

Allentown Sober Society

NJHS MSS.

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AMONG WHAT IS known as the "Hutchinson MSS.," in the Library of the New Jersey Historical Society, is a statement of the formation of one of the earliest of the Temperance Societies in New Jersey. The "Articles" of Association of this Society show that it was formed in Allentown, Monmouth county, and the following is a copy of the same, to which we append the names of its members.

It is further stated that the first meeting was held at the house of Aaron Stewart, April 27, 1805, when a Chairman and Clerk were appointed as stated in the names given below, and Mr. Stewart (last name entered) the Treasurer.

"ARTICLES OF THE SOBER SOCIETY"

"Organized at Allentown, N.J., April 27, 1805. We whose names are hereunto annexed do agree to quit the use of all kinds of distilled spirituous liquors and strive to do all we can to discourage it in others, except in case of sickness or the like, and then to be given by a doctor, or some two or more of said Society. In case any one should break the above said rules in any shape whatever, he shall pay the sum of one dollar for so offending and for every offence, and while he continues to pay the sum above-said to be considered as a member of said Society and enjoy all the privileges of said Society; but, when he refuses to pay, he shall lose all his rights and claim, and no longer be considered a member of said Society. If any should break said rules and pay the above forfeits, the money is to be put into the hands of some two men as Trustees for said Society, which shall be chosen by the members of said Society, and the money to be put to use for benefit of the Society in case of sickness or accident, if he should stand in need. And, further, we jointly agree and bind ourselves unto one another to assist and help one another in any case of distress which may accidentally happen to any, but shall help one another as brethren in all cases, preferring hiring or dealing one with another before others, provided we can get served as well.

"And for the further establishing said Society we agree to meet and hold meetings from time to time for the promotion and benefit of said Society, as witness our hands."

The following is a complete list of the members of the So-ciety as signed by them:

"Samuel Rogers, Ch'n, Obadiah Robbins, Cl'k, John Palmer, Joseph Paxton, William Borden, Thomas L. Swiler, Dutchet Mulholland, Edward Page, James Houston, Ira Winckel, Samuel Rulon, Peter Mesler, Hugh Ager, James Horner, Robert T. Chapman, William Osborn, William B. Montgomery, George Sprouls, Edward Clayton, George Derby, Emson Hamilton, John Demons, R. M. Stout, Joseph Robbins, Joseph Imley, Peter Bills, Thomas Auger, John Hamilton, William Arnet, John Quigley, William Vansciver, William Fervel, Samuel Pittman, Samuel Chamberlain, James Demons, Jacob Hawk, William Watton, John Williams, Nath'l Cox, John King, Ebenezer Soloman, Joseph Fowler, Nath'l Robbins, David Rulon, Edward

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Parent, Anthony Borden, Garret Newgent, Joseph Paxson, George W. Taylor, Andrew W. Bell, William Imley, James Tapscott, James Bills, Peter Parent, Zaphaniah Gibbins, William Foster, George Sinclair, Aaron Stewart.

The Society also made By-Laws, three of which were

"Any member taking a bottle or glass through deception to make a pretence of drink, although they do not drink, shall pay the sum of 25 cents.

"Any member having been disowned must pay \$1.00 for re-instatement.

"Be it further enacted, that if any member takes the use of God's name in vain, or swear in manner during the time the Society are sitting, is to pay the sum of 6 cents for every offence."

How long the Society existed is unknown.

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