

Newsletter of the Bergen County Historical Society In Bergen's Attic

Another year is upon us; the push of time is relentless. Now we traditionally

President's Message

pause for reflection, contemplating the year past. But this January, I am taking the long view, looking back over the last quarter century. My wife Deborah, my-two-and-a-half-year-old son Ivan, and I moved into the Steuben House on November 1, 1981. As impossible as it now seems, we have reached and passed the milestone of twenty-five years' association with New Bridge and Bergen County. It all happened so fast: suddenly, the "young whippersnapper" has become the "institutional memory" of the place.

Believe it or not, Waterloo Village, where I began my career as Tour Director, was facing bankruptcy and foreclosure in 1981 (how history repeats itself!). And so I went looking for greener pastures. I did a brief stint working as the mule tender on a restored piece of the Lehigh Canal, just outside Easton, Pennsylvania. Bert Proh at Ringwood Manor alerted me to an opening at the Steuben House in River Edge. I first met Paul Taylor, Supervisor of the Office of Historic Sites, and then with Dick Riker, the Superintendent of Ringwood State Park. And what was the job? It was a caretaker's position paying

\$7,200 a year (minus rent for living in the Steuben House). Supposedly, it was the lowest paying full-time job in State government. I drove to the interview in my "Fred Flintstone" car—a red Volkswagen bug, with heat working on only one side, and a hole in the floorboards so you could drag your feet on the street for brakes.



Kevin & Ivan Wright in 1982

When I first arrived, I found the downstairs of the Steuben House rather barren, the antique furniture having been loaned out to a department store in the Riverside Mall to use as props during the holiday season. We were the first caretakers to live entirely on the second floor in the rear of the house. Originally, the caretaker's kitchen and living room were located in the rear basement rooms nearest the parking lot, but recurrent flooding had spoiled that space. The Society then agreed to move their library from the northwest room on the second floor, which became our living room. Joe Caso, regional carpenter, built a kitchen in the adjacent display room. My predecessor had the room, including the beautiful new knotty-pine cabinets, painted a glossy pink with ruby red trim. She died, however, before she could occupy the new living quarters. In order to be able to digest our meals, we first

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I recently updated the BCHS web page. I was motivated after finding the website artofnewjersey.net, which lists artists who lived or worked in NJ.

After an email exchange, Professor Kate Ogden of Stockton College of NJ, was interested enough to include our quilts, the portrait of Garret Demarest by James Van Dyke and photos of 2 Kasten on this website. She teaches a class, *Art of New Jersey*, which has involved student research.

I focused on updating information on the Society's collections and included articles from the *Tree of Life* (now out of print) sections of *Ladies Ramble* and new photos of the collections, depicting the Hackensack Valley potter, the quilts, spoonboards and coverlets. It is one way to make the collection more available to the public and to popularize Bergen County's history.

Contact with the Society thru our website's email has increased over the years. Below is a recent query. — Deborah Powell

To Whom It May Concern:

I have this family photograph of a Bergen County Dutch farmhouse, And I was hoping, if it is still standing, if it could be identified. Likely owned by Cornelia Blauvelt (1806-1891), daughter of Abraham Blauvelt (1786 -1871) according to her will, it may border on Closter Road. Anybody there recognize it? Is it still standing? any history?

A shot in the dark,
Thanks, Bill,
Chambersburg, PA

Tim's response:

Dear Bill
I am the Dutch House
guy at the Bergen County
Historical Society.
Your e-mail query was
forwarded to me. The
house in the photo you
sent is the Walter Parsells
House – Lone Star
Tavern, 639 Piermont
Road, Closter. The view



is from the North West showing the rear of the house. The house was built by Parsells in 1795. It stands today and is being renovated. Walter Parsells, son Jacob married Cornelia Blauvelt at Tappan on July 22, 1820. The house was passed to Cornelia in 1832. Jacob Parsells died in 1835. Cornelia married twice more: to John Jochem in 1835 & to John Vanderbeck in 1847. Cornelia, known as "Granny Vanderbeck", operated the Lone Star Tavern here. The frame wing probably dates to 1870 when the son of Jacob and Cornelia, Peter Parsells was a hotel keeper here. The house was sold out of the family in 1961. There are twenty pages of history on the house (a bit much for one e-mail). What is your relation to the family? My family is the Auryansen family, we are interrelated to the entire old Closter crowd.

Tim Adriance

PS Parsells is the same family as the football coach.

Note: This house has a BCHS marker which Kevin Wright researched & wrote.



Pie Plate from collections

A CENTURY AGO

by Kevin Wright

The grading on the River Edge Land Company tract, encompassing the area on the Heights along Summit Avenue and adjacent streets, was nearly completed, but a heavy storm on Monday afternoon, May 28, 1906, delayed the work. The company soon sold six building lots in its newly opened section to two citizens of Brooklyn. They also laid 900 feet of water main, besides making other improvements, and planned to erect two cottages. Charles Hoffman, of Brooklyn, broke ground for a residence on Summit Avenue, River Edge, in January 1907

During the first week of June 1906, robins were busy robbing cherry trees of their fruit. Bloomer Brothers, who had been at the coal business at River Edge for the past 25 years, retired and disposed of their business to A. Z. Bogert & Brother, who asked for a continuance of public patronage. A. Z. Bogert had been in business for about 18 years and built up "a fair trade by square dealing." Burglars blew open A. Z. Bogert's big safe in the River Edge Post Office at an early hour Tuesday morning, July 3, 1906. Although the safe door was wrecked and office fixtures damaged, the thieves were unable to open a burglarproof cash drawer in the strong box. Bogert Brothers installed a new Hall's safe in their coal and lumber office in place of the wrecked strong box.

A barge heavily laden with brick grounded in Felter's canal at Little Ferry and was stuck in the mud until Tuesday, June 19, 1906, when it floated out with the high tide. Camping-out parties had been spotted in the groves along the river between River Edge and Cherry Hill. The bungalow in the woods on the east bank of the river, between River Edge and Cherry Hill, had been christened "Riverside Camp."

Discussion of narrow bridges over

the Hackensack River led to the River Edge Bridge being measured on Monday, July 9th, when it was found that this was one of the narrowest in the county, being only 13 feet in width. Crabs were unusually scarce in the river this season. Farmers were marketing sweet corn in the third week of July 1906, a little later than in other years. The first katydid appeared on July 31st, which was interpreted as an indication of frost six weeks later.

Eleven new postcard views of prominent places in River Edge included the Congregational Church, the old stone house (reputed to be 240 years old) owned by John H. Zabriskie, A. Z. Bogert's residence, the railroad depot, the county bridge, together with William Doremus' grocery and Bogert's coal



office, etc. These postcard views were immediately in great demand.

August 1906 quickly set a new record for rainfall. Milton Voorhis, who was farming on the old William Blair place, was said to have the choicest muskmelons grown in this section. Boys from West Hoboken broke camp along the river, south of River Edge, and went home at the end of August. Plans and specifications of the River Edge Improvement Association for improving the depot grounds were ready for signatures of citizens to a petition for submittal to the railroad company.

Henry Baker's hay barrack at New Bridge (Teaneck) was destroyed by fire, believed to be the work of an incendiary, on Saturday, September

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15th. Five tons of hay and six loads of rye went up in smoke. A. Z. Bogert and J. D. Van Wagoner took an automobile trip on Saturday, September 15, 1907, to the Delaware Water Gap, via Port Jervis and other points. The River Edge Improvement Association made arrangements to supply shade trees to residents at 22¢ each for Carolina poplars and 35¢ for silver maples. The Association recommended that trees be planted 25' apart. Gustav Pfof occupied his new residence at 52 Washington Avenue in River Edge on November 1.

Crabs were plentiful in the river, having been scarce throughout the summer. Railbird shooting was done from shallow rail boats that were polled over the meadows at high tide, providing access to the birds. Excavation was made on the River Edge Land Company's tract for a residence for Mr. Mead, of Brooklyn.

The unanimous sentiment of the citizens of Cherry Hill and New Bridge, as expressed at a public meeting held October 5, 1905, favored changing the name of Cherry Hill to North Hackensack. A petition signed by two hundred patrons of the Cherry Hill post office requested the Post Office Department to effect the desired alteration in the name of the place, as advocated by the Improvement Association. Although the local reporter for *The Bergen County Democrat* claimed, "that a majority of the citizens opposed such a change," a Postal Inspector conducted a public meeting on Saturday, October 6, 1906, and heard but one dissenting opinion out of the 100 people who were present in the firehouse when a vote was taken. Local residents believed that the growth of Cherry Hill had been retarded by the tornado that had struck ten years earlier, destroying considerable property and several lives. Odium was also attached to the name of Cherry Hill because of associations in the public mind with one of the most notorious sections of New York. Even worse, penitentiaries in Boston and Philadelphia carried the

name. Furthermore, mail destined for Cherry Hill was frequently misdirected to Cherryville, New Jersey. The name change would further augment the efforts of the Cherry Hill & New Bridge Public Improvement Association, which had succeeded in lighting the station and streets in the past year and in beautifying the station grounds.

According to a report in *The Evening Record* on November 14, 1906, the Post Office Department in Washington, D. C., notified the Cherry Hill postmaster that the name of the station would be changed in the near future. The North Hackensack Improvement Association immediately sent correspondence to the Erie Railroad, asking the name to be changed on station signs.

A letter was mailed at the River Edge Post Office on Friday, October 12, 1906, for "J. N. Voorhis, North Hackensack." Mrs. Voorhis did not receive the letter until the following afternoon, however, although she lived only about one mile from River Edge. And yet it had been claimed that by changing the name of the Cherry Hill post office to North Hackensack there would be less delay in the mails. Postal authorities finally agreed to recognize the name of North Hackensack on January 1, 1907.

While hunting upon the Hackensack Meadows in the first week of October 1906, Reuben Coyt, a well-known local Nimrod, bagged sixty-one yellow legs, a black duck and four saltwater teal. Chestnuts were on the market and chestnuts hunters had "a scratching time" in fields and woods on Sunday, October 7, 1906. Pickers were so plentiful under some trees that it looked like a picnic. In October 1906, the River Edge Land Company received 125 silver maples for planting on the company's tract on the hill.

The River Edge railroad depot was newly painted and by way of variety, more green color was used than the customary "Erie orange" applied to other stations along the line. As a result of the agitation by the River Edge Improvement

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Histories, and Mysteries, of Old Houses

by Beth Potter

When Ivy Greenstein and her husband Chris Doolittle bought their 1926 Dutch colonial in Demarest, New Jersey, some 20 years ago, they had no idea that one day an old golf club would be among their most prized possessions. The club is 100 years old, hand-carved out of wood by a pro golfer from Scotland named Willie Collins—and the reason the non-golfing Greenstein/Doolittle family treasures the club is that Willie Collins was the original owner of their house. He had the home built after he retired as the pro at the Knickerbocker Country Club in Tenafly.

If houses could talk, they'd have stories to tell—stories of all the kids who spilled juice on the kitchen floor, stories about the babies born there and the folks who grew old there, stories about the people who put green shag carpet over the hardwood floors. As a house historian, it's my business to find those stories.

A dozen years ago we moved into a Victorian on the main street of Haworth. A small bronze plaque by the front door read "E.A. King House. Built 1891." My curiosity got the better of me, and once our children were old enough for school, I set out to discover who "E. A. King" was. Now I probably know more about Ervin Abner King than his descendants. I know how he and his wife Kittie moved to Haworth from the small town of Benzonia, MI; where he had his carpentry business on 11th Ave. in Manhattan; the ingredients of the "pork cake" recipe Kittie submitted for the church cookbook in 1909 (which may explain why Mr. King died an early death); how their son Ervin, Jr. served aboard the "George Washington" in WWI, until he caught the Spanish flu; how Mr. King went bankrupt here and went back to Michigan, where he died of a heart attack 10 days after their arrival.

Having exhausted the possibilities in researching my own house, I turned to the homes of friends and family, and then to honest-to-goodness paying customers, who, like me, were curious about those who walked their floors before.

Unraveling the history of a house means being part Nancy Drew, part genealogist. One day I might be leafing through dusty old deed books in the county courthouse, the next day I'm spending hours going through genealogical search engines on the web. You need to be able to read 19th century handwriting, at the same time having a full understanding of Boolean search engines. It's been helpful to come from a career in journalism, where I honed research skills and learned to have no compunction at all about calling perfect strangers for information.

Using a mix of deeds, wills, census records, obituaries, local histories, church records, college alumni records and even town council minutes, it's possible to find out not only who owned your house and when, but what kind of real people they were. Back to our Scottish golfer—books on golfing history told us that Willie Collins came to Bergen County after jobs at the Richmond County Country Club on Staten Island and the Oakland Golf Club in Queens. His obituary in the *Bergen Record* said he taught golf to financier Bernard Baruch, Englewood's Dwight Morrow, and Woodrow Wilson. Collins and his wife Ella had one child, Donald, who married the Demarest school principal. They attended St. Joseph's Church in Demarest, and are buried at Mt. Carmel Cemetery in Tenafly. Collins served one term on the Demarest town council, where he worried that the police were overpaid, and found out that the fire insurance

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This 1920s house in Haworth, was built by the Franklin Society, one of the town's first developers. My research discovered that the home's first owners had a tent and awning company in Manhattan—and they supplied many of the tents used by U.S. troops in WWI. B. Potter.



Built by Ervin Abner King, in 1891, a carpenter from Benzonia, MI

on the town hall had expired three years before. Golf records showed us that Collins was one of dozens of British golfers who came over to the U.S. at the turn of the century to teach the Yanks how to play golf. Unfortunately, newspaper articles indicate Mr. Collins' talent as a golfer may have left a little to be desired—he shot the 2nd worst round ever in a U.S. Open, in 1898. As for his wooden golf club, that item turned up on eBay during a “Willie

Collins/golf” search, along with an 1899 *Collier's* magazine ad in which Collins appeared, endorsing Cuticura soap: “I can with confidence recommend Cuticura Soap to all Golfers who are troubled with sunburn. Yours truly, William Collins.”

A homeowner with an 1830ish farmhouse in Rockleigh, NJ, came to me with two requests: she wanted a picture of the original owner, who was a farmer and Hudson River sloop owner named Joseph DuBois, and she wanted to know where DuBois and his wife Elizabeth were buried. The library in Palisades, New York, provided answers to both questions. Joseph and Elizabeth and a few family members were buried just down the road from

their old farmhouse, in the old Palisades Cemetery. And the library itself had pictures of many of the original local settlers, including Joseph DuBois. But I had to dig farther than the local library. By using wills on file in Hackensack, and an Internet phonebook, I tracked down Joseph's great-great-great-granddaughter in Florida—and she provided turn of the century pictures of the house and old photos of the family. One picture even showed the family dog

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in the farmhouse yard.

The owners of a 19th century home in Tenafly were lucky enough during a construction project to find a piece of lumber with the original owners' names scrawled in pencil—George B. Jellison and his wife Sarah, as well as the name of Gamaliel King, an architect of the time who had designed the Brooklyn Borough Hall. But why was King designing a house in Bergen County? It didn't take much Internet sleuthing to discover that Gamaliel King was Mrs. Jellison's father, and King was building the home for his daughter and son-in-law.

Other "housetales" I've discovered—property tax records for a house in Haworth showed it was home to a man named Berkeley Tobey, a Greenwich Village bon vivant who worked on a Socialist magazine and was married 7 times. A 1950s split-level,

also in Haworth, was built by some Rockefellers, distant relatives of THE Rockefellers. A ninetysomething year old woman from Tenafly told me her father often made "home brew" in the basement of their 1912 Colonial Revival in the Old Smith Village neighborhood.

Of course, unless you have help from a séance, there's no way to find out everything you'd like to know about a home and its owners. We have his golf club, but we'll never know what Willie Collins looked like because it seems the man never posed for a picture. But what I've learned is that even without a photographic image, it's possible to make the names on the deeds come alive. They were real people who sat on your porch and cooked Thanksgiving dinner in your kitchen. They were real children who played hide-and-seek in your backyard. It's just nice to get to know them a little bit. ❖



Bill and Marie Ruggiero are moving to South Jersey. **Linda Masullo** has kindly offered to take on the gift shop in the Campbell-Christie House. Our best to Bill and Marie and many thanks for their years of donated service.

Nancy Terhune has sent out monthly postcards as a notice of events and this has been a very effective reminder. She wants to turn it over to someone else in June. **We need a volunteer to step forward, involves getting info, labels and stamps on monthly basis.**

Mike Gorman of Oradell, joins as a new trustee.

**Do you know
someone interested
in local history?**

**Give the gift of
membership.**

**As always, we
appreciate your
support.**

www.bergencountyhistory.org

Marginalia From Ancient Almanacs

*Dairy of a Once Prominent Citizen of Bergen County
from The Hackensack Republican, Thursday, July 20, 1890*

**INTERESTING NOTES ON PUBLIC
AND PRIVATE AFFAIRS BY AN
OLD-TIMER WHO LIVED IN TWO
CENTURIES—A RELICT OF HOME
LIFE FROM 50 TO 100 YEARS AGO—
WHAT SOME OF THE PELLs WERE.**

An interesting find is sometimes made among the rubbish cleaned out of old hair trunks and other receptacles that have stood for generations in garrets or haymows of homesteads but must now go the way of all things cast aside for newer surroundings, which are not to be tainted by the presence of "trash." One of these discoveries was recently made in the shape of a bundle of almanacs beginning with 1785 and continuing under several names to 1840.

Here are "Hutchins' Almanack, by John Nathan Hutchins, at his printing office at the Bible House in Hanover Square, New York" "The Town and Country Almanac;" "The Christian Almanack for New Jersey;" printed at Elizabethtown; "The Housekeepers' Almanac, or Young Wife's Oracle;" "The New Jersey Almanac;" "Farmers' Almanac, No. 23;" "Smith A. Sirman's New York and New Jersey Almanac;" and "The United States Almanac."

The old pamphlets are in good preservation and they form an exceedingly entertaining study, their margins being covered with household and farm history.

These publications, with their quaint marginalia, were collected by Casparus Bogert, great-grandfather of Surrogate David A. Pell. He was a man of note in the community, filling the office of town councilman, sheriff, and member of the legislature.

The annual issues, carefully bound together with cord and forming thick volumes, were in possession of the late

Peter A. I. Ackerman, of Saddle River, and came to light in the clean up of his effects. It is well known that even at the present day the old "Farmers' Almanac" is the family diary on many farms. On its narrow margins are recorded life's drama in the household and the barnyard—marriages, births, deaths, with many business and other details entering into the life of the husbandman who has not yet reached the dignity of an aristocratic diary writer.

Some of the older readers of the paper are no doubt familiar, at least through verbal family or community history, with many of the names recorded in these ancient pages. The writing is varied, showing several distinct styles of penmanship and orthography, but in many instances it is neat and correct.



The first entry noted is under date April 13, 1785, when there was a "hen set." This information occurs in its season with the same regularity as "killed hogs," "made candels," "made starch," "began to bleach linen," "harvest begun," "began to mow hay," "sowed buckwheat," etc. All of which had their important place in the farmer's schedule.

Hog killing was especially an event

that brought together neighbors in a community about the Thanksgiving season. The man who stuck the pigs was an individual of no little importance, and one who was particularly expert had his services in request over a wide territory. On "killin' day," the family was astir before daylight. Fires were lighted under great vessels in which the water was to be heated. The scaffold on which the dead animals were to be hung up by the heels after dressing, the tables on which they were to be scraped, the tank in which they were to be scalded after death, to loosen the bristles, and all other details were attended to the previous night, so that when the sticker and helpers arrived, everything was ready for active operations. There were always one or two members of the community who held prestige in guessing the weight of a hog, and they exercised this faculty with wise looks and comments as the lumbering animal, hobbled and held by a rope, was driven out to meet its fate. The process of dividing the animal into parts having been accomplished, the women took a hand in preparing choice cuts for the dinner that was so conspicuous a factor of the day. After every killing, neighbors received liberal presents of pork, sausages, headcheese, or any product of the pig. And the man who raised the heaviest porker was the talk of the gossips over their apple toddy for days. Here is an entry: "Killed 3 hogs weighing 804 pounds."

In 1786 the name Casparus Bogart, Elizabeth Bogart and Jenny Bogart appear together, and in 1792: "Jenny, 29; Betsy, 36; I, 35." Here, too, are recorded the reproductiveness of the mares Conny and Dolly, the white cow, the black cow, the one-horned cow, and the spotted cow.

In March 1793, "we got our dog" and "we knitted our socks." The number of stitches in stockings knitted for various members of the family is the

subject of frequent entry. Betsy required a generous article, as the diary says: "Your mamma to 37 stitches on Betsy's blue stockings, E. B.;" then there were "40 stitches on Betsy's blue stockings;" "37 on Betsy's stockings with blue top," leaving the inference that Betsy was not oblivious to effect in memory. In '92, a Barn was built; Mary Van Dien died; "Raised the store house;" "Got done with the store house," and "Betsy begun school with Mr. Suttin."

That the diarist was progressive appears in 1794: "Did begin to take the [news] papers the 19th day of March."

The weather was extremely hot in August '96, and there were "great floods" in the Saddle River on five different dates.

On October 2 appeared the first mention of slave dealing, when he "sold Susan."

In May '96, he "took Bet down to York," and later "Got my new wagon of John Wright."

"Dine broke her thigh" on June 5th, '97, and on July 17, "Dine begun to walk," indicating a prompt healing of a serious injury. Then John Terhune borrowed 15 loads of stone, they "left the red cow go dry;" Sylvester began school, they "dried the black cow," "killed boil," and "left the spotted cow dry."

In 1798, it is told: "I was taken with Bilyaris fever the 31st day of August, and it was two months before I could leave my room," which kept him from the election held October 9 and 10. The fact that "Mink put on his shoes the 30th of November" was of sufficient importance for preservation in this history. And about this time it is again entered: "Begun to take the paper." Why he had ceased taking it, or what paper it was, are unsolved mysteries. This taking papers was very desultory, for a similar entry, "begun to take the papers," appears in May '98. In 1800, "Paramus Church was raised 14th Day of June."

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This doubtless means that the church was rebuilt. The event of the year, however, fell upon October 21, when "Betsy's Twins bourned."

This appears the following year: "I was elected sheriff on the 13th and 14th of the present month of October, 1801, for the County of Bergen. C. B."

The Pells were great sea faring men, and there are many entries of the sailing from New York to William Pell, William W. Pell and John R. Pell; all of whom became captains of vessels. Captain William Pell sailed for Cadiz in January 1802. It is presumed that he is the William Pell who in 1797, while commanding the ship *Columbus*, owned by the Royal Company of Philippines of Madrid, Spain, was captured by the British privateer *Vulture*. After nine weeks in captivity he retook the vessel from the prize crew and landed a valuable cargo safely in port. The following translation of a testament from the company to Captain Pell is now in possession of Surrogate David A. Pell. The document is in good penmanship, but it was apparently done into English by a Spaniard, who was not a master of the language; but the paper shows that the "Royal Company" had a high appreciation of the Yankee skipper's bravery and the service he rendered.

"Sir: Although as soon as you arrived at the Port of St. Lucas with the Ship *Columbus*, we have constantly demonstrated to you the Credit & particular esteem, which you merited from us, for the good management of your commission, through the voyage that you undertook, with said Vessel, since she sailed from Bordeaux on 20th May 1797, bound to Trinijuebar, & on her return from that Port, & that of the Island of France, till the said Port of St. Lucas, on the 28th day of November Last, & Although we have particularly expressed to You our greatest Satisfaction, for the interesting

News of the arrival into a safe port of the rich cargo, of said Vessel, belonging to the Royal Company. And Although that we had also manifested to you directly the just homage of gratitude & praise for the hazardous but Well Combined and happy attempt in which you succeeded, on the 24th day of November, on the coast of Huelva, in rescuing this Vessel from the Power of an English Officer and 9 Sailors of the English Privateer called the *Vulture*, who had taken & kept her Nine weeks & were conducting her to Gibraltar. Yet as you have announced to us your early return to your country we feel the agreeable Necessity to renew to you all our former acknowledgements & to assure you of the everlasting gratitude of the Company & its Administrators for the Signal Service rendered to them on account of the aforesaid retaking. More Particularly so we avail ourselves of this opportunity to express to you our wishes, that they may rest forever in your Memory, our respectful Plaudits, which we proclaimed when we heard of this Heroism proceeding from your Courage & your Prudence, which shows nothing equivocal of your Loyalty, disinterestedness & good faith. And although we have not a new opportunity to avail ourselves of your talents, which have exceeded the hopes & Confidence, which the owners of said Vessel placed in you, you may return to your Country not only with the Satisfaction, which your Courage and generous conduct must have caused, but with the assurance that in the Annals of this Royal Company, it will be rendered as long as it shall last, and the remembrance of you, Sir, will Sweetly remain in our memories & in that of its Administrators, sentiments of esteem & Gratitude. From your honesty, Courage & the Greatness of our Soul, they have everything to expect in return, & we remain satisfied in the hope that you will demand our Services. That

you may return soon to the bosoms of your family & Country is our first wish, as also that in your Career of Life each succeeding day may become more brilliant than the Past, so that they may in comparison dissipate in part the Splendor, which has been so useful to this Royal Company, as well as grateful to the Assembly of the Government & Direction.

Our Lord keep you many years.

Madrid, May 21, 1799

For the Royal Company of

Philippines, its Directors,

Signed,

MARTIN ANTONIE HERA

JUAN MAD'L DE GANDASEQUI

William Pell, Esq.

In March 1802, it is recorded:

“Begun to be sick with the measles, broke out,” which was not a dignified ailment for a high sheriff.

This entry suggests a possibility of error in the commitment of a prisoner: “Myself and my brother John went down to Trenton on the 19th day of May with the negro Frank and had to bring him back to Hackensack.” Later there was better success: “Frank and Colly I took out of Hackensack gaol on the 8th day of November and took them down to state prison.”

On Dec. 27th, the family “bought a new tea cetel.”

In 1803, the sheriff was in a wreck, which is told of thus: “Coming from Trenton on Tuesday, 30th day of May, the mail stage overshot at the Ten Mile Run.”

In November 1804, he “made a cistern at Hackensack.” Jane was married Dec. 2 and Jane moved Dec. 13. Evidently Jane wasn’t affected by the thirteen superstition.

In 1805, he “Bought a clock from James Vervelen for 25 pounds,” which was a good price for a timepiece. It was no doubt one that had its “station in the hall” and probably still “points and beckons with its hands” in the

countryseat of some descendant of the original purchaser.

In 1806, Mr. Bogart “Bought a riding chair of Mr. Cleveland, for which I paid him \$125.” Five years later he put down: “Got a new riding chair from Jacob J. C. Zabriskie in exchange for my old chair, for which I paid him \$120 and the old chair.” A riding chair was a swell rig of the day, being a two-wheeler for one person.

In 1806, he “Began to take the Shepard Kollog paper, No. 1206.” It would be interesting to know what paper this was.

Under date of June 22, 1813, is recorded the purchase of “a negro woman by the name of Bett of David J. Ackerman for \$100 and a black boy for \$ 12.50 of the name of Tom.” In September Bett and Tom were sold to Armand Leonard of New York City for £ 45, which was a good bargain. And in October Mink was sold for \$275.

About this time, the second wife of Cornelius Bogart died at 2 o’clock p. m.”

This entry is found in 1814: “The legislature did rise the 14th Day of this month of February 1814, and I got home the 15th, about 6 o’clock p. m. C. Bogart.”

Cornelius Cadmus took his young Tartar, which was probably a blooded horse, “to use him to harness and saddle, and is to return him again the first of October next.”

“A black girl by the name of Sara” was bought in July and “the Negro woman Gin” was sold to Cornelius I. Kipur [Kuyper]. “A black woman and a black boy” were purchased for \$125.

Here appear further records of “stitches” on stockings—some dark blue, others with light blue tops.

There may be some residents of Hackensack who remember Cornelius Bogert’s schooner *Constellation*. In the marginalia it is said she was launched August 1814 and “the head workman was Jeremiah Jennyanch” Yeriance.

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John A. Bogart and Elizabeth Schuyler were married Sept. 19th; Jacob A. Zabriskie & Jane Terhune on the 30th.

Those were the days of pure applejack. It was the native drink, a supply of which every family kept on hand, and this entry indicates how farmers procured it: "Sold 405 bushels of apples to Benjamin Oldis at one shilling a bushel or 6 quarts of spirits for 10 bushels of apples." Mr. Oldis was noted for the excellent quality of "Jersey lightning" that he supplied.

The meaning of this entry in March 1816 is not so clear, but it probably relates to an arrangement for comfort during a severe winter. "Took the petition (partition) out of the room, but it was taken out too soon, it should have stood till the Saturday before Easter." At this time, "Mr. House cleaned my clock," the widow Hopper died, and "Lewis Moore sailed out of the port of New York in the ship *Ram Dololl Tay*, Goodwin, master, for Calcutta."

1817 was the year that kept the diary writer busy. In January, "Jane comes," March 4th, "Jane went home," March 7th, "Jane died." Among other occurrences in June was the death of Nicholas Van Dien, at the building of a hog pen. John B. Pell sailed for Batavia in July; "paid Mr. O'Neil \$2 for one quarter schooling for Casper A. Pell;" he took "10 loads of clover out of the young orchard;" "Wm. W. Pell sailed on board the ship *Ontario*, Capt. Depyster for Canton in India."

The rye crop was a good one—"Raised 5,410 sheaves of rye in the year."

Here comes some important household notes: "Sale gums cut," "cleaned one back room," "bed curtains put up," "cloth to mill." Then follow the deaths of Abraham Bogert, Gen. John A. Schuyler, Albert James Bogert, and

Jacob Zabriskie.

In March 1818, there was another purchase of a slave, when a woman named Cate was bought of Rev. John Demarest for \$50. The same month "sowed summer rye in the court yard of E. Pell."

Fort Lee was then and for many years after the local shad market and these old almanacs have frequent reference to trips there for the purchase of the fish, which brought \$9 to \$14 a hundred.

The setting of hens was a matter of sufficient importance for careful chronicle and there were so many of them that it was necessary to



Feeding the chickens at the Steuben House about 1909

register their location. Thus the record shows "2 hens set in the windmill; 2 hens set in the crib above the horse; 1 hen set in the stable."

Wool was taken to the factory of John Morrow to be manufactured into "Sattanet at 7d. per yard." "Miss Pell has paid to Martin Romaine for coloring ten pounds of green woolen yarn, 15 shillings." In the same line is an item: "37 ells woolsy linsy ran 5ells out of a pound" and "Paid John Wallenberg \$2.50 for making a flax crackle, in the presence of Nicholas John Zabriskie." He raised 275 pounds of swingle from one pound of sowing in the year."

Mr. Bogart was in the legislature again in 1819 and 1820. The legislature met Oct. 25, 1819, and met again Jan.

12, 1820; then it adjourned to March 3; then to May 17, and “the legislature rose sine die June 13. Got home the 15th.”

The winter of 1820-21 was a record breaker for low temperatures, as witness this: “Casparus Hough, jun’r, crossed on the ice from New York to Jersey City the 25th day of January 1821, and my son Cornelius the next day, 26th.”

September 27, 1823, “Cornelius C. Bogert and Edward I. Earle’s schooner Leander was lanced.”

“Mr. Gardner began to take the Star and Bergen Farmer with Vol. I, No. 37, July 18, 1824.” This was one of the first papers printed in Hackensack.

The purchase of a \$2 hat for Frank called for mention in 1824.

Mr. Bogart presumably lived in Hackensack from the time of his election as sheriff until 1830, when he made entry: “Moved back to Paramus, April 27th.”

On the first page of the almanac for 1835 is the query: “On the 8th of March I wonder where we will be!” and at that date in the calendar is an X. Adam Boyd died August 15 of this year.

Those familiar with life on the farm in the beginning of the century will have a keen appreciation of what to the less informed will appear as merely quaint or curious in these old data of family doings. Shearing sheep, thatching a barn, building a ribbon fence, knitting mittens or socks, cleaning a back or front room, the birth of a child, a calf or a colt, with hundreds of other events were of importance in the family or neighborhood. With this view of the matter these old almanacs and their marginalia are interesting if not instructive study.

Incidentally it may be noted that the Elizabeth Pell whose name appears in one place was the wife of Chancellor Zabriskie.

The first Pells were an old English family of Northamptonshire, and were also connected with London affairs.

Several of them came to America in the early days of the colonies. John, son of Rev. John Pell, came in 1670. His uncle, Thomas Pell, settled at New Haven in 1635. William Pell settled in Boston in 1635. Anne Pell, daughter of John Pell, was a woman of social distinction, and a great friend of Governor Thomas Dudley. The family is frequently referred to in “Dudley’s History.” ❖

from Kevin W. Wright files

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A Zabriskie Mystery Solved through eBay

by Robert D. Griffin, Past President BCHS

The late historian and genealogist George Olin Zabriskie was renowned for his well documented and detailed articles and books on New Jersey Dutch families. His magnum opus was a massive, 1,950 page two-volume genealogy on the Zabriskie Family.

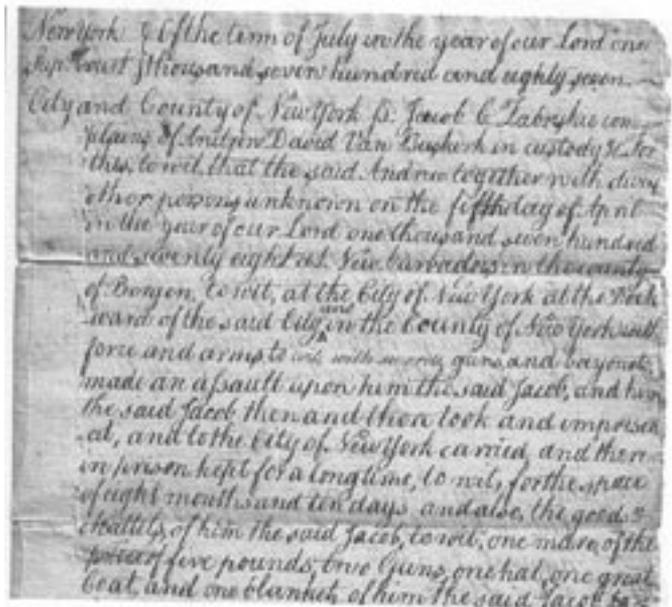
Among the more interesting stories contained in Zabriskie's book is that of Jacob C. Zabriskie, grandson of the immigrant ancestor, Albrecht Zabriskie, and the son of Christian and Leah (Hopper) Zabriskie. According to George Olin Zabriskie, his ancestor, Jacob C. Zabriskie, who was born at Paramus, (Bergen Co.), NJ 22 Dec. 1724, owned the Zabriskie (grist) Mills at Red Mills (later known as Arcola and located on the Saddle River). He was an ardent patriot known as "King Jacob," and served as a freeholder. He married Lena Ackerman, d/o Garret and Jannetje (Van Voorhees) Ackerman and sister of his brother Albert. The author further explains in an Appendix to his book, "On 11 May 1778 he was a prisoner in the Provost Prison in New York City, reason therefore or duration of not now evident. [emphasis the author's] In May 1779 Jacob was stabbed 15 times during a Tory raid. In Feb. 1780, Albert Zabriskie, a British spy, recommended to the British authorities that the Zabriskie Mills be seized during the raid being planned. The raiders did go to Red Mills, but left without burning the mills. In Mar 1780 and on

13 Feb 1781, Jacob received payment for wood and carting for the American forces."

In December 5, 2006, a New York Superior Court document dated July 1787, listed on the Internet auction site eBay sold for \$178.49. It was misidentified as a piece of Judaica, because the seller didn't understand Jersey-Dutch naming patterns or the historical origin of the Zabriskie family in America:

New York Superior Court: Of the term of July in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty seven.

City and County of New York SS: Jacob C Zabriskie complains of Andrew David Van Buskirk in custody. For this, to wit, that the said Andrew together with divers other persons unknown on the fifth day of April in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy eight at New Barbadoes in the county of Bergen, to wit, at the City of New York at the Dock-ward of



the said City and in the County of New York with force and arms, to wit, with swords, guns, and bayonets, made an assault upon him the said Jacob, and him the said Jacob then and there took and imprisoned, and to the City of New York carried and therein prison kept for a long time, to wit, for the space of eight months and ten days and also the goods & chattels, of him the said Jacob, to wit, one mare of the price of five pounds, two guns, one hat, one great coat, and one blanket, of him the said Jacob of the value of ten pounds at New Barbadoes in the County of Bergen aforesaid, to wit, at the City of New York at the Dockward of the said City and in the County of New York found he the said Andrew then and there took and carried away, and converted and disposed of the same to his own use, & did to the said Jacob other injuries against the peace. And also for this that he the said Andrew together with divers other persons unknown afterwards, to wit, on the sixth day of April in the year last, aforesaid, at the City of New York at the Dockward of the same City and in the County of New York with force and arms, to wit, with Guns, bayonets, and swords, made an assault upon him the said Jacob and him then & there took and imprisoned and him the said Jacob in prison there kept for the space of eight months and ten days, and also the goods, Chattels to wit two pair of stockings and one handkerchief of him the said Jacob to the value of twenty shillings then and there found then and there took and carried away, and other enormities to the said Jacob then and there did against the peace of the people of the state of New York and to the damage of the said Jacob five hundred pounds: and there of he bringeth suit.

Morris Attorney } Pledges of }
 John Doorich }
 For the Plaintiff } prosecution }
 City and County of New York SS"
 Jacob C. Zabriskie puts in his place

Robert Morris his attorney against Andrew David Van Buskirk in a plea of trespass.

Thus, we learn of King Jacob's imprisonment for 8 months and 10 days from April 5, to December 25, 1778. It appears he was released on Christmas Day.

Of Andrew David Van Buskirk, we know only a little, and nothing of his motives for kidnapping and holding Jacob C. Zabriskie. He never served in a military regiment, although a Loyalist. The State of New Jersey ordered his arrest and in early July 1777, 150 militia under Major Samuel Hayes of Newark were dispatched to apprehend him. In a letter from Hayes to Livingston reporting on the raid, he confirms his taking Andrew Van Buskirk on Barbadoes Neck. He mentions that Van Buskirk had taken the oath of allegiance to the State of NJ about 3 weeks prior and since that time sold provisions to the British, and he was arrested for having "committed high treason." His property was confiscated two years later. Afterwards, this led Governor William Livingston to write to George Washington:

"The Council of Safety has pretty well suppressed the Spirit of Disaffection in this County; & I hope by the vigorous measures lately adopted, we shall soon reduce that almost totally revolted County of Bergen to the obedience of the States."

Andrew was the son of David(4) (Andrew Laurens(3), Laurens(2), Laurens A.(1) and Rachel Van Horn. He was b. Schraalenburgh ca. 1755 and m. 13 August 1779 Cornelia Van Norden. David(4), b. 3 Jul 1721, m. at Schraalenburgh 27 Sept. 1744, Rachel Van Horn d/o Christian Cornelissen and Francyntje (Banta) Van Horn. Many members of the Van Buskirk family were known Loyalists and several fought for and served in British military units.

December 26, 2006 ❖

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Franklin Lakes' Contribution to The Battle of the Atlantic

By Jack Goudsward

The towns' involvement in the Battle for the Atlantic started long before the dark days of World War II. It can be traced to the latter days of World War I.

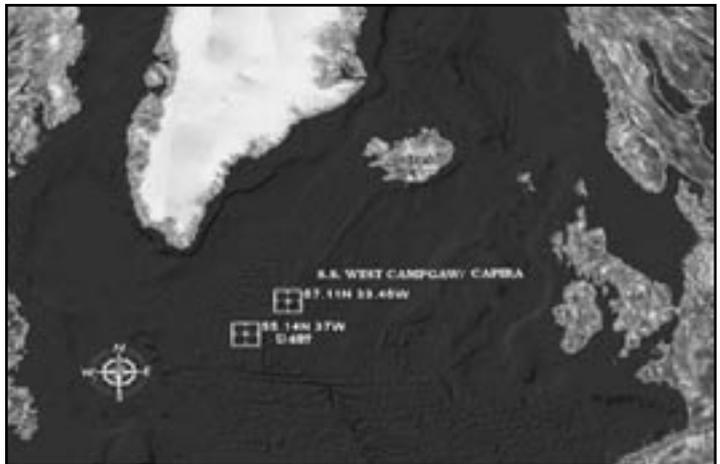
During World War One the United States Shipping Board put out a call to all America to contribute funds to revitalize the U.S. Merchant Fleet and replace the ships lost in the war. Franklin Lakes, then part of Franklin Township, answered the call. The money they contributed was used to build the "West Campgaw". It is said that Mrs. Woodrow Wilson picked the name "West Campgaw" from a group meant to perpetuate Indian names. Such pride was felt, for this patriotic act, that during the initial Scrap drive for the Second World War the name of the "West Campgaw" was evoked to rekindle the patriotic fires. (Braun 1965, *Wyckoff News* 1941)

The ship was built in 1920 by the J.F. Duthie and Company of Seattle, Washington, too late to enter war service. Her administration was placed under the Merchant Fleet Corporation, and then operated by various ship companies. She was operated by the U.S. Line through its subsidiary the "Yankee Line". This allowed the American Ship to trade with U.S. possessions. She started her career by plying the Atlantic. (Colton 2006, *New York Times* 1927)

Being a modern ship

did not exclude her from nautical superstitions. Such is the events of her 1923 crossing of the Atlantic. Sailors have the superstition of not singing religious hymns. This was avoided at all costs unless provoked. This taboo was broken by two Methodist clerics. One was the son of the Methodist Bishop of Ohio and his friend from Dartmouth. They were working their way to Europe. The crews said they were punished with two days of a gale and two more days in fog in ice filled waters. Luckily for the clerics some traditions have passed on; such as the tradition of throwing the offending person or persons overboard to placate the masters of the deep and calm the ocean. This is not the last time the West Campgaw felt bad weather. On her 1932 crossing of the middle Atlantic she encountered a force eleven gale with a barometer of 28.73. (NOAA 1923, *New York Times* 1923)

But the *West Campgaw* was not all superstitions and bad weather. Good news and acknowledgments did come her way. Late in 1927 the *West Campgaw* was one of 94 ships out of a fleet of 285



Final resting place of the S.S. Campgaw / Capira and the U-609

to receive recognition for a high state of maintenance; this bought a sense of pride to the crew.

In 1933 the U.S. Shipping Board was redesigned as the U.S. Shipping Bureau and placed in the Department of Commerce, then disbanded and replaced by the Martine Commission when Congress passed the Merchant Marine Act of 1936. Later in



West Campgaw / Capira on August 16, 1942

February of 1942 the War Shipping Administration became part of USMC by executive order. The task of the WSA was to purchase and operate the needed civilian tonnage the U.S. needed to win the war. (McMillan 2001)

At the beginning of 1940, the West Campgaw was riding at anchor off of Fort Eustis, Va., in the James River as part of the Maritime Commissions laid-up fleet. But this did not last long. In January of 1941 the U.S. Lines purchased five ships from the laid-up Fleet. One of them was the West Campgaw, having used her before the company knew what she could do. Since neutrality legislation banned all U.S. shipping from the war zone, the ships were bought with the understanding that they could be sold to a wholly owned foreign subsidiary for the North Atlantic operation. (*New York Times* 1940, 1941)

The five ships were sold to the North Atlantic Transport Company of Panama, but the U.S. Lines would act as agent for the operation of the ship. Now the West Campgaw started repairs to ready her for war service. During this time she was renamed CAPIRA

in honor of a small town not far from Panama City. After repairs the CAPIRA was assigned to convoy HX 122. She was outfitted with a general cargo and placed in station 53 of the sailing order. She departed Halifax on April 20, 1941 sailing to Liverpool. But on April 26 she returned to port with “Breakdown One after Another.”

On June 26, 1941 she departs Halifax with convoy HX 135 carrying a general cargo bound for Liverpool. The convoy arrived on July 12 with no trouble from U-Boats.

On July 31 she sailed from Liverpool with convoy ON-3 carrying a “Special Cargo”. The *Capira* dispersed from the convoy on August 14th and sails for Hualford in the USSR. On September 29 she departs and arrives at Archangel on October 11 of 1941 as part of Convoy PQ-1. Later as part of convoy QP-2 they leave Archangel and arrive 14 days later at Kirkwall.

March 19, 1942 the SS *Capria* was time chartered to the War Shipping Administration in the Port of Boston. She was outfitted to sail with Convoy SC 77 sailing from Halifax to Liverpool. Her position was 43rd in the convoy. A note on the harbor report reads “Her decks are loaded with tanks, greenish gray with some light blue, and the greatest number I have ever seen on a Freighter”. She then breaks off from Convoy 77 and sails with Convoy PQ-15 heading to Oban. They leave and arrive at Murmansk as part of Convoy PQ-15. The *Capria* then leaves and arrives at Archangel. On June 26 she leaves for Reyjavik as a part of Convoy QP-13. (Bowerman 2006, Lawson 2006))

During this voyage the instrument of the destruction of the *Capria*-the U-

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609—was completing training with the 5th Flotilla. The U-609 went into service with the 6th Flotilla “HUNDIUS”. The boat was captained by Kptit. Klaus Rudloff and was a Type VIIC boat. This type of boat was the most prevalent to see action in World War II for the German Navy. (Helgason 2006)

On August 22, 1942 the *Capria* set sail from Halifax to Liverpool England with Convoy SC 97. She was 23rd in line with the convoy. She carried a general cargo that included trucks, tractors, steel mats, bulldozers and 250 bags of U.S. Mail. On August 31, 1942 Convoy SC 97 was attacked by the U-609 along with nine other U-boats. Only the U-609 fired torpedoes. They ran true and hit and sunk the *Capria* and *Bronxville*. The *Capria* lost five of her crew. British escorts drove off the U-boats but the damage was done. The *Capria* settled beneath the waves at position 57.13N, 33.40W in the Atlantic. (Lawson 2006)

Benjamin F. Reid, a Second Class Seaman and survivor of the *Capria* sinking, recounts the events. “We were hit in the number four hold about six o’clock in the morning. I stepped out on the Aft deck and one of the booms came loose and hit a member of the Gun Crew in the head. There was nothing we could do she was going down fast. A Life raft came loose and hit me into the cold Atlantic. I was under it and a Dutch Merchant Seaman who was on the raft reached under and pulled me out. A Canadian Corvette picked us up. I had swallowed some Diesel fuel. I stayed on deck most of the time with the wind blowing in my face. I did not eat until we got to a North Ireland Naval Base.” (Reid 2006)

This was the only successful sortie for the U-609. The next two patrols yielded no engagements. On her forth and last patrol she was sunk by depth charges from the Free French Corvette LOBELIA—formally the *HMS Lobelia* a

Flower Class Corvette. She went down with all forty seven hands. Her resting place is 55.17N, 26.38W. Not far from the final resting place of the *Capria*. This ends the involvement of Franklin Lakes in the Battle of the Atlantic.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Charles P. Linder and Kevin Olsen for their help.

TABLE 1:

S.S.WEST CAMPGAW/CAPIRA	
TYPE	STEAM MERCHANT
TONNAGE	5,625 TONS
COMPLETED	1920-J.F.
DUTHIE and CO., SEATTLE WA.	
OWNER US Lines Inc. New York	
HOMEPOROT	Panama
FLAG	Panama
FATE Attacked and Sunk August 31, 1942	
SUNK BY U-609 (Klaus Rudloff)	

TABLE 2:

U.S. MERCHANT SEAMEN SURVIVORS OF THE S.S. CAPIRA	
Caras, James	Deck Cadet
Higgins, Thomas	Fireman
Travis, James B.	Engine Cadet
U.S. NAVAL ARMED GUARD SURVIVORS	
Ravella, James A.	Lt. jg.
Barbar, William L.	S2c
Campbell, John L.	S2c
Catoo, James W.	S2c
Chastain, Lawyal J.	S2c
DeChantsreiter, John G.	S2c
DeHaven, Woodrow W.	S2c
Dudley, Alvin D.	S2c
Freemen Wilham L.	S2c
Hertel, Mathew	S2c
Reid, Benjamin F.	S2c
Ricks, Benjamin F.	S2c
Van Bushkirk, Lester K.	Slc
FOREIGN SEAMEN LOST	
Ching, Young Foo China	Ch.Cook
Cuteger, Carmelo, Malta	Oiler
Kinnear, Thomas England	Chief Engr.
Mitchison, Thomas England	2nd Engr.
The Final Resting Place of the S.S.Campgaw/Capira and the U-609.	

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Association, the Erie Railroad Company promised to place four electric lights near the railroad depot immediately and two more in the spring. The company also planned to layout the grounds on the west side of the depot as a park with a driveway leading to the station. Crowds of children masqueraded around Hackensack on Halloween, making holiday calls.

Considerable speculation in northern New Jersey real estate was ignited in October 1906 by the rapid progress made in construction of six tunnels, arranged in pairs, under the Hudson River for the use of electric subways: the tunnels of the New York & New Jersey Railroad, running from Hudson Place, Hoboken, near the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western terminal to Morton Street, near Christopher Street in Manhattan; the tunnels of the Manhattan Railroad, extending from the present Pennsylvania Station in Jersey City to a new terminal to be built at Cortlandt and Church Streets in Manhattan; and the tunnels of the Pennsylvania Railroad, running from Weehawken to 32nd Street. The Borough Club of Tenafly began agitation for a bridge across the Hudson River from Fort Lee to Harlem in October 1906. The City Club of Englewood, organized on October 23, 1906, to second Tenafly's efforts in this regard. The Tenafly Borough Club, alive not only to the needs of the hour but to those of the future, announced that a Hudson River Bridge Rally would be held at Tenafly Hall on Monday evening, December 3, 1906, to be addressed by the New York and New Jersey Bridge Commissioners.

Colonel Alfred T. Holley, of Hackensack, in arguing for construction of a bridge across the Hudson River at the meeting held in Grantwood on January 10, 1907, said that the bridge could be built at this location at a cost of about seven million dollars, because Columbia Heights and Woodcliff offered so many natural advantages. Charles T. Logan, of the Grantwood Taxpayers'

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Newsletter printed at Tech Repro, Inc., Hackensack

Bergen County Historical Society
P.O. Box 55, River Edge, NJ 07661
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www.bergencountyhistory.org

Deborah Powell & Kevin Wright,
editors & layout
Items for the newsletter may be submitted
to D. Powell, Attn: Newsletter at
69 Christie Ave., River Edge, NJ 07661
or emailed to dspowell@optonline.net

Association, urging construction of a bridge from 115th Street in Manhattan to Grantwood, believed that a bridge would draw 200,000 persons from New York within five years, increasing the value of property and giving such returns in taxation as would pay for its construction in only 25 years.

The contract to build the new Borough Hall for River Edge on Kinderkamack Road was awarded to architect George Collins of Stanley Place, Hackensack, on October 18, 1906. Work was underway by the first week of November: it was to be a two-story frame building, the contract price being \$5,000. The first floor was to be utilized by the fire company for storing the fire apparatus and the second floor was to contain meeting rooms for the Borough Council and the firemen. Window sashes



for the new borough hall, for which the carpenter had waited nearly a month, finally arrived in January 1907. Owing to the delay, the Borough Council could not occupy the building before their March meeting. Painted white in February 1907 and presented a prominent appearance.

M. B. and L. G. Gardner, Hackensack brick makers, celebrated the preparation of the season's last brick kiln for firing on November 11, 1906 by ordering a ten-gallon pot of clam chowder to feast their employees.

On November 14, 1906, the caboose on the freight train, due at the Cherry Hill Station about 6:30 P. M., derailed while being switched from the northbound to the southbound tracks, thereby delaying traffic for about two hours. On the same night, the New Bridge got stuck in open position after passage of a boat, further delaying the people who had already been delayed by the caboose accident.

Thanksgiving turkeys were reportedly "roosting high in price." Bloomer Brothers transferred their property on the east side of the River Edge Bridge to C. J. Rose, of New York. The old coal yard was reopened with a larger stock of Lehigh coal and Anderson Bloomer was in charge as superintendent. A survey was made on November 19, 1907, of the Bloomer property, comprising about 12 acres along the riverfront, south of Bridge Street, for the new owner.

As of January 1, 1907, it was unlawful to sell whiskey except under a label, which told the ingredients and age of the product. Owing to the mild winter, farmers were enabled to do all sorts of work on their farms, such as setting fence posts, plowing, etc. Charles E. Walsh, brick maker, and Herman Abbenseth and Elmer Van Buskirk, manufacturers of cement block, contemplated embarking together as a firm in the building business.

Grape vines and fruit trees received their annual trimming during the second week of January. Consumers of gas who used a quarter-in-the-slot meter were now allowed 210 cubic feet of illuminant for their money, being 1 cubic foot more than theretofore. Kerosene lamps still did duty on the River Edge depot grounds but residents expected to see the promised electric lights before the New Year got very much older.

During the third week of January 1907, ice harvesters had renewed hopes of gathering a crop before the pansies bloomed again. The first sleighing of the season was enjoyed on Friday, January

18th, and then it rained. Two young ladies who took a ride down the hill on Wednesday morning, January 29th, in farmer Glinskie's sled, waited at the post office for the sleigh to come back from Bogert's dock, hoping for a return-trip home. The ladies sweetly inquired if it would be too heavy for the horses to pull them up hill. "Oh, no," answered Mr. Bogert with a laugh, "if you can stand it, the horses can." When the sleigh pulled out of Bogert's coal yard, the girls quickly saw the joke: the sleigh was heaped up with farm fertilizer of rank-smelling quality. One of them was so provoked that she threw a snowball at the post office door, but it went wide of the mark. Zero weather prevailed on January 31st, much to the delight of the ice dealers.

Mrs. Catherine A. Bogert on Tuesday, January 28th, sold a farm of 18 acres at Spring Valley to Fiecke Johnson of Maywood. Mr. Johnson, an employee in the Alkaloid Works at Maywood, was to try farming as a health restorer. C. H. Behnke, of New York, who recently bought the William Gundlah farm at Spring Valley in Paramus, took possession of the property on January 28, 1907.

A snowstorm, which struck Bergen County on Monday, February 4, 1907, developed into a genuine blizzard, the worst in eight years. Nearly two feet of snow fell and high winds piled it into drifts that in places measured four or five feet deep. Railroads and trolleys running through Hackensack were badly blocked and commuters stayed home. Throughout the county, highways were closed and school children got a general holiday. A cold wave followed in the wake of the snowstorm and on Wednesday morning, February 6th, thermometers registered 2° above zero and stood at 3° below zero at 7 A.M. on Thursday.

By the opening of March, ice on the river had broken up and was floating downstream. The electrocution law went into effect March 1, 1907, and hanging was played out in New Jersey. William Doremus was about to retire from

the village grocery business, opposite the River Edge Station, which he had operated for about a year; his successor was to be W. S. Brown, a former proprietor of the store.

Farmer Jacob Tschink retired from agricultural pursuits, disposed of his farming implements at public auction on March 14th, and moved to Fairmount. A week later, warm weather sufficiently broken the ice to open the river to navigation. Easter lilies were blooming and perch were running upstream. Children laid away their ice skates and were instead gliding the sidewalks on rollers. Temperature rose to 75° on Saturday, March 23rd, and early spring flowers such as crocus and snowdrops made their appearance.

Plans for improvement of the River Edge railroad depot were finally exhibited at the post office in March 1907. While the company would layout a driveway and approaches to the depot, the Improvement Association would beautify the grounds with shade trees and keep the grounds in good shape afterward. A subscription had been opened at the post office to help along the good work and over \$100 had been pledged in amounts ranging from \$1 to \$50.

It was a trifle early for picnics, but an excellent postcard view of a party of picnickers on the riverbank was exhibited in the post office, together with some fine winter scenes of River Edge. The best fishing grounds were rumored to be in the stretch of river between New Milford and River Edge, while "Harris Hole" and "Paulison's point" were favorite haling spots for seine fishermen.

Scrap baskets were placed at the east end of the borough near the North Hackensack Depot to receive waste paper, instead of allowing it to litter the public streets. Agent Blauvelt hoped that the fellow who stole the gum slot machine from the depot would become conscience-stricken and return it, but that dream did not come true. ❖
Kevin W. Wright



1.



2.

William Elliot Walling, (1917-2001) lived in Lyndhurst from 1925 to 1927 & 1931 to 2001 and these are some from his collection, by way of his son William.

I chose to start with this picture (1.) (William photographed) because being “posed” it has fewer of the defects found in snap shots. This building was at the south east corner of New Jersey Ave. and Ridge Road, Lyndhurst. The front section minus the entry porch was apparently originally the Lyndhurst Methodist Episcopal Church built about 1890. In 1914, the Methodists built a new church at Tontine Ave

and Stuyvesant Ave. Both locations incidentally were a few blocks from a DL&W Railroad station and directly on the trolley line. This building then became the Westminster Presbyterian Church. Thirty years later or so the Presbyterians relocated to a brick colonial style building further south and on the opposite side of Ridge Road. If memory serves correctly this building then became a plumbing and heating business and may still be there.

(2.) Apparently this is a 12-seat open car #67, of the Newark & Hackensack Traction Co. south-bound for Newark,



3.



4.

sometime between 1904 and 1906. The car was originally built for the Union Traction Co about 1898. See Sennstrom, B. H. and E. T. Francis, *Public Service Railway, Bergen Division*, (Harold E. Cox, Forty Fort, PA, 1994).

(3.) It has been a while since I sent anything but maybe this will be worth the wait. This is one of 7 pictures I received this weekend. I knew they existed but their whereabouts was uncertain. There are 2 pictures of this house (identified as being “near Waldwick”) taken at different times, 2 identical pictures of a later house and 3 scenes apparently of Waldwick. Pat Wardell with whom I correspond about

(Bergen County history) suggests that V. Royle whose name is stamped into all the pictures was probably Vernon Royle, who grew up in Paterson and whom she believes had pictures published in a book on the iron works of the Ramapos.

I neglected to mention in my first note that I think these pictures came from the White residence in Waldwick, though whether they belonged to Lillian White or to her cousins Emma Shuart and Mary Yereance I do not know. (4.) This is the house of which there are 2 identical pictures. It comes complete with 2 children, 1 hammock and apparently no chimney or running water. ❖ W. Walling

had to repaint the kitchen.

For security reasons, the wooden shutters were nailed closed. Before those along the back of the house could be opened again, I had to cut down mulberry saplings about eight inches in diameter. I remember the day we moved in; I looked into the gloom of the backrooms downstairs, but a flip of the switch produced no light. In half darkness, with just a crack of light streaming through the mismatching shutters, I thought that an ugly shag carpet covered the floor. The next day, armed with a lamp, I discovered that it was actually a thick mantle of mold and mildew covering industrial carpeting. The closed shutters and windows made it a mushroom farm!

Iron patio railings and chicken-wire fencing created a narrow corridor down the middle of the attic, which was a storage/display area. Of course, the Dugout canoe was the main object of curiosity. Downstairs, Art Deco wall sconces provided the only light. Heavy blinds shut out the daylight, even when the outside shutters were open. There was a large old display case inside the front door, which served as a gift shop.

As you can imagine, everything became an adventure, every door and drawer yielding something unexpected. The first thing we did was paint the interior, which had a very faded pastel Williamsburg Blue on the woodwork. Fortunately, Charles Tishy, the state restoration architect, had done interior paint sampling, which revealed the present verdigris green trim and linen white walls. When I went to move paintings and other wall displays, however, I found that a restoration contractor had done extensive exploration of the architectural fabric, leaving large holes in the plaster walls. The easiest remedy, of course, was to hang a picture over each one.

Digging into the walls did have its benefits: the Steuben House yielded

up the secrets of its long-forgotten architectural development for the first time in two and a half centuries. Combined with documentary research, the story of this great Revolutionary landmark began to grow in interest and complexity. At the same time, the Nation's Bicentennial encouraged a new and more objective look at the legend and lore that too often obscured historical fact. This great milestone event also inspired a new approach to historical interpretation, which became more inclusive and less hagiographic. There was a healthy impulse towards the respectful treatment of historical artifacts and the power of authenticity that they can lend in a proper museum setting.

For sometime after we arrived, I remember how middle-aged visitors would knock on the door and hesitate before entering, asking earnestly if "you still lock people into the dungeon?" It took me awhile to understand that a former caretaker had urged groups of scouts and school kids into the old vaulted root cellar in the back of the house. Once inside, she slammed and bolted the door, leaving the hapless victims to flail in the darkness of this damp vault, feeling the chains and skull that had been placed there for added effect. I concluded that a generation of youngsters had been "terrorized" in the dark recess of this scary old house.

Other guests insisted that I tell the story of the "hay door" in the back of the house. It turned out that WPA workers had removed the wooden staircase from the rear of the house, which descended to the ground from the center hall in the second story, when they tore off the rear kitchen wing (circa 1860) in 1939. The "explanation" commonly offered for the resulting doorway-to-nowhere was that this was built so that hay wagons could unload directly into the house. While I know that straw was used to fill mattresses, I thought the idea that Mr.

Zabriskie would store hay in his elegant stone mansion to be amusing at best. And then there was the local version of Veronica's Veil: a frying pan, hung in the Dwelling Room fireplace, displaying George Washington's portrait. As legend would have it, Mrs. Bourdet supposedly cooked Washington's eggs in it while he was at Fort Lee. I always wondered why the artist didn't depict two trompe l'oeil fried eggs!

We certainly became part of the house's history. Ben and Anna were born in the northwest room upstairs, respectively, in December 1982 and February 1985. Interestingly, our midwife lived within walking distance of the house. Now when I am upstairs in the backrooms, I find it almost impossible to imagine how the five of us fit into that confined space—two small rooms, a kitchen and a bathroom. Our kitchen was the main office for meetings of all kinds. We shared our bathroom with state workers, Society members, and even the general public. But at least I had the great privilege of living where I worked and watching my children grow up.

The grounds made up for what we lacked in domestic space. Out back, a gnarled mulberry tree held a rope swing. We had gardens and, at one point, as many as 200 blooms of my grandmother's iris. The problem was always the lack of privacy: Any toys left outside, even for a few moments, were apt to disappear.

We arrived in the fading hours of the Byrne administration. Governor Kean picked Russ Myers, who did so much of lasting value for the Morris County Parks and Historic Sites, as the Director of Parks & Forestry. Being a close friend of Alex and Catherine Marchbank, who lived on Coopers Pond in Bergenfield, he would frequently stop by for a visit. I can still remember him with BCHS President John Spring, in a ceremony commemorating the bicentennial of the

gift of the Steuben House from the State of New Jersey to Baron von Steuben on Steuben Day, 1983. Director Myers cherished historic sites. I remember his frustration. It appeared as if the Navy had bequeathed its surplus paint at the end of the Second World War to the State Park Service, for the exterior was a heavily peeled battleship gray. The house itself was slowly vanishing into the swamp, for it seemed that each year the landscapers mowed a smaller and smaller patch around the building, leaving nature to steadily reclaim the rest. Director Myers was appalled. He called Ringwood and demanded that the house be better treated. When he returned a couple of months later, nothing had been done. He called again and insisted that the exterior be scraped and painted in time for the Steuben Day event. When he got there, nothing had happened. He then told me how frustrated he was. He thought that as Division Director, when he said something, things would happen. Nothing ever did. Instead, he said that the bureaucrats and superintendents would line up at his desk to explain why they couldn't do what he asked—an endless train of excuses! He didn't stay long, but introduced Greg Marshall as his Deputy Director and eventual successor. Before he left in 1984, he signed a reclassification, which I wrote for the Steuben House, creating the first Historic Preservation Specialist positions in the field (at the same time also elevating Tom Laverty at the Wallace House in Somerville). Suddenly, my annual pay doubled to \$14,000!

I came to understand Director Myers' frustrations as time went on. For example, I remember contractors working on a major maintenance of the exterior of the house, which included taking down the chimneys to the roofline and rebuilding them. Rather than building chutes to safely convey the bricks to the ground, the

workers decided that it would be easier to just shove them down the chimney. Deborah and I were still asleep in bed on a Monday morning when we heard this terrific crash and tumult over our heads. When I saw several bricks fly past our window, I got up in a mighty hurry. They had pushed the bricks into the “live” chimney, causing the furnace to “puff back,” filling the house with oily soot! I ran out the front door and climbed the ladder to the roof, in my pajama pants, yelling for the inspector, who was standing atop the roof,



Ivan, Anna and Ben under the black walnut tree, behind the Steuben House, 1989

overseeing this fiasco. When the fire alarm sounded, I rushed back inside to find the place filled with smoke. Before I could even react (and try to save the collections from the damaging effects of the smoke and soot), I heard the fire engines pull up out front. Since it was my day off (the house being closed Mondays and Tuesdays), the doors and shutters were closed. I peered through the peephole in the front door to see the firemen approaching the house with their axes! I was on the front porch in an instant, yelling at the top of my lungs, before the first axe could impale the historic fabric. Another sad legacy of this “renovation” was the removal of the “crown glass” windowpanes in the

rear of the house. When we first arrived, and for several years afterward, the morning sunshine, breaking through the imperfections of the antique glass as through prisms, cast rainbows on the walls of our apartment. The windows were supposed to be “re-set”, but when we came home one afternoon, the old glass lay in shards along the back of the house, because it was supposedly easier to just break it then to re-putty the sashes and replace only broken panes.

Dr. Lenk was president when we first arrived. In succession came John Spring, Janet Odence, Frank Lawrence, Tim Adriance, Amy (Northrup) Adamo, Bob Griffin, John Heffernan and Todd Braisted. Many wonderful Society members made this place what it is, giving tirelessly of themselves. I enjoy a treasury of fond recollections, but the length of my memory and of this page makes me hesitant to begin the litany of names, for fear that I might unwittingly overlook someone most deserving of mention!

Deborah took on the newsletter in '93 and was first asked to be a trustee in '94. She created the BCHS website in early 1997.

I well remember being invited to dinner at Jim and Ada Ransom's house in Westwood. One of the great surprises of our visit was the discovery that Ada collected pink elephants! Several years later, Jim asked if the Society could again hold its Christmas party in the Steuben House (as had been the custom in former years). He introduced a very spirited gift exchange, where each new participant could either open a new gift or take one that someone else had opened. Under the rules, a gift could switch hands three times,

before it remained with its final holder. This, of course, made for some lively fun! Deborah and I found a beautiful reproduction German glass ornament of a pink elephant and had Ivan contribute it as a gift at the party. When the package was opened, Ada's eyes opened wide—the chase was on! Every maneuver and stratagem was employed in the great pink elephant hunt. Jim and Ada used their combined six chances to attain the prize, but seemingly failed in the end. Refusing to accept defeat, Jim stopped the person with the ornament as he was leaving and cut a deal that brought home the glass pachyderm for Ada's trophy case!

Much has changed over time. The Zabriskie-Steuben House remains the Society's Museum Headquarters, but the arrival of the Campbell-Christie House opened new opportunities and challenges. It would take a decade to make the interior of that relocated landmark truly presentable, capped with the installation of a gift shop and tavern furnishings. Tim Adriance and Charlie Marchesini built the Out Kitchen in 1991, using stone from demolished historic houses in Hackensack. The storage and display of our museum collections in the garret of the Zabriskie-Steuben House ended in 2000, when the heating system and roof were replaced.

We put together so many great events: Steuben day, the Hackensack River Festivals, Candlelight Concerts, quilt shows, antique shows, Pinkster Festival, Rev and Civil War reenactments, and more! I had the great privilege of working with several mentors who reshaped my interests and career. For more than a decade, I researched Bergen Dutch architecture with Claire Tholl, accompanying her on many visits to stone houses throughout the region and doing most of her documentary research. I also worked on historical research for Reg McMahon and the historical marker program. In 1983, I had the great honor of collaborating

with Betty Schmelz on the Bergen Dutch Folk Art Exhibit, timed to commemorate Bergen County's tercentenary. Our committee researched weaving, pottery spoon boards, and "primitive" artwork of every description. The State Museum later presented the show, which (I believe) remains the only major exhibit that originated in a State Historic Site to be subsequently offered at the State Museum. Betty went on to work with Kevin Tremble and myself to write the crucial *Site Management Plan* in 1984, which conceived of the unity of the site and its stakeholders, recommending the restoration of the ancient name of Historic New Bridge Landing. Ultimately, Senator Loretta Weinberg and Assemblywoman Charlotte Vandervalk ushered the passage of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission act through the Legislature in 1995. Past President Bob Griffin was (and is) the Great Nudge, who keeps this unique mechanism churning out success after success, ably assisted by a remarkable partnership of commissioners representing the three adjacent municipalities, the County, the Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation, the Division of Parks & Forestry, and BCHS.

But the best is always yet to come! Soon the junkyard will vanish and Historic New Bridge Landing will become visible along one of the county's major east-west arteries and only a quarter mile north of busy Route #4. After 105 years, the Society now faces its greatest challenge: to build a visitor center and museum commensurate with the important artifact and document collections it owns and preserves—the greatest physical remainder of the folk culture of the Jersey Dutch to survive in the public domain. A heritage center that Bergen County richly deserves! And on ground of such great historical significance. So stay tuned, there's more exciting news ahead... ❖
Kevin W. Wright



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