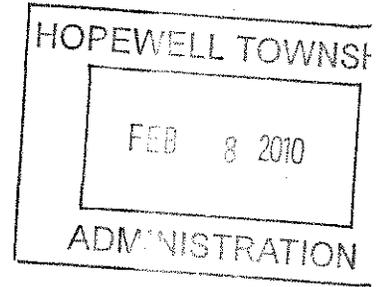




COUNTY OF MERCER
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE
ENGINEERING DIVISION
McDADE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
640 SOUTH BROAD STREET
P.O. BOX 8068
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KELVIN S. GANGES
Chief of Staff

BRIAN M. HUGHES
County Executive

ANDREW MAIR
County Administrator

AARON T. WATSON
Director

February 3, 2010

GREGORY SANDUSKY, P.E., P.L.S.
County Engineer

Daniel D. Saunders
Deputy State Historic Preservation Office
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Office of Historic Preservation
P.O. Box 404
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

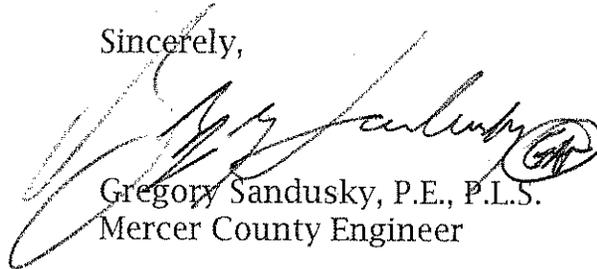
Re: Phase IA Archeological Study for Bear Tavern Road Bridge
over Jacobs Creek, Hopewell Township, Mercer County
State Bridge Number 2200060

Dear Mr. Saunders:

We are submitting a copy of the Phase IA Archeological Study for the
Jacobs Creek Bridge project, prepared by John Milner Associates, Inc., for
your consideration and review.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please feel
free to contact my office at (609)989-6600 or by email at
gsandusky@mercercounty.org.

Sincerely,



Gregory Sandusky, P.E., P.L.S.
Mercer County Engineer

GS:mar

C: Aaron T. Watson, Director of Mercer County D.O.T. & I.
Rebecca Yamin, Ph.D., John Milner Associates, Inc.
Paul Pogorzelski, Hopewell Township Administrator

University historian uneasy about bridge plan

By John Tredea
Staff Writer

A Pulitzer Prize-winning professor of history at Princeton University has serious reservations about Mercer County's plan to replace the Cob's Creek Bridge with a span that has no weight limit.

"There is no doubt that this area has great historical importance, which would be much compromised by the kind of new bridge that the county is contemplating, which would be capable of carrying heavy truck traffic," James McPherson said last week.

Dr. McPherson won the Pulitzer Prize in history for his 1989 book, "Battle Cry of Freedom," about the U.S. Civil War. He has published many other books as well, most of them about the Civil War.

In December 2001, he walked the route followed by George Washington and the Continental Army through what is now southwestern Hopewell Township. The walk included crossing Jacob's Creek on the now-closed bridge on Bear Tavern Road, just north of Jacob's Creek Road.

Making that walk with Dr. McPherson was another Pulitzer Prize-winning historian, this one whose special field of study is the American Revolution, David Hacker Fischer. He landed the Pulitzer Prize with his 2004 book, "Wash-

ington's Crossing," part of Oxford University Press' "Pivotal Moments in American History" series of books. Dr. Fischer has taught at Brandeis University for many years.

"David Fischer and I walked the route of the American army from Washington's Crossing to Trenton in the last weekend of December 2001, during the 225th anniversary events connected with the Trenton-Princeton campaign," Dr. McPherson said. "We did this as part of David's research for the book, 'Washington's Crossing,' and we also attended the re-enactments of the battles of Trenton and of Princeton that weekend."

He added he and Dr. Fischer "crossed Jacob's Creek on the bridge that is now closed, and both of us assumed that Washington and the army crossed the creek in the same vicinity. I recall a feeling of awe as we walked across the bridge and continued up the hill toward Trenton, treading in Washington's steps, as it were."

Dr. Fischer's book includes a detailed account, on Page 227, of the Continental Army's brave and skillful accomplishment of the daunting task of getting itself — and its equipment, including heavy artillery — across Jacob's Creek in the area of a steep ravine. Single pieces of artillery regularly weighed more than 1,000 pounds.

"The artillery's long drag ropes had to be brought out and trees used

as moving posts for a mechanical advantage so that the guns could be lowered slowly to the bottom of the ravine," Dr. Fischer writes. "On the other side of the creek, the guns had to be hauled up again by teams of men who were struggling to keep their own balance. Slowly, the column inched its way down the slope to Jacob's Creek, only to meet another deep ravine. It was a flooded (unnamed) tributary of Jacob's Creek, smaller but very steep."

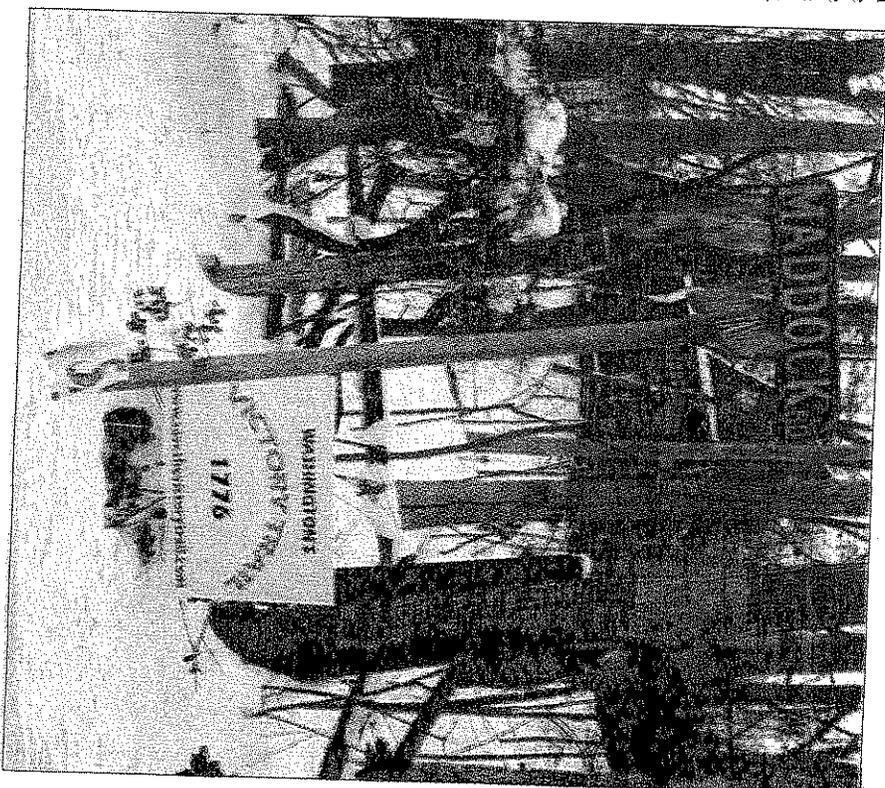
They made it across there as well — as they had crossed the Delaware River and Jacob's Creek. And then they went on to win the Battle of Trenton and, ultimately, the war.

The bridge crossed by Dr. McPherson and Dr. Fischer was closed by the Mercer County administration Sept. 24, 2009, for an indefinite period of time.

Mercer County Executive Brian M. Hughes ordered the closing based on findings by an independent engineering firm contracted by the New Jersey Department of Transportation to inspect county bridges.

IH Engineers of Princeton, which did the inspection, determined the bridge had been stressed to such a degree that safe passage of vehicles heavier than the 3-ton posted limit could not be guaranteed. IH Engineers also noted if vehicles over that limit were to use the span, the bridge could experi-

See BRIDGE, Page 6A



Near the intersection of Route 579 and Maddock Road, not far from the bridge over Jacob's Creek, is a sign suggesting that passersby visit: www.savethevictorytrail.com.

Bridge

Continued from Page 1A

The county, which cited these safety concerns when it closed the bridge, has commissioned an archaeological study of the area. The Mercer County Board of Chosen Freeholders voted unanimously Dec. 10 in favor of Mr. Hughes' recommendation to hire the Philadelphia, Pa.-

based firm of John Milner Associates to do the study.

"This project has generated interest among residents near Jacob's Creek bridge, and we are hopeful that the archaeological survey will provide answers to the questions posed by both Mercer County and the State Historic Preservation Office," Mr. Hughes said recently.

Under the resolution OK'd by the freeholders, the Milner firm can be paid up to \$15,996 during a one-year period that

began Dec. 10, 2009, and ends Dec. 9, 2010. The resolution, however, also says the funding for the study is contingent upon the inclusion in and the adoption of the 2010 Mercer County budget.

Mr. Hughes said the Milner firm's study would include two phases. A written report on the completion of the first phase would be a public document. As the consultant enters into phase two, any private property owner whose property might be of interest to the

consultant would be notified if the consultant needs access, he added. No properties will be entered without permission.

For information about what the firm of John Milner Associates does, visit www.johnmilnerassociates.com.

The county plan for the bridge has engendered strong local opposition from resi-

dents who say the plan entails wreaking havoc on an historic area. Opponents also say the new bridge would bring much new traffic, including tractor-trailer traffic.

Mercer has plans to replace the existing bridge, which, due to severe structural deficiencies, has, over the years, been reduced to a 3-ton weight limit. The new bridge would be built to modern stan-

dards and have no weight limit.

The existing structure, which has historical significance, is slated to be preserved, restored and relocated to a local park (Alliger Park), just west of the township's municipal complex, located west of the intersection of Route 546 and Scotch Road.

The closed bridge is 125 years old.

Republicans

... efforts to accommodate