Mahlon Stacy, a Quaker from England, was the original European landowner in the Trenton area. This presentation includes information about Stacy and his settlement here as well as a brief history of the Quakers.
Mahlon Stacy
at the Falls of the Delaware

• Stacy, a Quaker, came to New Jersey to flee religious persecution in England

• He settled at the Falls of the Delaware and established a grist mill on Assunpink Creek

• He named his estate here “Ballifield” after his family home in England
Ballifield – Handsworth, Sheffield, England

Ballifield Hall – George Fox himself held religious meetings at the home of Mahlon Stacy on his way to Yorkshire.
The Society of Friends
George Fox - Founder

- Son of a prosperous Puritan weaver; Worked as an itinerant shoemaker
- Had personal spiritual revelation in 1647
  - Both church and state authority were corrupt
  - God’s message comes directly as personal inspiration
- Was imprisoned multiple times for offenses such as refusing to take an oath, pay tithes, or honor officials by removing his hat
The Society of Friends

- Began in the Midlands and North of England
- Formally founded in 1652 as the “Religious Society of Friends”
- Followers originally called themselves “Friends of the Truth”
- By 1660 there were 50,000 followers.
- Known as “Quakers” because they “trembled before God”
Core Beliefs/Values

• Direct relationship with God – No need for a church or clergy

• Pacifism – Would not take up arms for any reason

• Equality – Hence their anti-slavery stance, would not bow to royalty etc.

• Freedom of conscience

• Simplicity
Core Beliefs/Values

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Some of Fox’s ideas that directly challenged the religious establishment were:

- Rituals can be safely ignored, as long as one experiences a true spiritual conversion.
- The qualification for ministry is given by the Holy Spirit, not by ecclesiastical study. This implies that anyone has the right to minister, assuming the Spirit guides them, including women and children.
- God "dwelleth in the hearts of his obedient people": religious experience is not confined to a church building. Indeed, Fox refused to apply the word "church" to a building, using instead the name "steeple-house", a usage maintained by many Quakers today. Fox would just as soon worship in fields and orchards, believing that God’s presence could be felt anywhere.
- Though Fox used the Bible to support his views, Fox reasoned that, because God was within the faithful, believers could follow their own inner guide rather than rely on a strict reading of Scripture or the word of clerics.
Quakerism as a Radical Movement

- Quakerism was founded in a time of upheaval in England
  - Civil wars (1642-1651)
  - Overthrow & restoration (with limited powers) of the monarchy
- Monopoly of Church of England ended in 1689
  - However, Quakers were still persecuted as “radical”
  - Were grouped with other “radical” sects at the restoration of the monarchy
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In the 1640s, the civil war between the king and Parliament raged across England, Wales and Scotland, culminating in the trial and execution of Charles I in 1649. For about 10 years there was no king and Britain was a republic led by Oliver Cromwell and Parliament. Cromwell died in 1658 and the monarchy was soon restored, with Charles II becoming king in 1660.

From the beginning of the century until the 1689 Act of Toleration, the only authorized religion was the Church of England. New religious groups that had emerged like the Quakers and Baptists were persecuted for their beliefs.
Quaker Persecution

- Members subjected to imprisonment and violent punishments – though none were executed in England

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In the drawing on the left the man is tied to the cart and is being flogged. In the drawing on the right the man is tied to the pillory and his tongue is being bored through with a hot iron.

It was against the law to be a Quaker in Massachusetts. At least four Quakers were put to death for their beliefs including Marmaduke Stephenson, William Robinson, Mary Dyer and William Leddra of Barbados. These four were all hanged in public in 1659, 1660 and 1661.
Quakers in New Jersey
Formation of New Jersey

Tract of land granted to Duke of York in 1664
York granted the land to John Lord Berkeley and Sir George Carteret

The Duke of York

Berkeley and Carteret
The Duke of York was the brother of King Charles II. He became king in 1685 and ruled England and Ireland as James II and Scotland as James VII.

Sir John Berkeley was a royalist soldier, politician and diplomat. His title was First Baron of Stratton, and he was associated with the Duke of York.

Sir George Carteret was a royalist statesman and vice admiral and treasurer of the Royal navy.
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  – Divided New Jersey into East and West
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The Quintipartite deed, a five part deed, was made in July 1676. This deed was between Sir George Carteret, William Penn, Gawn Lawrie, Nicholas Lucas and Edward Byllynge. This deed divided the province of New Jersey into two parts by a straight line running from the northwest corner of the province on the river Delaware and extending southward to the East point of Little Egg Harbor. The two parts were called East and West Jersey. Carteret had East Jersey granted to him and Penn, Lawrie and Lucas had West Jersey (Lord Berkeley’s half) granted to them, in trust for Byllynge. Carteret kept East Jersey until his death, then his heirs sold the land to William Penn and other Quakers.
Purchase by English Quakers

• Large shares of land in West Jersey were then sold to buyers in England, including Quakers in Yorkshire and in London.

• The Yorkshire Quakers included Mahlon Stacy of Hansworth with 4 others:
  – Their purchase fell between Assunpink Creek and Burlington – known as the Yorkshire 10th.
  – Mahlon Stacy’s share was more than 3500 acres on both sides of the Assunpink Creek.
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Among the Yorkshire Quakers, there was Thomas Hutchinson of Beverly, Thomas Pearson of Bonwick, Joseph Helmsley of Great Kelk, George Hutchinson of Sheffield, and Mahlon Stacy of Hansworth. These men purchased 10 of the 90 parts of West New Jersey and became entitled to an entire tenth. They chose the upper tenth, between the Assunpink Creek and Burlington, called the Yorkshire tenth.
Early Quaker Settlements in NJ

- The first Quaker settlement in East Jersey was at Shrewsbury in 1664
- The first Quaker colony at West Jersey was John Fenwick’s colony at Salem in 1675
- Quaker settlers arrived on The Kent in Burlington in 1677
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This is the Shrewsbury Meeting house, built in 1672.
Mahlon Stacy’s Arrival In New Jersey

• Mahlon Stacy with other Quaker families landed in Burlington in December 1678
  – Arrived on the ship *The Shield*, one of William Penn’s ships, after 16 weeks at sea

• In the Spring of 1679 he and his family settled at the Falls, the first permanent European settlement in the area
• Stacy’s first home was a small hastily built clapboard house on the property

• This was later replaced by a more spacious, well-built house, called “Dorehouse”

• Stacy’s will described the house as having two parlors and a chamber over the parlors

• The will also noted that the estate had a water pump, orchard and pasture lands
Mahlon Stacy’s Homes

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Two clergy men (Labadists), Jasper Dankers and Peter Sluyter were sent on a tour of observation through NY and adjoining provinces for the purpose of setting up a colony of their coreligionists. They sailed from Amsterdam in 1679 and in the course of their journey through New Jersey visited “The Falls”. Their account of Stacy’s clapboard house is as follows:

“This millers house is highest up the river, hitherto uninhabited. Here we had to lodge and although we were too tired to eat, we had to remain sitting upright the whole night not being able to find room enough to lie upon the ground. We had a fire, however but the dwellings are so wretchedly constructed that if you are not so close to the fire as to almost burn yourself, you cannot keep warm, for the wind blows through them everywhere. They (the clapboards) are not usually laid so close together, as to prevent you sticking a finger between them in consequence either of them not being well joined, or the boards being crooked.”
Stacy’s Mill

His property also included a grist mill he built on the Assunpink Creek
OLD STACY MILL, ENLARGED AND IMPROVED BY WILLIAM TRENT, AS IT APPEARED IN 1848, DILAPIDATED BY FIRE AND FLOOD.
A Man of Wealth & Influence

• Stacy held political positions
  – Appointed to the General Assembly of NJ in 1682 and reelected in 1685
  – Elected to the Assembly for the Yorkshire 10th in 1684
  – Also chosen a member of the Royal Governor’s Council and a Justice for Burlington County
  – Became a member of the prestigious council of proprietors of West Jersey in 1792
  – Was also a commissioner for West Jersey and a member of the Provincial Assembly.
Abundance at the Falls of the Delaware

Mahlon Stacy wrote many letters to friends and family in England including a letter with a detailed description of the good life and the abundance at the Falls of the Delaware.

In fact, he enjoyed his new land so much that he “had never the least thought of returning to England, except on the account of trade.”
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In his 1680 letter Stacy describes "orchards laden with fruit to admiration, their very limbs torn to pieces with the weight and most delicious to the taste and lovely to behold." And "Forty bushels of wheat from one bushel sown." He also describes the bounty of game and farm animals and a river teaming with fish.
Contact with the Native Americans

The Stacy family and all the settlers at the Falls came into contact with the Native Americans in the area.
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In a letter to England, Stacy wrote that “We have them (cranberries) brought to our houses by the Indians in great plenty.” He writes that the Indians also bring deer and fowls to the colonists. He also describes fishing with a Native American fish weir.
Enslaved People of African Descent

Despite George Fox’s admonitions against slavery, Stacy, though a Quaker and like many other of his co-religionists, owned enslaved people.
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Stacy's probate inventory lists a "Negro man" and a "servant girl." The girl might have been enslaved or indentured.

A probate inventory was conducted to determine the value of a decedent's property during resolution of the estate.
Stacy’s Heir –
Mahlon Stacy the Younger

• While in England, Stacy the elder married Rebecca Ely in 1668. They had 6 children.

• Surviving at his death in 1704 was one son, Mahlon the younger, and 5 daughters.

• The younger Stacy inherited the plantation Ballifield, along with the house, mill and other buildings, lands and meadows.
Stacy’s Land

• In 1714 there were a few houses on the land
  – Renting tenements to a small group of people
Stacy’s Land

• In 1714 there were a few houses on the land
  — Renting tenements to a small group of people

The definition of a tenement is any kind of permanent property, e.g., lands or rents, held from a superior, such as a manor plan.

The definition of manor is an estate or district, leased to tenants, especially one granted by a royal charter in a British colony.

These houses must have belonged to tenant farmers because they were taking their wheat to Stacy’s mill to be ground and bolted.
Trent’s Purchase

- Stacy the younger sold 800 acres to Trent in August, 1714 for 1400 pounds

- Included the Ballifield plantation of 500 acres with the house, grist mill and numerous outbuildings

- Another 300 acres of adjoining land was also conveyed to Trent
The Trent House is Built

- Trent built his summer home circa 1719.

- In 1721 Trent, his wife Mary Coddington, his youngest son William, and eleven enslaved people made this their full-time home.
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The Trent House sits in the red circled area.
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