
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

2022

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

2023

April 9 (Easter)	September 10
May 14 (Mother's Day)	October 8
June 11	November 12

2024

April 14	September 8
May 12 (Mother's Day)	October 13
June 9	November 10

Special group tours can be arranged by contacting
IsaacWatsonHouse@gmail.com



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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 29 May 1684, William Watson and his children William Jr., Isaac, Elizabeth and John left their home in Farnsfield, Nottinghamshire, England, for the New World. The journey to Bristol took eight-days. Traveling by cart and on horseback the family traveled 15 miles the first day and 14 miles the second. The remainder by boat, sailing and lodging on the water.

Once in Bristol, the Watsons picked up provisions including "...two pots and three "lessor" pans, a cask of "flower," butter, "spoons," "hony," nuts, cinnamon..." and other supplies making sure to note the merchants in his journal..."Edward tilley in mary port street," "Daniel Harding in wine street," to name a couple. Watson also purchased merchandise intended for resale (wrought iron, woolen stockings and gloves, sack cloth, gunpowder, firkin beer, cheese, etc.)

On 9 August (1684), Watson paid ship master, William Smith, 27^l 0^s 0^d for six passages to the new world – William, his three sons and daughter, two of his countrymen that came as servants (William Blanch and John Abbott) and Samuell Lewiss [4^l 10^s 0^d] for reasons unknown.



In his journal he wrote "Came in the Ship, called *Brista*[ll] merchant (pictured left) ... very well accommodated, arrive safe *ffiladefia* near eight weeks, rented a part of a house there 4 weeks—my son William died and was buried there."

After the death of his son William, Watson wished to make his home amongst his countrymen from old Nottingham who were living in West Jersey across the Delaware. Watson purchased land on the east bank of Doctors Creek, calling "the place *ffarsfield* in the township of Nottingham in the County of *Borlington* in the province of West Jersey" and built his log house on a bluff facing the creek.

... A New Life and Home

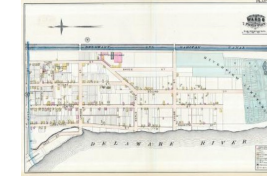
One year after he settled in his new home, in February 1693 William was appointed assessor and in December 1706 served as constable. His son, Isaac, also served as constable in 1698, again in 1704, and in 1706 served as overseer of the highways.

In 1708, Isaac built his stone house overlooking the meadows along the river 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 entrance, facing the creek is a date stone marked 1708, under that is a "W" for Watson; and under that the letters "I" and "J" for Isaac and Joanna (his wife). The foundation and walls are made of stone from "Ye Falls of Ye Delaware" brought to the plantation by flat boats. The house was built with 15 inch thick walls from the foundation to the roof, 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, the keeping room (pictured right) and "y^e House Chamber", as identified in Isaac's inventory after his death, each with a very large fireplace. The second floor was comprised of three rooms (one large chamber and two smaller ones), 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 home he owned about 800 areas of land. A copy of the inventory of his "goods, chattels and credits belonging to Isaac Watson of Nottingham in y^e Country of Burlington and Western Divission of New Jersey...taken and appraised the 22nd (of the) 7th month 1727, identified his holding as 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 musket balls for the Revolutionary soldiers. Wooden sashes replaced the lead ones.

Isaac donated land, which is now part of Riverview



Cemetery in Trenton (pictured left), 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, Joanna 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 house-keeping 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.