

THE FARM MAP OF ALEXANDRIA TWP. 1860 Matthew Hughes

Including notes on maps in general & New Jersey maps in particular.

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I. What are maps?

Maps are a basic form of human communication. They convert personal knowledge into a form that's transmittable. Maps evolved independently in many civilizations in many different parts of the world.

We can surmise that the very first maps were drawn in sand or dirt. Early maps were drawn on cave walls, on cowhide, on parchment and on silk. Maps were etched on ivory and engraved on copper, bronze and silver.

One of the earliest known maps is a clay tablet that was found at Nuzi in northern Iraq, dated 2300 B.C. It shows settlements, streams, and hills and written information that gives the dimensions of cultivated plots of land. We might say it was the first farm map. (Wilford, 8)

II. New Jersey Maps

Johannes de Laet produced the first detailed map that focused on the coast surrounding the future New Jersey in 1630. The map was oriented to the west and showed basic physical features. (Snyder, 9) Errors in depicting physical features can have far reaching consequences because, some of the most important lines on a map are those superimposed by society – boundary lines (Wilford, 174)

Nicolas Visscher's 1656 map is probably the map that the Duke of York used in granting New Jersey to his friends Sir George Carteret and John Berkeley in 1664. New Jersey was to extend as far to the West Delaware Bay or River extending north as far as the northernmost branch of the bay or river, which is forty-one degrees and forty minutes of Latitude. New York concluded that the Duke meant the head of Delaware Bay – near Salem. Then New York proposed a compromise at the forks of the Delaware, where the Lehigh River empties into the Delaware at Easton. (Pass handouts of Visscher Map) New York and New Jersey argued for over a century and the border was finally fixed near its present position. There were deviations of up to a half a mile from a straight line due to an abundance of magnetic iron ore in the Highlands, which misled the surveyors when they ran their compass course in 1774. (Snyder, 14-5)

In May of 1715 James Alexander arrived in America. Appointed Surveyor General, the man who gave Alexandria Township his name, became a major influence in the general mapping development of New Jersey, but it took more than 100 years before technology and the New Jersey legislature allowed the creation of the first detailed, accurate map of New Jersey. It was produced by Thomas Gordon in 1828. (Snyder, 94)

In 1836, the potential of underground resources propelled the legislature to authorize a geological survey of New Jersey. Work stopped in 1840 when funding was suspended. Work was resumed in 1854. (Snyder, 104)

A privately published mapping milestone appeared in 1860 when Kitchell and Hopkins prepared a high-quality detailed map of New Jersey based on the available geologic survey and on information from the U.S. Coast Survey. County boundaries were bordered in red and each

township received a solid tint of pink, yellow, orange or green. (Snyder, 105) That is the general color design of the 1860 Farm Map printed privately and sold for a profit. A black and white version of the 1860 map, printed on paper rather than fabric was also available. An original black and white map hangs in the recently restored Flemington Court House.

III. Farm Maps

The publication of county maps, farm maps and their closely related cousins, the panoramic maps of the mid 19th century were often produced by civil engineers with a commercial bent. (Show panoramic map of Clinton) These maps presented several potential markets. House and other structures border the Alexandria Township 1860 Farm Map. Prosperous proprietors, who subscribed, received not only a map, but also a lithograph of their structure that was shown on the map. At least three versions of the map were created with different structures pictured on the map.

There was another group of potential buyers, not particularly concerned with the borders, but engaged in various commercial ventures. Presumably this group was primarily interested in the less expensive black and white version. In the mid 19th century, there were few road names and often names were duplicated from township to township. If you weren't local, there was no good way of knowing where anyone lived. The farm maps provided directions as well as a mileage table that showed distances from various township crossroads to village centers. (Pass handouts & explain quality problems).

The maps also acted as mailing lists. Farm agents, farm suppliers, delivery services, peddlers, etc. were among commercial entities that needed farm maps. This type of map could also have been used for setting fire insurance rates. The map assisted local and potential businesses in understanding their communities; for example information about possible labor pools. The listing of subscribers identified the more prosperous proprietors. The last known farm map of this area was the 1914 Farm Directory of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties. (Frank Curcio)

IV, Farm Map of Alexandria Twp., Matthew Hughes 1860.

It is now more than 145 years since the creation of the **Farm Map of Alexandria Twp., Matthew Hughes 1860**. Local auctioneer, Art Hanna notes that in the past year, two maps have come up for sale. One map in very good condition sold for \$ 3,400. The second map, some what chewed, brought \$ 2,300.

The farm map that was the source for the recent reproduction was located at the newly renovated Riegel Ridge Community Center shortly before it opened in September 2000. Program coordinator Dorothy Barkiewicz found the original 50" X 65" map in a dusty pile of documents. Frank Stull, history teacher at the Holland Township School, mentioned to Larry LaFevre that Dorothy had found the map. Dorothy gave the map to the Holland Township Historic Preservation Commission.

Many questions remain about the provenance of this particular map. On the lower right corner of the back of the map (on the canvas/fabric) written in long hand in blue ink is the name Myrtle Anderson Wennagel. (Did Myrtle sign the map or was it signed by someone who knew it had belonged to Myrtle?) Was Myrtle, daughter of Howard Anderson, also a descendant of Jacob R. Anderson, listed on the map as owner of the Spring Mill, picture on the map? We know she had

owned property in Frenchtown and in 1980, she and her husband bought property in Holland Township but no direct connection has been established.

Whatever the history of the Anderson-Wennagel map, it was in excellent condition. Larry LaFevre compared it to other local originals, including those owned by Art Hanna, Sarah Melvin and Bob Phillips. On Larry's recommendation, the Holland Township Historic Preservation Commission decided to reproduce the map. Commission members including Walter Melvin explored various methods of scanning and printing.

Getting the map ready for reproduction cost approximately \$2,000. There were initial snags in the reproduction process. April Vollmer (www.aprilvollmer.com) of Walter B. Melvin Architects, LLC (www.wbmelvin.com) guided the HTHPC through the process and was instrumental in contacting the printer: Silicon Gallery Fine Art Prints in Philadelphia, PA 19106. (www.fineartprint.com) Commission members selected the quality paper, print and coloring, endeavoring to make it as close to the original as possible. The reproduction is on fiber based photo paper with pigmented ink jet print (pigment on archival paper). The original map is 50" X 65". It was reproduced in three sizes, 24" x 32" and 36" x 50" and 42" x 55.5", the largest size it was possible to print.

*** (Discussion of process and problems encountered in reproducing the map – members HTHPC)** Saving history isn't easy !!

In 2004, for marketing purposes, Newton LeVine of Essentially Visual, Milford NJ, designed and contracted for the printing of one thousand handsome 6x9 postcards that show a small sample section of the map.

Also in 2004, the Holland Township Historic Preservation Commission donated a large map to the Holland Township School and to the Alexandria Township Historical Society. The ATHS had the map framed and it hangs proudly in the front room of the Prevost House, Museum of Local History. In 2005 the Commission presented framed, medium sized farm maps to the Holland Township Town Hall and to the Alexandria Middle School. To date the map has been printed 3 times. The printing process is expensive so there is little monetary profit in the sales of the maps. Never-the-less, the HTHPC has the satisfaction of preserving and disseminating an important historic document.

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Larry LaFevre, Peter Craig, Dorothy Bartkiewicz, Art Hanna, Newton LeVine, & Sarah Melvin

Snyder, John P. *The mapping of New Jersey; the men and the art.* Rahway, N.J.: Rutgers University, 1973.

Wilford, John Noble. *The mapmakers: the story of the great pioneers in cartography ~ from antiquity to the space age.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981.