
Restoration

As part of the New Jersey Tercentenary Celebration in 1964, the New Jersey State Society of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) undertook the restoration of Watson House to use as its state headquarters, leasing it from Mercer County for 99 years. Under the direction of Samuel Mountford, a well-known architect and an authority on colonial restoration, the work proceeded. The house was formally dedicated on March 18, 1965.

The NJ State DAR Founders Committee was responsible for the restoration of Watson House and appropriating household furnishings from the 18th century, in keeping with the period.

All household furnishings predate 1790 and have been selected with considerable care and approval by established authorities on antiques of the period. Many of the home's furnishings were made by NJ craftsmen. Other furnishings were treasured heirlooms donated by NJ Daughters or have been purchased by DAR chapters or their members.

Upon completion of the restoration, the Grounds Committee was responsible to oversee the refurbishing of the gardens. All plantings are of the 18th century era. The raised flower garden by the entrance to the grounds was created using stones from an 18th Century Princeton barn. A brick walk, lined with English boxwood, leads from the parking area to the front of the house. Another brick walk branches off to the right and leads to the back door. The focal point of the herb garden, also on the north side of the house, is a sundial with the inscription "Time Doth Ever Fleet Away" circa 1720.

Guided Tours

Watson House is open to the public for docent-guided tours each spring and fall from 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM on the second Sunday of April, May, June, September, October and November.

Open Houses

2019

September 8
October 13
November 10

2020

April 12 (Easter)	September 13
May 10 (Mother's Day)	October 11
June 14	November 8

2021

April 11	September 12
May 9 (Mother's Day)	October 10
June 13	November 14

2022

April 10 (Palm Sunday)	September 11
May 8 (Mother's Day)	October 9
June 12	November 13



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NATIONAL SOCIETY DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

*Headquarters of the
New Jersey State Society
Daughters of the American Revolution*

The Isaac Watson House



151 Westcott Avenue
Hamilton, NJ

WWW.NJDAR.ORG

The Isaac Watson House is listed in the New Jersey and the National Registers of Historic Sites

A New World ...

On May 29, 1684, William Watson, a member of the Society of Friends, and his children William Jr., Isaac, Elizabeth and John left their home at Farnsfield, Nottinghamshire, England, on their way to America where they could worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience. They traveled by water to



Bristol, and then sailed on the ship Bristol Merchant (pictured left), William Smith, chief commander. According to

William's diary, which currently resides in the Pennsylvania Historical Society Library in Philadelphia, they were "very well accommodated, arrive safe Philadelphia near eight weeks, rented a part of a house there 4 weeks—my son William died and was buried there." Will Smith's receipt for twenty-seven pounds in full for their passage also resides in the library files.

From Philadelphia, William, his children and two of his countrymen who came with him as his servants "settled a plantation and called the place Farnsfield in the township of Nottingham in the County of Burlington in the province of West Jersey." William purchased 700 acres from the West Jersey Proprietors, settling near other Friends in the area, and built his log house on a bluff facing a creek. Since there were virtually no roads at the time, he built near a water route so he could take his farm's produce to market in Philadelphia. William built a scow to ferry across the creek.

It appears the Watsons were not the first to settle in this location as archaeologists have unearthed numerous artifacts as well as the remains of an Indian burial ground. The recovered artifacts comprise much of the Native American exhibit in the NJ State Museum.

... A New Life and Home

One year after he settled in his new home, William was appointed assessor, and in February 1693 and again in December 1706 served as constable. At a town meeting in 1692 his son Isaac proposed that the township be named Nottingham. In 1703 and again in 1706 Isaac was an Overseer of the Highways and also served as constable. He was a farmer and surveyor. For many years the family marketed their produce from their plantation, or farm, in Philadelphia.

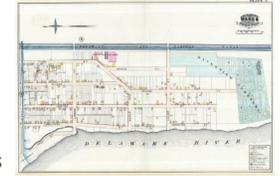
After William passed, his son Isaac, born in England in 1670, built a stone house to the east of his father's log house. It was plain but substantial as befit a Quaker household. For many years it was the finest in the township. Over the front door which faces the creek is a stone marked 1708, the year the house was built. The foundations and walls are made of stone from Ye Falls of Ye Delaware brought to the plantation by flat boats. The walls are 15 inches thick from the foundation to the roof. The house has a steep roof and pent eaves over the first floor windows on the north and



south sides. There are two rooms on the first floor (keeping room pictured left), each with a very large fireplace, three on the second floor, and a large garret in which the construction of the beams and rafters shows that at least some of the builders were ship's carpenters. Some years later a small wooden addition was built on the west side of the house. By the time Isaac built this house he owned about 800 acres of land. A copy of the inventory of his "goods, chattels and credits: - "taken and appraised the 22nd (of the) 7th month 1727, amounting to eight hundred pounds, sixteen shillings eight pence."

In the Watson House (as was the case in many well-built houses at the time) the dividing strips in the window sashes were made of lead. It has been said that during the Revolutionary War, the lead was taken from the windows and melted into bullets for our troops. Wooden sashes replaced the lead ones.

Isaac donated land, which is now part of Riverview Cemetery in Trenton (pictured right), as a burying ground for members of the Society of Friends. No doubt he and many members of his family are buried there.



The early Quakers used small stones with only the initials of the deceased marked on them. Sadly these stones have not withstood the ravages of time.

Isaac and his wife, Johanna Foulke, had nine children: William (born 01/13/1693, never married); Joanna (presumed to be his eldest daughter, married Thomas Tindall); Mary (born about 1698, married Joseph Peace); Isaac (died before 12/01/1749); Elizabeth (no mention of marriage); Sarah (born 09/07/1705, married Thomas Barnes Jr.); Deborah (born after 1708, married Elias Ring) Naomi (born after 1708, married John Allen Jr.); and John (born circa 1717, married about 1738, wife unknown, may have been Abigail since that is name of his only daughter).

When Isaac died, his property passed to his son, who in 1774 divided with his son. The last of Isaac's descendants to live in the house was his grandson Joseph Watson (born 1773, died 1857). He married Susannah West, daughter of William West. They began housekeeping about 1795 and lived there for 20 years. They had 13 children. Eventually the estate was broken up with many owners holding deeds to sections that once belonged to William, the immigrant.

Free Guided Tours
The Watson House is
managed and staffed by volunteers.

Donations Accepted
Please help us preserve the Watson House
and its collections for future generations.