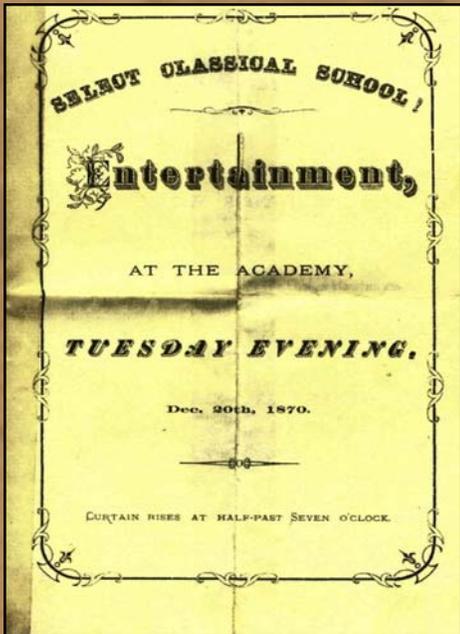




*Education and Entertainment at the*  
**Morris Academy**  
*1792 - 1869*

The Morris Academy Building 1792-1869, located on South Street was Morristown's center for classical education and entertainment.

*by Arthur Mierisch*



In 1870, the Morris Academy presented: "Make Your Wills," a farce in one act, one scene; "Excitement at Kettleville," a play in one act, one scene; "Dutchman's Ghost or All Right," a farce in one act, two scenes; and a Shadow Pantomime show.

"I'll do it today," thought Henry Pitney on a hot and humid day in August 1869, as he stepped onto the rotting Academy steps. "Why me? Why do I have to tell him? He'll never forgive me he thought. Using a monogrammed linen handkerchief, he wiped his forehead. The second step snapped and gave way. As he grasped the railing, a splinter pierced his soft palm. "Damn it!" he exclaimed. After regaining his balance, Pitney continued to the top of the landing. He paused to remove the sliver from his palm and smooth the wrinkles from his custom tailored Brooks Brothers suit.

"Johnson will never agree. The place is falling apart," Pitney thought reaching for the latch. The old oak door refused to budge. Giving it a determined shove, it opened with a groan. Pitney stumbled into the almost dark hallway lit by the faint gray-yellow light entering through a dust-caked window. The smell of dry wood reminded him of an old rotting barn. The Morris Academy, a two story building built before 1790, had four classrooms on each floor, and the principal's office on the first. "Why does he care about this old building? He says that the students need him. He'll be upset," he thought.

Johnson sitting at his desk, reading an official looking document, hearing the creaking hallway floor, looked towards the door. "Ah Henry come in. Have a seat. Do you have good news?"

Pitney sat in the worn walnut chair facing Johnson. "You need a larger office Henry." He remembered sitting in the chair thirty years ago awaiting a reprimand for a prank that upset his teachers. "It's an old building. It's unsound. The steps are falling apart. The railings are splintering. You refuse to heat the building for fear of disturbing the sparrows nesting in the chimneys. You're losing students."

Johnson looked discouraged staring at Pitney. "I don't want to lose my school. The boys need us. You understand. You attended the Academy. So did your children."

Pitney, appearing to be in deep thought. Giving a long sigh he said "Henry, I have something to tell you."

## The Morris Academy

1876–1913

In the 1700s, Morristown, situated along the Whippany River became a transportation hub for iron, agricultural products and leather goods moving east to coastal cities. In the 1800s, the town prospered from manufacturing telegraph equipment, iron products for railroads, steamboats, farm equipment, and armaments for the Mexican and Civil Wars. By the 1850s, wealthy businessmen, attracted to Morristown by its isolation from pox ridden cities, built mansions along tree lined streets.

In 1792, the Morris Academy opened a preparatory school for teen age boys. Its classical academic program attracted students from the thirteen states. In 1869, the Academy directors replaced the deteriorating building with a magnificent structure. It contained the Morris Academy, a Library and a large Hall for entertainment. Madison and Boonton must have been jealous when seeing this grand structure overwhelming theirs. On opening day in 1876, hundreds came to see Morristown's wonder.

Henry Pitney, a wealthy Morristown attorney organized the Lyceum Association. Henry Johnson was the Academy's principle in 1869. Their conversation is fictional and used to highlight Morristown's need for a quality college preparatory school during a time when public education was on Trenton's to-do list. A bit of imagination has filled in the gaps found in historical records.

In 1913, a fire destroyed the inside of the Lyceum. The outer walls survived and a box of records pulled from the fire. Preserved in the archives of the Morristown and the Morris Township Library are: Morris Academy documents; and newspapers as *The Genius of Liberty*, *The Morristown Herald*, and *The Palladium of Liberty*, *Morristown Topics* and *The Jerseyman*. They tell of the many people who studied, acted and were entertained at the Morris Academy and Lyceum.

In 1791, New Jersey was recovering economically from the Revolutionary War and not able to provide public education,

In 1805, teenage Daniel Mulford wanted a Yale education. He walked each day from Turkey (now New Providence) to attend the Morris Academy, New Jersey's prestigious preparatory school.

Lodges and Societies existed in Morristown since the Revolution. They provided friendship, educational and employment opportunities.

**1776 The American Union Lodge:** Army Lodge

**1812 St. Tammany's Lodge:** Master Masons

**1813 The Female Charitable Society:** Poor deserving women

**1849 Roxiticus Lodge:** Odd Fellows

**1868 Grand Army of the Republic Lodge:** Civil War veterans

**1873 Women's Employment Society:** Provided poor and worthy women with work paying above average wages

**1873 Young Men's Christian Association:** Social Services for young men

**1879 Winfield Scott Post:** Mexican War veterans

and relied on families, neighbors and private schools to teach children the basics of reading writing and arithmetic. A school devoted to quality education and supported by wealthy families became a reality when Caleb Russell and twenty-four residents subscribed, each paying 25 pounds (\$3,000 in 2010), agreed to form a company they named the Morris Academy. The list of subscribers included businessmen as the Fords, Canfields, Daniel Phoenix, and Joseph Lewis. They proposed to establish a "permanent school for the education of youth in the different branches of literature in the town of Morris." They wrote a Constitution and Bylaws, and appointed a president and a board of governors. Property measuring "one hundred feet of land in front and one hundred and thirty feet deep on the hill opposite the Connor's land," on South Street was purchased from the First Presbyterian Church for 520 English pounds (\$62,400 in 2010). Caleb Russell, a graduate of Princeton College and a law student of Judge Robert Morris became the first Principle. In 1792, the Morris Academy admitted 33 students. The Russell, Halsey, Lewis, Johnes, and Stiles families were the first to send their children to the school. The Academy students, often referred to as scholars, came from all states along the Atlantic coast. In 1863, enrollment began to decline. The 1792 building had worn out and there was no interest in repairing or enlarging it.

A student entered the Academy after a favorable interview with the Principle. In 1796, the Academy charged quarterly: 25 shillings (\$150 in 2010) for foreign languages, surveying and mathematics; and 16 shillings (\$96 in 2010) for English. From 1793, the school raised \$210 (\$5,000 in 2010) from annual theatrical presentations performed by the students for building repairs. The school purchased a bell from John Jacob Faeschs's Iron Works (Boonton).

In 1826, the Academy, unable to raise money for repairs, accepted students that paid \$31.25 (\$500 in 2010) per quarter per course in part cash, part work or materials. In 1869, the school again in disrepair failed to raise \$500 (\$8,000 in 2010). The school closed, then merged with the Lyceum, and

reopened in 1877, after construction of the Lyceum building.

In 1888, the Academy taught six grades called the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth forms. The students paid quarterly \$110 (\$2,000 in 2010) for the first, second and third forms; and \$150 (\$2,400 in 2010) for the fourth, fifth and sixth forms. French, German and Drawing courses were free. Classes began in September and ended in June. Students absent more than five consecutive weeks were penalized with reduced grades (most likely failing grades). Sons of clergymen and out of town commuters attended at reduced rates.

The school hired college educated and experienced teachers called Masters. School began at 8:00 a.m. and ended at 1:00 p.m.. The sounding of the 11:00 a.m. bell signaled a fifteen minute recess for outdoor exercises. Remedial time with teachers began at 2:15 and ended at 4:15 p.m..

The first and second forms taught basic penmanship, geography, English grammar, spelling, selected readings, and elementary mathematics. The third and fourth forms introduced United States history, civil government, composition, elementary algebra, plain and solid geometry, trigonometry, and the writings of Caesar. In the fifth and sixth forms, scholars studied English history, higher algebra, physics, chemistry, and Greek grammar. French and German languages, and Greek and Roman history were taught in all forms. Comprehensive courses in Latin and Greek grammar and composition, Cicero's Seven Orations, readings from Virgil and the Iliad, and Herodotus were available in the fifth and sixth forms. After 1:00 p.m., music was taught at additional expense. The Academy encouraged participation in athletics and had a membership in the Morristown Field Club where the students competed against local teams in baseball, hockey and tennis.

Weekly report cards, sent to parents monitored the scholar's performance. Some courses were graded on sub-categories rather than the whole course. Grades were recorded for reading, writing, and written and mental arithmetic; language grammar and translation; scriptures; astronomy; botany; physiology, and speaking. Etymology, an unpopular

**MORRIS ACADEMY.**

*Friday, Sept. 29 1865.*

WEEKLY REPORT OF  
*Alvin Johnson*

Reading . . . . .	Latin Translation . . . . .	Composition . . . . .
Spelling . . . . .	Latin Syntax . . . . .	Journal . . . . .
Penmanship . . . . .	Greek Grammar . . . . .	Speaking . . . . .
Arithmetic, Written . . . . .	Greek Translation . . . . .	French Language . . . . .
Arithmetic, Mental . . . . .	Greek Syntax . . . . .	Vocal Music . . . . .
English Grammar . . . . .	Chemistry . . . . .	Drawing . . . . .
Geography . . . . .	Natural Philosophy . . . . .	Painting . . . . .
Map Drawing . . . . .	Natural History . . . . .	German Language . . . . .
History . . . . .	Astronomy . . . . .	Italian Language . . . . .
Algebra . . . . .	Geology . . . . .	Punctuality . . . . .
Geometry . . . . .	Botany . . . . .	Departments . . . . .
Trigonometry . . . . .	Physiology . . . . .	Report . . . . .
Book Keeping . . . . .	Rhetoric . . . . .	Average . . . . .
Scriptures . . . . .	Etymology . . . . .	Absences—days . . . . .
Latin Grammar . . . . .	Instrumental Music . . . . .	

*13*  
*2*  
*110*  
*2*

**EXPLANATION:** Perfect recitations are marked No. 1; not so good, No. 2, and so on; No. 6 denotes a failure; X, excused; a, absent. Good Deportment is denoted by No. 1; Misdeportment increases the number, and No. 6 is the worst. Punctuality is denoted by No. 1; Irregularity increases the number to 6, as above.

**REMARKS:** A written excuse from the Parent or Guardian should always be promptly sent to the Principal, to cancel any mark for delinquency, when the pupil is not in fault. This report must be returned signed before Friday of each week, or the pupil will be marked delinquent.

Correct, *Alvin Johnson* PRINCIPAL  
Examined by \_\_\_\_\_



In 1880, the school paper, a six page two column publication sold for 10 cents (\$5.00 in 2010) a copy. An 8 issue subscription cost 75 cents (\$7.50). Advertising cost 50 cents (\$5.00) per inch per issue.

“There is a meeting of the shareholders of the Apprentices Library, on Friday next. Anyone can become a member by paying a \$3.00 fee. The Library is for the benefit of young apprentices and clerks. Books can be taken out during the year, on payment of twenty-five cents. A friend must sign a written guarantee for their safe return.”

*The Jerseyman*  
June 14, 1855

course proved difficult for students. According to Webster, etymology is the “origin or deviation of a word as shown by its analysis into elements, by pointing out the root or primitive which it is based.” Punctuality and deportment were mandated. An explanation on a report card defines a grade of 1 as a perfect recitation; 2 as not so good; 3 is worse and a 4 and 5 denotes a failure. A 6 indicated irregularities in attendance. Grades were averaged. A student receiving a 3 in history and a 1 each in three courses: spelling; writing; and geography achieved an above average grade of 1.5.

Scholars that completed prescribed studies and maintained an average of 2 or less (equivalent to a B+, 87 or better today) received diplomas. They were accepted by Amherst, Brown University, Dartmouth, and the Dental Department of the University of Pennsylvania. Students that completed studies averaging 4 or less received certificates.

The Academy paper, *The Avalon*, available to the public began publication in the 1860s. *The Academy Mirror* succeeded *The Avalon* in the 1880s. Students wrote about advances in science, current literature, and differences in languages. During the Civil War, baseball and football became popular sports. In March of 1892, an editor expressed concern about student’s lack of interest in “Base-ball.”

*But the thing to which all thoughts are directed, and upon which all eyes on turned it is the Base—ball nine. This has an advantage over the Foot-ball team and having experience and material from former nines has the universal support of the whole school. In former years the teams have been formed with more or less enthusiasm. We earnestly hope that this will not be the case this year.*

The *Mirror’s* MODERN INVENTION section listed amazing innovations. One issue told about metal plates for shoes, a new pen, a prohibition cane, and a bed shower that would refresh a weary traveler:

“There is a meeting of the shareholders of the Apprentices Library, on Friday next. Anyone can become a member by paying a \$3.00 fee. The Library is for the benefit of young apprentices and clerks. Books can be taken out during the year, on payment of twenty-five cents. A friend must sign a written guarantee for their safe return.”

*The Jerseyman*  
June 14, 1855

- The man who invented the metal plates for shoes made \$1,250,000.
- The stylographic [a fountain pen with a conical point used for graphing] pen made the inventor worth \$200,000.
- A Prohibition cane uses nothing but a hollow tube that will hold a quart of anything.
- A bed shower is quite a novelty now. The mattress is moved, the sleeper falls into a tank from the bed, and a valet works the pump.

Other articles were of general interest. A foreign correspondent gave a written tour of Paris describing the Arc de Triumph, the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, and the Rue Royale. A student entered a short story about an afternoon ride in May on the Nantucket Island Railroad. The impressive journey began at the steamboat landing and traveled across the island to Surfside and Seaconset stopping often to talk with people along the way.

The *Mirror's* SCHOOL NOTES section told of: graduate activities in colleges, a “Base-ball” team, and the formation of a school quartet.

- There are graduates of Morris Academy in Princeton, Yale, Williams, Johns Hopkins, and Cornell.
- Fredrick C. Palmier, formally of the school, has been elected on the Bric-a-Brac Committee of Princeton College for next year.
- The colors of the uniforms for the Base-ball team have been decided upon. The shirts and trousers will be of gray, the stockings, jersey, felted hat will be blue material. It will be similar to the Yale Uniform.
- McGraw, '92, has for some time past and desirous of forming a quartet, and has spoken to several of the fellows about it.

Students having noted family names of Condict, Cutler,

Howard, Mills, Smith, and Voorhees went on to graduate from prestigious colleges. In 1805, Daniel Mulford, a student “made the daily trip to and from Turkey (now New Providence) on foot” to Morristown. He spent an inheritance from his deceased parents at the Academy so that he “might gratify his heart’s desire—to obtain an education at Yale.” He returned to Morristown after graduating from Yale to study law with Sylvester Russell. “Shortly after his arrival he was appointed principle of the Morris Academy.”

Morristown and Madison merchants advertised in the *Mirror* selling musical instruments, jewelry, furniture, groceries, coal, and the services of steam-fitters (a job created by advancements in steam technology).

Libraries containing technical and literary volumes were supported by individual contributions or donations from manufacturing and agricultural societies. In 1790, Benjamin Freeman kept a private library in his home for the Morris County Society for the Promotion of Agriculture and Domestic Manufacturers. Freeman’s library merged with an independent library in 1812, forming the Morristown Library Association. In 1848, the Apprentice’s Library Association purchased the collection from the defunct Morristown Library Association for the sole use of apprentices in Morris County. Six years later in 1854, the Morris Institute purchased the books from the Apprentices Library and in 1878, assigned the collection to the Morristown Lyceum. The Lyceum charged a membership fee and kept records of books taken. The identity of gentlemen with overdue books was not publically divulged. Instead ads placed in the *Jerseyman* reminded members that books “should be returned at their convenience.”

### **Morristown Schools**

By the late 1800s, there were 14 private schools on South Street and 9 on Maple Avenue! Schools for young men, women, and coeducational schools offered liberal and technical education. Several schools restricted enrollment to native born or immigrant children. The Warren Academy Building on South



The Morris Female Institute was located on the site of the Chase Bank on South Street. The building became Miss Dana's Boarding and Day School for Young Ladies in 1887.

Street near the green became Morristown's teaching campus. In 1808, Mr. Barthelemy advertised that he was teaching French and Italian classes at the Academy. The Morristown French Academy in the same building opened a school for working students of all ages and sexes. Sessions ran from 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. for young men and from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. for young women. French speaking families posted ads for "a few young gentleman may be received as boarders in the family, where French is generally spoken." Mr. Dutton opened an evening school in the Warren Academy for "teaching reading, writing, arithmetic and Italian, and bookkeeping on moderate terms, and the most approved methods."

After 1860, private schools blossomed. Schools along Railroad Avenue (now Maple Avenue) convenient to the Morris and Essex Railroad's DeHart Street Station opened to teach lower grades (third through seventh).

In 1861, *The Jerseyman* advertised:

*MISS JULIA E. FLOOD will open her school on South Street for children of both sexes.*

In 1862, The Morris Female Institute, a boarding and day school on nearby South Street, remained in business until 1883. The school charged a yearly fee for a fixed number of courses instead of charging by the course. The first year called the Primary year cost \$7 (\$140 in 2010); the second year called the Preparatory year cost \$10 (\$200); the third year called the Junior year cost \$12 (\$240) and the Senior year cost \$11 (\$220). Students paid quarterly fees for French, Latin, drawing, painting and culture courses. The tuition did not include room and board.

During the 1820s, inventors became known as engineers and scientists. They experimented with radical ideas, investigated the properties of materials, created formulas to explain their findings and manufactured products that changed the way people lived. Developments in magnetism, batteries, and uses for oil and iron led to the creation of the telegraph,



The Morrystown School

gasoline engines and electric motors. The Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute opened in 1824, for the “application of science to the common purposes of life” and became known for “its success in transferring technology from the laboratory to the marketplace.”

In 1863, Morrystown’s Polytechnic School for male and female students opened at the corner of South and Elm Streets. The school’s advertisement read: “Moderate prices. Circulars may be had at the Post Office.”

In 1864, The Morrystown Collegiate Institute, a school for ministers located in Seeley Hall on South Street taught college level courses. The school’s brochure depicted the administration as a government “based upon the conscience of the pupils” and said that the students must be of good quality, respectful and interested in their studies:

*No written laws or penalties are provided; but it is proposed to receive none but those who aim to be gentlemen. The pupils will be expected to behave as such towards each other, and towards their teachers. Study in the primary department embraces a thorough knowledge of: reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, modern history, French and Spanish.*

After the Civil War, more schools opened in Morrystown. In 1869, the Maple Avenue Public School District established schools for lower grade students. Private schools were outraged, claiming unethical competition from the State. In the 1870s, Ms. Bostwick’s School for Young Ladies opened on Maple Avenue and Ms. Emma Campbell opened a kindergarten on De Hart Street. In 1880, Mrs. Phoebe Scribner opened a boarding School for Young Women. In 1882, Mrs. Mann and Mrs. Phoebe Babbitt opened schools for young women on opposite sides of Speedwell Avenue.

In 1891, the Episcopal Church founded St. Bartholomew’s School for boys to age 12 as a preparatory school for Harvard University. The school hosted lectures by international notorieties including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the author of the

Sherlock Holmes novels. Facing financial difficulties in 1897, the school was reorganized and named the Morristown School. It then prepared students for Ivy League and engineering schools. In 1971, the school merged with Miss Bard's School for Girls and became the coeducational Morristown Beard School.



Morristown Lyceum circa 1890

In 1894, Miss Dana re-opened her School for Girls. In lower grades she taught drawing, "water-color and oil painting, clay modeling, botany and zoology. Upper classes taught chemistry, astronomy, ancient history, calculus, and moral philosophy and science." A \$400 (\$1,000 in 2010) a year tuition included room and board, washing, lights, and fuel. Miss Dana advertised that special attention is: "given to English, reading and composition allowing students to be admitted, without examination to Smith, Wellesley and the Baltimore College for Women.

### **Lectures and Entertainment at the Lyceum**

From 1793 to 1830, annual performances at the Academy had raised sufficient funds to keep the building in repair. By 1869, however, the Academy was bankrupt and the Directors decided to close the school. They wanted a new building to be a tribute to the town's affluence. A Special Master sold the Academy land and building to the "Library and Lyceum Association" for \$6,000 (\$90,000 in 2010). After razing the old building, new construction began. It took nine years to complete the massive brown stone structure.

In 1878, the Lyceum opened to hundredths of amazed visitors. They entered the building from a single door fronting on South Street. To the left, the library's reading room, 18 feet wide by 28 feet long, welcomed patrons with a lavish display of furnishings. Light entered the room through eight-foot tall by three-feet wide windows that opened to dissipate fumes from candles, lamps, and coal furnaces, and to circulate air on hot and humid days. Many wanted to sit for a few moments on the fine oak and walnut furniture. A silver ice pitcher and goblets presented by the Democratic Association sat on a table near



Chautauqua is defined as a Native American name referring to a lake, town, or county in western New York state and also an assembly for educational purposes, combined lectures, entertainments and out-of-door-life. The Assembly charged for presentations. Today the town hosts vacationers.

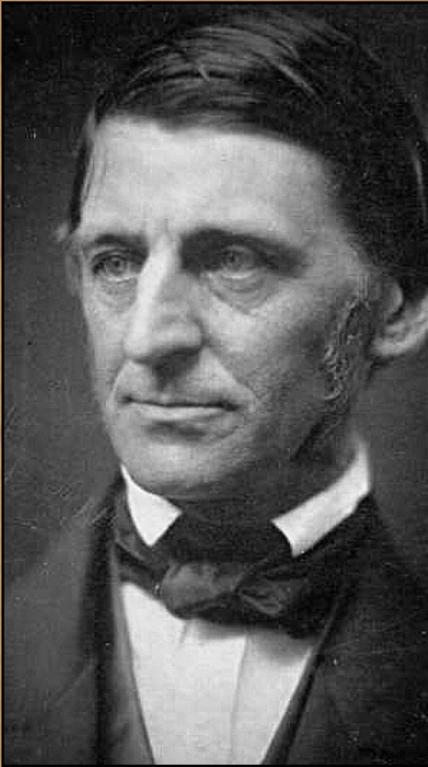
the cash register. The wall clock, a present from the old Morris Academy chimed on the hour. Below, on a table sat an exact model of the old School next to an egg in a silver cup symbolizing the idea that hatched the Library and Lyceum. In front of the fireplace, a handsome rug given by Chaffin and Company of New York took the chill off cold feet on wintery days. The walls painted with in a red-white-green floral display reminded people of the gardens along Madison Avenue. Behind the reading room, five rows of six foot high shelves contained over a thousand books bound in paper and leather. Classrooms were behind the library and along the right side of the building. The Lyceum Hall, on the second floor ornately decorated had two levels of box seats. Along with orchestra and balcony seats, the Hall seated over 700 patrons.

From 1792 through 1769, lectures and shows at the Morris Academy informed and educated audiences. Presentations as “The Russians” and “Peter the Great” told of historical events. Shows as “Every One Has His Fault,” “Flag Emotions,” “Lover’s Vows,” and “Miss In Her Teens” touched people’s social conscience and stimulated after-theater discussions.

In 1868, the Morris Academy with the Lyceum formed the Lyceum Lecture Bureau to engage paid lecturers and theatrical troupes. *Morristown Topics*, a 1923 newspaper referenced an 1869 article describing the Bureau as “the nearest thing to Chautauqua.” In the 1860s, local Chautauqua’s became the booking agents for lyceums throughout the country. Ralph Waldo Emerson, one of the first first lecturers at the Lyceum was said to be:

*...perhaps the first celebrity to go upon the lecture platform and have people pay him money for being famous. He is the forerunner of Chautauqua headliners.*

Later that year, the Academy presented “Arctic Explorations,” a lecture about travels to the North and South Poles. Audiences envisioned the hardships faced by explorers and sailors aboard wooden sailboats as they outmaneuvered



Ralph Waldo Emerson was among the noted speakers at the Lyceum.

crushing ice flows in Arctic waters. The lecturer told about the period from the 1830s through 1860, when scientists and naturalists as Charles Darwin, and the governments of the United States and Europe decided to map the world, explore for new species of plants and animals, and find land at the South Pole.

A spellbound audience heard about explorers unable to reach the North Pole. In 1851, Sir Robert McClure discovered the Northwest Passage. He traveled this route hoping to find the Pole. However, a sudden ice flow forced his small sailboat to turn back. Months later, another explorer John Rae, traveling on foot and dog sled retreated in the face of blinding snow storms and subzero temperatures. In 1903, a determined Ronald Amundsen reached the North Pole while braving wind and snow.

The lecturer told about the squadron of United States sloops and frigates that faced daily perils searching for land in the Antarctic. Several small boats were lost during the month it took to round Cape Horn at the tip of South America. Larger frigate sized boats, maneuvered around ice flows finding land in Antarctica. In 1912, Amundsen located the South Pole.

In 1869, enlightened audiences learned about the worthiness of Secretary of State William H. Seward's 1867 purchase of Alaska. The lecturer told about Russia occupying Alaska since 1794, and two years later building a permanent Orthodox mission settlement at Yakutat Bay. The Russian-American Trading Company established in 1799, harvested sea otters in Alaskan waters depleting several varieties. In 1862, Russia fearing a war with Britain wanted to prevent Britain, a stronger naval power from seizing Alaska. The territory was sold to the United States, already on unfriendly terms with Britain's foreign allegiances with the rebellious southern states.

During "a stormy night" in 1880, the Hon. C. A. Washburn, a United States Minister to Paraguay lectured about the human destruction in that land-locked country. He aroused the indignation of audiences as he told of cruel dictators that murdered hundredths of thousands since 1864. Such lectures



In 1870, the LaPlata River was the only access to the inland country of Paraguay. Dense forests and swamps protected it from invasion. During the 1500s, Spain controlled the country's economy. In 1811, a series of despotic dictators ruled the country. The Paraguayan War ended their tyranny.

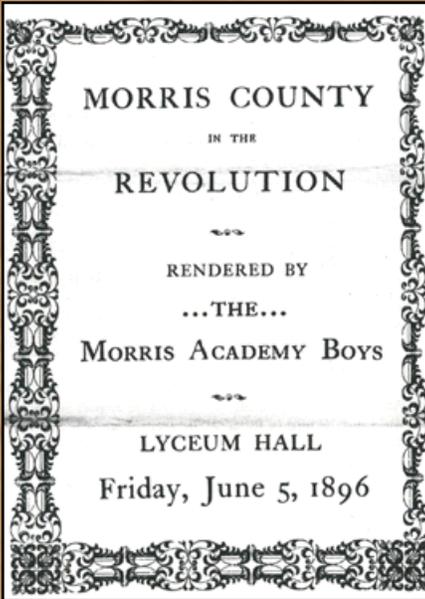
strengthened the United States opposition to foreign intervention in the Americas. This resentment led to military action against Spain by Teddy Roosevelt in the Spanish American War in the 1890s.

Mr. Washburn told how 200,000 of the original 900,000 men, women, and children died in the Paraguayan War (1864–1870). After five years of fighting, the neighboring countries of Argentina and Brazil asked the United States to intervene. The war ended when a squadron of gunboats led by the USS *Wasp* sailed up the La Plata River to Asuncion, the country's only city and capitol. Months after the lecture, the Lyceum Debating Society resolved: "That further foreign involvement in the Americas is not desirable."

Morristown learned from the experiences of personages who have traveled to distant lands. In 1888, Henry F. Downing (1846–1928), a vibrant and impressive African-American lectured at the Lyceum about "the customs, habits and superstitious practices of the savage tribes of Africa." Mr. Downing served in the U.S. Navy and Grover Cleveland appointed him consul to Luanda, Angola. He went on to write several novels and plays. The movie "Thirty Years Later" (1928) is based on a story/novella and the film "A Daughter of the Congo" (1930) is based on Downing's *The American Cavalryman*.

In 1896, the Academy's production of "Morris County in the Revolution," adapted from Mr. Charles D. Platt's *Ballads of New Jersey in the Revolution* excited audiences. The text, a lasting tribute to the Academy, first printed by the *Jerseyman* in 1896, was reprinted by the Ulan Press in January 2014. *Harper's New Monthly*, later known as *Harper's Magazine* permitted the inclusion of illustrations from their February 1859 issue. Throughout the play, audiences arose, clapped, and cheered at the sound of cannons and the rousing chorus.

It took The Morris Academy Boys two hours to present Mr. Platt's work *Morris County in the Revolution*. The presentation included narratives in five parts scanning 1776 through 1781. As the curtain opened, the audience heard:



Charles D. Platt (1846-1923) in his teens attended the private school of Rev. John T. Pingry. After graduating from Williams College in 1877, Platt taught at the Pingry School in New Brunswick until 1883 when he became principle of the Morris Academy. His publications include *Ballads of New Jersey*, *History of Dover*, *Pocahontas and the Dawn of Our Nation* and *Dover Dated*.

*The Opening Gun: A Cannon sounded. The chorus sang:*

*History! History! rah! rah! rah!*

*United States History! siss-boom-ah!*

*Boom-Boom-Boom!*

*DOOM-DOOM-DOOM!*

*United States History!*

In 1780, Connecticut Farms, now known as Union, New Jersey was attacked by 5,000 Hessian troops commanded by General Wilhelm von Knyphausen. The Germans expecting to find a war weary town were unaware of the militia men forming in the nearby hills. The Hessians, repulsed at Hobart Gap made a quick retreat for the coast. Chatham, Madison and Morristown survived this invasion into Patriot territory.

In Part IV, Platt recalls Parson Caldwell's resolution during Knyphausen's Raid:

*Now on a day, 'twas the sixth of June,  
Knyphausen led the foe  
In a raid wherein to Morristown  
They meant that day to go.*

*For much provision here was stored  
And powder and ball, they knew;  
But though they started on that raid,  
They did not quite get through.*

*Connecticut Farms was on their way,  
They burned it to the ground;  
And there we found Caldwell's wife  
With babe in arms we found*

*Shot down by some unfeeling wench,  
Who through the window fired  
To slay the wife of him whose voice  
His patriot zeal inspired.*



Pearl Craige, alias John Oliver Hobbes (1867-1905), from a portrait by Will Rothenstein, wrote plays and novels and lectured in the United States, England, and Scotland.

Morristown depended on coal for heating and the generation of steam for locomotives, pumps, and generators. In 1899, Mr. Daniel L. Hart and Mr. C. E. Callahan raised the compassion of audiences with their lecture "Slaves of the Mine," They told how New Jersey's iron industry prospered by the availability of anthracite coal from Pennsylvania. The Morris Canal (1820 through 1920) transported coal from the Leigh Valley in north eastern Pennsylvania, across New Jersey to Jersey City. In 1860, the Jersey Central Railroad reached Wilkes-Barre and added to the tonnage reaching Jersey City.

Hart and Callahan described the perils of miners working in cramped dark tunnels. They explained how a spark could easily ignite a blower—gas that suddenly escapes from a crack in the wall. To survive, the miner threw himself onto the floor pressing his face into the dirt. As the flames passed over head, the miner arose. Holding his breath, he ran to an area not contaminated by the poison methane gas and coal dust above him. If he inhaled, he would immediately perish. The lecturers told of other disasters: tunnel roofs collapsing; tunnels flooding; and exploding boilers. They related stories about the men and children of European heritage doing their life's work side by side hundreds of feet underground.

In 1894, Pearl Craige, alias John Oliver Hobbes, while staying with Mr. and Mrs. George Voorhees of Morristown delivered a lecture at the Lyceum. Reading from *Angels Life*, she linked great artists and thinkers as Balzac, Emerson, Brahms, Dante, and Goya into literature, painting, music, and Catholic and Protestant theology. Dr. Norman B. Fox, U.S. District Attorney and President of Morristown's Friday Evening Club sponsored her second lecture. After the performance, he wrote to the Lyceum Bureau in New York:

*All were charmed with her address. Of particularly pleasing personal appearance, with a voice musically pleasant and also so clear as to be heard distinctly in the farther parts of the hall, with an engaging style of speaking as simply animated conversation, with keen analysis, she proved herself to be one*

*of the most brilliant of speakers who have addressed the Friday Evening Club.*

In 1913, a fire consumed the inside of the Lyceum. The end had come to a magnificent building that was Morristown's symbol for classical education and entertainment. In 1792, the Morris Academy, a well endowed and staffed preparatory school for young men admitted 33 students from affluent households. As its reputation for quality education grew so did its enrollment. By 1880, after merging with Lyceum, enrollment peaked at over 100 scholars. The Academy survived the competition in 1800s from other private schools by providing a quality education where others failed. Many of its graduates went on to noted colleges.

A moment in Morristown's history had passed.



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