 1925) were recorded at the same time.

<sup>44</sup> *Freehold Transcript*, 20 February 1964

<sup>45</sup> *Freehold Transcript*, 20 February 1964

<sup>46</sup> Indenture between Raymond S. Smith, executor of the estate of Maude S. Moreau, and Monmouth County Historical Association, dated 1 March 1966. Monmouth County Clerk: Monmouth Deeds, Book 3460, p. 374. Indenture between the Moreau Plant Company, Inc., and Monmouth County Historical Association, dated 9 May 1966. Monmouth County Clerk: Monmouth Deeds, Book 3471, p. 54.

<sup>47</sup> James S. Brown, "Clinton's Headquarters: Its History and Restoration," *The Monmouth Historian* (Freehold, NJ: Monmouth County Historical Association, 1972)

---

<sup>48</sup> Brown, p. 23.

<sup>49</sup> Brown, p. 24.

<sup>50</sup> Brown, p. 27.

<sup>51</sup> It is interesting to note that William left nothing to his daughter Mary. This may have been because he had already given her her share of her inheritance while he was still alive. This practice was not uncommon, and in fact, many parents kept careful account of how their property was distributed among their grown children during life, to ensure that each received their allotted share. Large items, such as furniture and other household goods, were often distributed at the time of a daughter's marriage. Jane C. Nylander, "Provisions For Daughters: The Accounts of Samuel Lane," *House and Home* (Boston, MA: Boston University for the Dublin Seminar for New England Folk Life, Annual Proceedings 1990) 11-27.