



120 Academy Street, Trenton, N.J. 08608  
609-392-7188 \* [www.trentonlib.org](http://www.trentonlib.org)

**Coll. 642**  
**Trenton Commission, New Jersey Tercentenary (1961-1965)**

**By Ellen R. Callahan**  
**May 2024**

**History**

In March of 1664 King Charles II of England granted his brother James, Duke of York, land in North America that reached from Maine down to lands east of the Delaware River. On June 24, 1664, James deeded a valuable portion of this land to John Lord Berkeley and Sir George Carteret. This new colony was named New Jersey for the Isle of Jersey in the English Channel, home of Carteret's family.

On June 24, 1958, an act to establish the New Jersey Tercentenary Commission (State Commission) was established "to formulate and implement a five-year program to observe the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of New Jersey" which would culminate in a year-long celebration beginning in January of 1964. From its start, the State Commission knew that much of the planning and funding would be done at the local level and encouraged counties and municipalities to create their own commissions or committees to begin the process. In 1961, Trenton Mayor Arthur J. Holland created the Trenton Commission to celebrate New Jersey's Tercentenary Commission (Trenton Commission) to begin Trenton's planning. Initially chaired by Justice Sydney Goldman, the Commission only met twice in 1961. Citing the burdens of his responsibilities in the judiciary, Goldman resigned the Chairmanship in March of 1962 and Holland choose Dr. John Perry Pritchett, President of Trenton Junior College to take on the task as chair with Colonel Lyle A. Brookover (director of publicity for the Trenton Trust Co.) chosen as vice chair.

Since Trenton was both the state capital and county seat of Mercer County, the Trenton Commission was in a unique position to highlight Trenton and its history as the center of activity during the celebrations. It also had to coordinate especially closely with the State and County Commissions when planning the celebrations and programs to avoid overlap and schedule conflicts. In addition, the Trenton Commission competed with the state and county for recruiting local individuals to volunteer and with business to assist in funding. The meeting minutes and

correspondence of the Trenton Commission reflects some of the frustration and friction this caused.

The Commission was allocated a total of \$10,000 by the city and raised an additional \$8,994.65 via donations, sales of souvenirs, publications, and admission fees to several events. The Trenton Commission successfully organized an array of Tercentenary programs and events through-out 1964. Among the projects, one of the most successful was the publishing of a revised edition of Harry J. Podmore's *Trenton Old and New* which was originally printed in 1924. Another long legacy of the Commission was creating a sub-committee to champion the establishment of a Trenton City Museum at the Ellarslie Mansion in Cadwalader Park. Lobbying and planning for the Museum continued until 1971 when Trenton City Council passed a resolution to create the Trenton City Museum.

In addition, the Trenton Commission helped celebrate the Tercentenary by arranging and sponsoring a variety of activities. They organized guided bus tours to historic sites in Trenton and the Greater Trenton area from May 30 through the end of October 1964. An outdoor summer "Theatre in the Park" program of five plays was presented by the Players of Rider College as well as a play, "For the Ladies," presented by Trenton Junior College. Several art exhibits were arranged, including works of Trenton's past and present artists, Israeli art (co-sponsored by the Congregation Brothers of Israel), and "People: Makers of Trenton," which highlighted important citizens of Trenton's past. Commission members also participated in the State Fair, urging people to come to Trenton's Tercentenary events, as well as assisting in serving as guides at the New Jersey Tercentenary Pavilion at the 1964-1965 New York World's Fair. They also hosted governors of Maryland, North Carolina, and Delaware at Tercentenary luncheons and dinners; sponsored concerts and planned the re-dedication of the Trenton Battle Monument.

In a November 16, 1964 letter to Dr. Pritchett, Mayor Holland thanked him and the Trenton Commission for their work, noting that they had "... made a meaningful contribution toward the celebration of our State's 300<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Indeed, the accomplishments of our Trenton Commission exceeded my fondest hopes." Though there were some bills to be paid and final accounting to be made, the offices of the Trenton Tercentenary Commission closed its offices at 11 East Hanover Street on November 20, 1964.

### **Scope and Content Notes**

This collection contains administrative records of the Trenton Commission including minutes, financial records, and internal correspondence. It also includes correspondence to Mayor Holland from individuals he had invited to become members of the Commission as well as extensive correspondence of Chair John Pritchett with his fellow Commission members, Mayor Holland, members of the Mercer County and State New Jersey Tercentenary Commission and others. There are also events programs and invitations to events, newspaper clippings and entire issues of newspapers and magazines dedicated to celebrating New Jersey's yearlong tercentenary celebrations. Also included are Mercer County Tercentenary Commission Minutes of 11/18/1963, a list of its

Commission members, ca. 1963 and a 1964 *Calendar of Events* sponsored by the Mercer County Committee. Finally, is an extensive collection of publications, press releases and informational flyers from the State Tercentenary Commission as inventoried below.

This collection provides detailed information about how the Trenton New Jersey Commission functioned, the relationship between its members, and the many ways they helped celebrate the Tercentenary as well as its relationship with fellow commissioners at the state and county level. The collection also provides information about early planning for the Trenton City Museum at Ellarslie in both the minutes and Dr. Pritchett's correspondence. Mercer County Tercentenary Commission material provides some insight into the Commission's activities, especially through the 1964 *Calendar of Events*. Materials from the State Tercentenary Commission, especially their 1965 report and newsletter *New Jersey Heritage*, provide a broader state-wide look at how New Jersey celebrated its 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The collection consists of 5 boxes and is divided into 10 series as described below.

### **Series Description**

#### **Series 1. Administrative Records, 1961 - 1964**

This series consists of Commission minutes, lists of Commission members and correspondence (mostly about meetings, selecting members and other internal matters). These records were found filed together in a 3-ring binder embossed with a Trenton Junior College logo. Also found in the binder was John. P. Pritchett's "Trenton's Plans for the New Jersey State Tercentenary, ca. 1962" which outlines the Trenton Commission's vision of celebrations and projects it hoped to pursue. The minutes provide details on how the commission did its work, how plans evolved, and include reports from the various Commission committees. In addition to material kept in the binder, there are loose administrative records including financial reports and invoices and a survey-study form from the Commission to help determine the form, financing and leadership of the celebration. [A closer reading of the minutes needs to be made to determine if this survey ever took place; no replies to the survey were found with the collection]. Finally, there are drawings of suggested logos for the Trenton Commission designed by Anthony Dragonetti; these were not used.

#### **Series 2. Committee Records, 1962-1964**

As noted above, the minutes of the Trenton Commission include reports from its various committees, but there are some further records of a few. The Art Committee records include an outline of their plans for 1964, art exhibit catalogs and copies of gallery talks used at the exhibits. Historical Publications Committee records consists of minutes from 1962-1964 and correspondence from 1963-1964. Finally, there are a few pieces of 1964 correspondence and a report of the Trenton Beautiful Committee.

#### **Series 3. Correspondence, 1961-1965**

The first part of this series consists of replies to Mayor Holland's invitations to become a member of the Trenton Commission. These date from April to June of 1962. The remainder is correspondence to and from Chairman Pritchett which help provide details of his and the Commission's work throughout the planning and execution of Tercentenary projects and events.

#### **Series 4. Events Programs, Invitations, etc., 1963-1964**

As detailed below, this series includes event programs, descriptions and promotional material. There are also invitations to Trenton Commission events as well as those extended to the Trenton Commission members by the Mercer County and State Commissions for their activities.

#### **Series 5. Photographs, ca. 1962**

This series only includes two items: a 3"x4" portrait photograph of Colonel Lyle A. Brookover and an 8"x10" photograph of Tercentenary commemorative sign in front of Trenton City Hall. The sign photograph was used to promote the sale of these signs which could be customized for businesses, clubs, and other organizations.

#### **Series 6. Newspapers, Clippings, Magazines, etc., 1961-1964**

This series consists of clippings of articles promoting and documenting New Jersey's Tercentenary celebrations. While they focus on Trenton, there is also coverage of Mercer County and State Commission activities. In addition, there are entire issues of newspapers and magazines that were dedicated to the state-wide celebration.

#### **Series 7. Miscellaneous material, 1962-1964**

This series includes miscellaneous ephemera (samples of the Trenton Commission's stationery, a mailer promoting the sale of Tercentenary commemorative sign, etc.) as well as miscellaneous newsletters and informational brochures sent to the Trenton Commission by other county and municipal Tercentenary commissions and committees.

#### **Series 8. Mercer County Tercentenary Commission material, 1963-1964**

This small series includes a copy of the Mercer County Tercentenary Commission minutes, 11/18/1963, a list of County Commission members, ca. 1963 and their *Calendar of Events*, 1964 published in booklet form.

#### **Series 9. New Jersey Tercentenary Commission material, 1961-1964**

This series includes a wide variety of published material of the New Jersey Tercentenary Commission distributed to promote the Tercentenary and celebrate New Jersey. This includes the 1965 report on their activities sent to Governor Richard J. Hughes and the New Jersey State Legislature; their newsletter, *New Jersey Heritage*, 1961-1963; informational pamphlets and event programs; and press releases. Also included is a complete set of John Cunningham's "Tercentenary Tales"<sup>1</sup> from 1962 to 1964. The bulk of the copies are those sent as press releases from the State Commission which included black & white photographs of illustrations to be used with the stories. There are also some samples of the stories as published in various newsletters and other publications.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Tercentenary Tales" were published in a wide variety of New Jersey newspapers and magazines from October 1962 to May 1964. Generally, these were short vignettes which discussed certain people, facts, or events in New Jersey's history.

## **Series 10. Artifacts, ca. 1961-1964**

The artifacts include a New Jersey Tercentenary Tile issued by the Trenton Jaycees [6"x6"], several small Tercentenary Flags [4"x6"] and one large Tercentenary Flag [69"x44"].

### **Container List**

#### **Series 1. Administrative Records, 1961 - 1964**

##### **Box / Folder / Folder Title**

- 1 / 1 Bound: Minutes, 1961-1962
- 1 / 2 Bound: Minutes, 1963
- 1 / 3 Bound: Minutes, 1964
- 1 / 4 Bound: Commission Members, 1961-1964
- 1 / 5 Bound: Correspondence, 1961-1964
- 1 / 6 Bound: "Trenton's Plans for the New Jersey State Tercentenary," ca. 1962. John P. Pritchett
- 1 / 7 Bound: Trenton Junior College binder (with logo) used for Trenton Tercentenary Commission Records
- 1 / 8 Loose: Financial Reports and Invoices, 1962-1965
- 1 / 9 Loose: Survey Study to "determine the format, the financing ... of a city-wide celebration." [blank questionnaire]
- 1 / 10 Loose: Suggested Commission Logos designed by Anthony Dragonetti, ca. 1962 [not used]

#### **Series 2. Committee Records, 1962-1964**

- 1 / 11 Art Committee, report, minutes, pamphlets and scripts for art exhibit talks, ca. 1962-1964
- 1 / 12 Historical Publications Committee, Minutes, 1962-1964
- 1 / 13 Historical Publications Committee, Correspondence, 1963-1964
- 1 / 14 Trenton Beautiful Committee, Correspondence, 1964

#### **Series 3. Correspondence, 1961-1965**

- 1 / 15 Mayor Arthur J. Holland, 1962
- 1 / 16 Chairman John P. Pritchett, 1961-1962
- 1 / 17 Chairman John P. Pritchett, January - June 1963
- 2 / 1 Chairman John P. Pritchett, July - December 1963
- 2 / 2 Chairman John P. Pritchett, January - March 1964
- 2 / 3 Chairman John P. Pritchett, April - June 1964
- 2 / 4 Chairman John P. Pritchett, July-September 1964
- 2 / 5 Chairman John P. Pritchett, October 1964 - January 1965

#### **Series 4. Events Programs, Invitations, etc., 1963-1964**

- 2 / 6 Greater Historic Tours, 1964
- 2 / 7 History mobile visit, 1963-1964
- 2 / 8 Salute to Trenton Ball, April 25, 1964
- 2 / 9 Speeches, 1964
- 2 / 10 Various, 1964
- OS1 / 1 Sign for Trenton Art Exhibit, May 3-26, 1964

**Series 5. Photographs, ca. 1962 and Commemorative Images**

- 3 / 1 Portrait Photograph of Colonel Lyle A. Brookover, 3"x4" B&W done by Alexander, Trenton, NJ [note to return to Dr. Pritchett, Trenton Junior College]  
Photograph of sign in front of Trenton City Hall: "Trenton The Capitol City Salutes New Jersey Tercentenary" 8"x10" B&W. verso "February 1964 Sample sign if these available to businessmen, clubs, organizations to celebrate the Tercentenary."
- OS1 / 3 New Jersey Tercentenary Prints, by Henry Gasser sponsored by the Prudential Insurance Company. Includes reproductions of watercolors of Ford Mansion, Morristown; Barnegat Lighthouse; von Steuben House, North Hackensack; Nassau Hall, Princeton University; Green Sergeants Covered Bridge, Hunterdon County; and First Presbyterian Church, Springfield.

**Series 6. Newspapers, Clippings, Magazines, etc., 1961-1964**

- 3 / 2 Newspapers, Clippings etc.
- 3 / 3 Newspapers, Clippings etc.
- 3 / 4 Newspapers, Clippings etc.
- 3 / 5 *New Jersey Business*, Tercentenary Issue, 1964, publication of New Jersey Manufacturers Association, March, 1964, Vol. 10, Number 7  
*Town & Country*, March 1964 [New Jersey Tercentenary Issue]  
*Illustrated Fact Book and History Greater Trenton Area of New Jersey* [sponsored by the Greater Trenton Chamber of Commerce; published by Lenhart and Company, Princeton [2 copies]
- OS1 / 2 Princeton Packet, Tercentenary Salute, May 28, 1964  
Trenton Sunday Times Adviser, March 8, 1964  
The Trentonian, May 2, 1962

**Series 7. Miscellaneous material, 1962-1964**

- 3 / 6 Miscellaneous Ephemera [order forms for Salute to New Jersey Tercentenary signs, Greater Trenton Chamber of Commerce historic Trenton map, suggestion sheet for Tercentenary decorations, 2 handwritten notes [phone numbers and schedule of appointments] sample Trenton Commission stationery
- 3 / 7 Miscellaneous Memos, newsletters and programs from other county and municipal Tercentenary Committees: Atlantic County, Bordentown, Cape May, Little Silver, Middletown, Princeton, Ridgewood, Sussex County, Teaneck, 1962-1964

**Series 8. Mercer County Tercentenary Commission material, 1963-1964**

- 3 / 8 Minutes, 11/18/ 1963; Commission Members, ca. 1963
- 3 / 9 Calendar of Events, 1964

**Series 9. New Jersey Tercentenary Commission material, 1963-1964**

- 3 / 10 Bush, Bernard. *The New Jersey Tercentenary, 1664-1964: Report of the Tercentenary Commission*. Trenton, 1966. [Final report]
- OS1 / 1 *New Jersey Heritage*, 1961-1963 [newsletter].
- 3 / 11 Chairman of Municipal Committees, ca. 1963-1964
- 3 / 12 Events - New Jersey Tercentenary Pavilion at the 1964-1965 New York World's Fair [informational pamphlets and brochures], 1962-1964
- 3 / 13 Events – Various, 1963-1964. [includes 1963 schedule of events booklet]

**Series 9. New Jersey Tercentenary Commission material, 1963-1964 (cont'd)**

- 4 / 1 Events – Let's Talk Tercentenary Day, State House Assembly Chamber, Trenton, December 5, 1962
- 4 / 2 Events – Let's Talk Tercentenary Day, State House Assembly Chamber, Trenton, November 14, 1963
- 4 / 3 New Jersey Tercentenary Commission: Historic Site Marker Applications, Mercer County, ca. 1963
- 4 / 4 New Jersey Tercentenary Commission: Informational Pamphlets, ca. 1961- 1964
- 4 / 5 New Jersey Tercentenary Commission: Press Kit, 1963
- 4 / 6 New Jersey Tercentenary Commission: Press Releases, 1961-1963
- 4 / 7 New Jersey Tercentenary Commission: Press Releases, 1964
- 4 / 8 New Jersey Tercentenary Commission: Stamps, Seals and other commemorative material
- 4 / 9 New Jersey Tercentenary Commission: "Tercentenary Tales," by John Cunningham - Series Information, ca. 1962-1964.
- 4 / 10 New Jersey Tercentenary Commission: "Tercentenary Tales" - Loose Illustrations
- 4 / 11 New Jersey Tercentenary Commission: "Tercentenary Tales" - November 1962 - June 1963
- 4 / 12 New Jersey Tercentenary Commission: "Tercentenary Tales" - July 1963 – Oct. 24, 1963
- 5 / 1 New Jersey Tercentenary Commission: "Tercentenary Tales" – October 31, 1963 – March 12, 1964
- 5 / 2 New Jersey Tercentenary Commission: "Tercentenary Tales" - March 19, 1964 – May 28, 1964
- 5 / 3 New Jersey Tercentenary Commission: "Tercentenary Tales" - Clippings of published "Tercentenary Tales," 1962-1964.

**Series 10. Artifacts, ca. 1961-1964**

- OS1 Jaycee New Jersey Tercentenary Tile [6"x6"]  
Tercentenary Flag [4"x6"]  
Tercentenary Flag [69"x44"]

**Provenance**

This material was found in the collection.

**Processing Note**

Duplicate material that had no unique notations were weeded from the collection.

**Additional Resources**

Bush, Bernard. The New Jersey Tercentenary, 1664-1964: Report of the Tercentenary Commission. Trenton, 1966. [see Box 3, folder 10 of this collection].

Gemmell, Lenore Sorsby and Meredith Havens, Mercer County Tercentenary Commission. Mercer County Tercentenary, 1664-1964. Trenton: Neroni Associates, 1964.

### **Additional Resources (cont'd)**

New Jersey Tercentenary Commission Records, 1958-1964 [Series SZTER001], New Jersey State Archives.

New Jersey Tercentenary Commission, Records relating to the New Jersey Tercentenary Pavilion, New York World's Fair, ca. 1961 – 1965 [Series SZTER002], New Jersey State Archives.

Office of the President Records: Robert F. Goheen Subgroup, 1924-1988. Subseries 8C: Correspondence, 1956-1972. Mercer County Tercentenary Commission, 1963-1964. University Archives, Princeton University. [Box 303, Folders 8 and 9].

### **Additional Material available at the Trenton Free Public Library**

Holland, Mayor Arthur J. - Papers [main collection], Box 1, 1962 Trenton Tercentenary Collection, Box 5, 1965 Tercentenary Collection.

Podmore, Harry J. Revised and edited by Mary J. Messler. *Trenton Old and New*. Published under the auspices of the Trenton Tercentenary Commission. Trenton: MacCrellish & Quigley, 1964.

Coll. 6 Sheet Music Collection. Banbury, George E. Banbury, George E. "New Jersey Tercentenary Song." New York: George F. Briegel, Inc.

Collection 369-Harry J. Podmore (1891-1962) Research Collection [see Box 9 for what appears to be the final typescript versions of the revised 1964 *Trenton Old and New*.]

Coll. 392 Trenton Junior College, *Kelsey Review: Tercentenary Issues*, Autumn 1963, Spring 1964 and Autumn 1964

Photographic Collection: Box 55, Folders 10A, 25A and 97A; Box 60, Folder 61A; Box 64, Folder 25A.