

My Family's History in Howell, NJ

In the summer of 1945 my great-grandfather, John Hein, came home after three years of fighting on the front lines in North Africa and Italy during World War II. He bought a house on 11 Rustic Drive in Howell using money from the G.I. Bill that was provided to him for his service in the war. Living alongside Route 9 he and his neighbors knew it was a dangerous road; in fact, it was nicknamed "Killer Nine" and was one of the most dangerous highways in the country. ~~Often there were accidents, with people sometimes badly injured and no help available.~~ Seeing a need in the community, he and fellow veterans and friends in the neighborhood fundraised money to found the first Howell First Aid Squad. They went from door to door and held a coin toss on the corner of route 9 and Aldrich Rd. With that money they bought their first vehicle, a used 1949 Cadillac ambulance that was kept across the street from my great-grandfather's house and the first aid siren was in their backyard. My grandfather remembers taking first aid calls in the house, when he was eight years old, and if there were no adults present, he would have to sound the alarm himself. They even had a box next to the siren that he could stand on so he could reach the button. In the 1950's, Howell was a poor area, but as my grandfather says, "Just because we weren't people of means didn't mean we led meaningless lives." We will never really know how many lives were saved by our town's first aid squad over the years. However, the selflessness of my great-grandfather and his friends to help their community set an example for those who came after them.



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My Visit to the National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey

Monmouth County offers several sites that allow residents and visitors to experience our rich history. For this essay I chose to visit the National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey in Sea Girt. The National Guard museum houses thousands of military artifacts from the colonial era to modern day. The museum was very interesting and gave a great deal of information on Monmouth County's contribution to great battles and wars.

I began my tour of the museum by looking at artifacts from the colonial era. I learned that roads were built in the early days by using middens, which are piles of leftover seashells. I was surprised to learn that some roads today in our county still have a seashell base. The muskets that were used in the colonial era had a string fuse that was lit to fire the gun. Finally, I learned that the New Jersey Blues were the first evolution of our modern-day National Guard and they helped the British defeat the French in a battle during the French and Indian War.

As I explored the exhibit on the Revolutionary War I saw an actual musket that was used at that time. It had a flint strike to fire the gun, not a string fuse. After the Revolutionary War, President George Washington taxed farmers. The farmers rebelled and this was the first time the New Jersey militia helped enforce the law. I saw exhibits on the War of 1812 and the Spanish American War where the percussion musket was first used. It was interesting to learn that during the Civil War people started to rifle muskets to make bullets go farther and faster. This created the rifle which changed the war. I learned that the modern-day National Guard was established by the New Jersey Legislature in 1868.

My tour of the museum ended with artifacts from World War I, World War II, and the wars in Iraq. My favorite part of the tour was when I got to climb up and take a look inside a submarine which was used during the Civil War. It was fascinating to see how the submarine was powered by men turning cranks. I was surprised to learn that six men would fit inside the submarine.

I learned so much from my visit to the National Guard Militia Museum of New Jersey. I learned all about Monmouth County's contribution to our country. I am proud of our state's contribution to our nation's history, and I can't wait to visit the museum again!



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A Descendant Of The Mayflower

I am very proud of the legacy that my family has! My relatives (11th great grandmother and 11th great grandfather) Mary and William Brewster were called Pilgrims because they chose to sail to America to find a better life for themselves and their family. They brought their son named Wrestling and their daughter named Love with them. Their four other children came over on later ships. Last year we learned that there were 51 men, 20 women, 21 boys, and 10 girls onboard. There was also a crew of 30, 2 dogs, and a cat.

The Mayflower was supposed to sail with another ship called the Speedwell. There were difficulties on this trip right from the beginning. Both ships were out more than 200 miles in the Atlantic Ocean when the Speedwell started to leak. This couldn't be fixed so both ships had to go back to England. Some of the passengers on the Speedwell were very disappointed that they were home so they decided to sail on the Mayflower. This caused extremely crowded conditions. The Mayflower set sail for America on September 6, 1620.

Both of these ships were cargo ships and were meant to carry supplies-not people. Passengers had to travel below deck where it was cold, damp, smelly, and very crowded. During the start of the trip, many people became sick. They couldn't go out into the fresh air because they could be washed overboard. The Pilgrims lived for 66 days in this extremely small area where the ceilings were so low they couldn't even stand up! They had no electricity or refrigeration so they had to eat what they had put in barrels for the trip.

Soon large waves and dangerous winds came up and the ship was pushed off course-ending up in Massachusetts rather than Virginia. It was now November 11, 1620. They anchored in Provincetown Harbor and called the rock they landed on Plymouth Rock. The Pilgrims had to stay on the boat throughout the first winter and half of them died. As soon as the weather started to get warmer, they got off the Mayflower and started to build their houses. This was known as Plymouth Colony.

These brave people were looking for a new and better life. They wanted to live in freedom and have their children think for themselves so that they could make wise decisions. No longer did they want a king or queen telling them what to think or believe. These colonists had survived a long and dangerous voyage across the ocean. They are important to our history because they struggled for our freedom. They wrote the first document to set up self-government that was called the Mayflower Compact. This was the beginning of the creation of the United States of America.



By Joey Longo