

Fall/Winter  
2007/2008

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

The April flood and its aftermath really shook us up. The collections on display that were not moved by the DEP suffered water damage. We're still going through

**President's Message**

applying to FEMA and it has been a strenuous exercise. On top of that, the DEP required us to move the entire collection out of the Steuben House "to paint"—and gave us less than a month to accomplish this!

photograph and pack the collections for moving.

Andy Leeds from Ethan Allen and member Edward Schreyer read in the *Record* about our troubles and volunteered a crew to move the entire



BCHS collections being loaded on to Ethan Allen moving van.

J. Storm



We have been extremely fortunate to have County Executive Dennis McNerney step forward and make safe storage available to us. Members sprung into action. Tim Adriance, aided by Janet Strom led the charge to rescue items immediately after the flood. This summer, Janet, as museum chairwoman, orchestrated a crew to catalog, inventory,

collections out of the Steuben House. Even the rare 14 foot Indian canoe left the building.

FEMA requires three conservation quotes and Janet, Mike Trepicchio, Kevin Wright, Albert Dib, and I have been working hard to complete the application. Kevin Wright is back at the Steuben House since beginning of July and as always provides a steady hand.

I thank everyone on behalf of the Bergen County Historical Society and name below people who helped in this crisis. With so many people involved I run the risk of leaving someone out, I apologize in advance.

**Bergen County:** County Executive Dennis McNerney, Nancy Semon, Carol Messer, Frank DeBari, George Schnabel and the General Services Department.

**Donations:** **Holland Society**, NY, **Barbara Marchant**, Leonia, NJ, **Julia Van Haaften**, NYC, **James Mullins**, VA, **Nicholas Voorhis, Jr**, NM, **Ramsey**

continued on page 2

**In this issue**

Presidents Letter . . . . .	1-2
Marker Program Update. . . . .	4
Collections Update . . . . .	5, 13
Participate in History . . . . .	4
A Century Ago. . . . .	6, 13
Events & News. . . . .	6-7, 15
Important Donations . . . . .	8-9
Blockhouses and Chaos . . . . .	10-11
Art Moderne House in Teaneck. . . . .	14-15

**Historical Association, Averil L. Genton**, Woodridge, NJ, **George and Phebe Banta**, Poughkeepsie, NY, **Stephen Flagg, M.D.**, Hamden, CT, **Mark and Linda Stovall**, Cresskill, NJ, **Judith VanBuskirk**, Wayne, PA, **William and Judith Joyce**, Paramus, NJ, **William Romaine**, Irvington, NY, **Stuart Schneider**, Oradell, NJ, **Rose Harvey**, Delhi, Ontario • **Thank you!**

**Flood rescue participants:** Tim Adriance, Todd Braisted, Bari Falese, Deb Fisk, John Heffernan, Billy Newman, Denise Piccino, Elizabeth Piccino, Deborah Powell, Janet Strom and Kevin Tremble.

**Move participants:** Ethan Allen muscle: Andy Leeds, Miguel Gomez, Osmildo Ramos, William Rodriguez Jr., James Ferraro Jr. BCHS members: Catherine Cassidy, Rich Cuneo, Albert Dib, Pete Evans, Barbara Flurcheck, Gail Goldstein, Jack Goudsward, Mike Gorman, John and Linda Heffernan, Deborah Powell, Beth Potter, Denise Piccino, Elizabeth Piccino, Edward Schreyer, Ann Subrizi, Joe Suplicki,

Mike Trepicchio, Dave Whieldon, Kevin Wright and Janet Strom — who used a whole week's vacation time to manage the move.

**Conservators:**

Gary McGowan and Mary Alice Landis of Cultural, Preservation and Restoration Inc.; Gwen Spicer (Spicer Art Conservation); and Bari Falese.

**FEMA contact:**

David Livingstone and Susan Obert.

The museum and library collections comprise the greatest survival of significant Bergen Dutch



Gary McGowan and Janet Strom evaluating clock

artifacts and documents in the public domain. The number of items in the museum collection (not including the library) is over 3,000. Some 600 items were damaged in the flood and it's aftermath. The unique local focus of this irreplaceable collection was of particular interest to the folks at FEMA and the reason why we qualified for stabilization assistance.

Our long range plans have now become short range ... we must turn our attention to getting a safe museum environment—where we can professionally conserve, research and exhibit the whole collection.

In the coming year we'll be reaching out for help. Please consider being a part of these new challenges. Deborah Powell

**A different kind of project: Record oral histories, HNBL site tours and the BCHS lectures—before these stories disappear. We could make the recordings available to the public on the internet as pod casts. The recording equipment costs approximately \$1,000. Please contact me if you have a donation or are interested in working on this project. D. Powell contactBCHS@bergencountyhistory.org**



It is difficult not to become emotional when thinking of what happened during the Nor'easter Flood of April 15, 2007. What the BCHS almost lost - and what was severely damaged – was a part of one of the most extraordinary historical collections in the state.

And it wasn't just "objects" that were threatened – a Hackensack Valley sideboard, a turn-of-the-century teddy bear, a 19th century compass & sextant owned by Capt. Lozier of North Hackensack or a Wolfkiel pottery jug made from clay dug-up in present day River Edge. It was the stories that they tell. It is our history. And it is these stories that inform all of our present lives. If only we'd take the time to listen.

These artifacts were the silent witnesses to the stories that connect us to each other: parent to child; teacher to student; generation to generation. They are what link the lives of the Hackensack Valley's first people – the Native Americans – to the early Dutch settlers and today, to our most recent immigrants who are the newest members of the Bergen County family.

In the days following the flood volunteers worked tirelessly to organize the over 600 artifacts, photographing and recording each object. Under the advice of professional conservators, soaking-wet textiles that had been left in the large Dutch kas were rinsed; furniture was treated to lessen the effect of quickly-forming mold; dolls were removed from exhibit cases and, along with other objects, were bagged and placed in a freezer in order to arrest their deterioration. Artifacts are now being professional freeze-dried to remove the moisture.

But we couldn't stop the furniture from warping, or the 18th century wooden bowl from splitting. The large doll on display had already swollen and split open, and the metal kitchen utensils were rusting. Even the objects not in the water were affected. All the framed paintings, pastel portraits and embroidered images had been left on the walls. Even though they were above the floodwaters, the quickly forming mold in the house had likely infected them and other artifacts in the house.

As our hot and humid summer ordeal continued and

continued on page 13



19th century compass and sextant — used right on the Hackensack

A big thank you to **Dave Ramos**, for helping us pick out an appropriate laptop and installing all the software including PastPerfect, a cataloging program the BCHS purchased. We'll be able to record relevant information on every item and will help with dealing with the flood-damaged items as well as the rest of the collection.

Dave works full-time in an IT department and freelances too. He can be contacted at: [dramos\\_1701@yahoo.com](mailto:dramos_1701@yahoo.com). He's also webmaster for: The New York Harbor Railroad @ <http://www.nyhrr.com>, check it out. – D. Powell

**Thank you for supporting us through your membership, we appreciate it!**



**Just wanted to let everybody know** that the historical blue marker program, designating homes and buildings of historic note in Bergen County, is being revived. It's not exactly alive and kicking yet, but we're working on it.

BCHS President Deborah Powell has asked me to be the point person for the marker program, and I hope to start moving things along in the coming months. We're going to be revising the application process, determining a list of criteria, and, given the rising cost of metals, figuring out how much to charge for the marker and the research that goes into producing one.

We've recently had queries from at least three owners of historic buildings, so we know the interest is there, and we hope it won't be too long before we can add to the existing—historic blue markers along the roads of Bergen County.

By the way, we also hope to add pictures and information on existing markers to the BCHS website, so if someone "googles" something like the "Haring family," they'll find a marker which could be a gateway to our entire site.

As for why President Powell picked me—I've been researching house histories in Bergen County and metropolitan New York for about a decade now, and I've just signed a contract with Acanthus Press to co-author a book on the great estate homes of Westchester County (1880-1930). I also live in an old 1891 house in Haworth, which, unfortunately, is not "blue marker" material. The first

owner, a carpenter, went broke and his mill in Closter was sold off nail by nail—the second owner, the Haworth postmaster, skipped town in 1915 after it turned out the young woman he took to the Postmasters' Convention in Atlantic City wasn't his daughter after all. Colorful stories, but I don't think I need to worry about the cost of metal anytime soon. Check the website soon. Beth Potter [Housetales@aol.com](mailto:Housetales@aol.com)



Cultural & Historic Affairs Director Carol Messer, Paramus Mayor James Tedesco III, River Edge Mayor Peg Watkins, Bergen County Executive Dennis McNerney, Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttle and BCHS Past-President Kevin Wright at the Washington Spring marker dedication in Van Saun Park.

### Attention All Students—Participate in History



Learning about historical subjects from text books can be ... so boring. Wouldn't it be more fun to actually cook in a Dutch Oven, sew your own haversack, grow herbs and even use your tech skills to record adventures in the past? Students may even create a video to share with class mates about the people of Bergen County in the 1700s. Join us at our historic site and lend your skills and helping hands at our events and workshops. All students are welcome (12-18 years) If interested, please contact Denise Piccino at 973-427-9713.

## A CENTURY AGO

by Kevin Wright

The River Edge Land Company sold a house to W. H. Moffit, of New York, and E. S. Perry built a new building on River Edge Heights in April 1907. Nearby, a noise coming from Mr. Hoffman's house, then in course of construction, awakened Arthur Watt. He discovered a man leaving the house with a bundle containing lead pipes cut out of the new house. The Riverside Borough Council accepted their new Borough Hall on May 6, 1907, and the fire apparatus moved into the new firehouse in the Borough Hall in July.

The best fishing grounds were located between New Milford and River Edge, while "Harris Hole" and "Paulison's Point" were favorite haling spots for seine fishermen. The herring were so numerous on May 1st that boys waded in the stream and caught them in crab nets. Bobbing for eels was indulged almost nightly in springtime. A downpour accompanied the change of moon on May 4th. There is an old saying among the farmers: "A wet May for hay." In June 1907, the summer pavilion in the grove on the east bank at North Hackensack was prepared for entertaining boating parties.

A stuck draw on the Paterson Plank-Road Bridge delayed one of the Mehrhof Brick Company's schooners. Consequently, on May 6, 1907, Freeholder Coe introduced a resolution to create the office of County Engineer at an annual salary of \$3,500. The motion passed 13 to 10. Ralph D. Earle, Jr. was appointed the first County Engineer on June 17, 1907.

An ancient dwelling on the east side of the river at New Milford, owned by the Bloomer family of River Edge, but long untenanted, was discovered ablaze on June 22, 1907. The building was an old landmark, a two-story and

attic affair, and the oldest inhabitant said it was built more than a century ago. General Accalaries (?), of Civil War fame, occupied the place in his early career and it was widely said that a pirate had his den in the building long ago. Of late it had been known as the "Beehive." New Milford had another old house in a fair state of preservation, which was built in 1788.

The River Edge Improvement Association beautified the grounds on the west side of the River Edge station in June and July 1907, laying out paths and driveways and planting shrubbery, spruces and shade trees. A subscription drive raised \$150. The railroad company wired the depot for electric lighting and placed five rough pine bulletin boards upon the station in October, which greatly displeased the River Edge Improvement Association.

Cornelius Zabriskie, the Jersey City banker, died at his summer home in Sunapee Lake, New Hampshire, on July 10, 1907. He had been born at Cherry Hill on February 24, 1839, and began his business career at 15 years of age in a drug store in Jersey City. After a fire in 1871 destroyed his place of business, he turned to banking and met with great success. He donated 20 city blocks in Jersey City, which were transformed by him into a public playground.

By August, crabbing parties were seen along the river from sunrise to sunset. Reedbirds were scarce on the meadows and sweet corn was not of the best quality, owing to a summer drought. A dry rot affected tomatoes. Goldenrod and wild asters made the fields radiant, while swamp-maples showed their autumn tints in the first week of September. Peaches were at least fancy in price — selling for \$2 per basket. Perch fishing was good in the river during the last week of September and there were still many crabs of large size. Riverside Camp, an attractive spot for picnickers, just south of River Edge

continued on page 12

## A.J. Meerwald Sails Before the Wind and Into the Sunset

From July 19th through July 22nd the A.J. Meerwald returned to north Jersey and cast anchor at the Alpine Boat Basin for our annual fundraising sails. We enjoyed sunny weather and good breezes in addition to friendly people on board ship and delightful music on our evening sails. Both our sails and fundraisers were successful.

The Meerwald, New Jersey's official tall ship, is a restored 115 foot oyster schooner built in 1928. Oysters, which grew in large quantities and in large sizes in this area's rivers, were a cheap and plentiful food enjoyed first by native Americans and then settlers. On each sail a member of the Meerwald crew gave a talk about oyster harvesting and answered questions about the tall ship and sailing.

A variety of topics ranging from the geological formation of the Palisades, historical battles and settlements, coastal industries, and modern development of parks and recreation areas were covered by the official speakers on each sail. Our special thanks to past BCHS president Kevin Wright, Trustee Eric Nelsen, and member Kevin Tremble who have hosted sails and shared their knowledge for a number of years.

We also want to thank Jennifer Kleinbaum of the Tenafly Nature Center who hosted the children's sails. These provided special hands-on activities for children and teens such as analyzing water and "creatures" from the Hudson River. On one of this year's sails the granddaughter of a BCHS member

met another teen on board. They enjoyed each other's company so much that they decided to write to each other at school during the coming year.

The Meerwald sails are cosponsored by the Bergen County Historical Society, the Tenafly Nature Center, and the Association of NJ Environmental Commissions. We give a big tip of the hat to Martha Lieblich who skillfully coordinates the sails each year. We also toast the crew of the Meerwald for their sailing expertise and friendliness which add so much to each sail.

Submitted by Gail Goldstien

**Use of a pick-up truck needed — to help move our out-house!**  
[contactBCHS@bergencountyhistory.org](mailto:contactBCHS@bergencountyhistory.org)



Linda Masullo and Kathy and Shannon Azzaro work in the gift shop, taking inventory and preparing for the upcoming holiday season.

If you haven't received an email in July or August from Bergen History [bergenhistory@yahoo.com](mailto:bergenhistory@yahoo.com), and you would like to, please contact me.

If in the hard copy mailing, your name or address does not appear as you would like, please contact me.

Use the below info to reach me:  
[contactBCHS@bergencountyhistory.org](mailto:contactBCHS@bergencountyhistory.org) or

BCHS  
PO Box 55  
River Edge, NJ 07661  
Attn: Info Update

D. Powell

## LATE BREAKING NEWS

### Marley Anna Dib entered the world on September 16, 2007 weighing 7lbs 3oz. to delighted parents Jeanne and Albert Dib.

Jeanne left working as a U.S. licensed customs broker to work for the Wyckoff Public Library and recently resigned when she became pregnant and went on bed rest. She hopes to obtain her degree in library sciences when Marley gets a little older. She is an avid reader and sometimes reads three books at a time! Albert is a Vice President for BCHS. He was instrumental in setting up the Message Board which he continues to administer. He recently agreed to be a BCHS representative to the HNBL Commission.

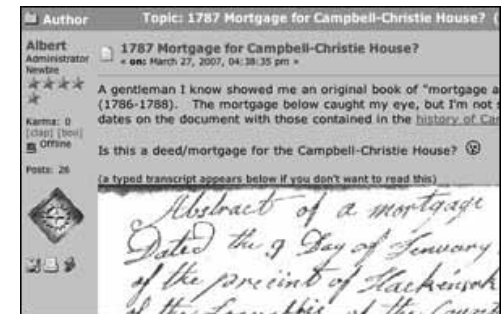


**The Message Board** has grown to over 109 members and 60,000 page views since inception in March '07 — by individuals from around the world. It provides a dynamic online location where anyone can post queries, photographs, alerts, calendar events, articles — with the focus on Bergen County (anyone can look but to respond you must be a member). We are getting quite a few queries with people looking for genealogical information and someone to do research for them. Recent posts include from "Chinadoll" looking for African-American burial grounds in the area. *Can you help her?*

It has been a tremendous help in answering the email queries that come by way of the main website — I can redirect them to the message board.

It seems to be the first Historical Society message board in the state.

**I encourage you to participate in this online history community.**



**Ridgewood Public Library** has indexed the State Census for 1885, 1895, 1905 and 1915 for Ridgewood and surrounding towns. These censuses are useful to genealogists and local historians. They provide details about family composition, occupations, birthplace and more. The actual census pages can be viewed on microfilm as several libraries or by ordering film through the Family History Centers. For details and the indexes see our website at: [www.ridgewoodlibrary.org/localhistory/local\\_history\\_census\\_index.htm](http://www.ridgewoodlibrary.org/localhistory/local_history_census_index.htm).

Funding for this index has been made possible in part through grant funds administered by the Bergen County Department of Parks, Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs through a General Operating Support grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, a Division of Cultural Affairs in the Department of State. Additional funds were provided by the Ridgewood Public Library. Volunteers from the Genealogical Society of Bergen County also made significant contributions to the project.

Submitted by Peggy Norris

## Bergen County Coverlets come to us ... by way of Cape Cod

by Deborah Powell, President BCHS

Actually, the contact started with Jeanne Newman, BCHS life member. Marjorie Haight Lydecker and Kenneth Ryck Lydecker knew Gus and Jeanne Newman in grade school in Hackensack in the 1920s. Kenneth wanted to find a home for the coverlet from his family and turned to Bergen County and the Newmans, having long since relocated to Cape Cod. Jeanne reached out to us, to find out whether BCHS would be interested. In the meantime, Priscilla A. Stahl, from a neighboring town, had been in touch with the Lydeckers—she had recently received items from the estate of collector Alice Sharp. She also really wanted a coverlet (inscribed “Matilda Demarest, 1841”) to come back to Bergen County. We were able to follow up the phone calls with a detour on a family trip this summer. We had delightful visits with both couples. It really made our visit to the Cape.

The unsigned Lydecker coverlet (from the estate of Caroline Helen (Tag

Lexow) is black wool and linen with a basket of flowers (very similar to one in the Blauvelt Demarest Foundation collection, which is signed/made for Rachel Demarest).

The Stahl-Sharp coverlet is signed, made of indigo wool and natural linen, with a floral pattern and central medallion. Both are woven in single piece and are in excellent condition.

These additions to the BCHS collections continue our appreciation and understanding of the coverlets of Bergen County. It really is wonderful that these friends contributed.

For more information on coverlets visit [www.bergencountyhistory.org](http://www.bergencountyhistory.org).



Alice Sharp



Kenneth Ryck and Marjorie (Haight) Lydecker

## and 4 Hackensack Valley Chairs



While we were visiting the Stahls, Priscilla asked us if we'd be interested in Alice Sharp's 4 Hackensack Valley chairs (one had been converted to a rocker). Priscilla had

someone who wanted to purchase them but she wanted them to go to Bergen County. Unfortunately, we didn't have room in our car. When I got back, I mentioned it to co-worker Anita DiGiulio and she volunteered to pick them up when attending a convention at the Cape. The collection continues to grow!

The chairs are in excellent condition and bear the distinctive urn finials.



Anita DiGiulio with the chairs at the CC House.



Priscilla A. and Richard Stahl

## 1780: Blockhouses and Chaos in the Northern Valley

By John Spring, Past-President BCHS



The “neutral ground” here in Bergen County was a virtual “no man’s land” in 1780 as the Revolution ground its way toward a culmination.

A handful of militiamen, at the risk of their lives, tried to protect farmers and their families from attacks by British irregulars and desperate “refugees”, who had bet on the British invaders, only to lose their homes and possessions when the British attackers were resisted.

Among these “refugees” were free-lancers who alternately enlisted in Washington’s army or carried out missions for the British, even proposing to kidnap General Washington — for a price.

These conflicts were brought to a climax by the terrible winter of 1779-80 when Washington’s army was buried in snow at Morristown N.J. The British in New York City were also in desperate straits for lack of firewood to heat their lodgings. Even some old ships were chopped up to provide firewood.

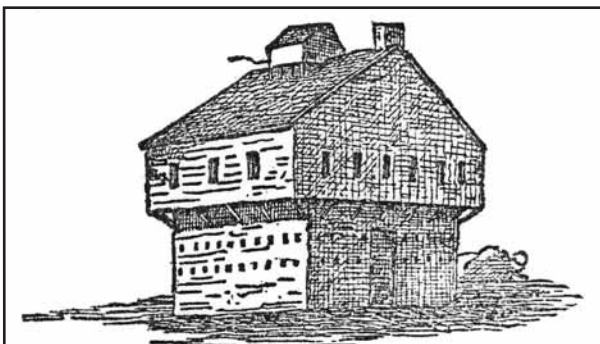
The opportunistic refugees grabbed a chance to profiteer on the situation by crossing the solidly frozen Hudson River to the farms on the Palisades in what is now Hudson County. There they cut down trees, tossed them from the Palisades and dragged them over the ice to Manhattan where they were cut up and sold at profiteer’s prices to the frozen city dwellers.

When spring arrived, the refugees proposed to

keep a good thing going. However, by then, the Northern Valley’s militiamen such as Captain John Huyler, Major John Goetschius and Colonel Thomas Blanch were aware of the situation, so they began to harass the woodcutters, making their tree-cutting dangerous. They appealed to the British Army which provided guards to defend them while they built a blockhouse where they could take cover if attacked. It was built at about where 72nd Street is today in North Bergen, but was known as the Bull’s Ferry blockhouse after a road up the Palisades about a half mile north of that location.

The local militia appealed to General Washington, who recognized the threat posed by a blockhouse in woodland and farm country. Washington, however, also remembered that the British invasion in 1776 might have cut off his retreating army (and himself) by cutting from the Closter New Dock to the Liberty Pole leaving him and his army trapped in the peninsula below.

So he gave his qualified permission to the attack, provided that General



PLAN OF A BLOCK-HOUSE

That my readers may better understand the construction of a block-house I add a view from Anburey’s *Travels*. These constructions were essentially similar, and in common use throughout the frontier as protection against the Indians. A stockade surrounded them without, and an exterior line of *abatis* occasionally afforded a more perfect defence. C.H. Winfield.

Anthony Wayne, accompanied by Washington’s Surveyor General Robert Erskine, do a survey of Hudson River Landings prior to the attack to be sure that the British Army, camped across the river on Valentine’s Hill could not get word, cross the river and cut Wayne’s army off in north Bergen.

Wayne’s report on July 18, 1780, confirmed that the 1776 invasion had come by way of the Lower Closter Landing or New Dock, so General Washington ordered that a guard be placed there before daybreak. Wayne posted Captain Zebulon Pike, (father of the explorer of Pike’s Peak), probably at what is now Bald Eagle Point in the Greenbrook Nature Sanctuary. His orders were to gather wood to send a smoke signal and to send a dispatch rider with word to call off the attack if the British, from their camp across the Hudson, made signs of an attack on Wayne’s forces. It was such a message from Pike which caused the attack to be called off and converted into a large scale forage raid.

Major John Andre wrote a seventy verse poem called, *The Cow Chace* which ridiculed Anthony Wayne and his attack on the blockhouse. Unfortunately for Andre, his poem was published in *Rivington’s Gazette*, the New York Tory paper, on the day when Andre sailed up the Hudson on his ill-fated expedition to meet Benedict Arnold and surrender West Point. Andre was, of course, hanged in Tappan, on October second.

But the battles over blockhouses and foraging continued to be a major concern, on the American side, between the Continental Army and the local militia and on the British side between local “hustlers” among the “refugees and the standing army.

For example, in August of 1780, Washington gave orders that a blockhouse should be built north of Sneden’s Landing in Rockland

County NY, both to harass British shipping and to protect the farmland in the vicinity. But, when he gave orders that some Bergen County militiamen be detached from their units to help man the blockhouse, Major John Goetschius objected bitterly that Bergen County militiamen were being paid by local farmers to protect them. In spite of this, he supplied the requested local militia units.

Both Major Goetschius and General Greene protested foraging or “pillaging” by the Continental Army, desperate for food and supplies during this period.

Perhaps the most graphic depiction of the dire situation was penned by Alexander Hamilton, General Washington’s aide-de-camp, while encamped at “Liberty Pole” on September 3, 1780. “Without a speedy change”, he wrote, “the army must dissolve; it is now a mob rather than an army, without clothing, without morals, without discipline. We begin to hate the country for its neglect of us; the country begins to hate us for our oppression of them. Congress has long been jealous of us; we have now lost all confidence in them and give the worst construction to all they do. Held together by the slenderest of ties we are ripening for dissolution”.

In July 1781, General Washington was preparing a massive attack on New York City which would include a major attack down the Hudson River from Sneden’s Landing. However, in August, word came that the French fleet was off the Virginia capes.

Shall we say, The rest is history?



### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

at the BCHS Library at Felician College. Cataloging and inventorying on Wednesdays between 10am and 5pm when it is open. If available contact: Steve Weigel at swa250@aol.com.

on the east bank of the river, closed for the season on October 1st.

Electric signs became quite the fashion on Main Street, Hackensack. A new common battery telephone system was expected to be in full operation there on September 15th. It was predicted that auto trucks would soon be used for hauling farm produce to city markets. Thomas Edison invented a process by which a three-story house could be built entirely of concrete in twelve hours at a cost not exceeding \$1,000.

Walter Christie, the record-breaking automobilist, of River Edge, was nearly killed at Pittsburg on September 9, 1907, when running his machine at the rate of 70 miles per hour. He was in the hospital with a broken wrist, a sprained back, lacerated head and injuries to his abdomen. He did not expect to ever race again. He was walking again with a cane by November.

The North Hackensack Hose Company was incorporated on October 9, 1907, with 35 members and 500 feet of hose. John Thompson, J. Pell Zabriskie and H. H. Burt were appointed a committee to purchase a

hose cart.

Good quality potatoes sold for \$2.50 per barrel on local farms. Fire destroyed a small dwelling house opposite the New Bridge hotel on October 19, 1907. Only a stove and some crockery were saved from the ruins. Elmer Post owned the building, which a family named Kirkmann occupied. Mr. Kirkmann was in Brooklyn at the time of the fire while his wife was at a friend's house in another part of the village.

The Bergen Grange held its Fifth Annual Fair in its new hall on Spring Valley road on October 30th with a fine display of farm products, fruits and flowers. Leslie R. Fort, Republican gubernatorial candidate, defeated Frank S. Katzenbach, Jr., the Democrat, by 10,232 votes against 8,714 in Bergen County. Out of a total registration of 25,805, about 6,300 Bergen County voters failed to go to the polls. The Democrats held a larger majority on the Board of Chosen Freeholders than any party had held for nearly a score of years, having 16 Democrats and 10 Republicans.

Flowers blooming late in autumn were said to be an indication of an

unpleasant winter. Hirschfield's pearl button factory returned to New Milford in November 1907. This time, it would be run by electricity and not by waterpower. A long iron smokestack arrived in May 1908.

This was a time of marvelous prosperity with "millionaires as thick as flies around the bung of a molasses barrel." The Republican Administration's laissez faire economic policies, Congress' endorsement of the gold standard and a high protective tariff, accumulated a great surplus in the National Treasury and a favorable trade balance. Big corporate Trusts dictated prices for everything from cradles to coffins without governmental interference or complaint. And yet, in November 1907, almost without warning, the Administration's supporters on Wall Street lost hundreds

of millions of dollars, forcing banks to close, and thereby tying up the savings of the people and the money of the merchant and manufacturer. Just before Thanksgiving, Maine woodsmen commenced cutting Christmas trees for the rest of the country.

Wild geese flew south in late November as muckrakers gave the streets a semi-annual cleaning. Hackensack store windows began filling with holiday goods. Blacksmiths were sharpening horseshoes in their spare moments so as to be ready for icy conditions. Governor Stokes' Thanksgiving proclamation was read in Hackensack schools on that day and at the High School the proclamation of the first Governor of New Jersey was also given a reading.

***This article appears in its entirety on the BCHS website.***

*Collections Update, continued from page 3*

we inventoried and packed every item in the house for storage, we were also on a journey of discovery. For the first time many of us were hearing the stories that these artifacts had to tell. Many were passed on to us by Kevin Wright who has been "reading" these artifacts for decades. This was the only fun part of the summer. We all worked hard because what we were doing was saving the history and stories that are Bergen County.

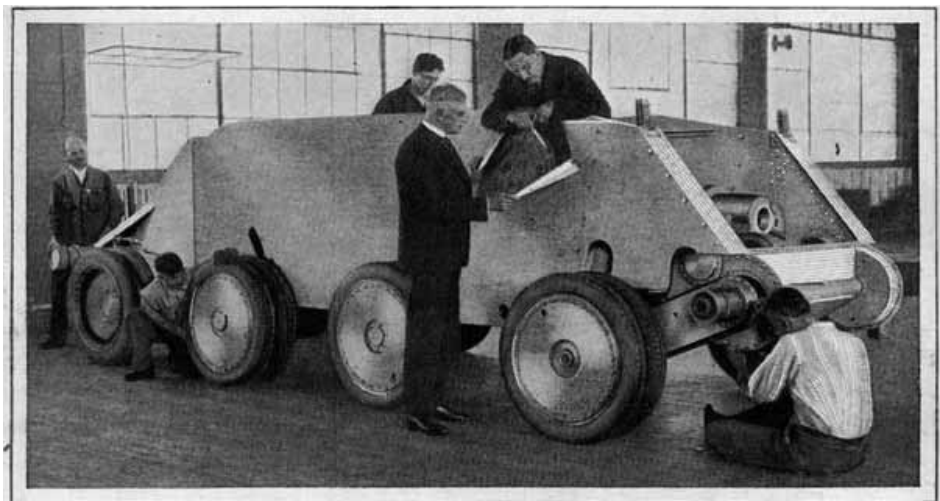
So, what would those artifacts say now? "Why were we left there when the river was rising? It's happened before and you've always saved us." Why indeed! After all, this is River Edge.

We may have felt abandoned by those whom we trusted to care for our collection, but we have found friends everywhere, some old and some new. We've received support from Australia to NYC; from a generous Leonia friend and local historical societies; from the members of the Holland Society and Bergen County officials; and, of course, from our BCHS family. This support has touched us all.

When we were asked to remove every artifact from the house, the County rescued us by providing a place for temporary storage. We even removed the Indian canoe that hasn't been out of the house for decades! Employees of Ethan Allen and the Bergen County Dept. of Parks, volunteered to move all the furniture, exhibit cases and boxes of artifacts out of the house.

Now we are waiting to find out the result of our application to FEMA. Conservators have estimated that to treat every item will cost about \$300,000. So the work continues. We want our BCHS family to know that its trustees and officers are working hard to care for its collections. Keep checking the BCHS Message Board. We'll be sure to let you know how we're doing.

And a personal thanks to everyone who took the time to help us. We'd really be up-a-creek-without-a-paddle without you. Submitted by Janet Strom



Here is the fuselage or body of the flying tank under construction. It is surprisingly light in weight, thanks to methods of construction which are jealously guarded. J. Walter Christie, noted builder of army tanks, is the man inside the body who is pointing to the plans. Caterpillar treads can be fitted over the wheels, to be used when necessary.

## Teaneck House

by Wanda Trotta

My birth was carefully planned. He lovingly laid out a cardboard miniature of the structure he envisioned. She too added ideas to the final form. Money wouldn't be spared and as a result I blossomed into the most unusual house in the neighborhood—a Floridian house in Teaneck, New Jersey.

Walter and Val Jones threw a lavish party in my honor when they moved in. For two years they occupied my fourteen rooms with their Toy Boston Bulldog. We entertained frequently and I thought everything fine until a five week old infant arrived. My upstairs transformed from a sitting area to a nursery. Custom painted three foot high Walt Disney characters danced across light blue walls and pasted stars on the ceiling twinkled nightly as a little girl counted them instead of sheep.

The Jones' loved me. My glass studded stucco glistened with pride when people stopped to admire—the most unusual angle being a view of the pool atop a backyard garage. My little girl even walked slowly if someone happened near, as she opened my wrought iron gate, hoping the person would realize I was hers. I boasted to my ordinary companions, "None of you are unique nor loved as I!" Now real contentment reigned within me. I witnessed my family's happiness, tears—the whole gamut of emotions humans experience during their lives. I experienced them too! The girl infant grew each day. I watched over her in slumber, rang with laughter when she giggled with her friends and comforted her in sadness. Before I could utter "venetian blinds", she stood in our bedroom saying a tearful goodbye. We were together

nineteen years, after all. Despite our loud protests, her mother painted away Jiminy Cricket, Mickey Mouse and all the rest six months later.

Again only Walter, Val and a dog



Teaneck, NJ c. 1942

rattled around in me. But, my girl visited often, eventually introducing her new boy baby to my rooms. They only stayed weekends fortunately. I was getting on in years. Crying infants jangled my chandeliers! Besides, how could I begin to fathom a male child after years of coping only with girls?

Obviously, life up to that point had been secure and easy. Then my creator died. Val stubbornly stayed, unwilling to part with me. However, a specimen of my class required many dollars to keep well groomed. Also, the older houses become the more care we need - not too unlike our residents. No matter how many fond memories I sparked in her mind she finally relented.

I'll never forget the trauma of



creaking a last farewell to Val. She's not returned to Larch Avenue since that parting. Her daughter returned a few times since then, but there is a saying that people cannot "go back". Everything has changed as things do—the "old neighborhood" is now totally different with new residents - so it is better to keep good memories in one's mind and replay them as one does a movie.

The last time she was her I tried to give good advice to my girl who with her parents loved me so much,

"Please don't come back again, young woman. Remember me as I was during the spring of your life and mine." Did she hear me?

Wanda Trotta is Assistant Graduate Dean at the University of Texas at Dallas.

The Bergen County Historical Society received a \$4,000 general operating support grant which will contribute to storage of museum collections and insurance on the collections.

Funding has been made possible in part through grant funds administered by the Bergen County Department of Parks, Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs through a General Operating Support grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, a Division of Cultural Affairs in the Department of State.



Bergen County Historical Society  
P.O. Box 55, River Edge, NJ 07661  
201.343.9492  
[www.bergencountyhistory.org](http://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 [contactBCHS@bergencountyhistory.org](mailto:contactBCHS@bergencountyhistory.org)

Newsletter printed at Tech Repr, Inc., Hackensack

## Upcoming Events • 2007

Mark your calendars!

**October 21**, Bring an Artifact to Share 1-4 pm.

**October 26**, Hallowe'en Campfire Tales 7-9 pm. Come tell your scary story!

**November 11**, USO Day, Veterans come share your stories. 1-4 pm

**November 18**, Rich Cuneo to share history and items from his collections on Thomas Paine. 1-4 pm

The above events take place at the CC House. Members free, all others \$5.00 donation.

### Rev War Roundtable

**October 23**, Posting Letters Two Centuries Ago: George Kramer, from the American Philatelic Society

**November 27**, The Women of Washington's World: Juanita Leisch-Jensen

### BCHS Lecture Program

**October 18**, Grover Cleveland and the Pullman Strike of 1894, Bruce Goldman.

**November 15**, A Judicial Adventure: Judge Clark, Prohibition, and the Eighteen Amendment, Mark Lender.

Lectures take place at 2nd Reformed Church, Anderson St, Hackensack, 8 pm, refreshments, free.

### School of Interpretation

**October 13 & 27**, Experience the Essentials of 18th Century Living! Cook in an authentic Jersey Dutch Out Kitchen at the CC House. Living-history interpreters of the BCHS will teach fire-keeping, kitchen safety, use of 18th c. culinary equipment, the rising of dough, firing up the brick oven and use of the bread peel. 10-4 pm \$20.00 donation. To register call Barbara at 201-444-4319, limited, call ASAP.

Officers: President • Deborah Powell, First Vice-President • Gail Goldstein, Second Vice-President • Albert Dib, Secretary • Janet Strom, Treasurer • Mike Trepicchio Trustees: Catherine Cassidy, Rich Cuneo, Matthew Delia, Deborah Fisk, Mike Gorman, Jack Goudsward, Linda Masullo, Eric Nelsen, Denise Piccino, Beth Potter, Steve Weigl. Trustees Emeritus: George Laurence, David Whieldon and Gus and Jean Newman Past Presidents: Leo R. Halligan 1977-80, Richard W. Lenk, Jr. 1980-83, John E. Spring 1983-86 Janet Odence 1986-89, Frank Lawrence 1989-91, Timothy Adriance 1991-94, Amy Adamo 1994-97, Robert Griffin 1997-00, John Heffernan 2000-03, Todd Braistead 2003-04, Kevin Wright 2004-07



**Bergen County Historical Society**  
**P.O. Box 55**  
**River Edge, NJ 07661**  
**Address Service Requested**

Our membership calendar year begins July 1, if double stars appear next to your name, please renew your membership — thank you!