



THE STORIED PIATT COTTAGE

It is a museum piece; what is its history?

Scores of wayfarers ask that question as they stand before the tidy cottage near the ancient inn, on East Front Street, Scotch Plains. It is the only dwelling in this old neighborhood which still retains its native simplicity and charm. It has not changed since the early days when it was successively the home of a pioneer, a Revolutionary War hero, a Quaker woman preacher and a noted physician.

Known as the Piatt Cottage, it probably was built and first occupied by John Shotwell, a Quaker, one of the founders of West Fields, whose widowed daughter, Sarah Smith, married Capt. William Piatt. Their three children were born in the house and many were the tales they told of their father's daring on the battlefield. He fought with distinction at Trenton, Princeton, Monmouth and in the siege of Yorktown which resulted in Cornwallis' surrender. He was a charter member of the Order of Cincinnati and attended the organization meeting of army officers at General von-Steuben's headquarters in the Verplanck house, near Fishkill, N. Y., May 13, 1783. While living in the cottage, he reenlisted in the Army and was killed in a battle with the Indians, at Fort Recovery, Ohio, Nov. 4, 1791.

Shortly after his death, the widow Piatt sold the cottage to David Vail Jr. and he sold it back to the Shotwells. The deed covering the transaction is dated Sept. 12, 1809, and the price given is \$700. Significantly the new owner, Jacob Shotwell, was the father-in-law and cousin of Jemima, only daughter of Captain Piatt. Soon thereafter, the cottage became the joint property of the Piatt children, James, Jemima and William F., and finally was conveyed to Elijah and Jemima Piatt Shotwell.

Like his father, James Piatt was a soldier, a lieutenant in Colonel Pikes regiment in the War of 1812. William F. preferred medicine, but before establishing a successful practice in New York City, he married Eliza Little of Scotch Plains, the daughter of a Revolutionary soldier. When Lafayette made his second visit to this country, he honored the son of his old friend and compatriot by choosing him as his escort at a public reception at Columbia College, and entered the hall leaning upon Dr. Piatt's arm.

Jemima Piatt Shotwell broke with the family tradition, joined her husband in the Society of Friends, and became a Quaker preacher. She was a positive character and vigorously denounced the theology of Elias Hicks. When that eloquent pleader for religious freedom was disowned, and Quakers—Orthodox and Hicksite