

HISTORIC NEW BRIDGE LANDING COMPREHENSIVE INTERPRETIVE PLAN



New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection,
Division of Parks and Forestry

HISTORIC NEW BRIDGE LANDING PARK COMMISSION

Steuben House, 1209 Main Street,
River Edge, New Jersey 07661

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Adopted June 5, 2003



The Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission was established by legislation (PL 1995, Chapter 260) to coordinate and implement governmental and private development policies and other activities incidental to the preservation, maintenance, restoration and interpretation of the historic riverfront village surrounding New Bridge, so as to optimize its educational and recreational benefit to the public.

Since this historic neighborhood spans the Hackensack River at the intersection of four municipalities (namely, River Edge, New Milford, Teaneck, and Hackensack), the Commission provides an intercommunicative forum to inform and coordinate decisions made by diverse public and private entities having ownership of properties within the Commission's jurisdiction.

The Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission consists of a representative from the County of Bergen, a representative from the Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation, a representative of the Borough of River Edge, a representative from the Borough of New Milford, two representatives from the Bergen County Historical Society, and two representatives from the Township of Teaneck. These representatives are chosen by their respective governing bodies to serve a three-year term. The Director of the NJDEP's Division of Parks and Forestry is the ninth commissioner.

The New Bridge Landing Park Commission usually meets the first Thursday of each month at the Steuben House, 1209 Main Street, River Edge, New Jersey 07661.

Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commissioners

James L. Bellis, Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation
Mary Donohue, Borough of River Edge
Jose Fernandez, Director, Division of Parks and Forestry
Deborah Fisk, Bergen County Historical Society
Robert D. Griffin, Bergen County Historical Society
S. Frederic Guggenheim, Township of Teaneck
Sandra Loft, Township of Teaneck
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Officers

Robert D. Griffin, Chairperson
Deborah Fisk, Vice-Chairperson
James L. Bellis, Treasurer
Kevin Wright, Secretary

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THE BRIDGE THAT SAVED A NATION

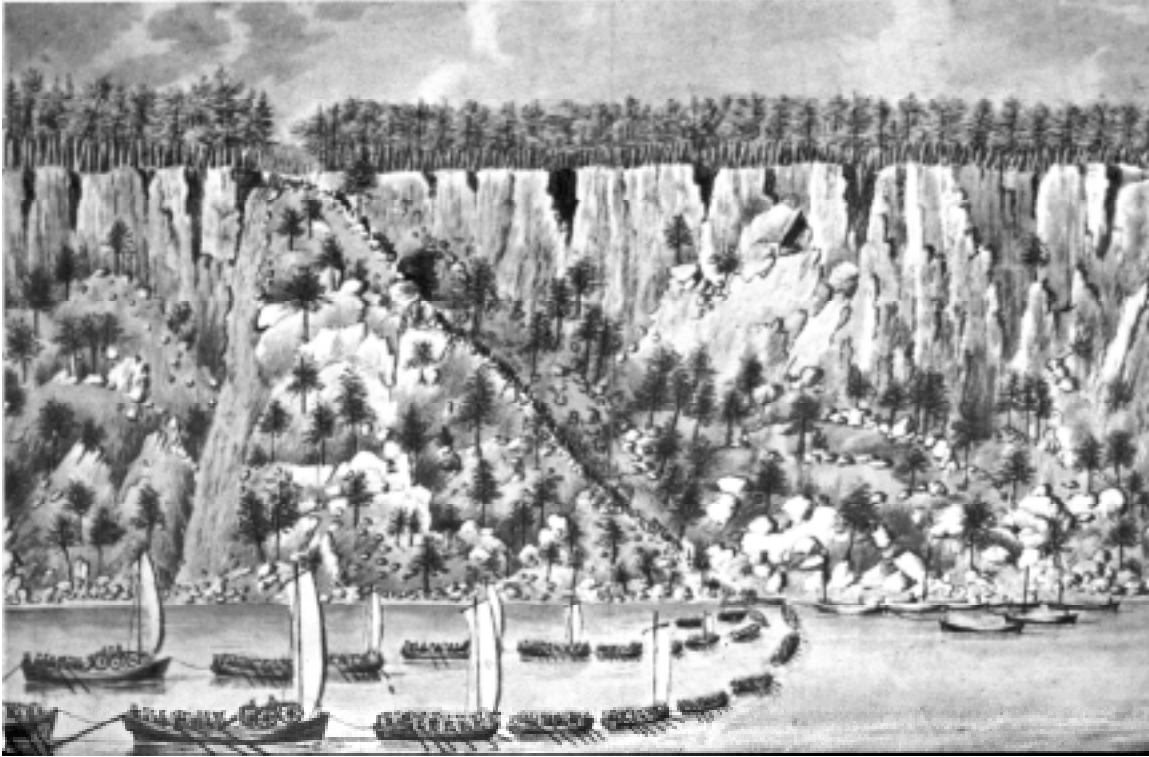
“These are the times that try men’s souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now deserves the love, and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet, we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated.”

“... Our first object was to secure the bridge over the Hackensack, which laid up the river between the enemy and us, about six miles from us, and three from them. General Washington arrived in about three quarters of an hour, and marched at the head of the troops towards the bridge, which place I expected we should have a brush for; however, they did not choose to dispute it with us, and the greatest part of our troops went over the bridge...”

Thomas Paine, *The American Crisis*



Spencer B. Newman’s painting depicts the darkest hour of the American Revolution, as Washington led the outnumbered Continental garrison of Fort Lee across the Hackensack River at New Bridge to safety on November 20, 1776. Eyewitness-to-history, Thomas Paine stands in the left foreground.



Eyewitness Captain Thomas Davies depicted British and Hessian soldiers scaling the Hudson Palisades at the Lower Closter Dock (Huyler's Landing) in the invasion of Bergen County on November 20, 1776.

INTRODUCTION

At a frozen crossroads in November, a moment of transformation sparked in the hearts of shoeless men, poorly armed, in flight, facing the cliff-climbing might of empire. These determined farmers, who would be kings in their own fields and frontier villages, struggled to read a map of the future. The large figure of a man, cloak-wrapped, upon a dark horse, gestured westward at what seemed to be a setting sun, its weak rays lighting the long difficult road ahead. The cold shadow of a Liberty Pole crossed their path. Then fortune smiled — the gate was open and in quiet order they crossed a small bridge over a muddy, marsh-fringed creek, its oak planks spanning one of the great divides in human history.

Sorely tried, those freedom fighters lived to fight another day. Stepping from the line, one citizen-soldier paused. Taking in the full breadth of the moment, he felt the gaze of even distant eyes watching their progress, hoping against hope, and he thought to himself, *“The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now deserves the love, and thanks of man and woman.”*

The road taken on that November day still winds unpretentiously among the sand hills and mires, though now paved and well populated. It still leads to the same crossing-place,

forever known (in defiance of time's empire) as the *New Bridge*. And those who happen upon this lost fragment of the Jersey Dutch countryside and cross its stream, will discover on its shore an old brownstone mansion, curiously named for the Prussian Inspector-General of the Continental Army, Baron von Steuben. Bypassed by busy highways, its gaze forever turns to the vacillating tides. But its quaint solitude is deceiving, if one truly stops to listen — these walls can talk.

The Revolutionary War events associated with Historic New Bridge Landing compose not only its most dramatic interlude, but also one that lends the place a truly national significance. But those cold and overcast patriots only followed well-beaten paths to New Bridge, traipsed by generations of fishermen, farmers, travelers, and traders coming before and after them.

The story of Historic New Bridge Landing flows strongly from a historical sense of place. Though changing appearance with each pulse of its tides, the river is an insistent presence, a webbing lace that binds hundreds of generations to the place and to each other — and all of this to us. The built environment contributes a contextual understanding of the brackish resources that made the place what it was, shaping the folkways of its inhabitants. Even a casual survey is informative:

- Traces of a milldam, millstones, and mill foundation tell us that some vanished civilization once raised cereal grains on this bottom land, using the river tides for power to process their agricultural products. For as far as the eye can detect, the rather uniform age of the trees on abandoned fields tells us that agriculture persisted in some form into the early twentieth century.
- The bulkhead and landing tell us that the river was the great highway of the past and that these country folk rode the tides, moving the freight of farm and forge to city markets on “wind-jammers.” The hand-cranked iron bridge once turned on its central pier and pony gear; the date on the bridge abutment (1888) indicates that river traffic persisted to the dawn of the last century.
- The New Bridge is little more than a hundred feet long, yet the river south of it is wide enough to be mistaken for a pond. This is clearly a natural strait, easily spanned with the materials and methods of long ago. An old storefront on the building to the east suggests that this small river front community was a busy service-center in its day. Its transportation facilities provided a workaday forum for the miller, merchants, barkeeps, tars, teamsters, dockers, and neighborhood gossips.
- The commercial advantages of the location are evident in the great stone house overlooking the wharf — a mansion in its day. A cut-stone lozenge in the south wall shows a water wheel, telling us that this was the mill owner's house. It also bears a construction date of 1752.

A sense of history abides in the collective impression imparted by the antique features and elemental forces of this setting. It is almost as if the ordinary business of the place

might resume at a moment's notice, were its past inhabitants to suddenly appear. And if the walls could talk, what stories might they tell? Who would the unexpected voices belong to? How would they paint the quiet routine of life? And what disturbing moments of drama might streak across this scenic backdrop.

The purpose of this Interpretive Plan is to choose what stories to tell and how best to tell them, so that visitors can make meaningful and lasting connections with this evocative place.



Clay effigy pipe found in Hackensack in 1870 during construction of the Midland Railroad (N. Y. S. & W). The collections of the Bergen County Historical Society.

HISTORIC NEW BRIDGE LANDING



MAP BY D. POWELL

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Using broad-brush strokes, the *Historic New Bridge Landing General Management Plan* is an encompassing document that articulates statements of purpose and significance. It further refines these into interpretive themes and a set of compatible visitor-experience goals and resource-management guidelines. Through a process of public input and final review, the *General Management Plan* resolves practical alternatives for developmental action into a set of recommendations.

Statements of purpose and significance tell us why a particular place or resource area is important enough to be protected as part of the public domain. A Statement of Park Purpose explains why the resource is preserved and what legislative or policy mandates directed its acquisition and guide its proper management and public presentation. The Statement of Significance encapsulates what important lessons the resource can teach us, by stimulating greater self-awareness of our connection to the grand continuum of our natural and historic heritage. A Statement of Significance should emphasize any evocative features or aspects of the resource that possess the broadest human interest.

Interpretive themes plot those stories that connect significant park resources to the larger key ideas, meanings and values that they best illustrate. They shape and direct the messages visitors may learn in their encounter with, and experience of, the resource. Themes develop the park's purpose and significance into a simple narrative format, bringing salient natural and cultural features to the visitor's attention.

Visitor-experience goals create or develop a sense of wonder in the site, setting forth a menu of opportunities for the audience to connect intellectually and emotionally with storied resources in a meaningful and acceptable way.

The story is therefore key to building resource appreciation and a sense of stewardship. For this reason, heritage interpretation does not indulge in a mere fractured recital of facts; it must somehow link visitors to the resource through the creation of memorable experiences. These stories are found in the resource — some need to be discovered, others only need to be repeated, but all need to be true and well told. Handed from one generation of interpreters to the next, stories may become stale and need to be refreshed. An Interpretive Plan examines what stories have been told and what stories should be told. It also chooses how best to tell these stories.

The process is as important as the product. In point of fact, the product (that is to say, the plan) may be viewed as a snapshot of an ongoing process at a particularly critical stage in its development. An Interpretive Plan benefits from a diversity of input through the inclusion of stakeholders, content experts, preservation technologists, and various interpretive-media specialists. Stakeholders may be defined as anyone with something of value to contribute. They often care deeply about the resource and may therefore bring new energy to the process.

The overall objective in planning is to become better decision-makers. For this reason, the planning process is goal-driven and not issue-driven.

THE PLANNING FOUNDATION

Site Description

Historic New Bridge Landing Park is centrally located in the County of Bergen, only nine miles west of the George Washington Bridge, a quarter mile north of State Route #4 and the Riverside Square Mall, and three miles east of Exit 161 on the Garden State Parkway. Fronting the Hackensack River, the historic park occupies alluvial ground surrounding the intersection of the towns of River Edge, Hackensack, Teaneck and New Milford.

Hackensack Avenue cuts across the northwest corner of the park, passing beyond the intersection of Main Street, River Edge, to a concrete-and-steel river bridge (built in 1956) that ties into New Bridge Road. On the east side of the river, Brett Park partly defines the northern boundary of Teaneck and encompasses valuable archaeological resources as well as the scenic view shed from the historic Steuben House, the 1889 Swing Bridge, and New Bridge Landing. Across Old New Bridge Road, the New Bridge General Store is the historic focal point of the New Milford streetscape, extending from the east abutment of the 1889 Swing Bridge to the privately operated New Bridge Inn (the restaurant built in 1964 on the site of the 1824 New Bridge Hotel was demolished and rebuilt in 2004).

Four Interpretive Zones

For the purposes of interpretive planning, Historic New Bridge Landing Park may be divided into four units.

- The **HISTORIC NEW BRIDGE CORE UNIT** encompasses the surviving Hackensack River front, including extant historic buildings and grounds, the 1889 New Bridge, the site of the Zabriskie gristmill and river landings, as well as the streetscapes, roadways and river flats approaching the historic 1889 bridge from east and west. It also includes the lower portion of Brett Park in Teaneck Township, lying between Old New Bridge Road and the Hackensack River. The Historic New Bridge Core Unit is where the history of New Bridge is preserved in place and where modern intrusions are minimal or largely reversible. It will be treated as archaeologically sensitive ground.
- The **BRETT PARK UPLAND** encompasses the sandy terrace bounded by Riverview Avenue and River Road, where significant archaeological resources may be discovered,

but where the adjacent residential neighborhood precludes any intensive park use or the location of visitor facilities. Brett Park belongs to the Township of Teaneck.

- The **SOCIETY LANDS UNIT** encompasses the property of the Bergen County Historical Society, fronting Main Street, River Edge. Their property extends from the Steuben House and the lands belonging to the State of New Jersey to the present driveway and parking lot along the west side of the Campbell-Christie House. The Society Lands Unit continues north to include most of the brackwater marshland bordering Hackensack Avenue. The Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation leases a portion of this ground (2800 square feet), where the Demarest House stands.

The Society Lands Unit will be treated archaeologically as part of the Historic New Bridge Core Unit. Two historic stone houses and a small barn have been relocated here. While adding to the interpretive potential of the site, the presence of these authentic buildings permanently alters the historic landscape, creating the feeling of a “historical village” contradictory to historic reality.

In this context, it is important to note that the Bergen Dutch were not inclined to village settlements, with the exceptions of the small crossroads towns of Bergen (Jersey City) and Hackensack. Their farmhouses were generally spread out along important highways, especially those roads running on the ridges alongside fertile river valleys. With rare exceptions, their homes faced south/southeast, fronting the winter sunrise, regardless of their orientation to the road. This placed the noonday sun directly above the ridge of the roof and allowed late afternoon light to flood the rear service rooms of the house. The north gable, with few openings for doors or windows, faced the north wind. Nearly all of their homes stood within “chatting distance” of the road.

- The **HACKENSACK AVENUE GATEWAY** encompasses newly acquired properties along the east side of Hackensack Avenue, at or near the intersection of Main Street, River Edge, where the greatest opportunity exists for the development of visitor facilities at the main entrance to the park. The river front marsh and slough lying north of Hackensack Avenue, owned by the County of Bergen and the Bergen County Historical Society will also be considered as part of the Gateway Unit.

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY

The Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission (HNBLPC) was established by public law in 1995. By statute, the Commission consists of the Director of the Division of Parks and Forestry, NJDEP, a representative from the County of Bergen, a representative from the Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation, a representative from the Borough of River Edge, a representative from the Borough of New Milford, two representatives from the Bergen County Historical Society, and two representatives from the Township of Teaneck. According to the bylaws, each commissioner (except the Director of the Division and Parks and Forestry) is appointed for a term of three years by

resolution of the respective governing body, which he or she represents. A Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, a Secretary, and a Treasurer are annually elected at the October meeting. Meetings are held the first Thursday of each month, unless and except that a majority of the Commissioners approve a change in the schedule at a regular meeting. The principal office and meeting place is the Steuben House, 1209 Main Street, River Edge, New Jersey 07661.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission was established by legislation (PL. 1995, Chapter 260) to coordinate and implement governmental and private development policies and other activities incidental to the preservation, maintenance, restoration and interpretation of the historic riverfront village surrounding New Bridge, so as to optimize its educational and recreational benefit to the public.

The purpose of Historic New Bridge Landing Park is to provide an authentic experience of a significant historic hamlet, using the setting of a museum village to preserve open space in a populated area and to protect a fragile riparian environment, through a program of public education and awareness.

STATEMENT OF PARK SIGNIFICANCE

Historic New Bridge Landing preserves an interesting and scenic fragment of the Jersey Dutch countryside, strategically situated at the narrows of the Hackensack River and famed for its compelling role in the Revolutionary War. Its distinctive antique dwellings, artifact collections and scenic landscapes are uniquely reminiscent of a vanished folk culture, dependent upon the tidal river as a commercial artery and a self-renewing source of nourishment and industrial power.

Inhabited since at least Middle Archaic times (c. 3500 BP), the prehistoric features of the site may include a seventeenth-century Lenape “castle” or fort. Small tributaries entering the river at New Bridge defined the familial territories of the indigenous peoples, known to history as the Hackensacks and Tappans. These prehistoric boundaries continued as property lines when the neighborhood was first settled by colonial farmers after 1677 and are perpetuated in the present civil boundaries of the four municipalities that intersect at New Bridge. The Hackensack sachem, Tantaqua, and his kin, inhabited the land surrounding the river narrows, which was partly known as Tantaqua’s Plain.

As it was technologically infeasible to bridge the wide marshes and meadowlands lying south of the river narrows, the “new bridge” remained the nearest span across the Hackensack River to Newark Bay for a half century after its construction in 1745. Consequently it was a node in the earliest network of roads leading from the Hudson River landings, opposite Manhattan, into the interior of the continent.

The Jersey Dutch sandstone architecture at New Bridge Landing, augmented by extensive artifact and archival collections of the Bergen County Historical Society and the Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation, convey a vivid sense of past life as distinctive to New Jersey as Plymouth Plantation or Sturbridge Village is to New England or as Williamsburg is to Virginia. Including numerous associations with persons and events of transcendent historic significance to the Nation, New Bridge Landing is capable of conveying an appreciation of New Jersey's pivotal role in American history, progressing from the most culturally diverse colony to the most densely populated State.

Owing to its strategic location at the narrows of the Hackensack River and its proximity to Manhattan, the principal base of British operations throughout the war, the site has numerous associations with the American Revolution. Historic New Bridge Landing will therefore be respectfully treated and preserved as an American Revolutionary War battleground, the site of several skirmishes, military encampments and headquarters for both armies. The Zabriskie-Steuben House is the only extant house along the route of the British invasion and Washington's Retreat of November 1776 through Bergen County. General Washington established his headquarters in the Zabriskie dwelling in September 1780 during the Steenrapie encampment of the Continental army.

Having literally been the "Crossroads of the American Revolution," New Bridge prospered for more than a century after the war as a commercial crossroads, situated where a major overland thoroughfare of travel and trade intersected the head of sloop navigation on the Hackensack River. The extant iron swing bridge, manually operated, was erected in 1889 to speed the passage of schooners and testifies to the importance of commercial river traffic at that date. The New Bridge is listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places as the oldest highway swing bridge in the State of New Jersey.

The Zabriskie-Steuben House is a memorial to Major-General Baron von Steuben, Inspector-General of the Continental troops, who received it as a gift from the State of New Jersey in 1783 and who, by his own advertisement, thoroughly rebuilt the dwelling during his six years of ownership.

INTERPRETIVE THEMES

The river changes with each tide, yet remains a constant. It binds hundreds of generations and their many stories to this place. Here people have long come to cross, to ride, to harness, or to harvest the tides. The story of human activities centered upon the narrows of the Hackensack River, as recorded in changes to natural and cultural resources over time, is the primary interpretive theme of Historic New Bridge Landing Park.

At the head of a broad alluvial plain, formed largely upon the drained bed of Proglacial Lake Hackensack, Historic New Bridge encompasses the tidal reach of the Hackensack River. Brackwater meadows, clay flats, mud islands, and sandy terraces fringe the stream, which is tightly enclosed by loamy ridges to the north. Diversified habitats supported a

broad foundation of natural resources, a rich diversity of plant and animal life. Human strategies progressed over several millennia from hunting and gathering, through horticultural, agricultural and industrial exploitation of resource opportunities.

Through a process of conflict and accommodation, the Bergen Dutch achieved a complex multicultural society, blending significant contributions from the indigenous Lenape, Netherlanders, Angolan Africans, English, Germans, French Huguenots, Scots, Scots-Irish, Scandinavians, Polish Silesians, and others, into a distinct regional folk culture. This process of “creolization” is evidenced in the development of a Jersey Dutch dialect, folk architecture and material culture, including distinctive styles and traditions of furniture, tools, utensils, and decorative objects. (*See Appendix C*)

Historic New Bridge Landing surrounds the narrows of the Hackensack River, at the point where its gathering headwaters emerge from the hills and nourish the broad tidal meadows of its ocean-fed estuary. The wind and tides propelled sail craft to and from this natural constriction in the river, where a drawbridge was first built in 1745. Remaining the nearest span to Newark Bay until 1790, New Bridge carried a major road leading from the Hudson River ferries, opposite Manhattan, to the interior country. Prior to the ascendancy of mechanical transportation after 1870, New Bridge Landing occupied a commercial and strategic gateway to the fertile shale Piedmont and iron-rich Highlands.

This point and passage gained special significance during the American Revolution. The British Army occupied Manhattan Island as their principal power base, maintaining fortified forage outposts atop the Palisades throughout the war. Washington’s army commanded the Highlands and interior roads, defending their principal line of communication and supply between New England, the Hudson River forts, Philadelphia, and the Southern States. New Bridge remained the principal point of conflict between the two main opposing armies and served continually as an intelligence-gathering post, an encampment ground, a military headquarters and the scene of several battles and skirmishes.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE GOALS

The principal visitor-experience objectives of Historic New Bridge Landing are to:

1. Provide opportunities for visitors to make meaningful and memorable connections with significant historic and natural resources, either independently or through an organized group experience.
2. Provide visitors with safe, satisfying and memorable encounters with a variety of interpretive media, techniques and activities, such as period impersonations, period clothing, historic craft demonstrations, military reenactments, guided tours by knowledgeable docents, special exhibits, publications and signage.

3. Provide necessary historic and natural context through professional displays of artifacts in a protective museum environment. Broaden public appreciation of the site and encourage repeat visits through periodically changing thematic exhibits.
4. Provide educational and research opportunities through active exploration and study of historic and archaeological resources. Several significant archaeological sites, capable of greatly enlarging public knowledge of the past in New Jersey, have been documented within the bounds of Historic New Bridge Landing. Encourage professional exploration, study, and interpretation of these sites, and of extant historic buildings, architectural features, and structures.
5. Provide opportunities for visitors to enjoy river walks and to learn more about the natural and cultural history of the river through a program of natural interpretation. Where continuous river pathways are not possible, especially in the narrow confines of the valley north of New Bridge, Historic New Bridge Landing will provide water-borne access by canoes or other passenger craft through river landings in the park.
6. Encourage passive recreational uses in a densely populated region. Provide opportunities to enjoy the scenery, wildlife, aesthetic character and tranquility of the site through passive outdoor pursuits, such as walking, biking, photography, painting, picnicking, and other such appropriate activities that minimally impact the park's cultural and natural resources. Provide opportunities for visitors to experience solitude, if they so desire. Make every attempt to limit excessive artificial light that interferes with the view and appreciation of the night sky.

INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM STANDARDS

Heritage interpretation succeeds when it presents accurate and compelling stories, relevant both to the visitor and to the site, having some “take-away” or lasting value. Who, how and where we choose to tell these stories determines what opportunities visitors will have to connect emotionally and intellectually with the resource.

Good interpretation does not address the interpreter's interests, but rather the significance of the resource. Interpretation may awaken interest by being sensory in nature; it may directly involve the visitor by being interactive; it may engage the visitor in discussion or dialogue; it may heighten curiosity by being provocative or by suggesting a very different point of view — but it should always be inclusive. It also builds a shared sense of stewardship for the resource's protection.

Our obligation is to protect and to interpret the resources we have and to fully honor them for what they are (and not for what we might wish them to be). In a useful sense, heritage interpretation encourages its audience to look backward through time. It treats the present as an outcome, in much the same way that a forensic scientist or archaeologist

begins with evidential traces to reconstruct a past event.

Walls can tell tales. Visitors to a storied place experience a sense of physical dimension and personal connection to an important person, event or natural process, be it long past or ongoing. And no skill is more basic to heritage interpretation than the refinement of *chronological depth perception*, that intellectual faculty which allows us to decipher the Past in the Present and to recognize evidence of change over time in the endless somersault of cause and effect. After all, the cause is expended in its effects and can be detected by its consequences.



This photograph (circa 1925) shows the 1889 pony-truss swing bridge across the Hackensack River. It occupies the site of earlier wooden drawbridges, including the one that Washington and his army crossed during the American Revolution. No builders' plan or contemporary work of art yet discovered tells us what the eighteenth-century bridges looked like --- any attempt at reconstruction would be largely speculative and clash with surrounding features. On the other hand, the extant iron bridge has acquired significance in its own right and is listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places as the oldest highway swing bridge in the State.

The beginning is contained in the end and so we must evaluate and explain *what remains*. To alter what remains or to insert speculative constructs that are supposed to represent an earlier time erodes the integrity of the scene and falsifies the historical outcome it relates. To begin at the end and end at the beginning is not to deny or even to downplay the significance of a more distant epoch, but merely to suggest that we not deceive ourselves into thinking that we see it as a breathing dinosaur before our eyes. We can only trace its shadow and sense its presence. Make no mistake about it: the departed soul of a thing cannot be revived or captured, but its forensic remnants reveal chapters in a life



Cooking in a jambless fireplace at a recreated Jersey Dutch Out-Kitchen, Historic New Bridge Landing.

history to the trained eye. Interpretation connects and animates the clues, using a variety of media and techniques to awaken the stories that they contain.

Heritage interpretation begins and ends with an open mind. How can we really show visitors “the past?” Should we? And what “past” should we show them? Within the limits of practicality, should we “freeze time,” but at what appropriate moment? And how? And what media are best suited to illustrate the stories we have to tell: Photographs? An audio-visual presentation?

An interactive digital display? A lecture? A three-dimensional model? Period dress? Historic furnishings? This, of course, is subject to “interpretation” — precisely the purpose at hand.

In order to provide the kind of broad-based, but well researched interpretive programs necessary to inform and educate the visiting public about the history and significance of Historic New Bridge Landing, we strive to:

- Rely upon documented facts, qualified experts, and the highest standards of scholarly research in developing good and sufficient information necessary to the fair, open-minded and inspired interpretation of the historic and natural resources under our stewardship.
- Be accurate and not merely entertaining or agreeable to popular preconceptions and honestly identify gaps in our knowledge.
- Provide interpreters with the necessary communications skills and background knowledge to satisfy visitors’ curiosity and enrich their experience of the resource. Encourage interpreters to share their enthusiasm for what they do with the public.
- Employ a variety of interpretive strategies, methods and media, to reach the broadest possible audience.
- Address varying levels and fields of visitors’ interest and experience.
- Honor and promote respect for the resource for what it truly is, imparting an appreciation of its significance and respect for the value of its preservation.
- Acknowledge disagreements and different points of view as helpful to the process of understanding.
- Evaluate visitor responses to the content and effectiveness of all elements of our interpretive program and make appropriate corrections or adjustments, as needed.

VISITOR AND AUDIENCE PROFILES

Historic New Bridge Landing Park is centrally located within Bergen County, with its largely suburban population of 884,118 (2000 Census). More importantly, it is also centrally situated within the Greater New York Metropolitan Area, the nation's most populous, which stretches from northeastern Pennsylvania to western Connecticut, encompassing a population of over twenty million people. Five of the United States' ten most densely populated municipalities are located in northeastern New Jersey, namely, Union City, Passaic City, East Orange, Paterson and Jersey City. Only nine miles from the George Washington Bridge, New Bridge Landing is convenient to most major arteries of travel, including State Routes 4 and 17, Interstate 80, the Palisades Interstate Parkway, the Garden State Parkway and the New Jersey Turnpike. The historic park is only two blocks distant from major rail and bus lines. Travel time to Liberty/Newark Airport is about 45 minutes. Hotels, restaurants, a shopping mall, and other visitor amenities are literally within walking distance.

New Bridge spans four adjacent municipalities having a total population of 109,283 residents within 14.4 square miles and an average population density of 7,589 residents per square mile. These statistics exceed the criteria for "Densely Populated Municipalities" in the 2001 *Parks for People* initiative.

- River Edge has a population (2000) of 10,946 in 1.9 square miles, or 5,761 per square mile.
- New Milford has a population (2000) of 16,400 in 2.3 square miles, or 7,130 per square mile.
- Teaneck has a population (2000) of 39,260 in 6.1 square miles, or 6,436 per square mile.
- Hackensack has a population (2000) of 42,677 in 4.1 square miles, or 10,409 per square mile.

Bergen County is New Jersey's most populous county. It is also the nation's most "boroughized" county, boasting seventy municipalities within a land area of only 234.17 square miles. Consequently there are 275 public and private schools within its territory. New Bridge Landing is well situated to serve as a unique educational resource to this large school population.

Bergen County's population density of 3,775.5 residents per square mile is thrice the State average of 1,134.4 persons per square mile. Only Hunterdon, Morris, Somerset and Sussex Counties surpass Bergen County's median family income of \$65,241. This means that Bergen County sends the largest amount of tax revenues to Trenton. Bergen County also occupies six of New Jersey's forty legislative districts.

Since the Steuben House, a State Historic Site, was opened in September 1939, it has developed a core following among “traditional” audiences, who come from near and far. For example, the name and personage of Major-General Steuben, professional founder of the American army and an exemplar of the German contribution to American life, is a proven attraction to generations of visitors. Compelling and numerous associations with the American Revolution draw a continuing and growing audience to the site. Making Historic New Bridge Landing an “anchor site” at the northeast gateway to the proposed Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area will further attract an audience interested in the stories and places associated with the revolutionary struggle for American independence and the founding of the world’s first and oldest democratic republic.



The Daughters of the American Revolution visit the Zabriskie-Steuben House in 1922

The Bergen Dutch stone houses have long inspired artists as well as admirers of American colonial architecture. Acquired by the State of New Jersey in 1928, the Steuben House is the best-known example of this regionally distinct folk architecture and was the inspirational model for the Dutch Colonial Revival, a picturesque suburban style that quickly spread from coast to

coast. Antique collectors come repeatedly to broaden their knowledge, often in a specific category of interest, be it chairs, pottery, quilts, or toys. Many visitors return with their children or grandchildren to share a pleasant memory from their own past and to reconnect with a local landmark that exudes a strong sense of place. Most visitors come to enjoy an outing with friends or family.

Having seventy municipalities within its boundaries, Bergen County is the most “boroughized” county in the Nation’s most densely populated State. It contains 190 elementary, middle and junior high schools; and 40 high schools. Five colleges provide opportunities for higher education. Generations of young visitors have come to the Steuben House on class trips, with camp or scout groups, and individually with parents in tow to obtain extra credit or to research term papers.

With its increasing attraction as an urban park and open space, Historic New Bridge Landing is developing new audiences. Noontide “office refugees” and mall workers have discovered a rare neighborhood green spot to eat lunch and to relax in quiet shade.

Retirees, lawyers, and private contractors, who regularly purchase their meals in local eateries, park at Historic New Bridge to briefly idle in the serenity of the place. Some visitors walk their dog, push strollers, or pass through on a walk or jog. New Bridge will become an important terminus and access point for the Teaneck Greenway and proposed County River Walkway.

Eco-tourists are frequently sighted and their numbers will increase as the river and its broad meadowlands recover from past abuses. Bird-watchers keep their vigil, delighting in glimpses of the Great Blue Herons, American Egrets and Lesser Yellow-legs who inhabit the morning mists along the river. New Bridge Landing has long been popular with anglers.

Valid visitor experiences will be accommodated and, if necessary, enhanced, or at least channeled to avoid conflicts with other park users. But nearly all visitors (including most casual or accidental intruders) express an intellectual curiosity and emotional attraction to the underlying significance of so unexpected a place. The site's greatest attraction is to heritage tourism. In this aspect, it can draw not only a regional audience, but also a national one.

In short, visitation has grown in scope and diversity of interest to reflect regional and national trends. The core interpretative messages relevant to the site must therefore adapt in delivery methods, media, and density of content to accommodate a variety of visitor needs, expectations and attention spans.

Studies show that most recreational travelers respond to a mixture of excitement and relaxation, enjoying opportunities to socialize in beautiful surroundings, to get a break from their normal pattern of activity; and to meaningful connect with interesting places through heritage interpretation. Tourist destinations therefore must offer a full, dynamic range of leisure experiences to meet the expectations of their audience.

According to Desmond Jolly, Cooperative Extension agricultural economist and director of the University of California Small Farm Program, most vacationers seek opportunities to:

- Renew and strengthen family relationships;
- Actively participate in outdoor activities that improve health and one's sense of well being;
- Seek self-renewal and inspiration through rest and relaxation;
- Have exciting emotional experiences;
- Change one's routine through exposure to a healthier climate, grander scenery, a slower pace of life, or quieter surroundings;
- Learn something about one's self through the exploration and discovery of history or nature, especially through direct contact with the unfamiliar or unknown;
- Reminisce or retrace a sentimental journey, create new memories of lasting value, or celebrate special anniversaries.

Heritage tourism

The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines heritage tourism as “traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present.” According to Cheryl M. Hargrove, the Trust’s first heritage-tourism director, it is “one of the fastest growing niche market segments in the travel industry.”

Hargrove agrees with other industry experts in noting, “The American heritage traveler is older, better educated, and more affluent than other tourists.” Baby boomers particularly like to “experience history through travel.” One in three international visitors can also be expected to visit a historic attraction during their stay. Linking historical attractions through heritage trails or loop tours is the most effective way to win an audience and to keep their interest. Historic New Bridge Landing is included within the boundaries of the proposed Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area.

The Staffing Needs and Capital Improvements Committee of New Jersey’s 225th Anniversary of the American Revolution Celebration Commission assessed the capital and staffing needs of geographically diverse State-owned sites. They identified regional American Revolutionary War Visitor Centers to act as “anchors” for visitation. Information, brochures and maps of sites in the region will be distributed at these centers to increase awareness and heritage tourism. Their report, published in December 2001, not only designated Historic New Bridge Landing as an “anchor site,” but also ranked it first by priority.

On January 3, 2001, Bobbie Greene, Director, informed the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission that Historic New Bridge Landing had been designated an Official Project of *Save America’s Treasures*, a partnership program between the White House Millennium Council and the National Trust for Historic Preservation dedicated to the celebration and preservation of our nation’s threatened cultural treasures.

Eco-tourism

Interest in eco-tourism is growing. Besides a general, traditional desire for an outdoors experience, it diverges into a wide variety of specialized interests. For example, in 1996, the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation reported that Americans spent approximately 31 billion dollars observing, feeding and photographing wildlife. Trip-related expenditures accounted for more than 9 billion (33%) of that total. The Survey also reported that 63 million Americans over the age of 16 participated in wildlife watching in 1996. Eleven million wildlife watchers visited public parks and 23.7 million said that they traveled more than one mile from their homes to do so.

A 1989 study by Paul Kerlinger and David Wiedner, of the Cape May Bird Observatory, entitled “The Economics of Birding at Cape May, New Jersey,” quantifies the benefits of another specialized form of eco-tourism:

The average age of survey respondents was 45 years for males and 46 years for females.

The incomes of birders were mostly in the middle and upper middle brackets. Birders came to Cape May from a wide geographic area, listing 32 states and 7 foreign countries as home. Most of those who came from out of state were from the eastern United States. New Jersey residents accounted for 45.3% of survey respondents. Nearly 70% of respondents paid for lodging: 43.3% stayed in motels/hotels, 9.7% in bed and breakfasts, 9.1% in campsites and 7.6% in rental houses. The average stay was four nights.

The study concluded that birding is a low overhead activity, requiring little supervision (e.g. life guards, game wardens, law enforcement officers), which contributes significantly to the local economy, especially in the non-peak tourist season. The income derived from this form of tourism greatly offset the primary cost of maintaining open space. The survey data helps to show “that birding and other outdoor activities are economically better alternatives than many sorts of development ...”

People watching and feeding birds spent an estimated \$87.5 million in New Jersey during 1991 (*The Bottom Line, How Healthy Bird Populations Contribute to a Healthy Economy*). Almost 100,000 birders visited Cape May, New Jersey, (south of the Canal) in 1993 and spent an estimated \$10 million dollars.

Given its location, ease of access, and significant resources appealing to heritage and ecological tourists, Historic New Bridge Landing holds great audience potential. Limits on staffing, operational funding, infrastructure, and publicity have heretofore made Historic New Bridge Landing one of New Jersey’s “hidden gems” or “best kept secrets.” But few historic “pocket” parks are more historically deserving, more scenically endowed, or better positioned in a heavily populated metropolitan area, to provide a range of meaningful experiences to so wide and interested an audience.

Bergen County needs and deserves a premier historic park of National significance and interest, to claim and to honor its unique cultural identity, and to serve as a catalytic attraction for a whole host of other worthy and diverse tourist destinations.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Summary

Owned and staffed by the Division of Parks and Forestry, the Steuben House is the only historic building at Historic New Bridge Landing open to visitors on a regular schedule of public hours. The Campbell-Christie House is open one Sunday afternoon each month, on all special events, and recently for school tours. The only gift shop and public restroom are located in the Campbell-Christie House. The Demarest House is presently open only on special events.

The museum collections of the Bergen County Historical Society and the Blauvelt-Demarest House are an attraction and delight to many visitors, but are not displayed to the best effect. In the past, museum objects were unavoidably subject to deleterious environmental conditions. The attics of these buildings serve to store museum records and collections.

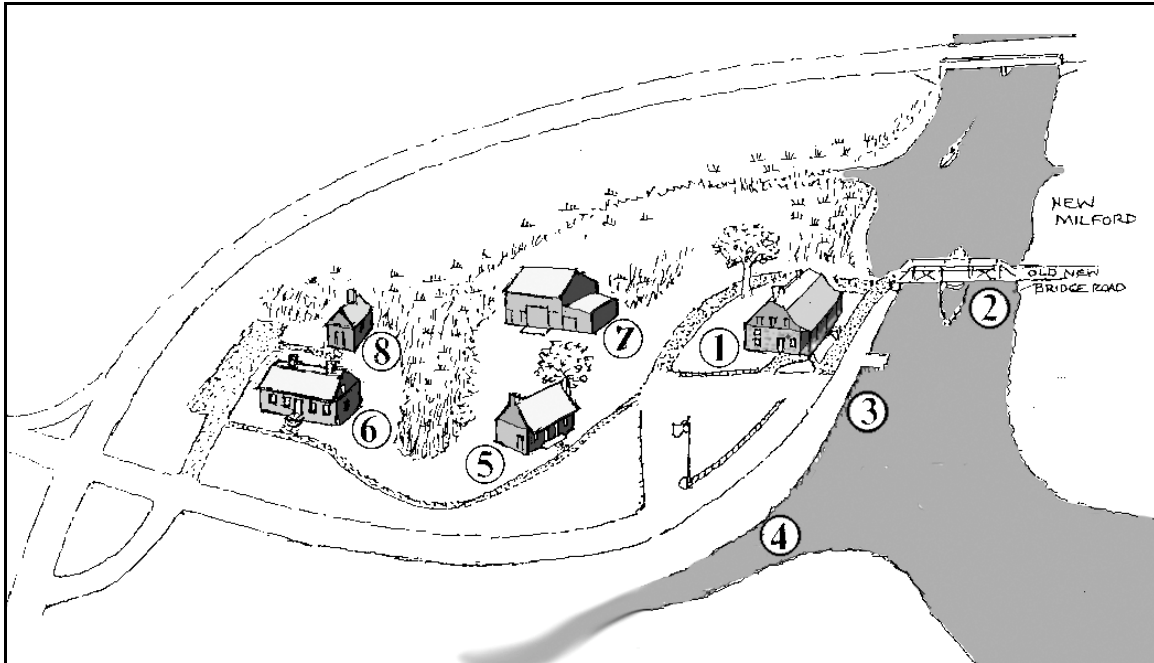
Special events draw the largest audiences to Historic New Bridge Landing Park. These are the only occasions when all or most of the buildings are staffed by volunteer docents and opened to the public. Over the past fifteen years, the Steuben House has achieved an annual attendance peak of 18,713 visitors (FY 2003), though 14,000 is closer to the norm, the difference being the frequency and success of special events.

Free admission has proven a great advantage and attraction to many schools. School tours at the Steuben House, lasting an hour and twenty minutes on average, have been most productive at the fourth through sixth grade level.

Most tourists coming from out-of-the area arrive during the summer vacation season. Most local visitors and day-trippers come on weekends, often in groups or in conjunction with a visit to some other area attraction, including local restaurants and malls. Attendance on Sunday afternoons is usually greater than on Saturdays.

Previsit Information

Previsit information definitely shapes expectations and therefore the quality of many visitor experiences, regardless of age level or field of interest. The Junior League of Bergen County funded the production of an 18-minute previsit school video in 1986. Several copies are available to teachers, who can pick up a copy several days in advance of their scheduled class visits at no charge.



CLAIRE THOLL'S MAP OF HISTORIC NEW BRIDGE LANDING

(1) The Zabriskie-Steuben House, owned and staffed by the NJDEP Division of Parks and Forestry; (2) the 1889 Swing Bridge, owned and recently restored by the County of Bergen; (3) New Bridge Landing, partly (1/3) owned by the State of NJ and partly (2/3) by the Bergen County Historical Society; (4) Site of milldam and tidal gristmill at the confluence of Coles Brook and the Hackensack River; (5) the Demarest House Museum, owned and operated by the Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation on land leased (1956) for 99 years from the Bergen County Historical Society; (6) The Campbell-Christie House, owned and maintained by the County of Bergen, with the interior leased to the Bergen County Historical Society; (7) Westervelt-Thomas Barn, owned by the Bergen County Historical Society; and (8) the Jersey Dutch Out-Kitchen, authentic re-creation of stone out-kitchen, owned by the Bergen County Historical Society.

The Bergen County Historical Society offers a previsit school program in which a trained docent visits 4th through 8th grade social studies classes in local schools and explains how farm families settled Bergen County during the time before the Revolutionary War. The docent dresses in period clothing and brings artifacts and reproductions of household tools, crafts, clothing, and children's games. This out-reach program is by appointment.

The Steuben House has had an informational brochure, prepared and printed by the Division of Parks and Forestry. Because students doing reports request it, it was overburdened with text. It also contained a self-touring guide map to the entire historic park, identifying the other buildings and points of interest.

The present need is for a promotional brochure, both for the Steuben House and for Historic New Bridge Landing Park, that reflects the major interpretive themes. This should be printed in sufficient quantities to be widely distributed, attracting visitors to

the site. More detailed historical information is available on the web for students and researchers. It could also be illustrated and packaged in a small booklet for sale.

The Bergen County Historical Society's web page (www.bergencounty.org) is the most successful media outreach to date, providing both educational and promotional material. It has registered 55,633 hits (as of September 1, 2004) since it became operational in the spring of 1998. It features information on Membership, Historic New Bridge Landing, the Society's Collections, School Out-Reach Program, Upcoming Events, Library and Research, a Map and Directions, a listing and order form for Publications for Sale, and the complete text of feature articles in the Society's newsletter.

Existing Conditions and Visitor Experience

Historic New Bridge Core Unit

The Steuben House, a State Historic Site displaying the museum collections of the Bergen County Historical Society, generally stands alone as the only historic building at Historic New Bridge Landing open to most visitors on a regular schedule of public hours (Wednesday through Saturday, 10 AM to 12 noon and 1 PM to 5 PM; Sunday from 2 to 5 PM) It has been possible in recent years to also open the Campbell-Christie House and the Demarest House to many school tours, on some Sunday afternoons and on all special events. Past successes prove that Historic New Bridge Landing has the potential to be



much more than the sum of its parts.

Over the past seventeen years, Historic New Bridge Landing achieved an annual attendance peak of 18,713 visitors in Fiscal Year 2003 (July 2002 through June 2003), although 13,825 is the average annual attendance over the span of fifteen years (1990-2004), the difference from year to year being the frequency and success of special

events. This number seems to represent a plateau, defined by the existing limitations on infrastructure and staffing. The attendance is the highest for any of the singular State Historic Sites.

The Division of Parks and Forestry employs a Resource Interpretive Specialist, the only paid staff person on site, to open the Steuben House five days a week, including weekends. Closing Mondays and Tuesdays, however, limits school visitation. Owing to relevant subject matter in their curricula, fourth through sixth graders comprise a sizable majority of school visitors. High school history clubs and some college classes (mainly from neighboring FDU) are occasional visitors. Thirty-seven schools from nineteen Bergen County municipalities sent students to the Steuben House during the school year between September 2003 and June 2004. Those municipalities and the number of schools represented are: Bergenfield (1), Dumont (1), Demarest (1), East Rutherford (3), Englewood (5), Fairlawn (1), Garfield (5), Hackensack (2), Hillsdale (91), Leonia (1), Lodi (1), New Milford (2), Oradell (1), Paramus (1), Ridgewood (5), River Edge (3), Teaneck (1), Tenafly (1), and Waldwick (1). The list includes public, private and charter schools.

The following attendance figures for the Steuben House cover the fiscal years (July through June) between July 1989 and July 2004:

FY 2004	17,622
FY 2003	18,713
FY 2002	Closed for Repairs
FY 2001	9,755
FY 2000	11,891
FY 1999	12,602
FY 1998	15,083
FY 1997	17,198
FY 1996	13,350
FY 1995	16,227
FY 1994	11,905
FY 1993	13,150
FY 1992	13,099
FY 1991	13,187
FY 1990	9,777

The monthly attendance record for July 1992 through June 1993 is representative of the flow of visitation. Comparing the number of buses and children is a fair indicator of school visitation, showing peaks in January and May. Attendance highs in July, September, December, February and May reflect the relative success of special events in those months. The comparatively high level of school visitation increased the May attendance. Traditional lulls occur in the end of June and the beginning of September, marking the start and finish of the summer tourist season.

Month	Adults/Children	Monthly Total	Buses	Cars
Jul 92	712/151	863	0	229
Aug 92	387/68	455	0	122
Sep 92	762/185	947	1	230
Oct 92	450/144	594	7	108
Nov 92	380/207	587	6	108
Dec 92	1,475/213	1,688	0	505
Jan 93	229/428	657	20	62
Feb 93	452/274	726	9	147
Mar 93	240/117	357	7	61
Apr 93	361/196	557	5	111
May 93	1,606/728	2,334	20	502
Jun 93	2,193/754	2,947	11	345
Totals:	9,247/3,465	12,712	86	2,530

The following attendance record for FY 2004 shows the correlation between special events, school tours, summer tourism and monthly attendance totals:

MONTH	TOTAL ATTENDANCE	TOURS	ADDITIONAL INFO
July 2003	1,400	95	Open Saturday only
August 2003	1,728	314	
September 2003	1,334	285	
October 2003	1,930	747	Halloween event, school groups
November 2003	1,385	565	School groups
December 2003	1,350	516	Christmas event, school tours
January 2004	1,095	136	
February 2004	1,620	750	Washington Birthday event (425 people)
March 2004	1,085	87	
April 2004	1,475	489	
May 2004	1,695	699	Pinkster (225 people), school tours
June 2004	1,525	410	
TOTAL:	17,622	5,093	

A comparison of the FY 1993 table and the FY 2004 table shows that school attendance was formerly higher in January through March than at present, although overall visitation is now higher.

Special events draw the largest audiences to Historic New Bridge Landing Park. These are the only occasions when volunteer docents can staff and open all the buildings to the public. On these select weekends, re-enactors, period craft demonstrators, musicians, and special-topic speakers provide an added attraction.

From 1981 through 2000, favorable circumstances allowed for as many as four special events, spread seasonally throughout the year: Steuben Day (September), Candlelight Concerts (December), Washington's Birthday (February), and a Hackensack River Festival (June). Special thematic exhibits have focused on Bergen Dutch Folk Art, Revolutionary War and Civil War Re-enactments, a School of Loyalists, Quilt and Basket Shows, Antique Festivals, Pinkster (Dutch Pentecost) and Open Houses. Such exhibits

have successfully highlighted different aspects of the museum collections, often enhanced by popular Living History demonstrations, thereby attracting new audiences and prompting return visits. Presently, the site features four special events annually: Candlelight Concerts and Tavern Nights (December), Washington's Birthday (February), the Jersey Dutch festival of Pinkster (May), and a Harvest Haunt (October). Special events programming has gained many new members (especially new docents) to the Bergen County Historical Society.



Dancers around the Maypole celebrate the Jersey Dutch spring festival of Pinkster in front of the Campbell-Christie House at New Bridge Landing. Photograph by Deborah Powell.

Since the Bergen County Historical Society not only owns and operates a large part of the park, but also provides all of the programming budget and volunteer talent, special events have doubled as fund-raisers. The State curator at the Steuben House generally acts as a site coordinator, providing a monthly training workshop for the volunteer docents and the living-history committee. The

frequency and scope of special events is limited, requiring the donation of considerable volunteer labor and talent. Special events generally strain the basic park infrastructure (parking, rest rooms, food services, exhibit-space capacities) to the breaking point, although the enlargement of the Steuben House parking lot (2001) and the addition of parking on the former Pizza Town property at the intersection of Hackensack Avenue and Main Street has improved the situation. Although only the State-owned and staffed Steuben House is opened five days per week, there is a public misperception that the whole historic park is open on a regular schedule of public hours. The Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation employed a part-time docent in 1987 to open the Demarest House once weekly, but after several years the practice was abandoned. The Demarest House is now only staffed for special events. Historical Society volunteers open the Campbell-Christie House one Sunday per month and by special arrangement for some school tours.

It is difficult to sustain an annual schedule featuring several large special events. Without a programming and publicity budget, the Bergen County Historical Society underwrites all such interpretive programs and events, collecting donations to try and meet their outlays.

Ignoring expenditures for salary and utilities, not to mention the contribution of volunteer talent and labor, the financial return on some events exceeds costs. But adverse weather, unreliable free press coverage, or the draw of competing attractions in the region, can undermine the best organizational efforts, resulting in losses. More predictably, such demanding tasks as research, planning, organization, publicity, exhibit design and construction, site maintenance and staffing, eventually exhaust even the most enthusiastic pool of volunteers and entirely consume the time of a single paid professional.

If you imagine opening your home to 20,000 guests each year, then you can appreciate the problems inherent in the traditional concept of a “house museum.” When you add into the equation the aged fabric and spatial constraints of historic dwellings, replete with antique furnishings, the need for specialized visitor facilities and additional staff becomes apparent. Incorporating rest rooms, gift shops, and even staff residency, into such cramped quarters contradicts the responsibilities and values inherent in heritage stewardship.

Many young parents and even middle-agers visit only with their children and only on those special occasions when they think that some form of “historical” entertainment will be provided. The expectations of many adults and class trippers are conditioned by the pasteurized “history” they are used to getting at several popular (and expensive) “historical villages.” Such “historical” destinations boil out everything unpleasant or thought provoking, generally romanticize the past, and indulge the latest politically correct fad, regardless of its relevance to the site or to the audience. Until recent years, the interpretation at many historic sites was long limited to the recital of a “household inventory,” describing the antique furnishings, enlivened somewhat by tales and “facts” of dubious merit. Often, both the site and its artifact collections were poorly researched, leaving much to the imagination and little to forbearance.

Many local schoolteachers truly appreciate the value of heritage interpretation in awakening an interest in history among their students. Such exceptional educators routinely incorporate a class visit to the Steuben House as a useful and exciting addendum to their curriculum. They not only bring their own classes each year, but also act as the catalyst or coordinator for all classes in their grade level to schedule visits. School tours are most productive at the fourth through sixth grade level, their value dropping off sharply as the age of the students falls below about eight or nine years. The site interpreter must be knowledgeable and flexible enough to adjust the focus and content of a school tour to the grade level and the time of the school year.

The capacity of the Steuben House restricts the audience for school tours to one class at a time, and the length of the educational tour to about one hour and twenty minutes. The availability of the single professional interpreter on site is three weekdays at most.

For tour groups, an interrogative style engages the audience and avoids the one-way dynamics of a lecture. Depending on weather conditions, tours begin with a brief introduction on the porch, which orients visitors to the setting of the house near the bridge and river landing. This orientation progresses in the entrance hall through the use of

paintings and old photographs depicting the same scene. The core of the visit consists of a talk in the Dwelling Room, focusing on household artifacts, and a shorter talk in the Parlor. Formerly, visitors were also allowed to visit the attic gallery, until it was closed to the public in October 2001 and its contents placed in storage. Presently, depending on the availability of Society volunteers, school groups are often able to visit the Campbell-Christie House, where there is a gift shop with educational items.

Because of blue laws closing malls on Sundays, the so-called “walk-in” trade at the Steuben House can range from thirty to fifty people on a Sunday, especially if the weather is good. The attendance on workdays drops, but the use of the grounds for lunch-hour picnicking or relaxation increases. Seating of any kind, especially under the canopy shade of old trees is prized; so is the serenity of the place.

Because the house is closed from noon to 1 P.M., some lunch time visitors who have come for years, have never seen the inside of the house, except through the windows. Nearly all such park users read the bulletin board outside, on the edge of the parking lot, to learn something about the site.

During the school year, attendance often revives after 3 P. M., especially in the spring and fall, with the arrival of scout groups and other clubs, or with parents bringing children working on school assignments. Adult clubs generally schedule their visits on Saturdays, often making lunch reservations in nearby restaurants.

Over the years, supernormal tides have frequently inundated the site. The first floor level of the front rooms of the Steuben House is about 6.5 feet above sea level and the floor level of the rear rooms is approximately 22 inches lower. On two occasions over the past twenty years, water has overrun the first floor, requiring the museum collections to be hand carried to safety (a task requiring several persons and about six to nine hours of labor). On numerous occasions, floodwaters have filled the rear basement rooms to a depth of approximately 18 inches.

Twice in past twenty years, supernormal tides have actually reached the level of the front rooms of the Steuben House. An ecliptic arrangement of the sun, earth and full moon, assisted by a stubborn northeaster, inundated New Bridge Landing with six successive high tides on December 11-13, 1992. Several inches of water overflowed the main floor of the Steuben House, buckling the oak floor for the first time in recent memory. The back rooms filled with 22 inches of water, drowning the furnace and causing loss of electrical service. With assistance from five National Guardsmen from the Teaneck Armory, the museum collections were carried into the garret (except for the largest pieces of furniture). After the first high tide, the River Edge Fire Department pumped the cellar rooms dry (and kindly loaned the use of a large submersible pump which greatly aided in keeping successive tidal incursions to a minimum).

In 1999, the heavy rains of Hurricane Floyd raised floodwaters 7.5 feet above mean tide. The window seats, measuring 18 inches above the floor, were used to safely store museum objects, the remainder being set atop folding tables (including disassembled

pieces of large furniture). The advantage of raising the objects onto tables and benches in the front rooms was that it took two people four and a half hours to move everything above the expected flood level — only half the time that it previously took to carry everything upstairs to the attic level — and also lessened the likelihood of mechanical damage in moving things up and down the steep winder staircase.

This flood was different from others in the amount of sediment carried by the waters: the floors in the back rooms were covered with 2-3 inches of mud and the front rooms with a heavy film, thicker near the entry points. Snow shovels, brooms and a garden hose were used to clean the back rooms.

The 2001 restoration of the house and replacement of the heating system improved the situation. A new gas furnace was located in the attic level, well above flood levels. The electrical panels, however, are still situated in the lowest rooms of the house.

The Borough of River Edge vacated the dead-end of Main Street, running from the entrance to the PSE&G substation to the west end of the old bridge, in May 2001. Surveyors immediately began marking out a new parking lot for the Steuben House, which occupies the former west lane of the street for parking slots, thereby increasing the facility from 16 to 21 parking spaces. Drainage problems were also addressed in this area through curbing and re-grading. The portion of Main Street extending from the entrance of the new parking lot to the bridge, and fronting the Steuben House, was given an appropriate new surface and restricted to pedestrian use (and emergency vehicles). The former Pizza Town property at the intersection of Main Street and Hackensack Avenue was acquired and provides additional parking.

The historic river landing in front of the Steuben House not only lends its name to the place, but it visually ties the Steuben House to the river. The State of New Jersey owns the section corresponding in length to the frontage of the Steuben House property on the opposite side of the street. The southerly remainder, extending approximately from a small dock built from telephone poles (nearly opposite the parking lot entrance) to the chain-link fence around the substation, belongs to the Bergen County Historical Society. This divided ownership is reflected in its condition: the Society pays to have most of its section mown regularly, while the State's portion is tended by its landscaping contractors to keep the river and bridge in view.

The PSE&G substation, standing opposite the exit of the Steuben House parking lot on Main Street, is a salient modern intrusion. In response to a request from the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission, PSE&G installed vinyl strips in the chain-link fence in August 2001, creating an effective camouflage for the substation. The company has also agreed to allow the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission to include the 10 to 12 feet of roadside property lying outside the fence in front of substation in its overall landscape design for the park. Commission Chairman Robert Griffin also received estimates for the removal of the power poles and power lines along Main Street in front of the Steuben House (approximately \$630,000 to reroute around Hackensack Avenue and across the 1956 bridge and roadway; or approximately \$370,000 to bury the lines

between the substation and Old New Bridge Road). Until funding is found to advance this project, the County engineers will include the necessary conduit to accommodate the electrical lines in the undercarriage of the 1889 Swing Bridge as part of its historic bridge rehabilitation project.

With funding from the State of New Jersey Open Space and Historic Preservation Trust Fund, the Division of Parks and Forestry acquired the Saw Shop property (originally the Arrow Canoe Club, 1 Old New Bridge Road, New Milford) on October 28, 2000, marking a major commitment by the State of New Jersey to the on-going efforts of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission. The purchase also recognizes the historical significance of the eastern side of the Hackensack River to the future design and operations of the historic park.

The County of Bergen is completed a complete rehabilitation and historic restoration of the 1889 Swing Bridge in October 2003. The Bergen County Board of Chosen Freeholders awarded a contract to the Progressive Machine Company in June 2001, for inspection services in order to ascertain the deteriorated areas of the historic New Bridge as part of a plan and program of repair and restoration. The goals of the historic bridge rehabilitation project were: to strip, prepare and paint the bridge; to repair/replace broken and missing structural steel components; to repair/reconstruct connections, joints and rivets; to clean the operating mechanism and to paint and stabilize the bridge; to stabilize masonry embankments; to repair/replace wood decking and re-attach as required; and to remove all loose fender material not to be replaced. As part of the adjacent roadway improvements, the existing metal curbs blocking vehicular access at the approaches were replaced with removable wooden bollards.



James Natalo built the Arrow Canoe Club on pilings in the Hackensack River in 1913. The pedestrian walkway to the right was added to the swing bridge in 1911

East of the bridge, the streetscape comprises six buildings, including a molded cement block garage. The Arrow Canoe Club occupies a riparian grant from the State of New Jersey for a parcel of river bottom, located along the east shore of the Hackensack River, which James Natalo purchased for \$120 on January 22, 1913. The bounds of this riparian lot begin where the high water line on the east shore of the Hackensack River intersects the north line of (Old) New Bridge Road and extends 65 feet to a point in the west face of the guard or piling placed in connection with the bridge across the River. The boundary continues north along the west side of the guard (which is the “exterior Line for Solid Filling”) 120 feet, to the outlet of French Brook, thence northeast 41.5 feet to the high water line on the east shore of the River and the center of French Brook, thence southeast along the east shore to the beginning.

James Natalo constructed the extant barnlike wooden structure on concrete pilings placed in the Hackensack River at this location in 1913. Rented canoes sailed in and out from beneath the building, the canoeists using a set of trap-door stairs that extended from the middle interior of the building to a small floating platform on the river. At sometime shortly before he sold the premises to Frederick K. Straub in 1925, James Natalo built a two-story addition to the front of the original building for use as an ice-cream store and small residential apartment. The front room at street level was equipped with a soda fountain counter; two show cases, twelve chairs, and four enamel-topped tables.

An antique shop occupied the premises for many years, despite recurrent flooding. The floor sagged after a particularly bad flood and the property was sold to a lawnmower-repair business. They built a raised floor in the rear section of the building and attached a shed along the riverside to extend their storage capacity.

The old Demarest-Cole General Store at 79 Old New Bridge Road occupies the foundation and site of the Cornelius Hoogland’s stone tavern house, known as the Black Horse Inn during the American Revolution. The oldest portion of the extant building (apart from the sandstone foundation) was probably built between 1825 and 1838. The building probably reached its present dimensions and style around the time of the railroad’s arrival in 1870. Barney Cole’s house and store property encompassed scales, outhouses, coal and lumberyard and dock on the east side of the Hackensack River.

Joseph F. M. Burger and his wife, Barbara, of New Milford, built the house designated 87 Old New Bridge Road, adjacent to the New Bridge General Store lot, in 1925. Joseph and Eleanor Martin erected the house presently standing at 91 Old New Bridge Road, adjacent to the parking lot of the New Bridge Inn, in 1923.

A TEA-21 grant, initiated by the Borough of New Milford, will fund \$400,000 worth of streetscape improvements to Old New Bridge Road, restoring the eastern approach to the historic 1889 swing-bridge to an approximation of its turn-of-the-century appearance. Appropriate period lighting, curbing, sidewalks, fencing, and road surfacing is included in the project design.



This photograph shows James Natalo's General Store on Old New Bridge Road around 1915. The New Bridge Inn is at the end of the street to the right.

The river flat on the south side of Old New Bridge Road was formerly Benson's Campground, which Harry and Barbara Bensen sold to the Borough of Teaneck in December 1968. This tract, now part of Brett Park, is bounded south and west by the Hackensack River, on the north by Old New Bridge Road, and east by land formerly of John I. Post and by the cove or river inlet known as the Old River. The old New Bridge Schoolhouse Lot forms a small portion of this property.



Benson's rental cottages on the banks of the Hackensack River in what is now Brett Park, Teaneck.

An inset map from Sullivan's *Atlas of Bergen County* published in 1936, indicates that Harry

Benson erected nine riverside cabins or summer cottages along the banks of the Hackensack River in what is now Brett Park. He also erected at least two large garages or shelters on the site (one of which apparently occupied a concrete pad still evident). A house with a porch stood along the south side of Old New Bridge Road and another house or cottage stood to the west. Another undefined structure stood beside the south abutment of the bridge. These structures were demolished in 1970.

At the northeast end of the Brett Park lowland, two short wooden walls standing on opposite sides of the river mark the path of the main sewer trunk line, which also continues through Brett Park to near the intersection of Old New Bridge Road and Riverview Avenue. The cove or inlet, once known as the Old River, originally extended to the edge of Riverview Avenue, but much of it has been filled in modern times.

Supernormal tides also flood the properties on the east side of the bridge. Due to the lack of parking, owners, employees, and customers of the commercial properties and rental boarding house on the north side of Old New Bridge Road have worn small parking lots into Brett Park on the south side of the street. Law enforcement has recently curtailed this practice.

Brett Park Upland

The Brett Park Upland encompasses about 5.25 acres, formerly the Rekow farm, bounded by residential River Road and Riverview Avenue, and acquired by the Borough of Teaneck in January 1969. Except for a small parking area, the flat terrace forming the Brett Park Upland is undeveloped. Adjacent to the south is the Teaneck DPW Yard. Brett Park belongs to the Township of Teaneck.

Society Lands Unit

The Demarest and Campbell-Christie Houses are antique structures, but their removal and reconstruction on the Bergen County Historical Society's lands in River Edge presents both an interpretive challenge and an opportunity. In their original New Milford locations, these houses were typically situated within "chatting distance" of a road or lane, facing southeast to the winter sunrise. This compass orientation put morning sunlight into the front rooms; it put the midday sun over the ridge of the roof; and it permitted the rear chambers to be naturally illuminated in late afternoon. It also positioned the narrow gable-end of the house northward to the blasts of winter.

Fronting the east-west axis of Main Street, these houses face south, but they are set back from the roadway, with a broad intervening lawn, much as in any modern suburban subdivision. Furthermore, with the exception of the villages of Bergen, Hackensack and a few other crossroads hamlets, the Jersey Dutch spread their homes at wide intervals along the river roads — the relatively close spacing of these relocated antique houses fronting Main Street creates the false impression of a "colonial village." This feeling comes

inevitably to anyone who drives down Main Street to the Steuben House parking lot. It is somewhat lessened for those walking up the main path in summer, since clusters of deciduous vegetation visually isolate each of the three stone houses.

The Demarest House



The Demarest-Paulison House in 1914, at its original location in New Milford.

Hiram Blauvelt, president of the Bergen County Historical Society, had the Demarest House disassembled and rebuilt on its present site at Historic New Bridge Landing in 1955-56. The interpretive value of the house is unmistakable: it is the best surviving example of the two-room, two entry-door stone cottages (the so-called “Flemish farmhouses,” probably because of their distinctive spring eaves). This house type offers a very easy visual comparison to the more pretentious and better known gambrel-roof stone houses — it represents a form of “starter home,” popularly built between 1790 and 1820, which was designed to be easily and cheaply expandable. Confusion over the age of the house is compounded by the display of an assortment of historic furnishings and family memorabilia, spanning several centuries in age.

Though most very interesting when studied individually, these artifacts, when taken all together, create the misleading impression of a singular eighteenth-century Bergen Dutch household.

The Campbell-Christie House

The Campbell-Christie House was trucked from its original site at the intersection of River Road and Henley Avenue in New Milford in 1977. Only the stonewalls above grade were moved and set on a concrete block foundation on the lands of the Bergen County Historical Society in River Edge. No attempt was made to record its original basement walls, making it difficult to definitively determine the house’s architectural history. All interior doors were lost during or after the move.

The County of Bergen owns and maintains the Campbell-Christie House, leasing the footprint of ground which it occupies from the Bergen County Historical Society. The Society furnishes and staffs the house.

Once set on its new foundation, a small one-story, pitch-gabled frame wing was built, projecting from the center of the rear of the house. The original back doorway allows passage from this wing into the main house. An asphalt-paved ramp provides handicapped access. A small kitchenette with cabinets lines the north wall. The south side of the wing provides the only public bathroom at Historic New Bridge

Landing. The combination of kitchen and bathroom facilities within such a confined space is often inconvenient and inadequate, especially during special events. All food ingredients to be used in the Out-Kitchen or for service in the tavern are stored and prepared there; all utensils, including large iron pots used in the Out-Kitchen, are washed there. The air-conditioning unit is located in the attic of the rear wing, accessed through a small door located at the stair landing in the rear of the main house. Over the years, several attempts have been made to make the rear wing appear “antique,” but it is clearly a modern anachronism, wholly unlike the lateral kitchen wings traditionally built by the Bergen Dutch. Construction of the Out-Kitchen behind the Campbell-Christie House only further advertises this “sore thumb” intrusion into the interpretive landscape. Two modern shed dormers were also added to the rear of the gambrel roof during reconstruction of the house in 1977.

In June 1998, the Site Committee of the Bergen County Historical Society, in consultation with the Docents/Living History group, agreed that the Campbell-Christie House will be interpreted as a “working” tavern, with appropriate reproduction period furnishings to allow their use by visitors. Those involved with interpretation at the site felt that this strategy would effectively address two visitor-experience objectives: building a sense of authenticity by adding a “living history” dimension (in contrast to the usual “house tour”); and interpreting the vital role of the Public House in such hub communities as New Bridge. During the eighteenth-century, a tavern known as the Black Horse Inn stood on the east side of the bridge. Its sandstone foundation underlies the extant New Bridge General Store.

The Bergen County Historical Society spent over \$5,000 spent to purchase reproduction tavern tables and chairs, dish, glassware and utensils. A “cage bar” made around 1920 to

Old Dutch Colonial Homestead



For Sale—This attractive nine room stone cottage on fine half acre corner in a beautiful, accessible and restricted residence suburb. Bearing fruit trees and vines. Shady lawn. Seven minutes' walk from station, 33 trains daily. A moderate expenditure would make this home a “show place” worth twice its present price.

RUFFIN A. SMITH, 47 West 34th St., New York

1909 real estate advertisement for the Campbell-Christie House shows circa 1836 kitchen wing.

replicate one found in an old tavern in Newberryport, Massachusetts, was installed in the Campbell-Christie House in November 2000. The Bergen County Historical Society is presently August 2004) spending about \$2,000 to complete the tavern furnishings.

Historically, the Campbell-Christie House may have been used as a tavern as early as 1785, when Jacob Campbell succeeded his father, William Campbell, as crossroads tavern keeper. John Brower, Jr., a blacksmith, occupied the house at the time his brother, Abraham, purchased the property in 1794. Abraham Brower sold the premises to John Christie, a blacksmith, in 1795. In November 1796, the local highway surveyors specifically mentioned “the Tavern of John Christie.”

About the time of John D. Christie’s death in 1836, his son John J. Christie made considerable interior renovations and an enlargement to the family homestead, adding a lateral wooden kitchen wing to the south gable end; removing a jambless kitchen fireplace in the southeast (rear) room; installing



Photograph by Deborah Powell shows the Campbell-Christie House at Historic New Bridge Landing. The Jersey Dutch Out-Kitchen is visible in left background.

plaster ceilings and fashionable new wooden mantles in Classical Revival style. He also installed a recessed door and transom with paneled reveals at the front entrance. The interior of the house, therefore, no longer reflects its eighteenth-century appearance.

A Bergen County Historical Society subcommittee met with representatives of the Bergen County Division of Cultural & Historic Affairs on February 8, 2001, to consider a proposed reconstruction of the missing frame kitchen wing of the Campbell-Christie House. The group recommended to BCHS Trustees to pursue the reconstruction of circa 1836 wooden kitchen wing and the Trustees approved, agreeing to move ahead with the project. The County of Bergen has appropriated design and construction funding. The wing will provide adequate kitchen facilities for the operation of a “working tavern” in the main house. The rear pavilion will continue as a public restroom (with an exterior doorway) until such time as public facilities are built elsewhere on the site.

Out-Kitchen

An authentic replication of the John R. Demarest Out-Kitchen behind the Campbell-Christie House in 1990 added an exciting new dimension to Historic New Bridge Landing, allowing for living-history demonstration of open-hearth cooking, baking, and candle making. The hearth room measures 12' x14'. Its beehive oven uses one and a half to two ovens full of cordwood, split small, burning for an hour to an hour and a quarter (depending on the wood and the outdoor temperature) to reach bread temperature. The beehive oven awaits reconstruction.

Degraded Wetland

The extension of Hackensack Avenue to a new river crossing in 1956 was accomplished with a sweeping curve that carries the roadway northeast on a rising embankment, so that the concrete-and-steel bridge stands well above the level of even supernormal tides. This road embankment acts like a dike, constricting the Hackensack River. Consequently, the undeveloped west shoreline has eroded into a shallow embayment as the river widens immediately south of the bridge. A drainage ditch was dug to conduct a small stream into the river. The slope of the road embankment to the north is well wooded. While a small patch of cattails stands just north of the Steuben House, phragmites has overtaken the remainder of this disturbed wetland.

Westervelt-Thomas Barn (The Red Barn)

The Westervelt-Thomas Barn originally stood on Ridgewood Road in Washington Township, but was moved to its present site, northwest of the Demarest House, in 1954-55. Built around 1889, it is



The Demarest House and Westervelt-Thomas Barn at Historic New Bridge Landing. Photograph by Deborah Powell.

sheathed with Novelty siding. Raised above the flood level and set on a new cement-block foundation in 1984, it houses an assortment of carriages, sleighs, harnesses, agricultural implements, broom machines, a variety of hand tools, and such miscellaneous items as the

bells from the old Court House and Washington Academy. Several old date-stones are scattered around the building and some architectural remnants (mantles, doors, et cetera) are stored in the lofts. It is opened on special events.

Hackensack Avenue Gateway

Property acquisitions are ongoing on the east side of Hackensack Avenue, surrounding the intersection with Main Street. Green Acres purchased the Sutton & Lys house, standing on south tip of the triangular lot of land, framed by Hackensack Avenue, the jug-handle, and Main Street, in September 2001. The adjacent Pizza Town property was acquired in October 2001. This property is paved and provides parking during special events.

The extant buildings on these lots have no historical or architectural value and were demolished. Green Acres coordinated its purchases with the County of Bergen, allowing the County to acquire an additional strip of land along Hackensack Avenue to provide for construction of turning lanes at the Main Street intersection.

The Bergen County Historical Society and the County of Bergen own an expanse of slough and river front on the north side of Hackensack Avenue, which is presently inaccessible due to its location on the north side of the highway. The County's preliminary plans for redesigning Hackensack Avenue provide for a pedestrian crossing.

Education Programs

Up until November 2000, when the Steuben House closed for replacement of its heating system, school tours lasted about an hour and twenty minutes on average. The entrance hall, attic stairway and open floor-space in the museum rooms constrict group movements. For this reason, and also the length of the tour, educational visits were limited to a single class (approximately 25 persons, including teacher and chaperones) at a time. One tour time is available at around 9 A. M. and another at 1 P.M. Depending on the distance traveled, it was best to start the afternoon session at 12:30 P. M., so that students could return to school in time for dismissal.

Free admission is a great advantage and attraction to many schools. However, accommodating a single-class at a time makes it inefficient and impractical for schools at a distance to transport several classes back and forth over several days. Closing the Steuben House on Mondays and Tuesdays also complicates scheduling and greatly restricts school visitation. These circumstances combine to create a disparity, favoring visitation from schools operating their own fleet of buses or from wealthier school districts where parents can afford to pay for several class trips each year — middle-class school districts are often caught in between. Moreover, when the site interpreter is attending to a class, other visitors must fend for themselves (raising, among other things, safety and security concerns) and even the telephone must go unanswered.

Other than a tried-and-true educational tour, developed through considerable knowledge and experience, the single most important factor in the success of a class visit remains the teacher. Students definitely transport the dynamics of their classroom experience to the Steuben House and generally treat the interpreter as a surrogate for their teacher. If there is respect for the learning resource and for the learning process, then students are enthusiastic and receptive. If the subject matter at hand is valued in the home and in the classroom, then the students are moved by the experience of history. If teacher and students share a mutual respect, then the interpreter receives equivalent respect and attention.

At bottom, most teachers who bring their class are those who enjoy history and who understand its foundational value to their students in building a healthy sense of identity based upon a strong sense of place. Furthermore, the first-hand experience of history seems to penetrate the indifference of minds saturated by the digital surrealism of the Information Age and points the way to enduring values.

Staffing

The Division of Parks and Forestry assigns a single professional interpreter (Resource Interpretive Specialist) to the Steuben House. Recently (2004), the State Park Service has also employed a seasonal interpreter. The Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation employs a part-time interpreter to open the Demarest House on a weekend day (either Saturday or Sunday) and on special events. The Bergen County Historical Society organizes and trains volunteer docents.

Park Library and Collections

The Bergen County Historical Society's Library collection comprises family genealogy, diaries, and manuscripts; church, cemetery, and bible records; books, clippings on local and county history, the Revolutionary War, and historic architecture; postcards, photos, videos, atlases, and maps. The society's library is located at Felican College (the Lodi campus library, 262 South Main Street, Lodi, New Jersey) and available on a limited basis. Staffed by BCHS volunteers, the schedule of times open to public is posted on the Society's web page. No microfilm census records are available.

The Bergen Dutch were an agricultural community who settled and farmed the valleys of the Hackensack, Saddle and Passaic Rivers, beginning in 1670. The museum collections of the Bergen County Historical Society are interesting and varied, with objects of exceptional significance and quality. The museum objects on display are nearly all local and therefore representative of a distinct regional folk culture, largely having been made or used in Bergen County from about 1680 through 1860. These objects, ranging from a dugout canoe, unearthed in 1868, to the pick-ax used in the groundbreaking for the George Washington Bridge, are an attraction and delight to many visitors. The collection spans folk art; prehistoric stone tools; Bergen Dutch ladder-back chairs; basketry; lighting

devices; foot stoves; Hackensack cupboards; kasten (or Dutch cupboards); children's furniture; historic clothing; salt-glazed and redware pottery, including slip-decorated pie plates of local manufacture; Jacquard coverlets; quilts; kitchen utensils, craft tools and agricultural implements.

Due to severe limitations on space, the garret served as the "County's Attic" from 1958 to 2001, providing a storage and display area, hot and humid in summer, hot and dry in winter, and always dusty. The attic gallery in the Steuben House displayed the oak dugout canoe, collections of dolls and toys, spinning equipment, antique school memorabilia and textbooks.

Until the museum collections of the Bergen County Historical Society were moved into off-site storage in April 2001, preparatory to exterior renovations and the installation of a new heating system, they were either displayed or stored throughout the building. The primary storage area was located under the west slope of the roof, where objects varying from stone tools to delicate antique fabrics were crammed into trunks and boxes without environmental controls, lacking even proper ventilation and pest control. The attic of the Campbell-Christie House is also loaded with stored objects.

Visitors frequently mistake the display of antique domestic furnishings, actually spanning several centuries and representing the full spectrum of social status in their original owners, for the authentic household possessions of the Colonial occupants of the Steuben House. Many visitors believe they are viewing General Steuben's furnishings and are puzzled when told otherwise. A single kas may store several dozen Jacquard coverlets, a most unlikely circumstance for the period represented. Explaining the broad and varied museum collections on display also limits the opportunity to interpret the Steuben House as an artifact with its own interesting history.

Issues and Influences

Like a good recreational tourist in time travel, American popular history tends to be panoramic in scope, quickly surveying much from a single vantage and taking notice of only the grandest peaks and valleys. It is a fast-food menu of limited choices, distinguishing a Colonial epoch from a Victorian epoch from our own time. But to interpret *how*, *when* and *why* a particular historic setting reached its present appearance, we must evaluate the quality and context of the surviving physical evidence, explaining additions, changes and gaps in the cultural record. Our obligation is to protect and to interpret the resources we have and to fully honor them for what they are (and not for what we might wish them to be). Esthetic attraction to particular aspects of the past places a heavy thumb on the scales: beauty and significance are different commodities.

Most interpreters realize that "history" and "nature" allure audiences with their most colorful petals, presenting a simpler time-and-place. The rural past suggests a pleasant alternative to an insistent, immersive, technologically paced Modern reality with all its stresses, entanglements and uneasy choices. Consequently, some people invest

emotionally in the perceived “purity” of an interpretive setting, essentially filtering away not only what is necessarily unpleasant about the past or about the natural world, but also any and all uncomfortable associations with the present.

Some twentieth-century historical hobbyists unknowingly equated the “primitive” character of small dwellings (or stone kitchen wings) with great age — supposing them to be the seventeenth-century abodes of their progenitors. Some genealogical family associations innocently backdated old houses to create “shrines” to their most distant ancestors. This was especially common in the 1920s when suburbanization began to erase the cultural landscape of an agrarian age, threatening to disconnect long-established families from their roots, while steadily eroding their long-held political and social dominance. Understandably they responded to the changing world around them by emphasizing their longevity on the land, promoting the oldest remaining dwellings on the landscape as the “original” domiciles of their earliest American ancestors. False traditions, purely and demonstrably twentieth-century inventions, have acquired the aura of “antiquity” and factuality through repetition, especially in print.

Architectural evidence strongly indicates that the Bergen Dutch went on a building binge after the American Revolution, replacing many of the crude and incommensurate dwellings that had served them during the hard-fought acquisition phase of their frontier experience. Their reconstructive activities partly reflect the extensive destruction repeatedly endured at the hands of foraging armies and revenging irregular troops. Fire and flood remain constant agents of architectural attrition. But the “building-binge” may also reflect, to an unquantified extent, that the Bergen Dutch also profited by the war through the consumptive proximity of large numbers of troops and their dependents. After all, the largest profits are usually found where the greatest risk lies. Then there is also the nearly indefinable factor of a change in attitudes wrought by the war (perhaps similar to the material-acquisitive behaviors and status display of comforts for some of the generation who survived the Great Depression).

Many people seem to respond to the perceived “medieval” character of old stone houses, when, in fact, these buildings are by their mere presence, number and pretensions, a determined step beyond the largely insular, hierarchic societies of the European Middle Ages. Quite contrarily, these comparatively substantial dwellings represent a rise in living standards over the hovelled peasantry of more distant ages. Architectural improvements reflected the spreading rise of land owning, independently acting, and profit-motivated middle-class farmers, merchants and craftsmen in a nascent global economy. While many European tourists acknowledge the existence of far older structures in their homelands, they also recognize a roughly equivalent age for bourgeoisie farmhouses. Despite an apparent “time lag” in the transference of academic styles (which, in and of themselves, indicate an increase in literacy and the value placed upon education), the same economic phenomena concurrently reshaped the cultural landscapes of the Old and New Worlds. The greatest difference lies in the greater urgency and fewer social obstacles among upstarts on American soil.

This is part of the “deep story” told by these resources --- the uniquely American recipe for social and political revolutions that shook the world, tumbling the foundations of the *ancien régime*. Transported to the fertile ground of unreserved continental opportunity, the seeds of Renaissance humanism and capitalist individualism flourished. The flow of political power, traditionally paternalistic and condescending, reversed itself as men (and eventually women) came to imagine themselves as the self-consenting authors of their own destiny, limited only by the whims of fortune and the force of their own imaginations. The sense of hierarchical dependency shrank, as Everyman’s tomorrow was unfenced.

This isn’t simply poetry. The American Revolution did not begin in 1776 or end in 1783. Its military phase marked a moment of transformation in the hearts and minds of its carriers: a recognition and embrace of certain newly Self-evident Truths. The great Propositional Creed at the heart of the American Declaration of Independence has resurfaced in all subsequent militant phases of that Revolution — its words were notably invoked a century apart by Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg and by Martin Luther King on the Washington Mall. In setting forth our interpretation, we should accept the rather expansive fluidity of this story and follow, rather than constrict, its movements through time and place.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a description of the programs and media proposals designed to realize the goals, themes, and visitor experiences for Historic New Bridge Landing Park.

Previsit Information

Information in all media will use the logo of Historic New Bridge Landing to develop a cohesive marketing identity.

Informational brochures for each of the historic houses and other interesting elements will be developed according to a standard design.

Besides individual historic house brochures, a promotional brochure for Historic New Bridge Landing will be developed and circulated throughout the region.

Orientation signs or exhibits will be placed at suitable locations on both sides of the river to inform the public as to the range and location of historic and natural resources available to them.

A uniform sign plan, including entrance and directional signs, will be developed for the park, using the Historic New Bridge Landing logo.

All park themes and trip-planning information will be posted on a web page.

Historic New Bridge Core Unit

The HISTORIC NEW BRIDGE CORE UNIT encompasses the historic buildings and grounds fronting the Hackensack River, where the history of New Bridge is preserved in place and where modern intrusions are minimal or largely reversible. The Historic New Bridge Core Unit includes the State-owned Zabriskie-Steuben House and its grounds, the County-owned 1889 New Bridge, the site of the Zabriskie gristmill and river landing, the New Bridge General Store on Old New Bridge Road, and the streetscapes and roadways approaching the historic 1889 bridge from east and west, including riparian marshlands and the lower part of Brett Park in Teaneck.

The 1889 iron truss swing bridge stands at the historic core of New Bridge, spanning the narrows of the Hackensack River, and occupying the very place of an earlier oak draw-bridge where the Continental army crossed in November 1776. The oldest highway swing bridge to survive in New Jersey, it has achieved significance in its own right. It was listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places for its centennial in 1989. The County of Bergen completed a restoration of the bridge in November 2002.

The extant river landing at New Bridge is a bulkhead that probably dates to about 1910, when industrialist Charles W. Bell had the Hackensack River and Coles Brook, near the Steuben House, dredged to allow barges to reach the site of his proposed cardboard mill (later the American Ink Factory). At the mouth of Coles Brook, the dredging machine unearthed an ancient millstone from Zabriskie's tide mill. Another millstone and shaft were left imbedded in the mud. Spoils from the dredging operation apparently were used to fill the old millpond at the outlet of Coles Brook and perhaps the mill site itself, which stood somewhere in the vicinity of the parking area of the PSE&G substation on Main Street, River Edge.

Before 1910, the river landing was built with a ship-shaped notch that could cradle a schooner when the tide was out, its main mast being lashed to a tall pole fixed in the ground. An embankment about four feet in height stood at the edge of the road, in front of the Steuben House. The boat "cradle" lay at the bottom of this embankment, outlined by horizontal slanting boards that framed the bulkhead. When resting in this cradle, the schooner's deck would have corresponded with the road level, facilitating loading and unloading. A path led directly from this ship's-cradle to the front door of the house across the road. The landing needs extensive restoration or replacement and interpretive signage.

Since the river is the visual and interpretive focal point of the core historic unit, the date of the bridge and the earlier river landing (1889) will be used as the terminal date in determining the interpretive relevance of all other features — that is to say, that features which predate 1889 would be considered for restoration, replacement or reconstruction, while those postdating the opening of the bridge would be considered for removal. Since

every feature must be evaluated for significance in its own right (as a product indicative of its own time), the terminal date is only an important “consideration,” and not an arbitrary finality. This does not mean that the historic core unit will be singularly focused on the year 1889, as each building and feature will be fully interpreted according to its own significance and story. Using this guideline, however, the former Arrow Canoe Club building, built in 1913, will be demolished and the earlier river landing alongside the General Store reconstructed.



This postcard view was taken between 1892 (when the old wooden store wing was removed from the south gable end of the Steuben House) and 1905. It shows the river landing before it was altered around 1910, when the river and its tributary creek, Coles Brook, were dredged. This photograph clearly shows an embankment at the edge of Main Street, perhaps four feet in height, which descends to the level of a “boat cradle.” The shape of the keel of a ship, apparently about 65 feet long, is visible. The mast was lashed to the tall pole near the center of the cradle, keeping the ship upright when the tide ran out. The bottom of the cradle, outlined by slanting horizontal boards forming the bulkhead, was low enough to allow the schooner to dock at high tide. Having the deck at road level facilitated loading and unloading of cargoes.

In its present configuration, the extant river landing does not reflect the presence of an operational tide mill, which would have required a large pond or reservoir behind the dam at the outlet of Cole’s Brook, as well as wheel pits and races. One newspaper account from 1904 claimed that the tidal gristmill measured 40 by 20 feet and supposedly burned down in 1852. It, however, is not listed in the New Barbadoes *Schedule for the Products of Industry* as part of the 1850 Census. Old photographs showing shafts protruding from the mud suggest that the mill may have stood on pilings, independent of the landing, perhaps on the property, which the PSE&G substation occupies. Only archaeology may

provide the answers. But it seems unlikely and unadvised to attempt so speculative a reconstruction of the mill en situ, since it would probably require extensive removal of the landing. Furthermore, its operation would require backing up the tide in Cole's Brook as far west as Route #4 (an unlikely circumstance under any conditions). Therefore, the mill will be interpreted through a wayside exhibit.



This photograph from a 1967 archaeological dig shows a trench, cut across the river landing in front of the Zabriskie-Steuben House, and the depth of the “cradle” feature. Eighteenth-century artifacts, including a shoe, suggest that this feature may date back to at least the Revolutionary War period.

The extant historic New Bridge also deserves interpretation in its own right and not merely as the site of the earlier *Bridge That Saved A Nation*. This also will be accomplished through wayside exhibits on both sides that will explain its operation.

Many visitors expect to see General Steuben's house at New Bridge, as this landmark was saved due to its association with him. For this and other good reasons, the

interpretation of the interior of the house will begin with the years 1783 through 1788, when General Steuben owned the property. Its earlier history will be more fully explained in the visitor facility.

General Philemon Dickinson informed Steuben that he could satisfy the requirements of the Legislature “by keeping a bed & Servants there & visiting the premises now & then...” Thus, when owned by Steuben, the Zabriskie mansion at the Hackensack New Bridge was partly occupied by his aide-de-camp, Capt. Benjamin Walker, and partly leased to the son and namesake of its former owner, the Loyalist Jan Zabriskie. The tax

assessments for 1786 list Walker & Zabriskie as merchants. On December 4, 1788, the Honorable Major-General Frederick Wm. Baron de Steuben of New York City conveyed his Jersey Estate, comprising 49 acres at New Bridge formerly belonging to John Zabriskie, to John Zabriskie, Jr., of New Barbadoes Township for £1,200.



A portrait of Major-General Frederick Wm. Baron von Steuben, the Inspector-General of the Continental troops, found in the collections of the New York State Historical Association.

Interpreting the years of Steuben ownership opens an interesting “bridge in time” that spans the causes and consequences of the Revolutionary War, not only to the house itself, but also to its occupants. The story of the Zabriskies’ return as lessees of their own family homestead will also include the circumstances of that family’s construction and enlargement of the house in the years prior to the war, as well as to their wartime experience. This opens the discussion of their Loyalty to the Crown.

The Zabriskie-Steuben House was enlarged around 1767 into conjoined houses occupied by two generations of the Zabriskie family. The Walker & Zabriskie joint-occupancy will address its unique architectural development as a “double-house.” The dwelling was “thoroughly rebuilt lately,” according to General Steuben’s 1788 advertisement of the property for sale, and this time period will also preserve and interpret its post-Revolutionary War reconstruction. Lastly, the only detailed inventory of the contents of Jan Zabriskie’s household and store stock was prepared at the time of his death in 1793, offering an exact and comprehensive guide to

the material culture of that time and place (See Appendix N). Therefore, the inventory will be used as the principal guide document in restoring and interpreting the interior.

This interpretation is premised upon the relocation of the collections of the Bergen County Historical Society to new museum at the entrance and the restoration of the interior of the Steuben House, particularly the reconstruction of the missing stone wall and jambless fireplace that divided the two parlors on the first floor. The house could then be furnished with appropriate reproductions, suggestive of the uses of the different rooms, according to a researched Furnishing Plan.

The Bake House of the Steuben House, demolished in 1931, will be reconstructed for interpretive purposes. The old four-seat Outhouse (well documented in old photographs) will also be reconstructed at its original location in the backyard.



(Above) This photograph from the early twentieth-century shows the old stone Out-Kitchen or Bake House to the right. Another out-building, believed to be a small barn, may have once housed a Riding Chair. Below, this photograph showing the Out-House in the backyard of the Steuben House, dates to around 1920.



The New Bridge General Store, situated on the north side of Old New Bridge Road, near the bridge, is the interpretive key to the east side of the river (See Appendix J). The appropriate portion of the building will be restored as a general store and gift shop, offering high-quality craft merchandise of educational value. The adjacent residential wing will be restored as the storekeeper's dwelling and an orientation station. If and when property acquisitions proceed, consideration will be given to limited parking (especially for Disabled Americans) on the north side of the road, adjacent to the Store.



This old postcard view of the New Bridge General Store on Old New Bridge Road in New Milford apparently predates the construction of the Arrow Canoe Club building to the west.

The Brett Park lowland, lying south of Old New Bridge Road and Riverview Avenue, encompasses sites of potential archaeological interest, most notably, the dwelling and river landing of Colonel Abraham Van Buskirk (nearly opposite the New Bridge Inn) and a one-room Teaneck School House. The public educational value of any archaeological investigations on these sites will be emphasized. Upon completion, any foundational remains (if found) will be non-obtrusively outlined at the surface and identified by wayside exhibits. The northern boundary of the park will be protected by a picket fence (similar to the one depicted in old photographs of the opposite side of the street).

Brett Park and the Hackensack River Greenway Through Teaneck

Architectural plans have been prepared for the complete reconstruction of the Teaneck DPW, adjacent to Brett Park, including an 80 to 100-foot buffer running along its

southern and western borders. The Hackensack River Greenway will be located through this buffer and will continue into Brett Park, ending at the New Bridge. A description of the entire length of the Greenway (in excess of three miles) is contained in the *Greenway Along The Hackensack River Planning Study*, prepared by Hakim Associates in November 1995.

Three proposed sections of trail are described in the Greenway Planning Study: (1) one begins at River Road at the remnant driveway and proceeds along the western edge of the upper section of Brett Park toward Riverview Avenue; (2) another trail along the river shore is an extension of the Greenway that will begin at the DPW yard and continue north along the river shore; and (3) a third joins the upper trail with the shore trail.

The proposed section of the Hackensack River Greenway across Brett Park to the New Bridge will afford stations to view wildlife and provide scenic enjoyment. The Teaneck Parks, Playgrounds and Recreation Advisory Board also recommends a canoe launch within Brett Park, to be located at the end of a path leading from the old macadam road, which runs from Riverview Avenue toward the Hackensack River. A trail grant application was also made in 2000 for this purpose

Every effort needs to be made to protect the rustic atmosphere and inspirational value of Brett Park, including its river vistas, its natural and archaeological resources, and the residential character of the surrounding neighborhood. Any construction or development in Brett Park requires the consultation and consent of the Township of Teaneck.

All meetings held to date indicate that plans for the Hackensack River Greenway Trail and interpretive proposals for Historic New Bridge Landing Park are mutually supportive. The Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission fully recognizes the need for regular consultations with officials of the Township of Teaneck, the Teaneck Planning Board, the Teaneck Environmental Commission, the Teaneck Parks, Playgrounds and Recreation Advisory Board, the Shade Tree Advisory Board, the Hackensack River Greenway Advisory Board, and the Friends of the Hackensack River Greenway through Teaneck, Inc. Future cooperation in applying for funding and coordinating proposed improvements will only benefit the public and the resource.

Brett Park Upland

The BRETT PARK UPLAND encompasses the sandy terrace bounded by Riverview Avenue and River Road, where significant archaeological resources may be discovered, but where the adjacent residential neighborhood precludes any intensive park use or the location of visitor facilities.

The Brett Park Upland offers an elevated view of Historic New Bridge Landing and the great bend (Rond Hook) of the river. This plateau should be used entirely for passive recreational enjoyments, compatible with the surrounding residential neighborhood, and to

interpret the native Lenape occupation of the site.

On January 6, 1676, Tantaqua joined six other Hackensack sachems in the sale of New Hackensack, a tract of land extending from about the line of Cedar Lane in Teaneck northward to French Creek on the present New Milford boundary. This deed mentions “the Great Indian Field — called the Indian Castle” lying or standing on the south side of the French Creek at New Bridge. With the consent and cooperation of the Township of Teaneck, qualified archaeologists will professionally investigate the prehistoric occupation of the Brett Park Upland, including a search for any subsurface traces of the Indian fortifications.

To improve the natural vantage, a rustic pergola or roofed colonnade will line the top of the bluff above the river. If a true pergola, it should be an arbor to support a native flowering vine. Otherwise, it will be a fully roofed. In either case, it will be wide enough to shelter benches facing the river view. To create a rustic look, while reducing the need for maintenance, the columns and braces might be concrete molded to resemble narrow tree trunks and branches. This structure might be called the “Longhouse,” to blend with the native interpretation of the area. An arboretum in the Brett Park Upland will complement the rustic pergola.

The principal interpretive objective for the Brett Park Upland is to memorialize Tantaqua, the last great sachem of the Hackensacks and former owner and inhabitant of northern Teaneck (as well as the west side of the river, where the Steuben House stands, which was known as Tantaquas Plain). His words spoke the only verbatim account we have of the Lenape story of genesis, which he told in October 1679 to Jasper Danckærts, a Labadist missionary. To visually represent this story, the sculpture of a large tortoise will be set in the middle of the open field comprising the Brett Park Upland. It might be made of fiberglass (or some other durable material) and placed in a shallow oval pool. Otherwise, it might be so placed as to allow children to safely climb or sit upon it. On or close to its base, Tantaquas’ words will be inscribed:

“THIS WAS OR IS ALL WATER, AND SO AT FIRST WAS THE WORLD OR THE EARTH, WHEN THE TORTOISE GRADUALLY RAISED ITS ROUND BACK UP HIGH, AND THE WATER RAN OFF OF IT, AND THUS THE EARTH BECAME DRY. THE EARTH WAS NOW DRY, AND THERE GREW A TREE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE EARTH, AND THE ROOT OF THIS TREE SENT FORTH A SPROUT BESIDE IT AND THERE GREW UPON IT A MAN, WHO WAS THE FIRST MALE. THIS MAN WAS THEN ALONE, AND WOULD HAVE REMAINED ALONE; BUT THE TREE BENT OVER UNTIL ITS TOP TOUCHED THE EARTH, AND THERE SHOT THEREIN ANOTHER ROOT, FROM WHICH CAME FORTH ANOTHER SPROUT, AND THERE GREW UPON IT THE WOMAN, AND FROM THESE TWO ARE ALL MEN PRODUCED.”

TANTAQUA, 1679

The same text will also be provided in Braille and made available through a sound recording.

Signature of Tantaqua

The Hackensack sachem or elder, Tantaqua, used the figure of a Tortoise for his mark when he consented to the 1677 sale of the New Hackensack Patent, which encompassed the northern half of the present Township of Teaneck, including what is now Brett Park at Historic New Bridge Landing.

Lastly, a narrow path or walkway will form the outline of the tortoise on the lawn using the largest scale that the field will accommodate. This outline will be enhanced by native plantings or arboretum. Several wayside exhibits will be placed around the upland park, interpreting its former native inhabitants. One will tell who Tantaqua was; another will list the place-names of Lenape origin in Bergen County (including Teaneck, which probably derives from *Uteneyik*, meaning “the villages”).



The 1839 Coastal Survey shows buildings at New Bridge, including several standing within the present boundaries of Brett Park in Teaneck.

Both the lowland and upland portions of Brett Park will be respected as part of

the Revolutionary War battleground surrounding New Bridge. Military action took place on both sides of the river. For example, Major John Andre’s map of New Bridge, made at the time of the British invasion and Grand Forage of September 1779, shows troop placements and fortifications on both Cherry Hill in River Edge and on the upland in what is now Brett Park.

The Society Lands Unit

The SOCIETY LANDS UNIT encompasses the property of the Bergen County Historical Society, fronting Main Street, River Edge. Their property extends from the Steuben

House and the lands belonging to the State of New Jersey westward to the present driveway and parking lot along the west side of the Campbell-Christie House. This Unit is bounded north by marshland.

As part of the original Zabriskie-Steuben farm, the Society Lands Unit will be treated archaeologically as part of the Historic New Bridge Core Unit. There is a significant difference, however, in that two historic homes and a small barn were relocated here (between 1956 and 1977) from River Road in New Milford. These “authentic” structures add to the interpretive potential of the site, but permanently alter the historic landscape, creating the false impression that a “historical village” existed here in the period of significance.

The present bark-chip path in front of the Demarest and Campbell-Christie Houses will be widened and improved to resemble a primitive road or lane, recreating the relationship that these houses originally had to roadways. This will also allow the area lying between the new roadway and Main Street to be adequately landscaped, so as to screen out the visuals intrusions and anachronisms on the south side of Main Street. Plantings along the south side of the roadway will further screen the PSE&G Substation. Acquisition of this facility, whenever it becomes obsolete, is a priority. Equally important in preserving the view shed of Historic New Bridge Landing, the wooded river bank, across Coles Brook on the northern edge of the City of Hackensack, needs to be protected, either through acquisition or conservation easements.

As indicated by an 1838 agreement to fence the old French Burial Ground (originally adjacent to the Demarest House), an orchard will be planted east of the Demarest House in its present setting. The field behind the Demarest House will be used for raising grain. A grain barrack (with sliding roof) will be placed near the middle of this field. Further plantings will be made along the creek between the Demarest and Campbell-Christie Houses to visually isolate each of these buildings and to thereby break up the impression of a village setting.

The Demarest House will be furnished and interpreted as the miller’s house, which it was circa 1795. The house is missing two original frame components: a small kitchen wing to the west and a hovel (a sort of mud-room) along the back (north). Though the foundation of the rear “hovel” was excavated and recorded in 1934, there is no known visual record of its appearance. Likewise, no presently known photograph or artistic rendering shows the kitchen wing attached at the west. Therefore, there are no present plans to reconstruct these missing elements.

The framing for a stove chimney still exists in the ceiling beams of the east room. This chimney will be reconstructed (it only stood in the attic atop the framing members) and a ten-plate stove installed in the east room. This will allow the interpretation to explain the great improvement in comfort and living standards that iron stoves made possible. The furnishings will also include a Dutch “slawbank,” or folding bed (either by an antique example or by a reproduction).

The interpretation of the Campbell-Christie House through “living history” as a “working tavern,” in conjunction with the Out-Kitchen, will be fully developed. Reconstruction of the 1836 kitchen wing will greatly facilitate this use. Items from the manuscript collection that illustrate the type of activities that took place in local taverns (public notices, tavern rates, vendues, tax assessments, et cetera) will be reproduced and displayed on the walls (and also sold in reproduction through the gift shop).

Since John Christie was also a blacksmith, a small blacksmithy will be reconstructed alongside the roadway just southeast of the house and near to the bank of the small creek. This facility will enhance the interpretation of the tavern as the focus of a crossroads service-center.

The greatest interpretive opportunity may reside in the most unlikely of places, in the degraded wetland lying north of the Red Barn and south of the embankment that carries Hackensack Avenue eastward to the modern bridge. A shallow basin lying immediately north of the Out-Kitchen and Barn was perhaps originally drained to the south by a small brook that now passes between the Campbell-Christie and Demarest Houses, entering a culvert that drains its waters through an underground conduit and into the Hackensack River, opposite the Steuben House. Presently, a drainage ditch running roughly parallel with Hackensack Avenue allows the tides to wash in and out of this phragmites marsh. A narrow terrace of relatively dry land runs along the highway embankment on the north side of this wetland.



This 1836 pastel drawing shows the Old Bridge and what is now River Edge Avenue.

Boardwalks for naturalist interpretation have been suggested in the past as a possible use for this marsh. Our plan is to replicate the Hackensack Meadowlands Development Corporation's reclamation project along the Turnpike near Secaucus. If feasible, silt will be dredged from the channel of the drainage ditch, widening it slightly, and the natural "bowl" or shallow basin, lying north of the Campbell-Christie House and Barn, opened to form a tidal pool. A narrow dirt lane will be built from the west side of the barn across to the terrace below Hackensack Avenue, crossing the outlet stream on a replicated wooden drawbridge (a facsimile of the Old Bridge as depicted in an 1836 drawing, the only one of its kind to actually show a Hackensack River drawbridge). A flap gate and dam will be built at the outlet of this tidal pond to serve as a reservoir for the operation of a small tidal gristmill, to be constructed with one set of stones for demonstrating tidal power. The phragmites will be eradicated and the restored stream and tidal pool replanted with appropriate native species, such as spartina or wild rice. This will channel people on a single, narrow lane, rather than introduce them on "boardwalks" throughout the marsh, thus protecting any native flora and fauna, while providing visitors a safe, scenic experience of the river and its marshes. Having crossed the facsimile drawbridge, the "road" will bend west to join the path leading through a pedestrian crossing on Hackensack Avenue, thus forming a complete loop around the Campbell-Christie House and grounds.

Hackensack Avenue Gateway

The HACKENSACK AVENUE GATEWAY encompasses newly acquired properties along the east side of Hackensack Avenue, at or near the intersection of Main Street, River Edge, where the greatest opportunity exists for the development of visitor facilities.

Visitor Facilities

Two interpretive centers will flank Main Street where it intersects Hackensack Avenue. The one to the north (on the auto salvage yard) will exclusively address visitor orientation to Historic New Bridge Landing with exhibits explaining the natural and cultural history of the site. A topographically accurate model of New Bridge in 1776 (based upon period maps and deeds) will be a centerpiece, orienting visitors to what existed then and allowing them to visualize and understand the changes that have occurred. Archaeological collections from New Bridge will be displayed here in combination with a variety of interpretive exhibits. Some collections of the Bergen County Historical Society, particularly relating to the American Revolution or to New Bridge, will also be incorporated into these exhibits.

The orientation center will be named to honor former Bergen County Freeholder and Assemblyman, D. Bennett Mazur, for his early role in developing the concept of Historic New Bridge Landing and for his support of Bergen County history and historic preservation. The proposed orientation center will have a small auditorium for audio-

visual presentations, including a short orientation film. There will also be a cafeteria or restaurant facility. The main parking lot will be located adjacent to the orientation center.

On the south side of Main Street, a museum and exhibit building will be erected on the former Pizza Town property. Besides exhibit galleries, the building will include a meeting room that has the architectural ambiance of an antique interior space. A modern facsimile of the 1819 Bergen County Court House will be considered for this purpose, since it would re-create such public interior spaces suited to meeting purposes. The remainder would be adapted to galleries, collections storage, and offices. An elevator will be located in a rear-projecting pavilion for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access. The possibility of organizing the museum collections into a display corresponding to the Bergen County Folk Art catalogue, called the *Tree of Life*, whereby the objects are arranged to tell the story of the passage through life, will be considered.



This woodcut from John Barber's and Henry Howe's *Historical Collections of the State of New Jersey*, shows the 1819 Court House facing the Hackensack Green. The Bergen County Historical Society has the original bell and front step from this building in its collections.

Although the American Revolutionary War is the primary focus for Historic New Bridge Landing, the 1819 Bergen County Court House is recommended as the architectural model for a museum to display the Bergen County Historical Society's collections, because this building (demolished in 1911 to make way for the present Court House) is well documented in a wood-engraving (Barber and Howe, 1844) and by photographs. Moreover, because of its public purpose, the facsimile Court House will serve the vital function of a meeting space for public programs and events, while providing the ambiance of an authentic historical space. Its interior finishes and appointments will enhance the display of local artifacts, most of which span the nineteenth century, including the distinctively local Hackensack cupboards, Bergen Dutch ladder-back chairs, Jacquard coverlets, quilts, and artwork. Being separate from the historic buildings along Main Street, the old Court House offers an opportunity to memorialize a lost Bergen County architectural landmark without confusing the public as to what is and what is not

authentic to the site.

If the 1819 Court House is chosen as the model for the museum building, then it will face a small village green, completed with cannon and Liberty Pole. The bell from this Court House (donated to the Bergen County Historical Society in 1912) will be hung in the belfry and used to announce events as they occur in the historic park. The original stepping-stone to the entrance of the 1819 court House, presently located at the front entrance to the Steuben House, will be used again for its original purpose. An elongated shed will be constructed close to the museum building for storing large museum objects, such as antique wheeled vehicles and or agricultural equipment.

When a pedestrian access is built across Hackensack Avenue, then river front paths will be developed in the marshlands and slough north of the highway. A Nature Center will be built in the form of a Dutch barn (using appropriate Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) architectural drawings as a guide). The Nature Center will also accommodate artists in various media who are inspired by natural and cultural resources of the site.

New Bridge Battle Monument

The New Bridge Battle Monument will be a figurative representative of a Liberty Pole — a slender column standing atop a square pedestal, surmounted by the figure of Liberty, armed and vigilant, wearing the Liberty Cap (based upon the figure depicted in the Great Seal of the State of New Jersey). Her shield will bear the plow and horse head from the Great Seal. An inscription on a frieze band near the head of the column will identify this figure as “THE SPIRIT OF THE JERSEYS.”

On the face of the base facing Hackensack Avenue, the opening paragraph of Thomas Paine’s *American Crisis* will be engraved, reading:

“These are the times that try men’s souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now deserves the love, and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet, we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated.”

The opposite face of the pedestal will also bear the following extract from the *American Crisis*:

“Our first object was to secure the bridge over the Hackensack, which laid up the river between the enemy and us, about six miles from us, and three from them. General Washington arrived in about three quarters of an hour, and marched at the head of the troops towards the bridge, which place I expected we should have a

brush for; however, they did not choose to dispute it with us, and the greatest part of our troops went over the bridge, the rest over the ferry, except some which passed at a mill on a small creek, between the bridge and the ferry, and made their way through some marshy grounds up to the town of Hackensack, and there passed the river.”

The face of the pedestal facing north will read:

HISTORIC NEW BRIDGE LANDING
THE BRIDGE THAT SAVED A NATION
NOVEMBER 20, 1776

The New Bridge Battle Monument will stand in the center of a landscaped circular plaza in Main Street, allowing local vehicular traffic to pass around it.

Education Programs

Historic New Bridge Landing Park will expand the “school tours” offered at the Steuben House to include other buildings and resources, integrating a theme-based, goal-oriented, and curriculum-related educational program. As they are developed, lessons plans will be posted through electronic media and made available in print.

In consultation with local educators, the park will develop an educational plan to determine what themes to target and for what age levels. The park will strive to develop suitable pre-visit and post-visit materials for students. Theme-based living-history presentations, especially those with hands-on components, would be particularly effective with this age group.

Historic New Bridge Landing will work to educate teachers as to the opportunities available through its educational plan and resources, working in co-ordination with established teacher-training courses and workshops, so as to provide professional development opportunities.

When related to park themes, living-history programs have great potential for enriching visitor experiences. To this end, efforts will be made to develop partnerships with “living history” and re-enactment groups that meet high standards of accuracy and interpretation.

Staffing

Development of a well-trained and enthusiastic volunteer docent program is a priority. There will also be opportunities created (outside of the civil service system) to employ good interpreters of different ages and proven abilities, including students and senior citizens, especially for part-time or summer employment.

A professionally qualified and compensated staff will be required to provide curatorial, administrative, educational, secretarial and maintenance services.

All staff must have an understanding of the resources, themes, and objectives of the *Historic New Bridge Landing General Management Plan* and the *Historic New Bridge Landing Comprehensive Interpretive Plan*. Training and evaluation will be provided on an ongoing basis.

Park Library and Collections

The greatest opportunity and challenge lies in placing the museum collections of the Bergen County Historical Society and the Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation on meaningful and safe display in a museum facility or into controlled-environment storage. Developing a Scope of Collections Statement, these organizations will further develop their collections, particularly by acquisition of objects of exceptional local significance, including Hudson River School (Luminist) paintings of the Hackensack Meadowlands and river.

ADDITIONAL PLANS/DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

A. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

B. STRATEGIC FUNDING PLAN

B. DESIGN ASSESSMENT TO DETERMINE SPACE AND CONSERVATION NEEDS FOR MUSEUM AND LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

C. FURNISHING PLANS

D. AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) ACCESSIBILITY

E. INTERPRETIVE MEDIA STRATEGY AND DESIGN

F. EDUCATION PLAN

G. INTERPRETIVE MEDIA PLANNING AND DESIGN

H. ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

I. CULTURAL LANDSCAPE DESIGN PLAN

J. ENVIRONMENTAL INTERPRETATION PLAN

PLANNING TEAM MEMBERS

Timothy D. Adriance, Alternate, Bergen County Historical Society
James L. Bellis, Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation
Mary Donohue, Borough of River Edge
Jose Fernandez, Director, Division of Parks and Forestry
Deborah Fisk, Bergen County Historical Society, Vice-Chairperson
Rebecca Fitzgerald, Superintendent, Northern Region Office, State Park Service
Robert D. Griffin, Bergen County Historical Society, Chairperson
S. Frederic Guggenheim, Township of Teaneck
John Heffernan, Past President, Bergen County Historical Society
Sandra Loft, Township of Teaneck
Carol Messer, Director, Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs, County of Bergen
Kerryl Meyer, Executive Assistant to the Bergen County Administrator
Susan Shutte, Resource Interpretive Specialist, Steuben House
Adam Strobel, Planning Department, County of Bergen
Ann Subrizi, Borough of New Milford
John O. Susino, Chief of Staff, Office of the Bergen County Executive
Beverly Weaver, Supervisor, Office of State Historic Sites
Kevin Wright, Secretary, Northern Regional Resource Interpretive Specialist



The banks of the Hackensack at New Bridge.

APPENDICES

A. Bergen Dutch Settlement of the Hackensack Valley

Bergen County occupies a swath of the Sandstone Piedmont, Triassic lowland of gentle relief. The old red sandstone, forming a wide plain nearly twenty miles in breadth, underlies this hilly, red-soiled plateau, dissected by valleys. Interbedded volcanic flows, being more resistant to erosion, now form trap ridges or hills, contributing the most conspicuous relief to the landscape. The plain declines gently to the southeast until it passes below the tides.

Proglacial Lake Hackensack formed about 17,000 years ago from melt water trapped behind the end moraine, which formed a dam about 30 feet high between Staten Island and New Jersey. Seasonal varves of clay in the Little Ferry Clay Pits indicate that this cold-water reservoir existed for at least 2,550 years before the ice sheet withdrew north of Haverstraw, New York. The height of a delta front at Westwood suggests water about 60 feet deep. The skeletal remains of a mastodon, found on the present site of the Sheraton Hotel in South Hackensack in 1962, have been dated to 12,000 BP.

Relieved of the burden of ice, the land slowly rebounded and Proglacial Lake Hackensack drained away between 10,000 and 7,000 years ago. There is evidence to show that vegetation grew upon the exposed bed of the drained lake before it was covered by sand. It is possible that ocean waters invaded the lakebed for a time before the land rebounded, raising it to its present height above sea level. Subsequently, the muddy flats of the former lakebed began a slow transition from swamp to bog to marsh. Ragweed and marsh vegetation first colonized the damp mud. Pollen analyses of peat-borings show the transition to a black ash swamp, interspersed with open grasslands of sedge, grass, and alders. Gradually, a *muskeg* forest of black spruce and tamaracks sprouted upon the peat mat. Finally, about 1400 AD, white cedar, a southern bog species, invaded the estuarine bog. At the onset of Dutch settlement, approximately one-third of the Hackensack Meadowlands was cedar swamp.

The Hackensack River rises in the Ramapo Mountains, some six or eight miles beyond Rockland Lake, where the Hudson River can be glimpsed through gaps in the Haverstraw range. The Palisades, an exposed dike of volcanic diabase, form steep cliffs along the Hudson waterfront, with a summit of undulating tableland that declines westward into the Hackensack valley. A sea-washed morass of spartina and red-winged blackbirds once bordered cedar bottoms and embraced steep sills and isolated knobs of volcanic rock. As the land rose above its sluggish creeks toward blue highlands afar, pudding-stone cottages appeared along the ridge-roads and river landings. Ox-trodden lanes and galloping sails spoke of agrarian industry. Steeped Schraalenbergh and Hackensack spoke of devotion

and the country folk spoke Dutch (at least in the presence of outsiders).

If glacial lakebed deposits were removed from the Hackensack Valley, exposing deep rock valleys, then an oceanic bay, 200 feet deep, would reach inland from Newark Bay northward to the State Line, with the Teaneck Ridge forming an island between present-day Haworth and Ridgefield Park. Other arms of this bay would reach up the Passaic Valley to Paterson, and westward from Newark to Springfield. Laminated clays in the Hackensack Valley, reaching depths of 215 feet west of Bogota, were extensively mined for brick manufacture. In July 1909, R. F. Harold, an artesian well-driller, who was drilling a well in the rear of the new Consolidated Market Company building at 153 Main Street, Hackensack, reached a depth of 212 feet, boring in solid clay as hard as rock. Clay beds are also found River Edge, New Milford, the Oradell Flats and Closter.

Glacial erosion produced and transported rocky debris ranging in size from boulders to minute grains. During the retreat of the Wisconsin glacier, a fine rock “flour” clouded the summer melt waters. Such water-borne clay particles settled in layers or “varves” at the bottom of Glacial Lake Hackensack. Locally, clay beds were everywhere covered by sand, generally 8 to 15 feet in depth. The red-burning clay of the Hackensack valley is easily molded and burns hard at a relatively low temperature. Because of these characteristics, it was used extensively in the manufacture of pottery and bricks.

Beginning 4,000 years ago, glacial clay mixed with bits of shell or pebbles was shaped and fired to make pottery vessels. The first commercial brickyard was located at New Bridge near the historic Steuben House. Between 1813 and 1829, Andrew Zobriskie manufactured brick here using straw as a binder.

Wetland reeds were used to weave baskets, mats and nets, which eased the task of gathering and storing wild foodstuffs. The long narrow leaves of the Cattail were harvested in late summer before they became brittle and dried for use as rush in matting chair-seats or in stuffing mattresses.

New Bridge marks the narrows of the Hackensack River, fifteen miles inland from Newark Bay. The name memorialized construction of a wooden drawbridge in 1745 — it remained the nearest Hackensack crossing to Newark Bay for the next half a century. At this point, a narrow winding Hackensack escapes its hilly confines, pouring out of the hollow between the Kinderkamack and Teaneck Ridges, to commingle with the sea. In 1882, W. Woodford Clayton described the “dwindled stream” north of New Bridge as “only a tributary of the ocean-fed Hackensack.” Below New Bridge, the stream widens at places to 500 feet, overflowing reedy flats and old cedar bottoms on its flanks.

Van Saun and Herring Brooks drain into Cole’s Brook. A sandy loam predominates in this small vale, before changing to clay near the Hackensack River. Cole’s Brook sneaks between Cherry Hill and Fairmount, blending into the Hackensack River just south of the historic Steuben House at New Bridge Landing. Its outlet served as a tidal reservoir to operate a gristmill between 1720 and 1852. Hereabout, full moon and spring tides inundate clay flats and cattail marshes, standing only five feet above sea level. Trees now

shade a sinuous meander of the river known as Rond Hook.

From New Amsterdam, the trap rock heights (“bergen”) of Jersey City etch the westward horizon and lent their name first to a village (1658) and then to a county (1683). North of Weehawken, these volcanic palisades rise steadily in height to form an impenetrable barrier reminiscent of walled cloisters in the Old Country; hence the name of Klooster (Closter) mountain.

In the eighteenth century, the Hackensack River was navigable to a public landing at the head of the tides in present-day Oradell, to which “Boats of seven or eight Cords frequently come up for Wood and other Produce.” Pettiaugers and canoes were the principal transport to market.

The typical eighteenth century farm in the Hackensack valley depended upon the river for the transport of bulk commodities and therefore was most advantageously situated near a public dock. It might contain upwards of 150 acres, half of which would be cleared land “neatly divided into Tillage, Meadow, and Pasture.” Livestock included hogs, cattle, oxen, and horses. The principal crops were rye, wheat, corn, buckwheat, turnips, melons, potatoes, salad greens, fresh and salt hay.



A domicile, preferably a good stone house, and a large barn serving as a granary, would be situated on the upland or terraces above the river, close to the public highways that generally maintained a somewhat level gradient by following the contour of the ridges. Horseback, wagons and sleighs conducted overland transportation. The upland bordering

the river was cultivated in orchards, a sufficiency of meadow for pasturage, grain fields, interspersed with woodlots supplying enough timber for fuel and fences. As apples provided cider, long the common beverage, large apple orchards might contain as many as 120 trees, together with other fruit trees, particularly pear and plum, set on well-drained slopes. The upland would also have to provide a sufficiency of good water.

The river meadows annually supplied salt and fresh-meadow hay. Tidal flats bearing natural crops of salt grasses and reeds were called “vly, valayen” by the Dutch (as in *Tenaflly*, the willow marsh). Though related to the English word “valley,” Jasper Danckaerts defined the Dutch expression in 1680 as “low flat land which is overflowed at every tide — miry and muddy at the bottom, and which produces a species of hard salt grass or reed grass.” Danckaerts also noted that cattle preferred salt hay to “fresh hay or grass.” Salt grass was therefore seasonally mown just before ripening and stored for animal bedding and fodder. In some instances, lands were diked and drained to encourage the production of fresh hay made from grasses of European origin. It was reported “a good spot of very fine mowing Land ... commonly yields about 15 or 18 Loads of good English Hay yearly.”

Most Bergen Dutch farms were oriented to the production of cereal grains, respectively, rye, corn, buckwheat, wheat and oats. Gristmills were conveniently located for the conversion of kernel to flour and feed. In August, many farmers went to city market. Their produce was carried in ox-carts and farm wagons over rutted, dirt roads. Most heavy goods were carried on sleds after snow and ice provided a smoother road surface. For these reasons, the river was the main “highway” in and out of Bergen County. Fifty-ton sloops rode the tides from Newark Bay nearly twenty-five miles north to landings in River Edge. Those who waited for the early morning trade of the city grocers and hucksters went to a nearby lodging house and turned in for an hour or two before business commenced. Others attempted to make themselves as comfortable as possible on their market wagons and sleep until daybreak.

As an inland port and trading center, New Bridge grew to include the stone mansion of a prominent river merchant and miller, with its attendant outbuildings, and a gristmill and wharf. On the east side of the river, there was a commercial bakery, a stage-wagon and drovers’ inn, and a classical academy. Stores, workshops and several farmhouses lined the riverside roads leading to the bridge. Tidal navigation remained an important activity through the end of the nineteenth century, as evidenced by the installation of an extant iron swing bridge in 1889, which is now listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places as the oldest highway swing-bridge in the State.

The river harbored a diversity of fish and game. In February, eels were speared through the ice. Smelt appeared in March. In the first week of April, spawning shad ascended the stream. Through early May, under moonlight when the tide was right, fishermen caught shad, some weighing 7 or 8 pounds each, with seines. The catch also included herring, bass and a great variety of other fish. At the beginning of May, snapping turtles of large size were caught in the meadows, some weighing nearly thirty pounds. The run of yellow perch commenced at anytime between the end of June and the middle of August. Bass

were taken toward the end of July, some weighing three and a half pounds. Large crabs were also found at this season.

In May 1874, the Bergen County Fish Warden, purchased and released 10,000 Penobscot salmon in spring brooks adjacent to the Hackensack River, starting at New Bridge and working northward to River Edge, thence to the brook at New Milford and also Bogert's Brook, and winding up in the Pascack Brook. The river was also stocked with black bass and salmon. In May 1876, a new kind of fish (probably German carp) made its appearance in the Hackensack River. By 1890, perch and striped bass were scarce. Set nets and fikes shut off the river for fishing from Newark Bay to the dam at New Milford. In 1904, the rare catch of a 400-pound sturgeon in the Hackensack River at New Bridge reminded some that only a few years before the catching of sturgeon in the Hackensack had been a very common occurrence. Sturgeon measuring six and eight feet in length were frequently tangled in the shad fishermen's nets.

The sight of wild geese flying northward, especially in late January, was taken as an indication of warm weather. In the last days of February, immense flocks of blackbirds passed northwest over the valley, followed by the arrival of robins and bluebirds. In May, southern mud-larks migrated in flocks. By late August, large flocks of reedbirds filled the meadows, with railbirds becoming plentiful about New Bridge during the first week of September. Railbird shooting was done from shallow rail boats or gunning skiffs that were pulled over the best meadows at high tide, providing access to the birds. The southward flight of wild ducks was a sure sign of approaching cold weather and they were usually plentiful along the river from Ridgefield to Oradell by the first days of November. Wild geese headed southward in the last days of November. Nineteenth-century newspaper accounts also mention otters, a rare yellow railbird, an immense crane, and very rare green Heron.

B. "Their Favorite Bent for Navigation": Wind-Jamming on the Hackensack River

The Hackensack River long remained the principal artery of commerce and travel through the cultivated heartland of Bergen County. By 1748, the river was considered "navigable for Vessels of about 50 Tons" as far inland as New Bridge. When visiting the Lutheran Church at New Bridge in October 1751, the Reverend Henry Muhlenburg noted that local farmers and merchants "bring the products they raise to the market in New York in little ships or vessels, and take back whatever is necessary for subsistence." The progress of such water craft was somewhat slowed "since the river has a tide."

River traffic on the river was seasonal. Boats usually were able to begin making regular trips by the third week of March. Freezing weather generally closed the river to navigation by the last days of December.

Shallow draft boats were used to navigate the tidal channel. In 1759, John Zabriskie, of New Bridge, owned "a Boat carrying seven Cord, all in good Order to attend a Mill; when

deeply loaded won't draw above four Feet eight Inches Water; Sails and Rigging all in compleat Order." It would appear that river craft increased in size during the nineteenth century and two-masted sloop yachts and large, three-masted schooners became a common sight, especially carrying brick as well as agricultural commodities. In January 1868, a schooner belonging to Jacob Van Buskirk, of New Milford, burned while anchored near New Bridge. Its cargo consisted of 1400 empty bags and 30 cords of wood.



Vessels off-loaded lumber and coal at riverside yards and docks. Farmers spent hundreds of dollars in the purchase of manure in New York, which was back-loaded by schooners owned by Messrs. Zabriskie, Lozier and Cole. In prosperous years of the brick trade, river boatmen were steadily employed conveying their product to market. From 1876 to 1890, Captain D. Anderson Zabriskie, of New Bridge, commanded the steam tugboat *Wesley Stoney*, maneuvering brick scows and large vessels. From the report of the Chief of Engineers, United States Army, for 1889, commerce on the Hackensack River amounted to 150,000 tons, valued at \$1,000,000. Commercial traffic was said to be increasing in 1896.

C. Creolization and the Jersey Dutch

New Jersey was the most culturally diverse colony on the Atlantic seaboard, bringing different cultures and ethnicities into community throughout its complicated settlement history. Colonial heterogeneity was more involved than it may appear to modern eyes, owing to the great variability of local cultures and parochial attitudes even within the boundaries of emerging European nation-states.

The process of “creolization” is defined as the merging of two or more cultural identities so as to produce a distinct new cultural meld, different from its source contributors, though often containing recognizable elements of its antecedents. The process of creolization led first to regional folk patterns of culture (such as the Jersey Dutch), which eventually nourished the emerging American culture.



This daguerreotype bears the likeness of Betty, an African American woman, who was the last living eyewitness of the Revolutionary War events at New Bridge. She was 98 years old at the time of her death in 1871.

Entrepreneurs of the Dutch West Indies Company never succeeded in convincing large numbers of their own countrymen to exchange comfortable abodes in the Low Countries for pioneer huts in a remote wilderness. Families seeking haven from religious intolerance throughout Western Europe made more willing adventurers to the New World. By the time of the American Revolution, only one-third of the population of

Bergen County, New Jersey, could claim Netherlandish descent. Africans comprised one-fifth of the population; Germans comprised another one-fifth; while English, French and Scotch-Irish formed the remainder of the population. Through intermarriage and the convenient adoption of a hybrid language rooted in Dutch, this varied stock blended to form the Bergen Dutch. Besides such distinctly Dutch surnames as Akkerman, De Groot, Blinkerhof, Hopper, Van Winkel, Brouwer and Blauvelt, the surnames of some founding families echo a diversity of origins: Zabriskie (Saborowski), Demarest (De Maree), Lozier (La Seur), Campbell, Christie, Stagg, Sandford, and Kingsland.

Early attempts to settle patroonal colonies upon the Jersey Mainland were wrecked by mistreatment of the native Hackensacks and Tappans and their consequent enmity. With the English Conquest of 1664, a ducal grant of all lands lying westward of Manhattan and Long Islands to Sir George Carteret and Lord John Berkeley created the province of New Jersey. On Manhattan, Governor Nichols loudly complained that the distant Duke of York had unwittingly ceded the most improvable part of his domain. Viewing the untapped wealth of pliable soils and natural meadows, New Netherlanders soon spread westward from Long Island and New Haarlem to establish plantations along the tidal waterways feeding into the Rivier Achter Kol, behind Bergen Neck.

The process of creolization commenced immediately on the frontiers of settlement. By October 1751, the Lutheran pietist preacher, Rev. Henry M. Muhlenberg offered this description of the congregation at New Bridge:

“The inhabitants of Hackinsack are natives of this country. Most of them are descendants from three or four ancestors who came from Holland and purchased this tract [that is, the New Hackensack tract at Teaneck] from the Indians about 80 or 90 years ago and settled here. Hence, almost all of them are inter-related and bear the original family names, such as van Buskirk, van Horn, van Orden, etc. The old folks had a certain natural honesty and artlessness. They did not use documents, seals, signatures, bonds and other such contracts. A man’s word and handshake was his bond. The older folks at the present times are shrewd; they are still good as their word; they are sociable and command great respect in their families. Like all other nationalities, they have a special love for their mother tongue. The young people are gradually degenerating because they receive no instruction in God’s Word and are mixing with other nationalities...”

The process of creolization was particularly evident at New Bridge, which, as the gateway into the upper valley of the Hackensack, seems to have attracted certain ethnicities from among the general population of New Netherlands who wished to preserve their cultural identity: the Van Buskirks who settled northern Teaneck were Holstein (Danish) Lutherans; Cornelis Mattysen, first owner of the lands in River Edge whereon the Steuben House stands, was a Swede and Lutheran; Albert Zabriskie, first owner of a neighboring tract in River Edge, was Polish Silesian and a Lutheran; the Demarests who established the French Patent (now New Milford) were French Huguenots who established a French Reformed congregation.

The Great Awakening fractured Jersey Dutch society into competing conservative (Conferentie) and liberal (Coetus) factions, often dividing families. Conservatives wanted all their ministers trained in Holland, conducting services in Dutch. Espousing the value of the conversion experience and religious “enthusiasm,” the liberals were eager to Americanize their church and to appeal to a younger generation. This split widened during the American Revolution, taking on an often-violent political dimension. The success of the Whig rebellion and the attainment of American independence drove away many Loyalists or diminished (at least briefly) their social standing. It is interesting to note how the genealogical entries in many Jersey Dutch Bibles change from Dutch to English after 1783, indicating the emergence of a larger and more nearly national sense of cultural identity.

In a journal of his travels through this vicinity in 1797-1799, the Polish patriot and poet, Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, noted that: “The whole countryside is inhabited by old Dutch colonists. I recognized them by their favorite bent for navigation. They were all busy constructing or refitting boats. They are said to be ignorant, avaricious and inhospitable. They love to work and to hoard. They have kept until now their mother tongue; however, nearly all speak and understand English.”

Nineteenth century revolutions in transportation, mechanization and industrialization progressively forced regional folk cultures into competing in a national marketplace, inducing increasing economic specialization and cultural standardization. In 1876, the author of *Walker's Atlas of Bergen County*, commenting upon Union Township, duly reported that: "Fifty years ago this township was occupied by farmers and gardeners of the Holland Dutch stock, who plodded on from year to year, taking their truck to market in their wagons frequently over night, and reducing their expenses by such return loads as they could get for the country stores, etc. The old inhabitants were peculiarly jealous of strangers, and it was with great difficulty that they could be persuaded to part with any of their land. This feature held sway over them long after the building of the New York and Paterson Railroad, which was one of the first railroads in the country; and it is only within about twenty years that any serious inroads have been made on the domains of this peculiar people. Possessing one of the most desirable and attractive districts for the suburban residences of New Yorkers, they refused to use their land for improvements, and continued to plant and plod on as aforetime, while other localities, far less attractive, were being built up and making the land-holders wealthy. There was not even a village in the whole township."

The plodding Bergen Dutch were slowly overwhelmed by suburban encroachment on their agrarian communities and lifestyle. By the 1890s, the growing population of new comers, called Commuters, were warring in school elections and borough formation to seize political control from the old-time rural natives, called Punkin-Dusters (in reference to their supposed habit of dusting the frost from pumpkins).

D. Significance in the Revolutionary War

Strategically located where New Bridge spans the narrows of the Hackensack River, the Steuben House is steeped in Revolutionary War legend and lore. Set in a no-man's land between the two opposing armies, it served as a fort, military headquarters, intelligence-gathering post, encampment ground and battleground throughout the long war. The first recorded visit by a tourist came in the summer of 1888, when a granddaughter of Hackensack's Revolutionary War tavernkeeper, Archibald Campbell, drove up in her carriage and asked to be shown the vaulted root-cellar where her grandfather had hidden to escape his British captors in 1780. Writing in 1909, one observer noted:

"It is certain that one or more skirmishes occurred around this house during the War for Independence, for when the roof was removed some years ago, to be replaced with a new one, the rafters were found with bullets imbedded in them, and there were marks of many others. There is a dungeon in the cellar and any number of old nooks and passages which might have been useful in those times, when it was unsafe to venture abroad much or when the possession of valuables might have worked injury to the owner. The front side of the building is of dressed stone, but the back is rough and appears like the original buildings. The gables are of brick, but whether these bricks were made on the place it is impossible to say."

Historic New Bridge Landing, where the Zabriskie-Steuben House, a State Historic Site, still stands, is the site of the *Bridge That Saved A Nation*, where General Washington and the American garrison of Fort Lee crossed the Hackensack River in the face of the British invasion of November 20, 1776, as immortalized in Thomas Paine's *American Crisis*. It is where British troops under Major General Vaughan attacked the American rear guard on November 21, 1776.

While a constant arena for conflict, the following significant Revolutionary War events are associated with Historic New Bridge Landing:

- British and Loyalist troops under command of Captain Patrick Fergusen attacked about 40 Bergen militiamen at New Bridge on May 18, 1779.
- Major Henry Lee led American troops from New Bridge on August 18, 1779, to attack the British earthworks at Powles Hook (Jersey City).
- A force of Bergen Militia and Continental troops attacked 600 British troops and German auxiliaries at New Bridge on their retreat from Hackensack and Paramus on March 23, 1780, during the two hours it took for the British to repair and cross the New Bridge.
- A body of 312 British, Loyalist and German infantry, attacked and overwhelmed an American outpost at New Bridge commanded by Lieutenant Bryson on April 15, 1780.
- Eight British soldiers were killed, and several wounded, by friendly fire when British troops attempted to attack a body of Bergen Militia in the Zabriskie-Steuben House at New Bridge on May 30, 1780.
- Brigadier General Anthony Wayne led American troops from New Bridge on a raid against the Bull's Ferry Blockhouse on July 20, 1780.
- General Washington made his headquarters in the Zabriskie-Steuben House during the encampment of the Continental Army at Steenrapie (River Edge) on September 4-20, 1780.

E. Architectural History of the Zabriskie-Steuben House

The architectural development of the Zabriskie-Steuben House was commonly misunderstood or misinterpreted prior to scientific architectural investigations undertaken in 1977 by John D. Milner on behalf of the Division of Parks and Forestry (*Architectural Research and Schematic Design Report, Restoration of Von Steuben House*, 1977). Archeological explorations, paint and mortar analysis, and careful detective work, conclusively demonstrated that the original dwelling was a stone saltbox (45' front and 35'-10" deep), with front rooms flanking a center hall and three narrow rooms at the back

of the house, comprising a kitchen, a milk-room and a root cellar, under a shed extension of the gable roof. He also made the interesting and significant observation that the string of rafters framing the west slope of the original gable roof show no evidence of lath or nail holes and therefore are replacements. Milner also found the incomplete framing for a clipped gable or hip roof at the south end, concealed by the later brick gable infill.

Milner's investigation refuted earlier theories and interpretations of the Steuben House's architectural history, which generally postulated several successive additions to a small one-room unit at the center of the present structure (See Rosalie Bailey, *Pre-Revolutionary Dutch Houses and Families*, 1936, pp. 332-333; Loring McMillen, *A Study of the Ackerman-Zabriskie-Von Steuben House*, 1967).

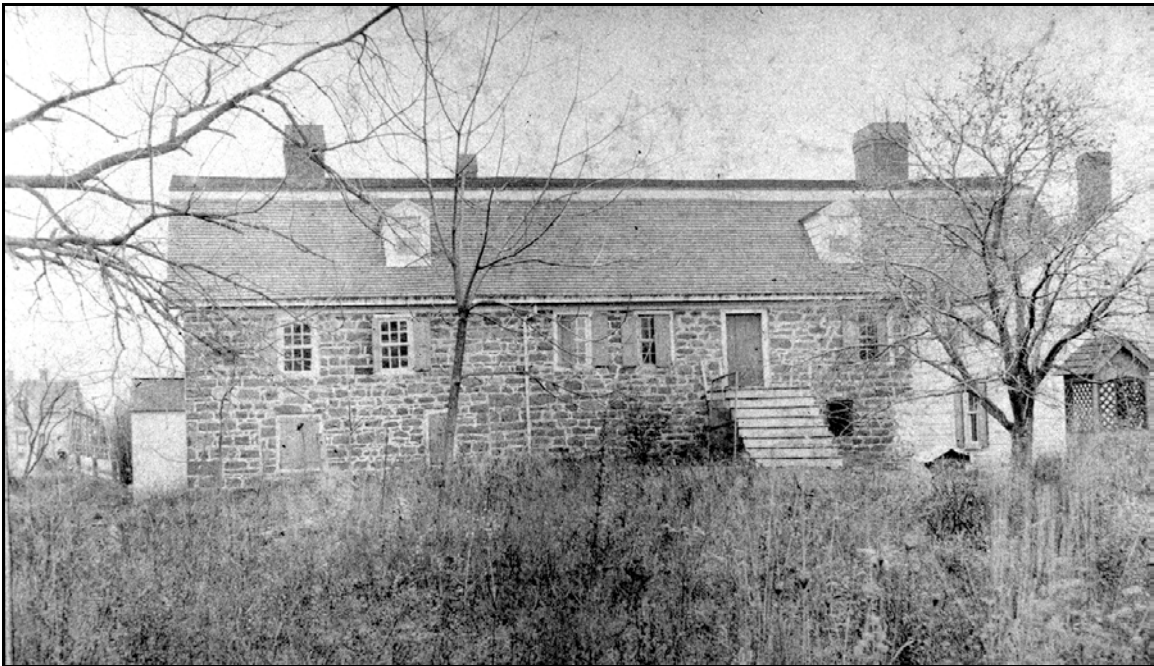


The oldest known photograph of the Steuben House was probably taken in 1891, shortly before the wooden wing, known as the Old Trading Post, was removed.

The Zabriskie-Steuben House should be counted among the five “great houses” of colonial Bergen County, built in the purest imitation of English countryseats to spread the gospel of architectural refinement. In this important sense, it is not typical of Bergen Dutch sandstone houses, but rather it is exceptional in certain crucial respects. Thus it is useless to say that these houses “typically had this” or “typically didn’t have that.” First of all, there are very few extant sandstone houses of this vintage — Claire Tholl estimated that there are probably no more than a half dozen Pre-Revolutionary examples surviving out of the approximately 235 stone houses in Bergen County. Continuing research not only confirms her estimate, but also suggests that she may have erred on the high side. Thus

any inferences drawn from comparisons with other stone houses must be viewed with caution (if not skepticism) — locally at least, the Zabriskie mansion may have set the pattern and not followed it. Furthermore, none of the early houses have survived in their “original” condition, but have changed and grown with the times — this is certainly true of the Zabriskie-Steuben House.

As evidence that the three rear rooms were part of the original house and not a subsequent addition, Milner showed that the west face of the interior stone partition wall was never pointed for exterior exposure. Interestingly, the original Zabriskie dwelling at New Bridge closely matches the description of a house in Hackensack which David W. Provoost offered for sale in 1746, described as “Forty-eight Foot in Length and Twenty-four Foot Broad, with a large Cellar-Kitchen, a Dairy and Store Cellar all joyn’d together, the said Dwelling House has two large Rooms, and an Entry [hall], with a large flush Garret....”



This rear view of the Steuben House was taken before the rear kitchen wing, which can be seen to the far right, was removed in 1939.

John Milner and his associates also proved that the five-room house grew to its present size by a single enlargement, whereby the three-bay north block (21'-3" by 35'-10") and the second floor along the rear (west elevation) were added at the same time. Milner conservatively reported that the Zabriskie mansion had reached its present size by 1784, citing a compensation claim filed on January 24, 1784, by John J. Zabriskie, “now a refugee in the City of New York” for his former homestead at New-Bridge which was “possessed under this Confiscation Law.” Mr. Zabriskie described his estate as: “One large Mansion House, seventy feet long and forty feet wide, containing twelve rooms built with stone, with Outhouses consisting of a bake House, Smoke House, Coach House, and two large Barns, and a Garden, situated at a place called New Bridge (value

£850); also One large gristmill containing two pair of stones adjoining said Mansion House (£1200); Forty Acres of Land adjoining said Mansion House consisting of Meadow Land and two orchards.”

It is most improbable that the Zabriskies undertook such a substantial construction project during the Revolutionary War. The Zabriskies grew wealthy from increased trade brought on by the French and Indian War (1756-1763). Internal evidence suggests that the house was enlarged about the time of the marriage of Jan Zabriskie, Jr., to Jannetje Goelett on November 21, 1764, in order to create a double house with separate quarters for two generations of the family.

The Steuben House’s floor plan is an immediate clue to the house’s atypical enlargement. Its high-ceiling (8'-6 3/4") front rooms, so wasteful of firewood, are also atypical and represent a deliberate display of wealth. This is (as its owner described it in 1784) a “mansion house.” The use of dressed stone facades, architraves surrounding doors and windows, raised paneling, and symmetrical facade arrangements, show a deliberate aping of Classical idioms. The gambrel roof, fairly new to Bergen County at the time of the Zabriskie-Steuben House’s enlargement (circa 1765), is neither the perpetuation of a local folk tradition nor a local invention. Instead, it is part and parcel of the penetration of a Classical Renaissance into the older settled neighborhoods of the eastern seaboard. As economic expansion increased both the resources and aspirations of an entrepreneurial class for more comfortable standards of living, an educated Classicism appealed to a wider audience and influenced even the modest dwellings of merchants, lawyers, and well-to-do farmers.

English settlers in southwestern New Jersey introduced the use of the gambrel roof on their patterned brickwork houses by 1690. While two early examples combine the gambrel with a two-and-a-half story brick house, the gambrel was commonly associated with one-and-a-half story brick houses built in Salem County between 1727 and 1746 (with isolated examples dating as late as 1764. This source of diffusion would explain why the gambrel roof spread throughout the lower Hudson valley, while it occurs infrequently at an early date in the northern reaches of Anglo-Dutch settlement. The distinctive slope of the Bergen Dutch gambrel is not so much a consequence of conscious art as of practical application — the steep slope of early English examples is found on houses only one room deep, whereas the Bergen Dutch used them to span houses one-and-a-half to two rooms deep. This allowed the Bergen Dutch to increase the depth of their stone houses, built low to the ground, and thus expand their living space without building taller buildings. Gambrel or hipped roofs provided an additional floor within the roof. This garret space was partly or entirely given over to bedrooms or finished quarters (as circumstances allowed).

Farmhouse garrets were generally used for the storage of dry goods; seed grain; raw materials such as feathers, wool, and flax; hand-held agricultural implements; fish seines; pigeon nets; smoked provisions; and seasonal textile equipment (such as wool cards, hetchels, spinning wheels, looms and reels). Middle-class homesteads also included “dormitories within the slopes of the roof,” as evidenced by the Brinkerhoff-Demarest

Homestead on Teaneck Road. Hendrick H. Brinkerhoff probably erected his center-hall sandstone dwelling about 1784. In March 1828, two years after his death, an advertisement of sale in the *Paterson Intelligencer* describes his “Dwelling House, one story high, four rooms and an entry on the lower floor, with two bedrooms in the garret, and a convenient garret...”

Bedsteads and chairs were counted among garret furnishings in Bergen Dutch household inventories. Children, farm laborers and travelers would sleep in such quarters on low bedsteads, slawbanks (folding beds), or mattresses. Finished bed chambers with dormers were obvious status symbols and any “well finished house, fit for a gentleman,” would have second-story living quarters in part of its garret — note, for example, that Judge Isaac Nicholl’s garret, inventoried in 1805, included “2 feather Beds, Bedsteads and Bedding and Curtains, worth \$20.

It is highly unlikely that the well-to-do Zabriskies spun much wool, wove their own cloth, and therefore had to store the necessary equipment in their attic. They were not cereal farmers and did not store seed grain there either. Having their own gristmill, grain kilns and storage facilities, it seems unlikely that they would have meal chests and flour barrels in their garret inventory. The Zabriskie estate at New Bridge encompassed only 49 acres surrounding the house, used variously for a large garden, a fruit orchard, pasture and mowing land sufficient to provender the family’s cattle and horses.

Use of the Zabriskie’s New Bridge estate as a battleground, military headquarters, fort and encampment ground (as well as its abandonment by the Zabriskies) strongly suggests deterioration due to the ill effects of war. Again, without reference to the historical record, most antiquarians discounted General Steuben’s association with the Zabriskie mansion. Steuben’s extensive repairs to the premises are openly stated in his advertisement of sale, published in the *New Jersey Journal* on December 3, 1788:

“... Long-noted as the best stand for trade in the state of New Jersey. Large well-built stone house, thoroughly rebuilt lately, a gristmill with two run of stone; excellent new kiln for drying grain for export built lately; other outbuildings, and 40 acres of land, one-half of which is excellent meadow. Situated on the bank of the river by which produce can be conveyed to New York in a few hours, and sloops of 40 tons burthen may load and discharge along side of the mill.”

The Zabriskie mansion at the Hackensack New Bridge, when owned by Steuben, was partly occupied by Steuben’s aide-de-camp, Capt. Benjamin Walker, and partly leased to the son and namesake of its former owner, the Loyalist Jan Zabriskie. The tax assessments for 1786 list Walker & Zabriskie as merchants. On December 4, 1788, the Honorable Major-General Frederick Wm. Baron de Steuben of New York City conveyed his Jersey Estate, comprising 49 acres at New Bridge formerly belonging to John Zabriskie, to John Zabriskie, Jr., of New Barbadoes Township for £1,200.

In 1791, John J. Zabriskie was taxed for 30 acres, two gristmills and one slave; John Zabriskie, Jr. was listed as a merchant and householder. John Seaman, a single man,

owned one vessel. On September 28, 1791, John Brower and his wife Mary sold two tracts upon Round Hook near New Bridge to John Zabriskie, Jr. for £53. The boundary survey for the first of these tracts began on the south side of Tantaquas Creek (Cole's Brook) on the line of John Zabriskie's lands and ran thence over the round hill, thence by various courses until it reached Flatt Creek, thence following along Flat Creek and Tantaquas Creek to the beginning. The boundary survey for the second parcel began on the east side of land belonging to Jan Zabriskie, Jr. at the edge of Flatt Creek and ran to the south side of the "New dam," thence to the Hackensack River, and finally northwest and south along Flatt Creek to the beginning point. It seems that Jan Zabriskie, Jr. restored his father's gristmill to operation by reconstruction of a new dam on Flatt Creek, apparently a tidal arm of Tantaquas Creek and the Hackensack River.

John Zabriskie, Jr., married Catharine Hoagland, daughter of Cornelius Hoagland, on October 13, 1792, at Schraalenburgh, but he died intestate on July 6, 1793, aged 25 years, 9 months and 25 days. On October 1, 1793, his cousin, John E. Seaman, of New York City, mortgaged "those tracts devised unto John E. Seaman by the Last Will and Testament of John Zabriskie, deceased, lying and being near the New Bridge and now occupied by P. Christopher as Tenant, Also all those tracts at Steenrapie, at Sluckup, at Paskack and Werimus...by Estimate 170 Acres" to David P. Demarest, Blacksmith. He discharged this mortgage on June 6, 1794.

The tax ratables for August 1793 included John Zabriskie, Jr., Deceased, as owner of 47 acres and two gristmills; John Zabriskie was listed as owner of a slave. Abraham Collins, who married John Zabriskie's widow, Catherine Hoogland, was taxed for 40 acres, two gristmills and one vessel (this property was the estate formerly belonging to John Zabriskie, Jr., deceased, and inherited by his widow). On March 28, 1795, John E. Seaman, of New York City, mortgaged his interest in the Dwelling House, Grist Mills and lands at the New Bridge, formerly the property of John Zabriskie, Jr., as well as the woodland at Sluckup, to Abraham Collins for £700. He discharged this mortgage on June 2, 1798. In September 1795, the list of tax ratables indicates that Thomas Howard had taken possession of the 40 acres, two gristmills and one slave, formerly owned by the Zabriskies.

The tax lists for September 1796 mention Derrick Banta as owner of 60 acres and one gristmill while John S. Banta was included as a merchant owning 1 gristmill, one-half a vessel; they were owners and residents in the Steuben House at River Edge. In 1797, John S. Banta owned 40 acres, 1 gristmill, and one-half vessel; Derrick Banta owned 20 acres and 1 gristmill. On February 7, 1798, John S. Banta, yeoman, and his wife Rachel, of the Precinct of New Barbadoes, conveyed five tracts to Derreck Banta of the same place, yeoman, for \$7,875. The five tracts comprised: first, eleven acres of woodland and meadow on the east side of the Hackensack River in present-day New Milford; second, a parcel of land near Round Hook, on the south side of Tantaquas Creek (Cole's Brook), across from the Zabriskie-Steuben House; third, another small parcel of land, also on Round Hook, bounded upon Flat Creek, Tantaquas Creek and the Hackensack River; fourth, seven acres of woodland at Sluckup; and fifth, all that part of the real estate at New Bridge, formerly belonging to Jan Zabriskie, that had been presented to the Baron

von Steuben, comprising 49 acres. On April 20, 1798, these same five tracts, including the Steuben House, were sold by Derreck Banta, yeoman, of New Barbadoes, to Luke Van Boskirk of the same place for \$7,250. The list of tax ratables for September 1802 includes Luke Van Buskirk, shopkeeper, as owner of 49 acres and 2 gristmills at New Bridge.

On January 3, 1815, Daniel Denniston and his wife Elizabeth conveyed five tracts of land, formerly belonging to Lucas Van Buskirk (including the Steuben House), to Andrew Zobriskie for \$5,000. Andrew Zobriskie (1772-1837) was a cousin to John Zabriskie. He opened the first commercial brickyard in the Hackensack Valley. The brick gable infill is probably his handiwork. In 1820, Andrew Zabriskie, shopkeeper, was taxed for 200 acres, 3 to 8 tan vats, 1 fishery, 1 sawmill and 3 gristmills.

In 1839, Andrew's son, David A. Zobriskie, took ownership of the family homestead. Captain Dave, as he was familiarly known, owned and commanded a schooner named *The Farmer*. About 1845, a wooden wing was built onto the south gable end of the Zabriskie-Steuben House for use of a store, where farmers would exchange cordwood for groceries.

The 1850 Census for New Barbadoes listed (629-659) David A. Zobriskie, aged 40 years, Waterman; his wife Jane, aged 38 years; and children: David A., aged 13 years; Cornelius, aged 11 years; Andrew, aged 9 years; May E., aged 5 years; Christiana, aged 3 years; and John, aged 5 months. Catherine Oats, aged 22 years, born in Germany, and Samuel Banta, 18 years old, a boatman, also resided there. Next door, the census listed Jacob J. Demott, aged 27 years, Merchant, his wife Catherine, aged 23 years, and daughter May Helen, aged 3 years. Judy Jackson, 12 years old, a Black, also lived with the family.

David A. Zobriskie also built a frame store wing adjoining the south gable-end of the stone house. He made other improvements, including replacement of the front porch, for the *Bergen Democrat* reported in March 1872, "Anderson Zabriskie is effecting considerable improvements by adding a handsome verandah, &c, to the front of his dwelling house." His son, D. Anderson Zabriskie removed this store wing shortly after acquiring the property in 1891. The porch was then extended around the south gable.

The successful blend of freestone with Classical forms and ornament produced the Bergen Dutch cottage form. By 1834, Thomas Gordon would admire its distinctive aspects and describe it as "ancient," though its oldest examples had barely stood for eighty years:

"There are few spots in New Jersey presenting more pleasing attractions than this country above the Hackensack, and on the highlands on each side of the river. The houses, built in the ancient Dutch cottage form, of one full story, with its projecting pent houses, and dormitories within the slopes of the roof, are sometimes large, always painted white, and surrounded with verdant lawns, shrubbery, and well-cultivated gardens. And we may here remark, that the taste for horticulture and ornamental shrubberies, appears more general in the central and northern parts of New Jersey, than in the southern parts, or in the state of Pennsylvania."

One significant alteration distorts the interior spaces of the Steuben House. The interior partition wall dividing the parlors was removed in 1923 when Harry Benson opened a restaurant here called the 1752 House. The framing for a jambless Dutch fireplace survives in of the ceiling in the original (1752) south parlor.

F. The Oldest Highway Swing Bridge in New Jersey



This photograph, taken around 1925, shows the pedestrian walkway added to the north side of the bridge around 1913. The front section was added to the Arrow Canoe Club for an ice cream parlor.

The Bridge That Saved A Nation is not only gone, but was severely damaged on the day following the very passage that made it memorable. In point of fact, it was repeatedly dismantled and rebuilt throughout the war. Not only don't we know what it looked like or even exactly how its draw functioned, but also no depiction of a similar eighteenth-century bridge (if even there was one) across the Hackensack River has ever been found, despite exhaustive searches. In its place stands the oldest highway swing-bridge in the State of New Jersey, listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places as such. It was built in 1889. It tells us that this remained an important point of passage, for overland and water traffic, nourishing attendant stores and a hotel, even at that relatively late date.

In July 1888, contracts for erecting an iron bridge at New Bridge were awarded on the following bids:

Bridge Contracts: New Bridge Draw — Smith Bridge Co., \$4,170; Penn. \$4,390; Berlin, \$4,287; Dean & Westbrook, \$4,330; Variety, \$4,390; Columbia, \$4,345; Pittsburg, \$4,467; King Iron, \$3,990 — King Iron awarded contract. Bids for stone work — Joseph Stagg, \$3,994; S. H. Vanderbeck, \$4,324. Contract to Mr. Stagg.

Joseph W. Stagg, House Mover and Bridge Builder, resided at Highland, Bergen County. In the final week of August 1888, Joseph Stagg commenced tearing down the bridge at New Bridge and began laying stone for the abutments. By the close of November 1888, the people of New Bridge were indignant. The old bridge had been torn down about August first and although contractor Joseph Stagg had completed his portion of the contract, no attempt had been made on the part of the new contractors to do their work and open the highway. The new iron swing bridge at New Bridge was opened on Monday, February 4, 1889. At their monthly meeting on that same date, the Board of Chosen Freeholders were presented a bill for \$100 in favor of Joseph Stagg for building a temporary foot-bridge across the Hackensack River at Cherry Hill, which apparently served the citizens of New Bridge during the six months that they waited for the iron bridge to be installed.

G. Modern History of the Steuben House, A State Historic Site

Alluring tales and lingering traces of bygone glory have made heritage tourism a fact of life here for better than a century. In 1888, two elderly women rode their carriage to the old Zabriskie mansion at New Bridge and asked to see the stone vault where their grandfather, Hackensack tavernkeeper Archibald Campbell, had hidden during a cold March night in March 1780 to escape his British captors. They were the first trickle in a steady and growing stream of visitors attracted to the storied landscape that is New Bridge.

Firmly documenting its association with the Prussian Inspector-General of the Continental troops, William Alexander Linn read a paper devoted to “Baron Steuben’s Estate” at the Society’s annual dinner on Washington’s Birthday, 1904. It was published in the first *Papers and Proceedings of the Bergen County Historical Society (1902-1905)*, enlarging public curiosity. The death of Captain D. Anderson Zobriskie in May 1907, however, raised concerns about the fate of this Revolutionary War landmark, which now passed to his daughter, Magdalena.

There was a genuine sentiment to protect its memorable qualities. As reported in July 1909, the Baron Steuben House at North Hackensack was in danger of being “remodeled and made into a tenement house, unless some friend of historic structures comes forward and buys it for the purpose of preserving it.” A reporter for the *Newark Sunday Call* called the Steuben House “quite as historic and quite as beautiful architecturally” as any other antique building in America, worthy of “better treatment than to be transformed into a tenement house.” It was rumored that the house could be bought for about \$5,000 and “would make a delightful summer home for some one who is interested in such a

building, and it really deserves preservation.”

The same reporter observed one millstone being “used as a steppingstone for the house and another lying in the mud at the mouth of the creek, above which projects the shaft upon which it turned. A few of the posts which supported the mill are still visible, but aside from that the structure has entirely disappeared.” Despite such publicity, Magdalena Zabriskie sold her family’s 30 acres, including the old Baron Steuben house, to industrialist Charles W. Bell on October 1, 1909. He intended to build a large mill on the property for the manufacture of cardboard, using the waterfront and planning a spur from the New Jersey & New York railroad for freight facilities.

Charles W. Bell engaged machinery to dredge the Hackensack River and Cole’s Brook, near the Steuben House, for the erection of his proposed large manufactory, which was expected to employ 500 hands. Besides foreign capitalists, William Randolph Hearst, of New York, owned an interest in the ink factory, supposedly to supply ink for his publications in case of union strikes. Where the dredging machine was operating at the mouth of the creek, a tributary of the river, workmen unearthed the ancient millstone of Zabriskie’s tide mill. Another millstone and shaft were left imbedded in the mud. Andrew Zabriskie, it was said, also established a brickyard, the first in North Jersey, near the site of the proposed paper mill (located where the Steuben Arms apartments stand today). Hackensack Mayor Charles W. Bell transferred his interest in the 50-acre tract at North Hackensack to the American Ink Company in May 1911.



James Natalo published this postcard view around 1915.

According to the 1915 State Census, John Schwarzman and his family occupied the old Zabriskie-Steuben House. Mr. Schwarzman was born October 1856 in Austria and immigrated to the United States in 1882. His wife Katie was also Austrian. Their children residing at home were: John G., born in Arkansas in February 1895, then 20 years old and employed as a clerk; Dewey M., born in Arkansas in April 1898, then 17 years old and a farmer; Gustaf, born in Arkansas in June 1899, then 14 years old; and Harry, born in Arkansas in June 1904, then 10 years old. They may have shared the dwelling with the family of Thomas Lawton, an English shoemaker, 81 years old, and his wife Augusta, 69 years old. In 1916, the old Zobriskie estate at New Bridge was sold to the Veronica Realty Corporation (formerly the Veronica Ink Company) of New York.

Through the First World War, the Steuben House was partly rented to the Schwarzmans, he being a tenant farmer who also rented boats to vacationers. He and his family occupied the south end of the house, together with the frame kitchen wing at the rear. The remainder housed several families of summer boarders, each family living in a section of the house containing two or three rooms at most.

The Veronica Realty Corporation sold the premises in 1919 to William Randolph Hearst's mother-in-law, Mrs. Hanna L. Willson, of Manhattan. She died September 14, 1919. Millicent V. Hearst and her father, George L. Willson, renounced their rights and the property passed to daughter Anita Irwin, wife of Walter W. Irwin, of Manhattan. On May 29, 1929, William Randolph and Millicent Hearst and her father, George L. Willson, conveyed all their real estate at New Bridge to Anita Irwin.

The Women's Auxiliary of the Bergen County Historical Society toured the old Steuben House in June 1920, noting that "in spite of its fall from its past estate, has many interesting features still to be seen." They returned on June 11, 1921, hosting local chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The owner, Mrs. Anita Irwin, sister of William Randolph Hearst, leased the landmark dwelling to Harry Benson in 1923 for use as a tearoom and restaurant, to be known as the "1752 House." The interior stone wall dividing the parlors was removed to open a large room, but the project soon failed or was abandoned. The alterations only heightened a sense of public concern.

The American Sesquicentennial of 1926 renewed patriotic sentimentality. On January 25, 1926, State Senator William B. Mackay and Assemblyman John Y. Dater introduced companion bills, asking that \$12,000 be appropriated to purchase the Steuben estate at New Bridge (River Edge) as "a place of national significance dear to the heart of every Jerseyman who wishes it to be preserved." The bill passed the Senate (12 to 2) on February 8, 1926. A large delegation from the Steuben Society listened from the galleries to Governor A. Harry Moore's oration on George Washington, delivered on Washington's Birthday, February 22, 1926. Immediately thereafter, the Steuben House Commission bill passed the General Assembly unanimously (57 to 0) and was signed into law.

The Steuben House Commission was organized on June 26, 1926, to oversee the acquisition and restoration of the Steuben House. While some had hoped that the family

of William Randolph Hearst, owners of the historic estate, would donate the premises to the public, negotiations stalemated when they instead demanded what Sheriff Joseph Kinzley, Chairman of the Steuben House Commission, considered “a Tammany Hall price for the place.” When the Hearst family refused all offers, the legislature authorized the use of condemnation. In May 1928, the Hearst interests contested eminent-domain proceedings but lost. The State of New Jersey took title on June 28, 1928, paying \$14,000 for the decaying landmark and only one surrounding acre of land.

On March 11, 1929, Sheriff Kinzley urged the Legislature to appropriate \$100,000 for restoration of the house and grounds, but received no official response. In the absence of official action, the Frank J. Van Wetering Post of the Hackensack V.F.W. cleared overgrown vegetation that obscured the house and hired a man to maintain the grounds. The General George S. Patton Post of Dumont started a fund drive and some money was raised to assist with maintenance. The Bergen County Historical Society urged that the State immediately appropriate \$25,000 for emergency repairs and upkeep. A bill was introduced in February 1930 to that purpose, but it was not enacted.

Finally, in April 1931, Assemblywoman Emma Peters, of Rutherford, managed to get a \$7,000 emergency appropriation to repair the deteriorated roof and to settle outstanding bills. On June 18, 1931, a contract was awarded to the Collins Construction Company of Hackensack. Accordingly, \$6,116 worth of rehabilitation began in July, under the supervision of architect Wesley S. Bessell, and included uncovering a beamed ceiling and putting on a new roof. Some of the funds went to pay a caretaker and to cover other outstanding obligations.

In July 1931, Joseph Kinzley, chairman of the Steuben House Commission, reported that restoration work on the old Steuben House would be completed by the fall. The work largely consisted of tearing down decaying structures, removing accumulated debris, rebuilding stonewalls, fireplaces and chimneys. The contractor was also directed to preserve “all the old Holland brick, handsome hewn beams, stone block and old sills in the building.” A beamed ceiling that was replastered was “reputed to be one of the finest examples of the Colonial period in this section.”

Initial plans did not provide for heating or sanitation, though there was hope of installing a resident caretaker in one or two rooms. An antique stone step, which had been used in the 1819 County Courthouse in Hackensack, was secured for the entrance (and remains at this location to this day). The Steuben Society, the Bergen County Historical Society, and the Daughters of the American Revolution, applied to furnish and to use some of the rooms in the house for meeting purposes. Large numbers of visitors were daily making special visits, arriving from all parts of the State.

During the Depression years, a family of squatters occupied the house, subsisting in part from rabbits caught on the property. Facing difficult economic times and the need to more efficiently organize its governmental functions, the New Jersey Legislature formed a Historic Sites Commission in the Department of Conservation and Development in 1931 to administer the State’s expanding historic-sites preservation and interpretive program,

and to consolidate the powers previously exercised by independent commissions supervising State-owned historic properties. Accordingly, the Steuben House Commission was dissolved in February 1932 and its responsibilities passed to the Historic Sites Commission. In 1934, the Historic American Buildings Survey prepared detailed measured drawings of the house. With these completed, Francis Koehler, President of the Bergen County Historical Society, urged a rehabilitation project.

The Bergen County Historical Society held its first program at the Steuben House on Constitution Day in September 1935, when caretaker, Mrs. Gordon Brown Kynoch, escorted members through the rooms under restoration. On October 30, 1937, the Historic Sites Commission dedicated a bronze roadside marker and a bronze wall plaque at the site. At this time, Louis Sherwood, of the Historic Sites Commission, forecast an impending restoration of the house by the WPA.

On June 20, 1938, a crew of WPA workmen began a \$20,000 renovation of the Steuben House (the New Jersey Historic Sites Commission contributing \$3,000 and the WPA supplying \$15,800 worth of labor to the project). A new oil heating system, a bath and lavatory were installed. The original floorboards of the ground level were removed, thin concrete pads were poured between the original floor joists, and new random-oak flooring was installed on the first floor. Original plaster walls and ceilings were either removed or concealed as a sand-finish plaster was newly applied over expanded metal lath. The grounds were drained by a system of subterranean concrete conduits (called French drains) and the New Jersey Highway Department built an 18' roadway around the house (removed in 2001). A mid-nineteenth century frame kitchen wing was torn off the southwest corner of the building. Lastly, whitewash coating the east and south elevations of the house was sandblasted and a temporary concrete porch pad was laid in front.

On October 14, 1938, Thomas Marple, Assistant Director of the Historic Sites Commission, offered to allow the Bergen County Historical Society to occupy the restored Steuben House as their museum headquarters. The Society accepted on October 20, 1938, passing the required amendment to their By-Laws on December 13, 1939, which provided that, in the event of the Society's dissolution, its "collections of every sort will become the property of the State of New Jersey under the supervision of the Commission on Historic Sites or its successor, on the condition that such property will remain in the present building known as the Steuben House." This dissolution clause in the Society's By-Laws was removed in June 1983.

On August 19, 1939, the Hackensack Boys Workshop of the National Youth Administration set about splitting rails and posts from condemned chestnut telephone poles to fence the Steuben House property. The renovated house was formally dedicated on September 23, 1939. Thomas Marple, Director and Secretary of the New Jersey Historic Sites Commission, represented the State of New Jersey. A Red Oak, the State Tree, was planted near the northeast corner of the front porch. It apparently liked the site and has grown into a beautiful specimen.

The house was not restored in 1938-39 as a period home or as an artifact of its time, but rather it was converted into a museum headquarters and clubhouse, complete with showcases for artifacts, offices and a library. The Society began meeting in the historic homestead in 1940. The museum regularly opened between 10 A.M. and 4:30 P.M. from Tuesday through Saturday. Admission was free and 3,000 children visited during the first year.

Route #4 was built between the newly opened George Washington Bridge and Paterson as part of the original State Highway System, spurring development on its periphery. But although the population of River Edge doubled between 1930 and 1940, 25% of the borough remained farm acreage when the Steuben House opened as a public museum in September 1939. The population tripled between 1940 and 1950, increasing from three to nine thousand. Within this time frame, the Steuben House, sitting upon an acre of ground, quickly lost the open surroundings of centuries past. Kiddy Land Amusement Park opened on the largely wooded grounds of the old ink factory, between Main Street and Coles Brook. An auto salvage yard occupied the northeast corner of the intersection of Hackensack Avenue and Main Street. The Bergen County Historical Society responded in 1945 by purchasing the adjacent 7.3 acres to the west of the Steuben House, thereby preventing further encroachment upon its historic setting. The Society vigorously contested the County's revived plans to build a new river crossing adjacent to the Steuben House in 1947. The right-of-way for the approaching roadway on the west side of the river is still evident on the tax map, showing the road corridor as it would have crossed through the present parking lot of the Steuben House to the river's edge.

On July 4, 1942, a new steel flagpole was dedicated in the backyard of the Steuben House. The War of 1812 cannon named "Old Bergen" was permanently relocated to a concrete mount in front of the Steuben House (the cannon was stolen in 1978). In 1944, a sandstone well and well sweep were constructed in the backyard (removed in 1983).

The Historic Sites Commission's functions and properties were transferred to the Division of Forestry, Geology, Parks and Historic Sites in 1945. As of May 1, 1946, half of the State admission fee to the Steuben House went to the Society

The decision was made in August 1947 to build shelves for the Society's library in the northwest room on the second story of the Steuben House. In 1948, the Society employed Mrs. Curtis to staff the house on Thursdays and Fridays. Mrs. Herbert T. Johnson and the Englewood Garden Club planted an herb garden behind the house in 1949. In September of that same year, a contract was let for a new oil burner. In October, new directional road-signs were established on local roads. Mrs. Olga Atkins, Supervisor of the Historic Sites Section, decided after an initial inspection of the property in 1950 that the well and four-seat outhouse should be restored.

Drainage remained a problem on the grounds. In 1954 the County installed a new drainage pipe, with a "tidal flap" on its outlet, thus allowing run-off from storm drains to empty into the Hackensack River. As the County had decided to extend Hackensack Avenue beyond its intersection with Main Street to a new river crossing north of the Steuben

House, this drainage system was laid in the abandoned right-of-way south of the Steuben House. Using the embankment built for the abandoned bridge approach, 18" to 22" of fill was spread around the Steuben House, helping considerably to alleviate tidal flooding.

As the septic tank was subject to recurrent back filling by high tides, repairs were continually made to address the problem. On November 17, 1954, a contract for the installation of a new 500-gallon Septic Tank, Orangeburg leach lines and gravel beds, was awarded. While digging percolation test holes, old brickwork was discovered along the north driveway (removed in 2001), on the edge of the marsh, about 30 feet from the northwest corner of the Steuben House. The Society commenced a "Buried Treasure Hunt" at this site in June 1959, reportedly unearthing a 12' x 15' building, with a well-laid brick floor, and recovering two dozen buried eighteenth-century bottles containing cherry pits. Diggers kept some bottles for themselves and sold the rest for 50¢ apiece — none now survive at the site.

In 1954-56, the Demarest Memorial Foundation (now the Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation) painstakingly disassembled the Demarest House on its original site, behind the present New Milford Borough Hall (actually where the American Legion Post now stands) and reconstructed it on Main Street, River Edge, directly behind the Steuben House, taking a 99-year lease for 2,800 square feet from the Bergen County Historical Society. The Red Barn (an 1889 English-style dairy barn or "cow house," also known as the Westervelt-Thomas Barn) was moved from Washington Township and reconstructed in its present location behind the Steuben House in November 1954. This barn was raised and set on a new foundation in 1984.

The Bureau of Architecture, Department of the Treasury, put out specifications for restoration of the roof framing, structural reinforcement, and roof repairs to the Steuben House in March 1955. Most original roof trusses were removed and replaced with circular-sawn oak timbers, a new wooden shingle roof was installed, the first floor was painted, electrical repairs were made, fixtures added, a kitchen installed, and sewage disposal upgraded. Sadly, the old roof trusses were replaced to raise headroom in the garret level, enabling the space to be used for exhibits. The carpenters found it impossible to cut the oak for mortise-and-tenon work; so most trusses are nailed together with fake pegs inserted in auger-holes. In October 1955, while the replacement of the roof rafters was progressing, architect Lawrence Moon decided not to replace the rafters and other timbers at the south end of the house in order to preserve some of the original work and to save the small bedroom.

The garret was opened up (by the removal of old board partitions) to make a 25' x 50' space for exhibits that had been previously displayed downstairs in the large museum room. The large room downstairs was then furnished in a more homelike setting. The entrance was moved to the front porch and the Dwelling-Room converted from an entry and office to a "Colonial kitchen." There were 4,536 visitors to the house in 1955. In the summer of 1956, the garret was first opened to the public, despite low headroom and a narrow winder staircase.

The new roadway for extending Hackensack Avenue beyond its intersection with Main Street was laid out in 1956 across the northwest corner of the Society's property, to a new concrete-and-steel bridge over the Hackensack River, 500' north of the iron truss bridge. The closing of the 1889 swing bridge to automotive traffic turned Main Street, River Edge, into a dead-end in front of the Steuben House. Old New Bridge Road (on the boundary between New Milford and Teaneck) likewise became a dead end.

The Army Corps of Engineers planned to destroy the old bridge as soon as the new one was completed. The Bergen County Historical Society and the Dumont Women's Club successfully petitioned to keep the historic span for a pedestrian crossing. Colonel John T. O'Neill, of the Army Corps of Engineers, yielded to Freeholder Walter M. Neill, who promised that the County of Bergen would henceforth maintain the old bridge, if it were spared.

The Westervelt-Thomas Barn was opened to the public on October 14, 1956. On December 4, 1956, the Distaff Committee of the Bergen County Historical Society was organized "to assist in preservation and display of such valuable treasures and to aid in securing additions to the Society's collection of Americana." The attendance in 1956 was recorded at 6,624 persons.

Olga Atkins, Supervisor of the State Historic Sites Section, submitted specifications for major maintenance to the Steuben House in August 1957, including cleaning and re-pointing of masonry joints with a sand-lime mortar, raising a ramp to connect the different garret floor levels, repairing attic floor boards, installing lighting fixtures in the garret, applying pine paneling over the stairway bulkhead at the attic level, installing a stair railing, capping the chimneys, installing a new electrical panel in the Toilet and Furnace Room, putting in base and floor receptacles and switches, lamps and lighting fixtures, and painting all exterior woodwork. The Steuben House was closed early in 1958 for repairs and not opened to the public until March 30th. The \$18,000 renovation took six weeks.

In January 1959, Mrs. Boeck, caretaker at the Steuben House, reported that servicemen for the Hackensack Water Company had discovered a leak in the water line where it crossed the bed of the Hackensack River. The loss was estimated at about 800 gallons per day. Contractor Theodore D'Agostino excavated a trench from Main Street in River Edge, and installed a new water line in August 1959, using an easement across the lands of the Bergen County Historical Society, secured on February 18, 1959.

The Society transferred a small piece of land to the State of New Jersey in 1959, just south of the house, to provide the first parking lot. The Maintenance Division of the State Highway Department completed construction of the parking area in May 1960. The project also included installation of a brick walk with a "basket-weave pattern," on a 4-inch concrete base, leading from the new parking lot to the south end of the Steuben House. In July 2001, a portion of this walkway was re-laid to form a ramp to the level of the new wooden porch.

Single-bedroom garden apartments replaced the Kiddy Land Amusement Park that operated on the south side of Main Street, opposite the historic park. Coles Brook, the boundary between River Edge and the City of Hackensack, was straightened and commercial development began on Commerce Way.

Bergen County Freeholder D. Bennett Mazur initiated a project in 1967 to build a Hall of History, using a portion of the Society's land, lying west of the barn, whereon the County would put up a building to display the collections of the Bergen County Historical Society and the Bergen Community Museum. The old County Poor House on Ridgewood Avenue in Paramus was instead converted to a museum in 1969, but the Society withdrew its participation. In December 1967, archeologist Roland Robbins excavated a section of the river landing in front of the Steuben House, recovering many artifacts.

The Steuben Arms apartments were built on the south side of Main Street, River Edge, in 1967 and commercial development quickly surrounded the new crossroads of Main Street and Hackensack Avenue. Using plans developed by Harry Dobson, the Bergen County Historical Society awarded a contract in July 1968 to spread topsoil, grade, and seed with grass, a strip of their land, 50' wide, extending from the auto-salvage yard to the Demarest House. The first floor of the Steuben House was changed into a "colonial" house museum and the Victorian items placed in storage. Bloomingdales was built on the north side of Route 4 in Hackensack, forming the core of what would become the Riverside Square Mall.

With funding from the Federal Open Space and New Jersey Green Acres programs, the Township of Teaneck acquired 10.54 acres of land in 1968-69 at a bend in the Hackensack River, where the communities of Teaneck, New Milford, Hackensack and River Edge intersect. Once the site of Rekow's truck farm and several summer bungalows composing Benson's Campground, the new parkland was named to honor Clarence W. Brett, a former member of the Teaneck Planning Board.

In April 1974, the firm of Miceli, Week and Kulik presented a *Lake Hackensack Shoreline Plan* to the Bergen County Board of Chosen Freeholders. As its centerpiece, the plan called for creation of a 200-acre freshwater lake behind a tidal barrier to be erected between the Midtown and Susquehanna Railroad bridges in Hackensack. The shoreline was conceived as a continuous recreation system, linking a variety of recreational, cultural and commercial attractions.

As part of this grand scheme, Lake Hackensack planner Luciano Miceli proposed construction of a historic village and extensive recreational facilities in Brett Park. His proposal envisioned a river front beach, bath house and snack bar, multi-use athletic fields, tennis courts, boat rentals and docks, foot paths, family picnic area, an Historic Village, shops and Village Green, a restaurant and parking for 76 cars. Old buildings were to be moved, or antique reproductions built, on the flood plain in Brett Park, opposite the Steuben House. The plan called for "a unifying village motif ... to provide a compact yet appropriate setting for the buildings." Office rental space was to be offered as a partial

adaptive reuse of these historic buildings.

Across the river, the State of New Jersey was to more fully develop the museum potential of the Steuben House through a plan of extensive renovations. Its grounds were to be screened from incompatible adjacent land uses. The State was also to acquire the junkyard at the west edge of the property, making possible a more attractive approach and allowing the removal of the existing road and parking lot, located immediately south of the house. Integral to the proposed park design, the Bergen County Historical Society made plans for a museum and Society headquarters building (on the site where the Campbell-Christie House now stands). The County of Bergen also acquired marshland on the river's edge, north of Hackensack Avenue, where it planned to build an environmental center.

In May 1975, Teaneck's own park consultant, Robert B. Kinsey, concluded that the proposed County projects "would constitute an over-development of the Brett Park site — an attempt to include many crowd-producing areas and facilities into a site not large enough to accommodate them." He further noted "a substantial part of the total acreage does not lend itself to development for active (or even passive) recreational development." When environmental concerns doomed the projected tidal barrier and freshwater lake as its *raison d'être*, the plan lost its unifying spirit (in this case, the County of Bergen) and dissolved, largely unfulfilled, into its disparate elements.

With help from the Campbell-Christie Society of New Milford, the County of Bergen and the Bergen County Historical Society cooperated to relocate the Campbell-Christie House from its original site at the intersection of River Road and Henley Avenue in New Milford to the Society's lands at New Bridge on September 27, 1977. The County leased the plot of ground that the house occupies from the Society, leasing the interior to the Society for its use. After extensive reconstruction, the Campbell-Christie House opened to the public in 1980. Due to fire damage, the original kitchen wing was not salvaged and reconstructed on the new site.

Continental Plaza (433 Hackensack Avenue, containing 633,000 sq. ft. in three towers with an attached parking garage) was built in 1972 on the old driving range, west of Hackensack Avenue. In 1978, the Riverside Square Mall was built around Bloomingdales, less than a quarter miles south of the Steuben House. Shortly thereafter, the County of Bergen designed and built a riverside park, with public access from the rear of the parking garage of the new mall.

The Division of Parks and Forestry installed an ejection-pump sanitary line and connection with the County sewer system in 1973, using a 15-foot wide easement from the Bergen County Historical Society to reach the Steuben House.

Due to flood damage to the caretaker's living room and kitchen, located in the rear basement rooms of the Steuben House, the Division of Parks and Forestry asked the Bergen County Historical Society to remove their library collections from the northwest room. A new kitchen and living room were then installed in the rear rooms on the second

floor in 1979, placing the caretaker's residence on one floor and above the reach of tidal flooding for the first time. Kevin Wright was employed as "caretaker" on October 31, 1981, and became the site's first professional Historic Preservation Specialist on July 18, 1984. He and his family resided in the Steuben House until February 1996. Their oldest child, Ivan, was two and a half years old when they moved there. Two children, Benjamin and Anna Wright, were actually born in the house, respectively in December 1982 and February 1985.

John Spring, president of the Bergen County Historical Society, assembled a Site Management Committee in September 1983 to examine the site and structures at New Bridge, to make plans for their care and development, and to report to the Society on findings and priorities. The Committee also made a study of "Society lands and State lands on the west bank of the river as well as an investigation of areas on the east bank of the river." *The New Bridge Landing Historic Park Site Management Plan* (August 1984) suggested the name of *Historic New Bridge Landing Park* as a way to integrate the various historic buildings and their respective owners into a single coordinated entity, saying that the "name represents a recognition that the resources, and organizations which participate in their preservation, are partners in the management of the area." To this end, the committee deliberately included representatives of the Bergen County Historical Society, the Division of Parks and Forestry, the Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation, and, to the extent possible, from the three neighboring communities at New Bridge.

As columnist Mark Stuart wrote ("History needs a face lift," *The Record*, April 17, 1985): "The society's idea is to recreate this whole collection [of historic buildings] as a historic-cultural park, the heritage of every resident of Bergen County. The park would include not only the society's property but Brett Park in Teaneck, just across the river; the corner of Hackensack Avenue and Main Street, now occupied by an auto junkyard; and a small stretch of New Milford that includes the street on which the New Bridge Inn now stands." The *Site Management Plan* also identified "a need for a Visitor Center" to "display large items from the collection and provide space for group audio-visual presentations on Bergen County history, architecture, crafts and natural environs." It was to include space for a research library, sales area and rest rooms. Thus the *Historic New Bridge Landing General Management Plan* of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission is a direct and complete fulfillment of the Bergen County Historical Society's own wishes and plans.

After the BCHS Board of Trustees adopted the *Site Management Plan* in June 1984, a copy was officially presented to the Division of Parks and Forestry for its approval. BCHS President John Spring personally handed a copy to Governor Thomas Kean on his visit to the site during the Hackensack River Festival in June 1985. The Society discussed the plan with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, seeking Green Acres purchase of the junkyard, and also discussed the rehabilitation of the iron swing-bridge with the County Engineer. Kevin Tremble made presentations before the municipal officials of River Edge, Teaneck and New Milford (See "\$1.7M plan for historic park," *The Record*, March 25, 1985).

The Society encouraged the various stakeholders to act upon this plan. In response, the Division of Parks and Forestry added the board reading “Historic New Bridge Landing” to the entrance sign at the Steuben House. BCHS Trustee Harold Syversen conducted a membership fund drive to erect the rail fencing around the grounds and river landing. To mark the bridge’s centennial in 1989, the Site Committee successfully applied for the Iron Swing Bridge to be included on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places and persuaded the County of Bergen to paint it and clear away vegetation that obscured it from view. At this time, the County of Bergen also erected the two brown historical markers on the river landing explaining the history of the bridge and tide mill. The County also placed directional signs to Historic New Bridge on the surrounding streets and highways.

The Division of Parks and Forestry undertook a major maintenance project to repair the exterior of the Steuben House in 1984, doing extensive repointing of masonry joints, reconstructing the chimneys above the roof line, replacing the wood shingle roof, and making other much needed repairs and painting. The position of Caretaker was upgraded to the professional position of Historic Preservation Specialist in July 1984.

In evaluation of its open space and recreational needs, the Township of Teaneck adopted a *Master Plan and Summary of Background Studies*, prepared by the firm of Queale & Lynch, Inc., in June 1985. Two important guidelines, recommended in the Draft Revision of 1993, were adopted, namely, (1) that appropriate zoning standards should allow for a natural buffer of about 100 feet along the Hackensack River and that the township should require future development on land fronting the river to provide for a river pathway in conformance with the Hackensack River Pathway concept plan; and (2) that any development of Brett Park should be made with regard to plans for the entire New Bridge Landing area being developed by the Bergen County Historical Society, the County and the State.

PSE&G installed an extended service line to the Demarest and Steuben Houses in 1991, providing gas heat. At this time, a 275-gallon tank was removed from the root cellar of the Steuben House. The basement location of the furnace continued to be a problem, however, due to repeated flood damage. The site curator moved from the residence in the Steuben House in March 1996.

The Site Committee’s efforts to co-ordinate planning at Historic New Bridge foundered because of the Society’s lack of resources and an inability to compel participation from the disparate governmental entities that needed to be involved. The creation of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission solved these defects and legally established the very centralized coordinating committee that the Site Committee struggled to be.

The Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission was established by legislation (*PL. 1995, Chapter 260*) in 1995 to coordinate and implement federal, State, county, municipal and private development policies and other activities incidental to the preservation, maintenance, restoration and interpretation of historic buildings, structures, sites and

features of Historic New Bridge Landing, so as to develop and promote their optimal educational and recreational benefit to the public. The Commission provides the regular interface needed to inform and coordinate decisions made by diverse public and private entities having ownership of land, buildings, structures or roadways within the Commission's jurisdiction.

The Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission consists of a representative from the County of Bergen, a representative from the Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation, a representative from the Borough of River Edge, a representative from the Borough of New Milford, two representatives from the Bergen County Historical Society, and two representatives from the Township of Teaneck. Each of these eight members is appointed by resolution of the respective governing bodies they are to represent and serve for a term of three years. The Director of the Division of Parks and Forestry is the ninth member. The Commission's business is organized and conducted by annually elected officers, namely: a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, a Secretary, and a Treasurer.

After years of meetings, seeking public input, and building consensus, final approval of the *Historic New Bridge Landing General Management Plan* on February 4, 1999, set the stage for remarkable progress. Through the intercommunicative forum provided by the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission, several effective and changing partnerships have formed to achieve GMP goals, turning a diversity of stakeholders into a positive asset.

The Borough of River Edge enacted Ordinance #1334 on May 12, 2001, vacating the dead-end of Main Street (approximately 213 feet in length) between the entrance to the PSE&G Substation and the 1889 Swing Bridge. A portion of the former westbound lane was incorporated into the design of the new parking lot at the Steuben House. The section in front of the Steuben House was given a new gravel surface. The deeds vacating a portion of Main Street and transferring title to the lands from the Borough of River Edge to the State of New Jersey and to the Bergen County Historical Society, the contiguous property owners, is dated September 17, 2001.

On October 27, 2000, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection purchased the former Saw shop property at 1 Old New Bridge Road in New Milford (Block No. 113, Lot No. 10 on the New Milford Tax Map) from Joseph Van Hook.

Through the intercession of Senator Robert Torricelli, the Secretary of the Interior was authorized (P. L. 106-554) to provide \$1,097,580 to purchase lands at Historic New Bridge Landing. Authority to implement the appropriation was delegated to the National Park Service. Administrative oversight and stewardship responsibilities were accordingly assigned to the National Park Service Regional Director at the Northeast Region Office in Philadelphia. An Agreement to transfer administration of this fund was signed with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection on August 17, 2000.

The Green Acres Program has been willing and able to secure properties for historic park purposes in a densely settled corner of the State. In July 2001, the County of Bergen

joined Green Acres in securing the right-of-way to make the necessary road improvements on or near the site of the proposed entrance and visitor facilities. The County of Bergen also initiated and funded important improvements to its properties at Historic New Bridge Landing, namely, the 1889 Swing Bridge and the Campbell-Christie House. The participating municipalities have also lent their talent, enthusiasm and support to the project. The Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation provided timely support at the inception of the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission and greatly advanced the cause by funding a professional *Concept Development Prospectus*. United States Senator Robert Torricelli rendered great assistance by securing a \$1.1 million Federal grant through the National Park Service for property acquisition.

The Division of Parks and Forestry has committed its resources and talent to leading the project. When the Borough of River Edge vacated the dead-end of Main Street, the Division designed and installed a new parking area (increasing its capacity from 16 to 21 parking spaces), by incorporating a lane of the vacated roadway. The antiquated heating system in the Steuben House irreparably broke in January 2000. Due to the loss of heat, the house closed in November 2000, while awaiting repairs. The Bergen County Historical Society removed and safely stored its valuable historic collections from the Steuben House in April 2001 to allow for the extensive renovations.

Green Acres acquired the Sutton and Lys house (.1 acre) on the tip of the traffic island, south of the intersection of Main Street and Hackensack Avenue, on May 14, 2001. The adjacent Pizza Town property was acquired, with .45 acres to the State of New Jersey and .15 acre to the county of Bergen for a right-of-way. The Sutton and Lys house was demolished in September 2002.

The Division of Parks and Forestry completed a major exterior restoration of the house in August 2001, according to plans and specifications prepared by historic restoration architects Holt, Morgan & Russell. With a small gas furnace removed to the attic level, well above the flood level, a new heating system became operational in October 2001. The renovated Steuben House reopened in October 2001, just in time for the 225th Anniversary of Washington's Retreat. The "Retreat to Victory" was held on November 17-18, 2001.

On March 25, 2002, the State House Commission approved trading a strip of land on the Lys & Sutton property, located on the traffic triangle, to the County of Bergen in exchange for small neighboring plots of land. The exchange was made to facilitate the widening of Hackensack Avenue as part of the anticipated road improvements to enhance the gateway to Historic New Bridge Landing.

Matt Gebhardt was employed as provisional Resource Interpretive Specialist at the Steuben House in May 2002 (having worked at the house since the previous October). After his departure in July 2003, Sue Shutte was employed as Resource Interpretive Specialist.

The County of Bergen completed restoration of the 1889 swing bridge between November 16 and November 30, 2002.

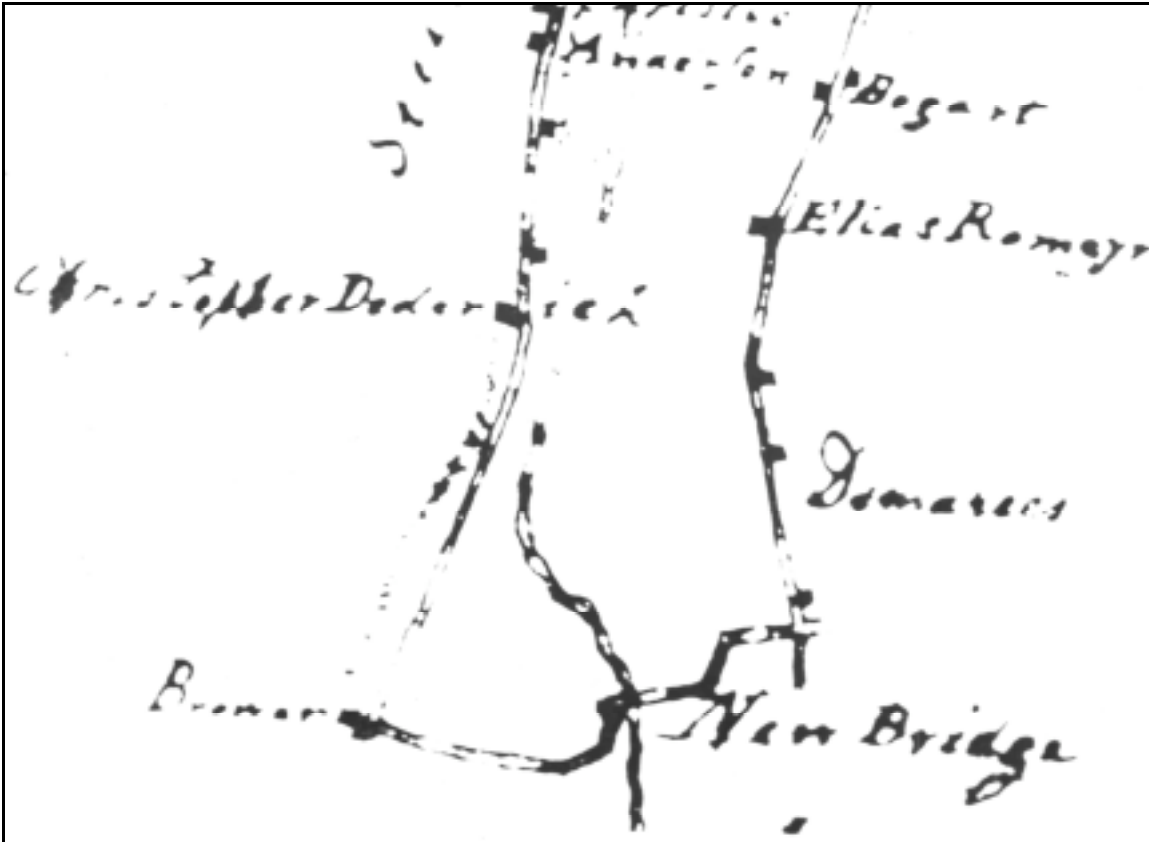
H. The Demarest House (J. Paulison Mill House)

The Paulison Homestead, relocated to River Edge in 1956 and known as “the Demarest House,” is the best surviving example of a Bergen Dutch sandstone cottage with two rooms and two entry doors with a stoop shaded by the spring-eaves extension of the roof. This type of “starter home” was most popular between 1790 and 1820. Because of its proximity to the French Burying Ground and to the site of an old gristmill on the Hackensack River, some twentieth-century descendants mistook this simple two-room stone dwelling for the original habitation of David Demarest, Senior, erected in 1678. He actually resided at Old Bridge, near the original family gristmill. When it was realized that the tract whereon the old cemetery and adjacent stone dwelling were situated originally belonged to David’s son, Samuel, construction of the little stone house was mistakenly attributed to him.

The Old French Burying Ground is situated upon Lot #3 in the French Patent, encompassing 200 acres, surveyed for Samuel Demarest on January 13, 1695. By his last will and testament, probated October 19, 1728, Samuel Demarest, Senior, of Hackinsack, yeoman, devised this tract to his son Simon. Simon may have erected a now vanished house on the west side of River Road about the time of his marriage to VROUTIE HERRING in December 1722. Interestingly, the oldest recorded burial in the Old French Burying Ground dates to 1721, suggesting settlement at about this date. The cemetery was rarely used again until the Revolution, when circumstances perhaps made it difficult or impossible for neighbors to conduct burials in the nearest churchyards.

By his last will and testament, probated April 8, 1761, Simon bequeathed the “land where my improvements are, on which I live” to his youngest son, Jacob. Jacob S. Demarest married Elizabeth Steenbrander at Schraalenburgh on August 27, 1768, and they had three children, all baptized at Schraalenburgh Church. The family apparently removed to New York City either during or after the Revolution. Jacob possibly died there in November 1787 — in any event, they disappear from local records.

On the Erskine-Watkins Map #113 (ca. 1778), an old Demarest house on the west side of River Road was marked “Elias Romeyn.” Born in Dutchess County, Captain Romeyn removed to this neighborhood after the British captured New York City and his militia company guarded New Bridge, Brower’s Hill and Liberty Pole throughout the war. He and his men were attacked at Liberty Pole on September 22, 1778, by a regiment of British dragoons. In 1782, Captain Romeyn was court-martialed and convicted of robbing the inhabitants of the neighborhood and of accepting bribes to overlook illicit traders along the Hackensack River, who shipped goods to British-held Manhattan. He then departed the area.



Erskine Map #113 (circa 1778) shows a house occupied by Elias Romeyn standing on the west side of River Road in New Milford, which Simon Demarest probably built around 1722. The Simon Demarest House was apparently demolished around 1923. It has been confused with the John Paulison House, built around 1794 on the lane leading from River Road to Paulison's Mill. On the mistaken belief that this two-room stone cottage was built by David Demarest, Senior, in 1678, the John Paulison House was taken apart and rebuilt at Historic New Bridge Landing in 1956.

Jacobus Paulison, a son of Paulus M. Paulison and Rachel Demarest, purchased 100 acres of the estate of Jacob S. Demarest in 1791 and then erected a gristmill upon the Hackensack River. He had this two-room stone cottage built for his son John J. Paulison on the Mill Lane shortly after his marriage to Altie Ely, daughter of William Ely and Maria Demarest, on April 4, 1794. John Paulison took over management of his father's gristmill in that same year.

When Jacobus died in November 1808, he left instructions to divide his farm between his two sons: Paulus received that portion to the north and the east of the division line, including the old Demarest homestead and barn on the west side of River Road; John received the land to the south and west, bounded east on the Franse Valletje and west on the Hackensack River, "together with the Mill house, New Barn, [and] dwelling house..." where he resided. In August 1821, Paulus Paulison agreed to allow William Ely, Andrew Zabriskie and others who had friends and relatives in the French Burying Ground near his

house to enclose the old cemetery with a fence. This agreement mentions the “lane leading from the public road [River Road] to *John Paulison’s house*.”

John Paulison died December 19, 1852, aged 79 years. His first wife had died in 1802, where upon he married Abigail Van Norden who survived him by three years, dying in March 1855 at 84 years of age. According to an inventory made in January 1853, the Paulisons used one of the two rooms of the stone house as a “Bedroom,” outfitted with a bed, bedding and cupboard. Chairs, tables and sundry items were dispersed throughout the two rooms. Dry goods were stored in the garret; perishables were kept cool in either the east or west cellar. A small frame Kitchen was formerly appended to the west gable end of the house, a doorway beside the fireplace providing entrance to this wing. The curious shingled opening at the rear of the stone house accommodated a “hovel” or frame shed, perhaps used much like a “mud room” to store tools and fishing net.

In June 1853, Albert Van Voorhis, John Paulison’s son-in-law and executor, sold the old homestead farm, comprising 89.16 acres, to Abraham Collard. In October 1855, Collard sold 35.59 acres of the farm (including the old stone house) lying on the west side of River Road to Christian Sackman of Hudson County, but reserved the use of the Old Grist Mill until May 1, 1856. The 1860 Census for Hackensack Township lists Christian Sackman, 44 years old, a farmer, born in Germany. His wife Christina, 48 years old, was also German born. Their children, residing at home, were: George, 19 years old, born in New York, listed as an “Agent”; Caroline, 15 years old, also born in New York; and Margaret 11 years old, born in New York. Their neighbor, apparently residing in the older house near River Road, was James Paulison, 59 years old, a farmer; his wife Ellen, 53 years old; and son Paul, 23 years old, also listed as an agent.

Sackman sold the same premises to Carl George Frederick Heine, of New York City, in February 1863. He was the popular proprietor of the New Bridge Hotel and undoubtedly purchased this farm to supply his hotel with produce. The 1870 Census indicates his residence in the hotel and not in the small stone house to the north. It lists: C. G. Frederick Heine, 53 years old, Hotel Farer, born in Brunswick, Germany; wife Louisa, 50 years old, born in the same place; son Frederick, 16 years old, a farm laborer, born in New York; and daughter Anna, 15 years old, also born in New York. C. G. F. Heine died on February 6, 1894. Upon the death of his wife Louisa, he devised “the farm I own on the River Road containing 35 Acres” to daughter Emma, wife of Henry Rieman, and “the Hotel at New Bridge where I have resided for many years” to daughter Emma, wife of Henry Schreiber. When Emma Heine Rieman died in October 1921, her estate was divided among her four children: Bertha Louise (Telgheder), Augusta (Pratt), Annie (Cathcart) and Henry Rieman.

For many years, the old stone house near the French Burying Ground was occupied on weekends in summer by a group of city artists known as the Pochard Club. The Demarest Family Association was organized in January 1937 to save the old house. Hiram B. Demarest Blauvelt, president of the Comfort Coal & Lumber Company, purchased the house from Henry B. Pratt and Henry Rieman, executors of Emma H. Rieman’s estate, in November 1939. The dwelling was painstakingly disassembled and reconstructed on

Main Street, River Edge, directly behind the Steuben House, in 1955/56. It displays a collection of Bergen Dutch furnishings, many associated with the Demarest family.

I. The Campbell-Christie House (John Christie's Tavern)

Jacob Campbell, a mason, built at least a portion of the Campbell-Christie House about the time of his marriage to Altche Westervelt in April 1774. It stood upon land owned by his father, William Campbell, an Ulster Scotsman who kept tavern on the north side of the road leading from Old Bridge to Schraalenburgh Church (now Henley Avenue, New Milford).

A difference in the elevation of the ceiling beams between the east and west rooms suggest a side-hall dwelling, enlarged by lateral addition to form the present center hall plan. Unfortunately, the removal of the house from its original site has destroyed whatever evidence the cellar walls foundation might provide. The interior was largely gutted and rebuilt about 1835, removing most original fabric. The dressed stone facade with inset wooden trapezoidal lintels (painted to simulate stone) and the center-hall plan are typical of Bergen Dutch sandstone dwellings erected between 1785 and 1790.

Private Jacob Campbell served with the Bergen militia during the Revolution. According to the list of tax ratables, Jacob was a merchant in February 1780, keeping store in his household at the southeast corner of the intersection of River Road and Henley Avenue. About 1785, Jacob replaced his father as crossroads tavern keeper. When William Campbell died in October 1793, his last will and testament provided for his real estate to be sold and the proceeds equally divided among his six sons and three daughters. Accordingly, Jacob sold the six-acre lot the following spring to Abraham Brower. Abraham's brother, John Brower, Jr., a blacksmith, then occupies the premises, working out of a roadside smithy. John died a year later and on March 11, 1795, Abraham Brower sold the premises (the blacksmith shop excepted) to John Christie, a blacksmith, for £250. John Christie and Helena Banta, both of Schraalenburgh, were married at the Schraalenburgh South Church on January 28, 1791. In July 1795, John Christie was taxed as the owner of a house, one horse and two horned cattle. In November 1796, the local highway surveyors mentioned "the Tavern of John Christie."

When John D. Christie died in 1836, he provided his "beloved wife Lena [Banta]" with "as much house room and privileges as she may want in and about my present premises where I now live and also \$150 out of my personal estate." He bequeathed "all of my lot of land together with the Improvements thereon, whereon I now live, lying on the east side of the [River] road" to his son John J. Christie. He was a farmer who, having married Anna Brinkerhoff in October 1825, raised a family of five boys named: John, Junior; George; Samuel; Jacob Brinkerhoff; and Daniel. At about this time, the dwelling underwent considerable interior renovation and enlargement: a lateral wooden kitchen wing was added at the south gable end; a jambless kitchen fireplace in the southeast (rear) room was enclosed; exposed ceiling beams were shaved for installation of plaster ceilings; and fashionable new wooden mantles in Classical Revival style were installed upon the

fireplaces in the front rooms. Paneled reveals, a recessed door and transom were installed at the front entrance.

The family homestead descended to Jacob Brinkerhoff Christie, who married Elizabeth Van Houten in February 1861. He became manager of the Comfort Coal & Lumber Company. Their children were Aletta, John Walter, George, Alice M., and Carlton Howard.

The Homestead farm of John I. Christie, deceased, encompassing 25 acres at River Edge, was offered at public sale on January 14, 1891, by his executors: Samuel Christie of New York, Jacob B. Christie, of River Edge, and Daniel J. Christie, of New York. As advertised, it was only five minutes' walk from the River Edge railroad station and about two and a half miles above Hackensack. The Christie farm included 500-foot river frontage with deep water and 1,600-foot frontage on the road, making it suitable for business purposes. The house was "of antique design, built of stone," situated on the corner of two public roads with a fine view of the river and countryside.

J. Walter Christie, born in the house on May 6, 1865, achieved fame as a mechanical genius and inventor. At sixteen years of age, he worked on pioneer submarines and developed turret tracks and gun mounts for battleships. In May 1904, he entered a car, which he had built himself, into a race in Germany, boasting that he could reach speeds upwards of 90 miles per hour. In August 1905, he equaled the world's record for gasoline cars on a circular track at Morris Park, doing a mile in 51.15 seconds. As measured by the same timekeepers, he also went a mile in 49 seconds, driving his car only in the stretches and coasting around the turns. He held the American speed record for cars on a straightaway and hoped to challenge the world record.

His racing career ended on September 9, 1907, when he was nearly killed in a car crash at Pittsburgh, while traveling 70 miles per hour. He was hospitalized with a broken wrist, a sprained back, a lacerated head and abdominal injuries. Still recovering at home, he resumed walking with the assistance of a cane in late October 1907. During his three years on the speedway, J. Walter Christie built and raced cars against Louis Chevrolet, Henry Ford and Barney Oldfield. He beat Oldfield in a fifty-mile race and claimed the world speed record. He went on to invent automotive front-wheel drive, many units of which were produced in 1913 and 1914 for fire trucks. He is best known as the "father of the modern tank," having developed the design in 1930 for high-speed tanks that moved optionally on wheels or track. J. Walter Christie died at Falls Church, Virginia, on January 11, 1944.

On October 31, 1907, Walter's parents, Jacob B. Christie and his wife Eliza sold the old homestead and 25.5 acres to Theodore Hill of Ridgefield. He conveyed the premises to the Brookchester Land Company on April 28, 1908. This real estate company surveyed the Christie and neighboring John H. Zabriskie lands into building lots. After some modernization and improvements, the old Christie dwelling was sold to Anna M. Taylor of Brooklyn on July 3, 1909. Jacob Brinkerhoff Christie died at Ridgefield Park on March

11, 1911.

J. New Bridge General Store

Abraham De Voe, Jr., a house carpenter, built the oldest portion of the extant storehouse at 79 Old New Bridge Road between 1825, when he purchased the .75-acre lot, and 1838, when he sold it to John Demarest, of New York City, for \$475. The building is represented on the 1839 Coastal Survey. An inventory of John Demarest's personal property, compiled in November 25, 1843, includes "Stock of goods in store," worth \$124.80. Barney Cole married Jane Lavina Demarest, daughter of John and Harmony Demarest, of New Bridge, at Schraalenburgh Church on October 21 1841. John's widow and executrix, Harmony Demarest, sold the storehouse lot to her son-in-law, Barney Cole, in May 1848 for \$700.

Barney Cole of New Bridge leased his house and store, scales, outhouses, coal and lumber yard and dock on the east side of the Hackensack River at New Bridge, encompassing about two acres, on April 1, 1862, to Ira W. Hover and Aaron Swarts, of New York City, for \$500 annual rent. On April 1, 1863, Hover & Swarts took out a six-year lease on these premises at \$400 annual rent.

On September 7, 1866, the firm of Blacklidge & Banta advertised coal of various grades and sizes for sale at New Bridge. They had leased the docks of David A. Zabriskie, at New Bridge, and opened a coal yard for the purpose of supplying families with coal at the lowest market price. Orders could be left at the grocery stores of Jacob S. Lozier, Hackensack, or at John Ackerman's, Englewood, or at the Dry Goods Store of J. J. & J. P. Blacklidge, at New Bridge. In July 1869, John J. Blacklidge was named postmaster at New Bridge, with the new office receiving a daily mail. On April 1, 1872, J. J. Blacklidge and John D. Cole succeeded J. P. Blacklidge and Barney Cole as operators of the store and coal-and-lumber yard at New Bridge, situated at the east end of the New Bridge (along Old New Bridge Road).

The new firm of Abraham H. Leggett & Peter L. Cole invested in a new delivery wagon in May 1882. Mr. Leggett moved his family into the Cole house connected with the store. Peter L. Cole secured a government position in Washington in September 1882 and sold his interest in the New Bridge grocery trade to his partner. In June 1888, Emma Demarest became postmistress at New Bridge, succeeding Mr. Leggett, the storekeeper. Barney Cole and his wife, Jane, sold the store building to Abraham H. Leggett in September 1890 for \$5,000.

In June 1891, the County Freeholders authorized payment of \$60 to Abraham Leggett, the bridge-keeper at New Bridge. In October 1899, Fred A. Leggett and family, of New Bridge, moved to Albany, New York, where he accepted a position as manager of a grocery department in a dry goods house. Abraham H. Leggett, who for the past nineteen years had carried on the grocery at New Bridge and who had succeeded Barney Cole as

postmaster there, died Thursday, March 8, 1900, aged 77 years old.



James Natalo purchased the New Bridge General Store in September 1912. His name appears on the signboard in this old photograph.

Frank Sittig bought the store at Sheriff's sale from the heirs and administrators of Abraham H. Leggett's estate in January 1901 for \$2,000. Harry L. Benedict took over the store on the east side of the New Bridge, formerly occupied by the late A. H. Leggett, in September 1905. Frank Sittig and his wife, Lena, of Brooklyn, New York, sold the building to Edwin H. Sayre, William H. Juhring, Arthur P. Williams, and Francis J. Bessen, composing the firm of R. C. Williams Company of Manhattan, as joint tenants, in February 1906. The partners of this firm sold to Harrison L. Benedict, the resident storekeeper, and his wife, Viola, in July 1912. The Benedicts conveyed the premises to James Natalo in September 1912.

On July 12, 1921, James and Ida May Natalo sold the store and dwelling at 79 Old New Bridge Road to William Geyer and his wife, Rebecca, for \$8,750. This lot ran 107 feet from the center of French Brook along the right-of-way (Steuben Place) to the north line of New Bridge Road, thence 87.6 feet along the road, thence north 128 feet to the center of French Brook, thence 101 feet along the center of the Brook to the place of beginning. The sale included "all the stock, fixtures and good will of the business conducted at said address."

K. New Bridge School House

On April 15, 1840, Tunis Cole of Hackensack Township sold a small lot of ground on the south side of [Old] New Bridge Road, opposite the house of Abraham Devoe, to Richard Doremus, Abraham Ely and John J. Demarest, trustees of School District No. 6 and John Voorhis, Andrew Demarest and John A. Zabriskie, trustees of School District No. 3 at New Bridge. This parcel measured 30 by 88 feet. By 1881, the New Bridge School served District No. 10, encompassing parts of Palisades (New Milford), Englewood (Teaneck), New Barbadoes (Hackensack) and Midland (River Edge) Townships. An Irishman named Gilfillan, in the chair shop of Gabriel Purdy at New Bridge in 1822, reportedly taught the first school in this district.

According to a township school report of April 10, 1843, School #6 (New Bridge) had an average number of 34 scholars under instruction. The terms of tuition were \$1.50, \$1.75 and \$2.00. The school was open all year and the collector received \$74.80, which was expended for the education of poor children and for the expenses of the schoolhouse.

On May 8, 1862, the heirs of Tunis Cole sold 8.13 acres to Barney Cole. These heirs were: John A. Cole and his wife Ann; Christian Cole and his wife Anna; John I. Post and his wife Eliza (Cole); and Elsie Cole, widow of Tunis Cole. The tract that Barney Cole acquired was bounded north by lands already owned by Barney Cole and others, south and west by lands of Christian Cole and east by lands of John I. Post. By 1867, the lumber and coal yard at New Bridge (Brett Park) was leased and operated by Ira W. Hover. By 1876, the lumber and coal yard was operated by Barney Cole & Son. At least three buildings (other than the Schoolhouse) are depicted at this lumber and coal yard in the Walker's 1876 *Atlas of Bergen County*. The island in the river, however, appears to have vanished between 1867 and 1876.

According to the School Census of May 1888, School District #10 (New Bridge, Palisade, Englewood and Midland Townships) included 174 children and received \$826.36 in State money. There was considerable controversy brewing at this time over an attempt to relocate the New Bridge Schoolhouse. The legal battle opened at Trenton on February 19, 1889, when lawyer Campbell made a motion before the Judge Van Valen, Supreme Court Commissioner, seeking to stop the Trustees of School District #10 from proceeding any further with purchasing a lot for school purposes. Lawyer Stagg appeared on behalf of Trustees Ely and Collins. The Cherry Hill people charged irregularity in the proceedings at the meeting at which it was decided to build, though a majority of the Board denied the allegations. On February 28, 1889, *The Hackensack Republican* noted that "the people of Cherry Hill do not want the school house moved to their side of the river, but want a new district formed, being willing and anxious to support their own school." On March first, the principal of the New Bridge School moved to Nanuet, New York, and it was said that when the vacation season arrived, the teacher expected to resign his position altogether.

On March 21, 1889, reporting on the spring school meetings, *The Hackensack Republican* published the following account of the New Bridge school meeting, held Tuesday, March 19, 1889:

“There was a very exciting meeting in the New Bridge and Cherry Hill district, and at various stages of the proceedings there seemed good ground for anticipating a conflict of arms, for some gentlemen on both sides became greatly exercised. The contest was between the New Bridge (east) and Cherry Hill (west) sides of the river, each desiring to secure control of the official board by electing two trustees. The east had selected S. G. Acton, sr., of its own side and Wm. Ely, jr., of the west side, while the west wanted to put in D. Anderson Zabriskie and C. Freidmann, both living on the west side of the historic old river. Being desirous of treating all parties with fairness, the REPUBLICAN will give both sides of the case as presented to the reporter by representative men of the east and west, substantially as they gave it.

This is the story of the gentlemen from the west: We went over there and found the school building crowded, and it was soon packed so full that nobody could get in and many were pressing at doors and windows to see what was being done, if they couldn't join in. Wm. Ely, jr., who is District Clerk, called the meeting to order, but he wouldn't let us organize because he knew we'd beat them. We nominated A. J. DeVoe for chairman, and they put up Samuel Roberts. When the vote was taken Mr. Ely declared in favor of Roberts when it was plain that we had it. Then there was a great racket, and the chairman declared the meeting adjourned. They knew we had them beaten, for we had 50 or 60 ladies at Anderson Zabriskie's waiting to vote. We think we were treated very unfairly, and you'll hear more about it.

The east presents its case thus: Mr. Ely presided with absolute fairness. The vote for chairman resulted clearly in favor of Mr. Roberts, but the other side wanted a vote by ballot and objected to the appointment of tellers by the chairman. This created a great noise, which continued so long and was attended with so much excitement that Mr. Ely declared the meeting adjourned. Subsequently Mr. Kennard arose in the rear of the room and gave assurance that the proceedings should be undisturbed if the meeting was allowed to proceed. Upon this Mr. Ely changed his former declaration, but before anything could be accomplished Mr. Kennard appeared on the platform and had his fist under Mr. Ely's nose. Finding himself threatened by the very man who had but a moment before given assurance of peace, Mr. Ely again and finally declared the meeting adjourned, saying he would not call it together again until he could have the Sheriff of Bergen county present to preserve order. We had a large number of ladies, all voters, close at

hand, and would have won easily.

The little entertainment furnished by the monkey and the parrot on a memorable occasion must have been a tame affair beside the exhibition at this meeting. So far as learned, no blood was shed, but it is evident that some gentlemen were laboring under a high degree of excitement. It is certainly unfortunate that the interest of education should be thus interfered with. We are told that there are in this district 160 children of school age, with an average attendance of but 88. The County Superintendent will be called upon to appoint trustees.

A legal gentleman informs us that Mr. Ely had no authority to adjourn the meeting; in fact, that the District Clerk has no more right than any other citizen to assume control over such a meeting; and that those who were prevented, by this action, from electing trustees, should have organized and proceeded regardless of his decision.”

In consequence of the New Bridge School dispute, a petition seeking to divide the district and thus enable the Cherry Hillers to erect a schoolhouse on the west side of the river gathered 140 signatures of legal voters. On March 29, 1889, *The Bergen Democrat* reported the arbitration of the County Superintendent:

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 10

The unpleasant duty of settling the bitter controversy between the residents of Cherry Hill and New Bridge has at last been determined, as far as organizing the Board of Trustees is concerned, by appointment of Samuel G. Acton and David Anderson Zabriskie.

The Superintendent has listened with patience to the grievances from both sides, and while he questions the impossibility of organizing the meeting on the evening of the 19th inst., still the condition in which two of the trustees appeared at his office at 10:30 p. m. of the same evening — colorless, trembling, and with fear stamped in every lineament of their countenances — would give credence to their story that something of a turbulent or riotous nature had occurred, either while attempting to call the meeting to order or after its illegal adjournment. Evidence given and affidavits offered from both sides, in like quantities, by unquestionable citizens, but diametrically opposite in character as to which party had the majority present to participate in the voting, made impartial decision impossible.

Webster's method of deciding such cases, called by him "Prudential Algebra," has been resorted to, viz.: Debiting each party with what is against his case and crediting his account with what is in favor of it; and then canceling testimony from each side of the account of about the same value, and thereby ascertaining on which side the balance remains:

1. Statements as to the number of voters present; both sides claim a majority of about 30, hence this item cancels.

2. New Bridge claims that an agreement was understood when the new chapel was built at Cherry Hill, that the new schoolhouse was to be located on the New Bridge side of the river.

This is balanced by a claim from Cherry Hill that the majority in the Board of Trustees should alternate between the two sides of the river, and this compact the New Bridge element has violated by attempting to elect all three members favorable to their side.

3. The fact that the New Bridgers succeeded in making their opponents believe that such a meeting could be adjourned should be balanced by the knowledge gained by the Cherry Hillers that such an action was impossible, and it is their own fault for not organizing that meeting and proceeding to elect trustees according to law.

The other alternative of dividing the district is at present beyond the jurisdiction of the Superintendent, as the law prohibits any changes in the boundaries of districts, in which district taxes have been ordered, between the time of ordering and assessing the same. The fact that a majority of the legal voters assembled at a previous meeting decided to bond the district, and because the proceedings are being contested, the Superintendent has deemed it just to retain a majority in the Board that would not prevent an unsatisfactory termination of said litigation before a decision from the Supreme Court has been rendered.

In case said decision reverses the action of that meeting and sets the entire proceedings aside, then the Superintendent will divide the district, simply for the sake of peace and not because he considers it for the best interests of the present school generation.

The New Bridge school trustees held a meeting for School District #10 on August 8, 1889. Citizens from the west bank of the river opposed making an appropriation for school purposes and insisted upon a division of the district. The muskmelon crop was a failure because a worm had damaged the vines early in the season and then those that

survived suffered from drought. On Tuesday morning, August thirteenth, Lewis Cotte caught a bass weighing five and a half pounds. Another meeting of School District #10 was reportedly “entirely devoid of the scenes enacted some months ago.” The men and women of Cherry Hill were out in force. Some one nominated Mrs. Mund for chairman, but she indignantly refused and Andrew J. Devoe, the so-called Ronderhook prophet, was chosen to preside. The Trustees wanted an appropriation for school purposes, but the Cherry Hill people objected and won by a vote of 68 against 23. The New Bridge people made no effort whatsoever and let the west side of the river run things to satisfy themselves.

County Superintendent Terhune received conclusive evidence that the decision of the Supreme Court in the New Bridge school litigation set aside the entire proceedings and divided the district with the river as a boundary in order to stop the bitter feeling existing between the two factions and to prevent further hostilities. The new district was known as Cherry Hill, District No. 51. D. Anderson Zabriskie, Conrad Friedman and Abram P. Burr were appointed its trustees and vacancies in the old New Bridge district were to be filled by appointments as soon the Superintendent received nominations.

At the end of May 1890, the contract to build a new public school at New Bridge was awarded to builder John J. Vanderbeck. Under the building agreement with the Trustees of School District #10, John Vanderbeck was to furnish labor and materials to complete the building by September 15, 1890 at a cost of \$4,450. The school was to occupy the first floor while the second floor would serve as a meeting hall.

The New Bridge School House, District #10, was formally opened on January 23, 1891. The large assembly room was overflowing with people from the surrounding villages. District Clerk Samuel G. Acton opened the exercises at 8 o'clock P. M. Reverend J. F. Harris offered a prayer and the choir sang “My Country ‘Tis of Thee.” Miss Etta A. Laire presided at the piano. Mr. E. Y. Bell, and John G. Webb addressed the assemblage. J. Edgar Waite of River Edge was the principal of the new school. The structure was considered one of the prettiest in the county, measuring 40 by 56 feet, furnished throughout with natural wood, heated by steam and furnished with all the modern improvements. It cost \$6,000. The new school was situated on a little rise of ground affording a fine view of the Hackensack River and overlooking the villages of New Bridge, Cherry Hill, River Edge and Schraalenburgh. One hundred years earlier, the old stone schoolhouse stood on the same site.

L. Bensen's Campground

John D. and Sarah Cole, of the Village of Hackensack, sold the river front property lying south of Old New Bridge Road to Harry A. Bensen of Teaneck on June 15, 1911. The tract was bounded south and west by the Hackensack River, north by the public road from New Bridge to Schraalenburgh, and east by a stream known as the Old River. The only exception was a small lot on the south side of Old New Bridge Road reserved for

school use. The sale was subject to a mortgage of \$2,500 held by Barney Cole.



This photograph was taken around 1925 from the river landing in front of the Steuben House. Harry Benson's summer rental cottages line the shore in what is now Brett Park in Teaneck Township.

Christian Benson was born at Hanover, Germany, in 1858; his wife, Margaret, was born at Wittenberg in the same year. They immigrated to New York in 1867. Their children were: Harry A. Benson, born at New York in 1885; Christian D., born at New York in 1886; Edgar P., born at New York in 1892; Adele, born at New York in 1896; and Clarence, born in New Jersey in 1900. In 1920, Christian Bensen worked as a collector for a soda water manufacturer. His son, Christian, was bookkeeper at a restaurant. Edgar was employed as a carpenter. Clarence was also a bookkeeper. The eldest son, Harry A. Benson, lived with his wife, Barbara, and their children: Edgar, born 1912; Harry, born 1914. Harry A. Benson was a draper in the upholstery trade.

An inset map from Sullivan's *Atlas of Bergen County* published in 1936, indicates that Harry Benson erected nine riverside cabins or summer cottages along the banks of the Hackensack River in what is now Brett Park. He also erected at least two large garages or shelters on the site (on of which apparently occupied a concrete pad still evident). A house with a porch stood along the south side of Old New Bridge Road and another house or cottage stood to the west. Another undefined structure stood beside the south abutment of the bridge.

M. The Arrow Canoe Club

The operation of Bensen's Campground provided new entrepreneurial opportunities for recreational facilities in the neighborhood. James Natalo operated the general store on the north side of (Old) New Bridge Road. He expanded his business by construction of a boathouse and soda fountain in 1913 on riparian lands adjacent to his store.

The State of New Jersey issued a Riparian Grant "for a parcel now or formerly flowed by tidewater," located along the east shore of the Hackensack River, to James Natalo for \$120 on January 22, 1913. The bounds of this riparian lot began where high water line on the east shore of the Hackensack River intersects the north line of (Old) New Bridge Road and extended 65 feet to a point in the west face of the guard or piling placed in connection with the bridge across the River. The boundary continued north along the west side of the guard which is the "exterior Line for Solid Filling," 120 feet, to the outlet of French Brook, thence northeast 41.5 feet to the high water line on the east shore of the River and the center of French Brook, thence southeast along the east shore to the beginning.



The Arrow Canoe Club was built on pilings in the Hackensack River. This photograph dates to around 1915. Note the pedestrian walkway on the north side of the bridge.

On pilings and fill placed in the Hackensack River at this location, James Natalo constructed a barn like wooden structure, which housed the Arrow Canoe Club (1 Old New Bridge Road, New Milford). On February 20, 1925, James and Ida May Natalo sold this lot of land "with the buildings and improvements thereon and the contents now located therein" to Frederick K. Straub and his wife, Mabel. The following personal property was included in the sale: ten canoes and equipment including paddles and cushions; three rowboats; two floats; a soda fountain counter and equipment; malt mixer; carbonator; coffee urn; cash register; two show cases; oil stove; twelve chairs; four enamel topped tables; desk; and all screens and awnings. On May 2, 1930, James and Ida May

Natalo again deeded the property to Mabel L. Straub, the widow of Frederick K. Straub; this time including riparian rights purchased by James Natalo from the State of New Jersey in 1913.

N. A Zabriskie Inventory From 1793

Jan Zabriskie, Senior, miller and wily middleman, had that proverbial “thumb of gold.” By quick study (and perhaps by nature), he became profitably conversant with backcountry farmers, river boatmen, drovers, teamsters, ironmasters and the polished upper strata of city merchants. His twin children, Jan and Elizabeth, married into Manhattan’s mercantile families. Elizabeth married Edmund Seaman, son of Judge Benjamin Seaman and his wife Elizabeth Mott, on Christmas Day, 1768. Judge Seaman was a successful New York merchant and politician. The young couple produced three sons, John, Benjamin and Edmund Seaman.

Childbirth was risky in those times and Elizabeth Zabriskie Seaman, wife of the Clerk of the New York Assembly, died February 26, 1774, aged 30 years, one week after the birth of her youngest son, Edmund.

Jan Zabriskie, Junior, married Jane Goelet in November 1764. Certainly, local wags knew that her brother, Francis, had married the daughter of a respectable Perth Amboy family, set up business in his wife’s hometown, only to fall into “unhappy circumstances,” as bankruptcy was euphemistically called in those times. Jane’s spinster sister, Mary, moved from New York to New Bridge, and set up a shop in the former academy. Edmund Seaman purchased this property, located on the high bluff above the river, opposite Zabriskie’s Mills.

John Zabriskie, third generation of that name to inhabit the sandstone mansion at New Bridge, was born September 30, 1767, the son of John and Jane (Goelet) Zabriskie. When his grandfather, John the first, died in September 1774, he assumed the title of Junior. We can imagine the wide-eyes of this nine-year-old boy, face pressed against the pane, as he counted the ragtag garrison of Fort Lee, General Washington at their head, passing his threshold and vanishing southward in a cold drizzle. Continental troops used his home as a fort to defend their passage. We don’t know what he overheard of his father’s political whisperings, but on July 14, 1777, he may have watched approaching bateaux, loaded with soldiers under command of Major Samuel Hayes, as they landed alongside the gristmill. They arrested his father as a “disaffected person” and imprisoned him at Morristown. Once on parole, John, Senior, abandoned the family homestead and trade, fleeing to New York City where his family found refuge with the Seamans. Whatever bitterness the Zabriskies felt at the British evacuation of Manhattan could only have been compounded by confiscation of their properties by the victorious revolutionary officers of the State of New Jersey.

The Zabriskies did not join the fleeing tide of Loyalists to Canada, but returned to New Bridge, leasing their home from its new owner, Baron von Steuben, and operating the mill

landing in partnership with the Baron's aide-de-camp, Captain Benjamin Walker. John Zabriskie, Jr., was twenty-one years of age when, on December 12, 1788, he paid 1,200 Pounds to Baron von Steuben for purchase of the Zabriskies' New Bridge estate. On October 13, 1792, John married the girl-next-door, Caty Hoogland. Her father, Cornelius, had acquired the old stone tavern on the east side of New Bridge from Andrew Van Buskirk in 1771. John Zabriskie, Junior, died June 6, 1793, aged 25 years, and was buried in the Old French Burying Ground (New Milford). Tradition says that he died in a mill accident, but no proof has yet been found. His widow married Abraham Collins of New Bridge on February 1, 1795. Abraham Collins was taxed for 40 acres, two gristmills and one vessel. She released her dower right in the Zabriskie mansion and mills to the Zabriskie cousins, John, Benjamin and Edmund Seaman, on April 21, 1795. Only four months later, Edmund Seaman of New York and New Barbadoes, merchant, sold the premises to John and Derrick Banta.

In September 1795, the list of tax ratables indicates that Thomas Howard had leased the 40 acres, two gristmills and one slave, formerly owned by the Zabriskies. The sale of the Steuben House to Derrick and John Banta is reflected in the tax lists for September 1796, which mention Derrick Banta as owner of 60 acres and 1 gristmill while John S. Banta was included as a merchant owning 1 gristmill, one-half a vessel.



Painting of the Steuben House at Historic New Bridge Landing by Spencer B. Newman

John Zabriskie's administrators, in preparing an inventory of his stock in trade, have bequeathed to posterity a valuable insight into the material culture of the late eighteenth century, carefully listing everything from mousetraps to fiddle strings. Of particular interest to our docent group, now studying the clothing of that era is the variety of cloth mentioned. One looming perplexity, however, remains the location of this stock of merchandise. A few items of household furniture appear near the beginning of the inventory — was the storeroom located in the Steuben House? If so, where are the beds, andirons, personal clothing, et cetera, that would confirm occupancy? Were these few items of furniture used to warehouse bolts of cloth and other commodities? Perhaps cabinet work (possibly imported from New York or England) was included in the Zabriskie's range of merchandise? Maybe the entire house was a store - but then where did the Zabriskies reside? If the store was kept in a separate building (or an appendage to the main house), then why didn't the appraisers include more of John Zabriskie's personal possessions in the inventory? They certainly visited his carriage house and barn, mentioning the family cow. Did his moveable estate perish with him - in a fire???

An Inventory of all and Singular the goods and Chattels, rights and Credits which were of John Zabriskie, Junior, deceased, at the time of his death, who died intestate, made the seventeenth day of July 1793 in the presence of Albert Zabriskie, Administrator, made by John Earle and Christian Zabriskie, appraisers.

Monetary values are given in Pounds, shillings, pence (£. s..d)

1/2 Sloop		1
1 Riding Chair with a fixed top		
1 Bay Horse with a white face	16.00..00	
1 Ditto Ditto	16.00..00	
1 Sorrel Colt	20.00..00	
1 Cow	5.00..00	
1 Wild Cherry Clothes Press	8.08..08	
1 Desk	2.10..08	
1 Cass [kas]	0.16..08	
1 Iron bound Hogshead	0.10..08	
2 Empty Barrels	0.06..00	
1 Barrel of Herring	1.10..00	
1 Saddle and Bridle	2.18..00	
A quantity of logwood	0.10..00	
A hogshead containing some Molasses	10.10..08	
A barrel containing some West Indian Rum	3.05..08	
A Keg with peach Brandy	3.10..00	
A cask with some Cherry [brandy]	1.04..08	
1 Hogshead containing York rum	13.15..08	
A Bushel of Salt	1.12..08	
A Quantity of Sand	0.08..00	

3 Iron bound Hogsheads	1.04..00
6 Barrels	0.18..00
A Lot of Brooms	1.12..00
A Quantity of Indian Corn	12.10.00
18 half Gallon Stone[ware] pots and Jugs	0.12..00
9 Chamber pots	0.06..00
9 Gallon stone [ware] Jugs	0.11..00
3 Gallon earthen pots and jugs	0.04..00
9 Large earthen pots and jugs	0.18..00
6 Earthen pots	0.03..04
3 Earthen pipkins	0.06..00
Twenty large Earthen dishes	0.15..00
13 Small ditto ditto	0.06..00
28 Smaller ditto ditto	0.09..04
27 Smaller ditto ditto	0.06..09
41 Smaller ditto ditto	0.06..18
4 Iron pots	1.15..00
3 Iron tea kettles	1.18..00
A Quantity of Starch	1.12..00
A Quantity of Chalk	0.10..00
7 Syths [scythes]	1.10..00
3 Iron Squares	0.06..00
4 Carpenters Adzes	0.18..00
5 Coopers Adzes	0.18..00
2 padlocks and brass rings	0.03..00
2 Mouse traps	0.01..06
2 Hetchels	1.00..00
1 oz. of Brass Ware	0.05..00
19 Awl Handles	0.01..06
3 Bellows	0.10..00
242 lbs. of nails	9.00..00
A box of window glass	3.00..00
1 Quarter of lb. of red wood	0.05..00
10 pairs of Smoothing Irons	1.18..06
2 Pairs of [fireplace] Shovels and tongs	0.12..00
4 hand saws	1.12..00
3 lanterns [lanterns]	0.10..00
6 frying pans	1.04..00
21 Iron Candlesticks	0.19..00
6 Slates	0.08..00
3 Castor [beaver] hats	1.16..00
13 wool hats	1.14..00
1/2 hundred wts. of patent Shot	1.10..00

12 Screw Augers	2.10..00
5 round bore Augers	0.08..00
13 pairs of Midling sized HL hinges	1.04..00
3 pairs of Large sized HL hinges	0.06..00
14 pairs of Small sized HL hinges	1.00..00
21 pairs of H hinges	1.01..00
6 pairs of other hinges	0.05..00
6 complete locks and some incomplete ones	0.12..00
6 rulers	0.06..00
4 flat files and 2 rasps	0.07..00
8 Saw files	0.05..04
5 hand-saw files	0.01..03
17 Chisels	1.02..00
4 Gouges	0.04..00
A Bundle of Sadlers' small buckles	0.02..08
A bundle of Gimbolts [gimlets]	0.01..06
10 Shoemakers' knives	0.06..00
7 Plane Chisels	0.05..00
A Bundle of Knitting needles	0.01..06
A plane and 2 Sand Stones [used as sand paper?]	0.02..00
Some Ginger	0.02..00
A Bundle of roll pigtail Tobacco	0.03..06
A Bundle of paste board	0.02..00
60 lbs. of hand Soap	1.15..00
³ / ₄ Quarter of lb. of Sugar	4.05..00
A parcel of Indigo	0.12..00
A Quantity of Buttons	6.18..00
A lot of Knives, Buckles, Snuff Boxes, Scissors and mustard	3.00..00
2 ¹ / ₂ dozen of Enamel bowls	0.12..06
20 half-pint blue and white bowls	0.06..08
1 dozen pint blue and white bowls	0.07..00
9 bowls of quart [size] blue and white	0.09..00
29 bowls of pint [size] of cream color	0.07..06
21 bowls of ¹ / ₂ pint [size] cream color	0.04..04
5 Quart bowls	0.01..09
Some flints	0.01..00
16 green edge plates	0.06..04
31 of small blue edge plates	0.09..00
37 Cream color plates	0.09..00
7 dozen blue and white cups and saucers	0.14..00

7 ¹ / ₂ dozen blue and white large cups and saucers	1.02..06
6 Red with white Cups and saucers	0.12..00
7 Tea pots	0.10..06
1 quart Mug	0.00..08
21 Milk pots and pepper casters	0.07..00
4 pint tumblers	0.14..00
9 ¹ / ₂ pint tumblers	0.06..09
¹ / ₂ dozen of gill glasses	0.03..00
1 dozen of ¹ / ₂ gill glasses and 4 wine glasses	0.05..00
Needles, fish hooks and fiddle stings	0.10..00
1 Box of shirt needles	0.02..00
1 Lot of pencils, pens and tape	0.03..00
A part of a Bladder of Snuff	0.06..00
2 bundles of ink powder	0.07..06
1 Lot of white Thread	0.10..06
1 Lot of Colored Thread	0.12..00
1 Lot of Combs	0.12..00
1 Lot of pins	1.12..00
Apron and Cap Tape	0.02..00
1 Lot of Books	0.10..06
1 dozen of Cotton Caps	1.00..06
7 White Cotton Caps	0.02..00
5 Cilmarnick [i.e., Kilmarnock, Scotch serge] Caps	0.02..00
1 Box of White Chapple [?] needles	0.08..00
A Quantity of Binding	4.00..00
1 Lot of Ribbons and Sundries	7.10..00
1 Box of white and black lace and gimp	10.00..00
A Keg of Alum	0.10..00
A Keg with some Brimstone	0.02..00
A Keg with allspice	0.10..00
50 lbs. Bohea Tea	7.10..00
Shoufhong Tea	3.10..00
1 Drawer with Sundries	0.16..00
8,150 of Black Wampum	10.03..09
3 Green Rugs [used as bed covers]	5.08..00
1 Green Rug	1.05..00
5 Rose Blankets	3.10..10
2 Rose Blankets	1.08..00
18 Yards of Twill Cotton	7.04..00
2 ¹ / ₄ Yards of Twill Cotton	0.18..00

3 ¹ / ₂ Yards of Common Cotton	0.14..14
11 ¹ / ₂ Yards of Blue Cotton	3.09..00
27 ¹ / ₂ Yards of Green Cotton [?]	4.09..00
19 ¹ / ₂ Yards of Green Nap	2.03..01
11 ³ / ₄ Yards of Yellow flannel	1.09..03
6 ¹ / ₄ Yards of Red flannel	0.18..09
8 ¹ / ₂ Yards of blue Broad Cloth	5.15..06
5 ¹ / ₄ Yards of Brown Broad Cloth	3.12..06
5 Yards of Black Durant [durance, a thick, woolen fabric]	0.11..03
13 ¹ / ₂ Yards of Shalloon	1.07..00
28 ¹ / ₂ Yards of Shalloon	3.06..06
23 ¹ / ₂ Yards of Brown Shalloon	2.14..10
11 ¹ / ₂ Yards of Brown Shalloon	1.06..10
16 Yards of Green Shalloon	1.17..04
23 ¹ / ₂ Yards of black Calliminck [probably Calamanco]	2.10..11
22 ¹ / ₂ Yards of green Durant	2.12..06
19 ¹ / ₂ Yards of blue Durant	2.08..09
26 Yards of blue Tabinet	3.02..10
10 Yards of black Moreen	1.10..00
12 Yards of pink Tammy	1.00..00
15 ¹ / ₂ Yards of blue Tammy	1.11..00
15 ³ / ₄ Yards of Tow Linen	1.01..00
23 ¹ / ₂ Yards of Brown Holland [linen]	2.07..00
7 Yards of White Buckram	0.14..00
2 Yards of Brown Buckram	0.30..00
24 Yards of Jane [jean]	3.16..00
9 Yards of Jane [jean]	1.09..03
1 ³ / ₄ Yards of Jane [jean]	0.05..08
4 Yards of Striped Nankeens	0.12..00
11 ¹ / ₂ Yards of fustian	1.06..10
21 Yards of fustian	1.15..00
7 Yards of fustian	0.11..08
24 Yards of fustian	2.08..00
20 Yards of fustian	1.16..08
24 Yards of fustian	2.12..00
14 Yards of Velvet	4.04..00
14 ¹ / ₂ Yards of Tick [ticking]	3.01..07
2 ³ / ₄ Yards of Tick	0.11..00
1 ³ / ₄ Yards of Corduroy	0.05..01
6 Yards of Worsted plush	1.08..06
13 ¹ / ₂ Yards of blue plush	3.00..09

3 Yards of linen	0.05..00
4 ¹ / ₄ Yards of linen	0.14..10
4 ¹ / ₄ Yards of long Lawn [linen fabric named for Laon, France]	1.14..00
18 ¹ / ₂ Yards of black Mode [alamode, lightweight silk fabric used for mourning scarves]	6.09..06
6 Yards of black Taffeta	3.09..00
21 ¹ / ₂ Yards of Apron Check	3.04..09
20 Yards of Shirt Check	2.06..08
2 ¹ / ₂ Dozen of black and white gauze handkerchiefs	3.00..00
44 ¹ / ₂ Yards of plain black Gauze	4.09..00
2 Jacket pattrons [patterns]	0.11..00
6 Yards of Nankeens	0.10..00
11 Pairs of White Cotton Stockings	3.17..00
3 Pairs of Worsted Stockings	0.18..00
7 Pairs of Worsted Stockings	1.03..04
A Pair of White Cotton Stockings	1.12..00
13 Yards of Callico	2.05..06
4 ³ / ₄ Yards of Callico	0.11..18
5 ¹ / ₂ Yards of Chintz	1.02..00
24 ¹ / ₂ Yards of Chintz	4.09..10
7 ³ / ₄ Yards of Chintz	1.13..07
2 ¹ / ₂ Yards of Chintz	0.10..00
3 Yards of Chintz	0.13..00
5 ¹ / ₄ Yards of Chintz	1.02..09
2 Yards of Callico	0.06..00
11 ¹ / ₄ Yards of Callico	1.10..11
13 Yards of Callico	1.16..10
8 Yards of Callico	1.08..00
4 ¹ / ₂ Yards of Callico	0.15..09
7 ¹ / ₂ Yards of Callico	1.04..04
1 ¹ / ₂ Yards of calico	0.04..06
5 ³ / ₄ Yards of Callico	0.16..03
17 ¹ / ₄ Yards of Callico	2.11..09
28 Yards of Callico	3.17..00
9 purple shawls	1.11..06
6 purple shawls	1.02..06
4 purple shawls	0.18..00
5 ¹ / ₂ Yards of Cambricks [Cambric]	2.09..06
4 pocket handkerchiefs	0.07..00
12 Neck handkerchiefs	1.10..00

6 Checkered handkerchiefs	0.12..00
6 pocket Checkered handkerchiefs	0.12..00
10 pocket Checkered handkerchiefs	1.00..00
31 pocket Checkered handkerchiefs	3.20..00
6 Checkered handkerchiefs	0.09..06
7 Checkered handkerchiefs	0.17..06
9 pocket handkerchiefs	0.18..00
1 piece of Striped Camblet [camlet]	2.03..00
16 Yards of Silk Camblet [camlet]	1.12..00
25 Yards of double folded stiff [Camblet?]	2.14..02
26 Yards of Camblet [camlet]	1.16..10
1 piece of Camblet [camlet]	2.03..00
23 ³ / ₄ Yards of Camblet [camlet]	1.09..08
4 Yards of Camblet [camlet]	0.05..04
27 Yards of Brown Camblet	2.14..00
7 ¹ / ₂ Yards of Wile Boar [wildbore, a coarse woolen dress fabric]	0.16..10
8 Yards of Crape Gauze	0.16..00
9 Pairs of Worsted Mits	0.16..06
2 Silk handkerchiefs	0.08..00
4 fans	0.01..00
1 lb. 2 oz. of Sewing Silk, different colors	2.10..00
13 oz. of Mohair Sewing Silk [thread]	1.12..00
11 Velvet Vest pattrons [patterns]	3.17..00
3 ¹ / ₂ Yards of Lawn	1.04..06
7 ¹ / ₂ Yards of Lawn	2.05..00
1 Yard of Lawn	0.02..06
1 Lawn handkerchief	0.03..00
2 ¹ / ₂ Yards of Sprigged [?] Lawn	0.10..00
2 ¹ / ₂ Yards of book Muslin	0.15..00
5 Sprigged [?] Lawn aprons	2.00..00
1 Bundle of black beads	0.02..03
4 Volumes of Blackstone's Commentaries	1.08..00
1 Set of the New British Theatre	4.00..00
5 Vol. of Sterns Works	0.12..06
Bruins Travels	0.05..00
14 Latin Books	1.08..00
Baileys Dictionary	0.10..00
Guthrie's Geography	0.10..00
13 different Books	1.19..00
1 Silver watch	6.00..00
2 Case Bottles	0.01..00
2 pint Tumblers	0.02..00

Amount of debts due on Book	253.04.10
27,350 wampum in the hands of Abraham Van Buskirk	38.05.11
John Degrote's Note of hand dated 19 Jan 1793 with lawful interest from date	12.00..00
Wiert Banta's Note dated 12th of April 1792 with lawful interest from date	2.15..07
Israel Parsel's and Guillian Demarest's Note dated 6th of May 1793 with lawful interest from date	6.08..10
Cash	11.00..00
Amount of debts due on Seaman & Zabriskie's Books assigned to Zabriskie	50.00..00
4 pairs of men's gloves	0.09..04
1 Dozen of Women's gloves	1.07..00
2 lbs. of yarn twine	0.05..00
Total	1,001.05.07
1 Set of Harness	1.10..00
1 Cutting Bench	0.10..00
1 Dressing Glass [mirror]	0.04..00
1 Set of China	1.00..00
1 pitcher	0.00..00
1 Dozen of Soup plates	0.04..00
3 Earthen dishes	0.02..00
1 Green Rug [bed cover]	1.06..00
1 Briar hook	0.04..00
1 lot of [fence] Post	0.08..00
1 lot of Timber	2.00..00
1 Cow	5.00..00
5 Bilstead [gumwood] Boards	0.08..00
Total	12.17..00

O. New Bridge Inn, Stopping by the Wayside

By Kevin Wright

The roads ran from bad to worse. Their repair fell to the overseers of the highways, who were elected each March “to provide labourers, animals, implements and materials for the work, and to erect such bridges as can be built by common labourers...” Farmers generally “worked off” their road tax by providing labor and equipment for highway maintenance within their road district. At their personal convenience, they rather haphazardly fulfilled their obligation by ploughing roadside ditches and throwing dirt to the center of the

roadbed, where it was eventually compacted by passing vehicles. This operation was repeated yearly, the dirt being washed back to the sides with every recurring spell of soft weather. Having been warned out, anyone who neglected to perform his quota of work was fined \$1.00 a day for their own absence, \$1.50 for a horse and cart, and \$2.00 for a wagon or cart with a team of horses or oxen.

Consequently, the 'mud road' was handed down from generation to generation for centuries, together with the trouble and expense of carting heavy loads over ruts or mire. Under the old system of casual scraping and dumping, local road conditions naturally varied with the terrain and the weather. Spring thaw and rains softened highways while freshets swamped fords and swept away bridge timbers. Dry summer winds made wagon paths hard and dusty, rattling bones and choking man and beast. Hopefully, cold weather returned in time to freeze the mud for the autumnal trip to market. Better yet, snow and ice occasioned the use of sleigh and sled, easing the carting of cordwood. At this turn of the season, blacksmiths worked overtime, sharpening horseshoes enough to keep business moving on icy roads.

Sometimes we forget the obvious: in past times, overland journeys were made in "stages." The degree of difficulty, the limits of endurance and the need for refreshment determined the interval between stopping places. Consequently, inns beckoned to harried travelers from busy crossroads, bridges, fords, ferry landings and canal locks, near churches and courthouses, and from the foot of steep mountain passages - in short, wherever the demands of the traveling public sustained a profitable trade in food and lodgings. Some arose simply as halfway houses along extended stretches of the beaten path. Often the inn operated in proximity to a store, blacksmithy and wheelwright shop, forming a crossroads full-service center.

Given the primitive condition of the country, wayfarers could expect shelter and sustenance from any abode where necessity compelled them. Regular stages or ordinaries were seldom more commodious or better outfitted than the average household. Before 1835, dwellings conveniently situated for travelers' respite were commonly known as "public houses."

The Court of General Quarter Sessions allowed only "a person of Good Repute for Honesty and temperance" to keep a Tavern or public house. In old colonial days, applicants for the license had to be "Provided with two Good Spare feather beds More than is Neceary for ye families use" and "well accomedated with house Room, stabling and Pature (for use of Drovers)." A Public House Keeper and several neighbors posted a recognizance bond of £20, attesting that he "shall not game himself nor suffer any person to game in his house for money or the Vallue of Money but Shall during the said time in all things Respecting himself as a public house keeper use and maintain good order & Rules & find & provide good & sufficient Entertainment for man & provisions for horses" Old diaries, journals and newspaper accounts commonly refer to an inn holder as "my landlord" or "mine host." Sometimes a widow and her children ran an inn.

In busy times and places, guests slept up to five to a bed, removing only their boots and laying crosswise. According to a table of rates from 1846, lodging alone, per night, cost 12¢, while lodging two or more in one bed, cost 8¢. Teamsters and drovers slept on the kitchen floor so that they would not spread fleas and other crawling vermin to the better class of guests.

A driver routinely drove his stage wagon over one leg of an established route. As with a sailing vessel, several investors formed a partnership in the purchase and operation of a stage line. With a vested interest in its success, a tavern keeper might financially underwrite such an enterprise, often joining in business with his kin or in-laws. In the fullness of time, a seasoned stage driver might retire to the ownership or management of a popular stand.

It was not merely the frequency of passengers but the contract to carry mail that made a particular route profitable. Over little traveled roads, the mail franchise alone justified operation of a stage line. Addressees collected their mail at the neighborhood inn, whose proprietor was usually the postmaster, or at least accommodated the post office within his establishment. Consequently, many a rural hamlet was named for its postmaster or the emblem on his tavern sign. In the Federal era, postmasterships were tokens of partisan favor. On the local level, a change in the National Administration could result in the appointment of a new postmaster and consequently a change in the name of the village.

Large gatherings of humanity were exceptional events in most rural districts. Political caucuses, revival meetings and holiday celebrations were open-air affairs, convened at a central location, amidst a shady grove with a potable supply of water. Churches and county court houses were the only buildings large enough for public assemblies. The local hotel provided a gathering-place for elections, exhibitions, dances, public meetings and dinners. Here people gathered to celebrate political and military victories, to settle their grievances in municipal court, or to bid at public vendues and sheriff sales. The itinerant State tax assessor and local township collector appeared at regular intervals to receive declarations of ratables or to collect revenue. Each autumn, drovers and backcountry farmers crowded inns, resting en route to city entrepôts.

Standing at strategic nodes in the primitive network of highways, taverns were relay stations for the dissemination of information. The front stoop was the rumor mill where newspapers and correspondence passed hands and where travelers told tales. With each debarkation of stage passengers or mail delivery, the congenial hostellers soaked up news and gossip, transmitting worthy tidbits to his neighbors. In times and places of low literacy, he perhaps even read letters and newspapers to his unschooled audience. There is little evidence, however, to suggest that his central role in the community easily translated into either great wealth or political power.

Railroads speeded the movement of people and goods, creating new destinations while bypassing many a crossroads hamlet. In their wake, country inns languished into

obscurity and obsolescence.

The Old Stone Tavern at New Bridge

The history of the earliest hostelry at New Bridge is obscure, but it is quite certain that an Old Stone Tavern stood on or about the present site of the General Store at 79 Old New Bridge Road, near the east abutment of the bridge. Lawrence Pieterse Van Buskirk resided near the river, south of French Creek, before 1738 — perhaps at this location. As early as 1717, there was reason to open a public road from the present intersection of River and New Bridge Roads, leading west to the river. The Return for widening River Road from Winkelmans (in Bogota) to Old Bridge, dated November 23, 1717, includes mention of this spur leading west to the Hackensack River:

“Then there is Likewise by the Line of Peter van Boskerk, his Line upon the Land of John Demarest, a Road altered and Laid out by the Line of Peter van Boskerk to the north side of the said Line from the main [River] Road to Hackensack River, to be four Rods broad, as it is now marked out by John Demarest...”

French Creek formed the boundary between lands of John Demarest (to the north) and Peter Van Buskirk (to the south). West of River Road, New Bridge Road remains on the north side of French Creek until it turns south onto Old New Bridge Road, crossing then to the lower side of the brook. The 1717 survey indicates a route continuing on the north side of the creek, as does present-day New Bridge Road. This road probably accessed a landing, canoe ferry, or ford.

The first inn was possibly opened on Lawrence P. Van Buskirk’s lands (if not in his house) when a new bridge was opened at the narrows of the Hackensack River in 1745. On April 13, 1745, a four-rod road was surveyed at the request of Lawrence L. Van Buskirk:

“Beginning at the Road of New Hackensack that leads from the bridge east on land of Peter Demarest to the first corner of the run of water [that is, French Creek], thence over the run to a black oak stump on the upland of Lawrence Van Buskirk as near the brook as possible and so as said land runs to a walnut sapling and so over the run of water to land of Peter Demarest and on said land as near the run [of water] as possible to the Boiling Spring that makes the Division line of the aforesaid Demarest and Van Buskirk and on said line of land as far as said Division Line runs and a straight line on the land of David Demarest, Jr. to his bridge and from thence East to Road of Tenack [Teaneck Road/ Washington Avenue] which Road we lay out four rods wide.”

This Road Return places the east abutment of the bridge on Peter Demarest’s land, north of the outlet of French Creek. Perhaps the bridge superseded a canoe or boat ferry, running from Peter Demarest’s dock across to the west bank. The location of the eastern abutment (and hence the orientation of the bridge) changed in 1753, probably to reduce

the length of the span and its exposure to damage by ice floes and freshets. On August 2, 1753, Peter Demarest, Jr., asked the highway surveyors to lay out a two-rod road (probably following the present route of Old New Bridge Road) “from Peter Demaris to New Bridge so called, now that the said bridge being removed, we lay the way out from said road with a southerly course to a post being four panell fence from the dock, easterly from said dock, thence from said line westerly lay out four rods wide.”

Michael Cornelisse opened the Paulus Hook Ferry in July 1764, making the overland route via New Bridge of considerable use to travelers to and from Manhattan. At this time, New Bridge was the nearest span over the Hackensack River to Newark Bay. A “New road or highway, which leads from New Bridge Easterly to Teaneck” (that is to say, present-day New Bridge Road, allowing for some adjustments and re-alignments over time) was laid out on the line dividing the farms of Peter Demarest (deceased) and Lawrence P. Van Buskirk (deceased) in 1767. On June 9, 1767, Peter P. Demarest, Jr., applied to the Court of the General Quarter Session of the Peace (his neighbor, Justice Lawrence L. Van Buskirk, presiding) and was granted a license to keep Tavern for the term of one year. He also purchased six acres on the south side of New Bridge Road, bounded south and west by lands of Lawrence P. Van Buskirk, from Lawrence L. Van Buskirk for £28. Exactly where he kept tavern is uncertain.

In May 1767, the farm of the late Lawrence P. Van Buskirk was divided among his children: Jacobus, Abraham, Andrew and Elizabeth Vroomen, wife of Isaac Vroomen. In September 1768, Lawrence’s son, Andrew Van Buskirk, began driving a stage wagon between Hackensack and Paulus Hook, via New Bridge, twice weekly in summer and once weekly in winter. In an advertisement published in February 1771, Andrew offered to sell a “Convenient stone dwelling house” having “three good rooms on a floor, with two small back rooms,” situated on one acre of ground at the New Bridge. The premises offered “a very convenient situation for a shop or tavern-keeper, as there has been a tavern kept for many years...” This was the Old Stone Tavern (now the site of 79 Old New Bridge Road). Shortly after his brother, Captain Jacobus Van Buskirk, a New Bridge merchant, died in November 1771, Andrew removed to Hackensack and discontinued his stage route. In May 1772, Peter De Marest, of New Bridge, advertised his intention “to drive a covered waggon from that Place to Powles-Hook, twice every Week.” His stage wagon was “new and well fitted, with Curtains and the Horses in excellent Heart.” By April 1773, however, Andrew Van Buskirk restored service twice weekly between Hackensack and Paulus Hook (via the New Bridge), complaining that the public had been ill-served by competitors who “like fair weather birds, have kept at home, and given no attendance during the last winter.” In May 1775, Andrew Van Buskirk advertised that “the flying machine’ he had formerly driven between Hackensack and Powles-Hook would henceforth “for the sake of a better and shorter road,” drive between Hackensack and the Hoboken Ferry. In May 1775, Verdine Ellsworth began driving the “New Caravan from Powles-Hook to the New Bridge above Hackensack.”

In or about 1775, Cornelius Hoogland became proprietor of the Old Stone Tavern at New Bridge and remained so during the difficult years of the Revolution when opposing armies frequented the neighborhood. On November 20, 1776, when a surprise British invasion

prompted the hasty abandonment of Fort Lee, American soldiers used the stone dwellings on either side of the New Bridge as forts to defend the crossing. Cornelius Hoogland later submitted a claim for compensation for the loss of twelve gills of rum destroyed or taken by the enemy. The Tax Ratables of Hackensack Township list Cornelius Hoogland as owner of the tavern at New Bridge from February 1779 through 1797, after which there is a gap in the record until July-August 1802, when his name does not appear. There is record of several trials held at Hoogland's between 1786 and 1789. A tavern account from New Bridge, running from June 24 to December 11, 1798, mentions all sorts of "Licker," including: beer, bitters, brandy, cider, gin or rum grog, milk punch, wine, and wine sling. It was also possible to hire a Riding Chair for taxi service.

The New Bridge Inn

In April 1823, Isaac and Jane (Demarest) Vreeland sold "two certain messuages, tenements, houses and lots of land" at New Bridge to Abraham De Voe, Jr., a house carpenter, for \$1,300. Six months later, De Voe sold the premises back to Isaac Vreeland for the same amount. On April 29, 1824, Isaac P. Vreeland composed the following advertisement:

VENDUE To be sold at Public Vendue on Saturday the 22nd day of May between the hours of 12 and five o'clock at the House of the Subscribers at the New Bridge: the two following Houses and lots of Ground with Improvements thereon, viz., the new two Story frame house wherein the Subscriber now resides, it is an Excellent Stand for a Tavern or Store. Also the old Stone house formerly occupied as a Tavern adjoining the above; it will answer very well for a Merchant or any other Kind of Business. Conditions of Sale made Known and attendance Given by the Subscriber on the Day of Sale.

Isaac P. Freeland

New Bridge April 29th, 1824

"The new two Story frame house" of Isaac Vreeland, erected in 1823 by house-carpenter Abraham De Voe, became the hotel familiar to succeeding generations. It stood east of the original Stone Tavern, at a sharp bend in the road. In May 1824, Albert G. Doremus purchased the old and new tavern houses, but retained ownership for only a year before selling the property back to Abraham De Voe, Jr. In November 1838, Abraham De Voe and his wife Frances, residing in New Barbadoes Township, sold the three-quarter-acre Old Stone Tavern Lot to John Demarest, of New York City, for \$475.

And what became of the Old Stone Tavern at New Bridge? In late September 1895, Richard Earle, while watching workers tear down the old Henry Hall House in Hackensack, said that seventy-two years earlier (that is, about 1823) he had helped put up that same building for Paul Paulison. According to Mr. Earle's recollection, Paul Paulison had purchased an old stone building at New Bridge and transported the stone in

a scow to Hackensack where it was re-used for the foundation. By Earle's account, "the stone was taken up the [Doctor's] creek, which in those days was something else than an open sewer, and landed on the ground [near the Bergen County Court House] ready for the masons."

In October 1841, Abraham and Frances De Voe sold the New Bridge Hotel on a half-acre of ground to Henry Pettengill of New York City for \$1,000. He remained five years, selling to Abraham T. Banta of Franklin Township in December 1846 for \$815. John Ackerman bought the premises in March 1854 and remained throughout the Civil War. These were perhaps the "glory days," before railroads superseded horseflesh. John Ackerman owned an omnibus with a door in the rear, which he drove between Fort Lee and New Bridge. Supposedly, "everybody liked to ride with Mr. Ackerman as he had fast horses."

Ackerman's Hotel was the neighborhood social center where public and private anniversaries were commemorated. The social calendar included a Washington's Ball to honor the first President's Birthday, election-night celebrations, and holiday entertainment of all sorts. For example, Opposition voters from Bergen County - the nucleus of what would become the Republican Party - attended a Bergen County Festival at the New Bridge hotel on December 1, 1859, to honor the election of Charles S. Olden as Governor. In February 1862, an advertisement for a dress ball and supper to be held at Ackerman's Hotel, celebrated the genial host of this establishment as "the prince of good caterers, and a landlord not to be neglected by the kind remembrance of his guests." On Wednesday evening, March 19, 1862, the pupils of Abraham Waltermire's School at New Bridge gave an exhibition at John Ackerman's Hotel, consisting of "Recitations, Dialogues, Declamations, interspersed with Singing." The admission was 10¢.



Heine's New Bridge Hotel around 1870

On April 1, 1865, John and Anna Ackerman sold the hotel to C. G. Frederick Heine for \$3,750. During his tenure, Heine's Hotel remained a center of community life. On New Year's Eve 1877, a reporter for The Bergen County Democrat noticed that the old folk had danced the night away at Heine's New Bridge Hotel where "they all enjoyed themselves but failed to go home with the girls in the morning." Local boys had "a marble ground" in front of the hotel, where they frequently engaged in their favorite pastime. On Sunday morning, September 17, 1882, people residing on the east side of New Bridge found it impossible to pass Heine's New Bridge Hotel on their return from church, a flood tide having risen rapidly within a few hours.

Carl George Frederick Heine died February 6, 1894, aged 78 years, devising "the Hotel property at the New Bridge where I have resided for many years" to his daughter Anna, wife of John Henry Schreiber. The building then consisted of a kitchen, barroom, sitting room, ballroom, parlor, dining room, nine bedrooms, hall and garrets. For the guests' amusement, there was a bagatelle table in the barroom, a piano in the sitting room, and a pool table in the ballroom. In March 1895, Anna O. Schreiber and her mother, Louisa Heine, sold the New Bridge Hotel to Conrad W. Bachmann for \$6,000. By October first, the hotel opened for business under the new owner. He advertised: "The New Bridge Hotel, Formerly Known as Heine's Hotel, Has Been Newly Furnished...And all first-class accommodations can be given by the present owner for fishing, sailing, hunting or pleasure parties. Night accommodations for 20 persons. Good German Cooking guaranteed."

After returning from Hackensack in William Weber's hack on March 22, 1896, C. W. Bachmann died suddenly at 47 years of age. He had but recently recovered from what was described as acute indigestion when he suffered a fatal heart attack. His widow continued the business. On October 29, 1897, The Bergen Democrat referred to the Bachmann Hotel at New Bridge as "one of the best road houses in the county." Mrs. Bachmann was forced to retire after suffering throat cancer for two years. In September 1899, she sold to Charles J. Kræmer. He relinquished his business in New York and settled at New Bridge while Mrs. Bachmann moved into a cottage near the hotel. Kræmer immediately commenced improvements upon the hotel property, laying a walk along the front of building. In November 1899, Kramer Brothers announced plans for extensive alterations to the old Heine Hotel, including construction of a bowling alley on the property now owned by them.

In October 1900, Charles J. Kramer leased the New Bridge Hotel to Oscar West for five years at a yearly rent of \$300 (he also had the privilege of buying the premises for \$5,800). In October 1901, Anna O. Schreiber and Louisa Heine purchased the premises at Sheriff's Sale for non-payment of the mortgage, amounting to \$4,198 in principal and interest. During the century-high flood, occurring October 16, 1903, business at Kaufman's New Bridge Hotel was entirely suspended as the barroom and all floors even with it were submerged by rising river waters. The piano was saved by standing it on soapboxes and the spirits were stored on high shelves. In February 1906, Anna Schreiber and Louisa Heine sold the hotel to the William Peter Brewing Company of Union Hill, Hudson County, New Jersey. In April 1909, Judge Demarest belatedly granted a hotel

license to Frederick Stellman, of New Bridge. On January 24, 1911, the William Peter Brewing Company conveyed the hotel to Frederick and Katharina Stellman. An airship was built on Stellman's hotel grounds at North Hackensack in July 1911. In September 1912, the William Peter Brewing Company advertised the sale of its draught beer here. Frederick and Katharina Stellman conveyed the premises to Joseph F. M. Burger and his wife, Barbara Helen, of Lodi Township, on January 26, 1917. Joseph Burger died January 20, 1942. In 1954, Barbara H. Burger, widow, sold the hotel to Stanley Bader and Walter Coolick, Jr., partners trading as the "New Bridge Inn." Ralph J. Dietch replaced Walter Coolick as a partner in November 1954. On December 11, 1956, Stanley Bader and Ralph Dietch, owners of the New Bridge Inn, sold to WAD, Inc. of the City of Hackensack. Frank W. Adamski, of River Vale, was president of this corporation and Joyce Adamski, his wife, was secretary.



The New Bridge Inn in 1963

On Saturday, May 30, 1964, a fire originating in the barroom at about 2:45 am spread quickly throughout the building, which lacked any fire stops. A milkman making deliveries discovered the blaze and alerted Special Patrolman Frank Fyfe, who lived across the street. At times, the flames reached as high as 75 feet and could be seen for miles around. It was described as one of

the worst fires in the history of New Milford Borough, causing an estimated \$100,000 in damage. Christian Benson, aged 76 years, a boarder at the inn, died of asphyxiation in the bathroom adjoining his second-floor room. He was a retired draftsman who worked as handyman on the premises. John Barry, the only other occupant of the sixteen-room building, escaped down a ladder placed under his window by Special Patrolman Fyfe and Patrolman James Entwistle. Fire Chief Verge T. Brower supervised the five-hour, 120-man effort, comprised of firemen from Oradell, River Edge and New Milford; eight were injured. The frame of the old building was so badly damaged that owner Frank Adamski said, "its remains would have to be torn down." He also said "it would not be rebuilt in its Dutch Colonial Style because it would cost about \$500,000 to do so." Frank Adamski, president of WAD, Inc. owned the rebuilt "New Bridge Inn" until 1970.

P. Baron von Steuben, with particulars regarding his Jersey Estate

By Kevin Wright

There is no doubt that the Steuben House still graces the willowy banks of the Hackensack only because of a rather vague but very real association with its namesake: the legendary Prussian Inspector-General. The image of him gruffly instructing a

dispirited and tattered citizen-soldiery on the snowy wastes of Valley Forge has filtered through the imagination of many a schoolchild and become engraved in our national iconography. Regrettably Steuben's association with this historic property cannot be neatly encapsulated in modern "sound-bites". The matter has been hopelessly muddled both by wishful thinking and by dour skepticism. How many times has it been said that the Baron "never took possession of the property" or even worse, that he "turned his nose up at it!" In fact, the Steuben House may have been Steuben's best and perhaps only true reward for services rendered during our Revolutionary struggle.

William Alexander Linn who read a paper devoted to this topic at the Society's annual dinner on Washington's Birthday, 1904, first expressed the Bergen County Historical Society's interest in the Baron's estate at New Bridge. Linn's research is entirely honest and his text well worth reading today. Matters took a turn for the worse, however, in January of 1931, when Mrs. Frances A. Westervelt, dean of local historians and curator of the Bergen County Historical Society, publicly proclaimed that the "Steuben House Was Not Steuben's." It was her solemn opinion that the old Zabriskie homestead at New-Bridge was not built until after Steuben's death in 1794 and therefore had no association with him. She called a bill pending in the NJ legislature to provide \$75,000 for the reconstruction and maintenance of the Steuben House "a ridiculous waste of money." One of Mrs. Westervelt's claims was that the gambrel roof did not appear in Bergen County until the early nineteenth century. Fortunately, her opinions were contested and thoroughly refuted by Miss Saretta Demarest of Teaneck who "offered masses of historical documents for proof as well as citing various features in the construction of the building which, she said, leaves no doubt as to the date of its erection." Her refutation was printed in the *Bergen Evening Record* on Tuesday, March 31, 1931.

At least a part of our fascination with this ancient landmark arises from a natural curiosity we have about the Revolutionary hero for whom it is named. I mentioned earlier that most school children encounter the Baron von Steuben briefly in their "social science" textbooks. Now I can readily see how a young student, condemned to seemingly endless hours of practicing multiplication tables and cursive script, would easily be impressed by the image of an unyielding drill-sergeant. But otherwise I think we tend to prefer heroes that charge up hills with a saber clenched in their teeth to even the most efficient Inspector-generals. In a sense, General Steuben is the "Father of the American Military." The training and organization he brought to the army contributed substantially, however discreetly, to the final victory. In kitchen terms, he was the yeast that made the bread rise.

But there is more to it than that. First of all, until the latter half of the present century, Americans were somewhat ambivalent to "standing armies" and "professional soldiers" which many regarded as hazardous to the health of a democratic taxpayer. Secondly, I don't think that the idea of regimentation blends readily with the American creed of individuality.

Lastly and honestly, Baron von Steuben can be easily mistaken for the model of a Prussian militarist. Having fought two World Wars against Germany in this century,

General Steuben's reputation may have suffered from the same anxieties in the American imagination that turned sauerkraut into Liberty Cabbage. And however high-minded his approach to the Congress in 1778, we must accept the fact that General Steuben was a soldier of fortune. But we must also accept the fact that he contributed immeasurably to the victory of our Revolutionary arms.

The Life of Friedrich Wilhelm Baron von Steuben

Friedrich Wilhelm Rudolph Gerhard Augustin von Steuben was born in Magdeburg, a fortress-town on the Elbe River. The birth registry of the local German Reformed church records his birth on September 17, 1730, as the son of Lt. Baron Wilhelm Augustin von Steube, a Royal Prussian Engineer-Lieutenant and his wife, Elizabeth Maria Justina Dorothea von Jagvodin. In later life, Baron Steuben was heard to say that he was not a Prussian by birth, but that his family owned a small estate at Weilheim, on the borders of Baden and Wurtemberg. His home was therefore in the historic region known as Swabia, situated in southwest Germany on the borders of Switzerland and Austria, which also included the Prussian province of Hohenzollern. The family's claim to nobility was concocted by Steuben's grandfather, Augustin von Steuben, a country parson, who counterfeited a pedigree by conveniently using his surname to claim descent from an obscure branch of the ancient noble house of Steuben. This was done to further his own ecclesiastical prospects and to open careers in either the church or the military to his children. Such dishonest and designing behavior prefigured the modern art of padding a resume with faked academic credentials. Evidently it worked, since four sons of Augustin von Steuben and his wife, Countess Charlotte Dorothea von Efferen, entered the Prussian army. Steuben's father, Wilhelm Augustin von Steuben, was a member of the engineering corps at a time when not much attention was paid by Central European armies to this particular branch of the service.

The soldier-king Frederick William I lavished his attention upon the Prussian army, turning it into an effective instrument of war by incessant drilling. He selected Augustin Wilhelm von Steuben from his corps of engineers to assist Anna Leopoldovna, Empress and Czarina of Russia, in the War of the Polish Succession (1733-1735). Friedrich Baron von Steuben thus spent several years of his infancy in Poland, in the Crimea and at Kronstadt on the Gulf of Finland. With the death of Frederick Wilhelm I on May 31, 1740, his son Frederick II was crowned King of Prussia.

When Emperor Charles VI died on October 20, 1740, his daughter Maria Theresa, Archduchess of Austria and Queen of Bohemia and Hungary, succeeded him. Despite promises to support her accession, Frederick marched 40,000 Prussian troops into the Austrian Duchy of Silesia on December 1, 1740, under the pretext of protecting its inhabitants and providing "for the tranquility of that duchy, which is equally necessary to us." He thus precipitated the major European powers into the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748).

King Frederick entered the Silesian provincial capital of Breslau (now Wroclaw), situated on the River Oder, on January 3, 1741, to a friendly welcome from its inhabitants. An Imperial army of 16,000 Austrians, Croats, Serbs, Moravians and Bohemians,

commanded by Field-Marshal Wilhelm Neipperg, marched in snowy weather and relieved the besieged fortress at Neisse on April 5, 1741. Frederick, in hurried pursuit, caught up with his antagonists five days later near the village of Mollwitz, where well-trained Prussian infantry, using a three-ranked firing line for the first time, won the day. On August 10, 1741, Prussian soldiers occupied Breslau. By the Convention of Klein-Schnellendorf, signed October 9, 1741, the defeated Hapsburgs conceded — for the time being, at least — the Prussian conquest of Silesia. On October 31, 1741, the Austrian garrison at Neisse surrendered to Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau. Royal Prussian Engineer-Lieutenant Wilhelm Augustin von Steuben was cited for meritorious service during the bombardment and siege of Neisse. The Steuben family then took up residence in Breslau, where Jesuits schooled Frederick Wilhelm von Steuben. King Frederick led an allied army of Prussian, Saxon and French troops into Moravia the following spring. After turning back the Austrians at Chotusitz, Frederick achieved a negotiated peace in June 1742.

In August 1744, after a brief interlude of peace, Frederick invaded the Austrian crown land of Bohemia, tramping his army across neutral Saxony and laying siege to Prague, the second largest city in the Hapsburg's domain, forcing its surrender on September 16, 1744. At fourteen years of age, Steuben accompanied his father on the campaign. Confronted by a strong opponent and facing winter in a hostile country, Frederick withdrew across the Elbe River with the Austrians in determined pursuit. In harsh winter cold and deep snow, suffering heavy losses to exposure, the Prussians straggled back across the mountains into Silesia, from whence they had come.

Anticipating a spring assault by the Austrians, Frederick rebuilt his army.. After a night march, the Prussian army fell upon and routed the Austro-Saxon army at Hohenfriedberg (now Dabromierz), on June 4, 1745, ending their hope of regaining Silesia. Despite the advantage of tactical surprise, the Austrian army was again defeated at the town of Soor in northeastern Bohemia on September 30, 1745. The Austro-Saxon armies attempted to recoup their losses with a winter campaign into the heart of Prussian Brandenburg, but Frederick forestalled their intentions with a pincer movement against Saxon outposts and supply depots. A Prussian force, commanded by Hereditary Prince Leopold I ("Old Dessauer"), soundly defeated the Saxons at the battle of Kesseldorf, on the outskirts of the provincial capital of Dresden, on December 15th. After the capitulation of her Saxon allies, Empress Maria Theresa was forced to accept the cession of Silesia to Prussia by the Treaty of Dresden on December 25, 1745. She prepared for future retaliation by securing an alliance with Czarina Elizabeth of Russia in 1746. Completing an alliance with Bavaria in June 1746, the Austrians turned their attention to the French, eventually reversing their earlier losses in northern Italy.

In seizing Silesia, King Frederick had upset the balance of power in central Europe, thrusting Prussia forward as a dangerous competitor with the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Fully realizing that wars to sustain the balance of power in Europe would be wars of shifting alliances, King Frederick understood that he could be easily overwhelmed by the combination of powerful neighbors. Prussia's survival would depend upon its military ability to settle the issue on one front, concentrating its resources against one opponent at

a time and knocking them out of the fight quickly; this called for an offensive strategy. He therefore turned his attention to “building an integrated, front-loaded military system” capable of “winning immediate, decisive victories.” This required the development of operational speed and maneuver. To this end, Frederick experimented with the linear system of engagement, but improved upon the processional method of deployment, allowing the two battalions of a regiment to form a line of battle in less than fifteen minutes.

By the time that sixteen-year-old Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben enlisted as a lance corporal in 1746, he had already witnessed his father’s several military campaigns. Schooled in mathematics and the practical sciences, Steuben no doubt endured the drudgery of peacetime service in planning and preparing fortifications. But war was not long in coming. A superficial truce was achieved by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, as the great competing European powers maneuvered for diplomatic advantage over their adversaries. Wenzel Anton Fürst von Kaunitz, Austrian State-Chancellor and ambassador to the French court from 1750 to 1753, achieved the diplomatic coup of his age by negotiating the alliance of France and Austria, hereditary adversaries. Frederick was his own worst enemy; the Treaty of Westminster, concluded in January 1756, bound Prussia and England to mutual assistance and military cooperation in the event of invasion, but it propelled the French into Kaunitz’s embrace. France and Austria concluded a defensive alliance on May 1, 1756. Powerful enemies suddenly enveloped Prussia. Only England, with the Continental interests of its Hanoverian king, remained an ally.

Frederick the Great touched off the Seven Years’ War by his invasion of Saxony on August 29, 1756. Virtually unopposed, his troops marched into the capital of Dresden on September 9. Maintaining the initiative, Frederick took his army into Bohemia on September 30. At Lobositz, Austrian Field-Marshal Maximilian von Browne skillfully challenged the Prussians, inflicting severe losses before withdrawing from the field. The Austrians, however, were unable to rescue the Saxons in their Camp at Pirna and on October 14, 1756, the Saxon army surrendered.

On January 10, 1757, the Imperial Diet declared war on Prussia. King Frederick again seized the initiative and invaded Bohemia, this time in force. The Austrian army, now commanded by Archduke Charles, withdrew to the provincial capital of Prague. Battle was joined on June 6 by armies of nearly equal size; the Austrians, however, holding the advantage of a prepared defensive position. Frederick decided upon a flanking maneuver that stalled in heavy fighting. An opening, however, was found in the enemy’s line and Prussians poured through, throwing the Austrians into full retreat. The Austrians lost nearly 14,000 men killed, wounded or captured, but Frederick lost 11,740 killed or wounded. Steuben was twice wounded at the Battle of Prague. Frederick attempted to force the city’s capitulation by heavy bombardment. When the Prussians were beaten back at Kolin (now in the Czech Republic) on June 18, 1757, they abandoned the siege of Prague and withdrew into northern Bohemia.

Dark clouds were gathering on the eastern front as a Russian army marched towards East Prussia in May 1757. On August 30, Field-Marshal Hans von Lehwaldt surprised the numerically superior Russian column at Gross-Jägersdorf. Though defeated, the Prussians were able to stem the Russian advance and save the isolated Baltic province from being immediately overwhelmed.

To the northwest, William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, attempting to blunt a French advance into Hanover, was narrowly defeated on July 25 at Hastenbeck. The French seized Hamburg and Bremen, pinning the British expeditionary force against the North Sea. Cumberland capitulated on September 8. Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick arrived to confront the French with little more than a token force. Duc de Richelieu, the over-extended French commander, plundered Hanover. Unexpectedly, he asked for an armistice until spring. In the first weeks of September, Frederick led his army to the west on an unprecedented forced march — covering 170 miles — only to learn of Cumberland's surrender. Austrian Prince Joseph von Sachsen-Hildburghausen, commanding about 30,000 Imperial German troops on the upper Rhine, was reinforced by a French force of 24,000 men under Marshal Charles de Soubise. Together they advanced to meet the Prussians. Lieutenant-General Friedrich Wilhelm von Seydlitz, commanding the Prussian cavalry, opened the fray with a resounding charge that thundered down upon and routed advancing squadrons of Imperial horseman and infantry. French infantry now marched into a killing ground as Prussian infantry, artillery and cavalry, deployed in an obtuse angle, poured shot, canister and musket volleys into their ranks. Seydlitz's cavalry broke the ranks of Franconian and French infantry, sending them pell-mell in retreat.

Steuben became aide-de-camp to the famous daredevil General Johan von Mayr, organizing eight companies of elite light-infantry skirmishers in Silesia, known as Mayr Free Battalion. Under command of General von Lestwitz, First Lieutenant Frederich von Steuben and his regiment were at the vanguard of the Prussian army during the battle of Rossbach on November 5, 1757. Though outnumbered at least two-to-one, the Prussians forced the rout of French and Imperial troops and inflicted heavy casualties: five thousand killed or wounded and another five thousand captured; the Prussians lost about 550 killed or wounded.

While Frederick met the enemy in the western theater, the Austrians invaded Silesia and besieged Prussian strongholds: the fortress at Swednitz surrendered on November 13 and Breslau on November 25. King Frederick quickly led his army towards Breslau, encountering a superior enemy force at the village of Leuthen on December 4. The superbly trained Prussian infantry outmaneuvered and soundly defeated their opponents, forcing them to abandon the province. The large Austrian garrison at Breslau surrendered on December 20.

The Russians overran East Prussia in January 1758. In May, Frederick attempted unsuccessfully to seize the Austrian fortress at Olmütz. At Zorndorf, on August 25, 1758, he surprised the Russian army. By ferocious assaults and the most desperate fighting, the Prussians overcame the invaders and forced their withdrawal. Frederick returned to Saxony. On October 14, 1758, a vastly superior Austrian army defeated the

Prussians at Hochkirch.

The Russians invaded Brandenburg in July 1759. King Frederick tried to prevent their conjunction with the Austrians, confronting the invaders under a scorching sun at Kunersdorf, (now Kunowice, on the River Oder) on August 12, 1759. After a heavy and deadly effective artillery barrage, Prussian and Silesian infantry stormed a hilltop Russian position. But then they pushed forward on a narrow front against the strongest concentration of the combined Russian and Austrian army. In furious but futile assaults, the Prussians, short of ammunition, exhausted by the heat and severely depleted by casualties, broke and ran. Both sides suffered about 19,000 casualties. Steuben was again wounded at Kunersdorf. Although the Austrians captured Dresden, they and their Russian allies failed to take advantage of their victory. The Prussians spent a bitter winter on starvation rations.

Upon Mayr's death, Steuben became adjutant to Lieutenant-General Johann von Hülsen, a division commander under the King's brother, Prince Henry. Stalemate prevailed on every front in the spring and summer of 1760, but the Austrians captured a small screening force in Silesia and set out to reconquer the province, stronghold by stronghold, capturing Glatz, Liegnitz and Parchwitz. A Russian army, some 60,000 strong, marched toward Silesia to complete its conquest. Prince Henry now marched his army westward to join the battle for Silesia. Steuben was engaged in the battle of Liegnitz (in Silesia) on August 15, 1760, where Frederick's troops, exhausted and outnumbered, defeated a poorly led Austrian army and was thus able to prevent the union of the Russian and Austrian armies. On October 9, 1760, a combined force of Russian and Austrian light cavalry and grenadiers captured Berlin and looted Frederick's palace at Charlottenburg. Frederick responded by marching his army towards Saxony, engaging the enemy at Torgau on the Elbe River. A frontal assault by Prussian grenadiers withered under heavy artillery fire, though the second wave crested the Austrian positions before being repulsed. Lieutenant-General Johann von Hülsen rallied remnants of the earlier assault troops succeeded in forcing the Austrian's withdrawal. The final cost of the victory, however, was frightful: 17,000 Prussian soldiers were killed, wounded or missing.

The Russian and Austrian armies joined forces in August 1761, and Frederick led his army, now outnumbered better than two-to-one, onto good defensive ground near the fortress of Schweidnitz, where his engineers prepared field fortifications. Unable or unwilling to coordinate an assault upon the Prussian defenses, the allies departed on September 9. Shortly after Frederick marched his army towards winter quarters at Niesse, the Austrians captured Schweidnitz with its great horde of munitions and supplies.

In 1761, Lieutenant von Steuben was transferred to the general staff of General Knoblauch (Knobloch). As Knoblauch's adjutant, his brigade formed part of Lieutenant-General Count Platen's corps who, in 1761, When the Russians besieged the Baltic port of Kolberg in September 1761, Frederick ordered Count Platen's corps of 10,000 light infantry and cavalry to raid the Russian supply depot at Posen. They succeeded in destroying a Russian train of ammunition and provisions, routing 4,000 Russian troops and marching another 1,900 prisoners to Landsberg on the Warthe. Steuben's father, by

now a major of engineers at Küstrin, erected the bridge across the Warthe, which enabled Count Platen to cross. Making a deep penetration into enemy territory, Platen's corps was surrounded by a superior Russian force at Treptow, late in 1761, and surrendered. Steuben reportedly negotiated the articles of capitulation, which allowed men in ranks to retain their equipment of rations and clothing and officers their swords. The port of Kolsberg capitulated on December 16, 1761, completing the Russian subjugation of East Pomerania. Captain Steuben was among fifty-eight Prussian officers taken as prisoners of war to St. Petersburg. Czar Peter III, who ascended the Russian throne upon the death of Frederick's implacable foe, Czarina Elizabeth, on January 6, 1762, used Steuben as an envoy to King Frederick. The new Czar, an ardent admirer of Frederick the Great, immediately concluded an armistice with Prussia in July 1762, restoring all captured territory. Peter III was deposed on July 18, but the Russians were effectively out of the war.

Brigade major Steuben returned to serve as staff captain and aide-de-camp to Frederick the Great and as military attaché with the Prussian embassy to the star-crossed Czar Peter III. Steuben was one of thirteen staff officers personally selected for special training in military science by King Frederick the Great (who was considered the greatest military genius of his age). Steuben was employed as deputy-quartermaster to his old regiment under Von Lestwitz. In this capacity, he personally served in the King's retinue during the siege of Schweidnitz, twenty-eight miles southwest of Breslau in Silesia, whose surrender on October 9, 1762, proved a decisive Prussian victory. The Austrians suffered another defeat at Frieberg in Saxony on October 29, this time at the hands of Prince Henry. Peace negotiations opened on December 30, 1762. On February 15, 1763, the Treaty of Hubertsburg ended the Seven Years' War. Captain Steuben was granted a canonry in Havelberg Cathedral, paying an annual stipend of 1,200 German florins.

With the Peace of Hubertsburg, Captain von Steuben was discharged from the staff of General Friedrich Wilhelm von Gaudy, commander of the regiment of Salmuth, in the general demobilization of 1763. His career apparently scuttled by the dislike of General Anhalt, Steuben later said that: "I have nothing to be ashamed of for my part in the war, though it may be that an inconsiderate step and perhaps an unreconcilable enemy destroyed the expectation of a better reward." Through noble patronage of Prince Henry and others, he found employment as chamberlain or Grand Marshall in the household bodyguard of the bankrupt Catholic prince of Hohenzollern-Hechingen, a small principality of southern Germany, lying northwest of the Danube River, on the borders of Baden and Wurttemberg, paying a salary of 1,200 German florins. He also was commissioned a Colonel of the Swabian Circle, making him, in a sense, honorary commander of the local militia. Most portraits of Baron von Steuben show him proudly wearing "a splendid medal of gold and diamonds." This impressive ornament was a Star of the Order of Fidelity, the outward sign of an honorary knighthood conferred upon Hofmarschall von Steuben by William, Margrave of Baden-Durlach, in 1769.

Hoping to improve his station in life and relieve his many debts, Steuben explored various prospects for securing a lucrative government appointment or, failing that, a remunerative marriage. He journeyed to Paris seeking a French military commission and met with the

new French War Minister, Count de St. Germain. The French government was then engaged (more or less discreetly) in supplying military assistance to American revolutionaries, but many supplies had been squandered in America by a lack of order and discipline among the ill-trained rebels. Sending French military advisors to America would have constituted an open breach of neutrality and St. Germain immediately recognized the potential value of a former Prussian staff-officer to his cause. Appropriately, he forwarded his visitor to the American ministers in France, Benjamin Franklin and Silas Deane; here he also became acquainted with Peter S. Du Ponceau, only seventeen years of age, who spoke English fluently and who served as interpreter. Their negotiations, however, soon dead-ended: having no ideological predisposition toward republican uprisings, Steuben was initially disgusted by a congressional prohibition on ministerial guarantees of either high rank, financial rewards or even travel expenses to foreign adventurers. He departed Paris for Rastadt on July 25th. Most timely for the American cause, Steuben's last hope for advantageous employment by another German principality was suddenly and completely dashed by insinuations of sexual misconduct. So far as any researcher has been able to discover, the charges were unsubstantiated; the attempted character assassination was apparently occasioned by the envy and bigotry of rivals.

Whatever venom and intrigue lay hidden in this slander, it effectively propelled the Baron back to Paris and into the confidence of the American ministers. They neatly conspired to inflate his resume by conferring the rank of "Lieutenant-general" in the Prussian army upon him. The French minister loaned him money enough to outfit himself properly for his "rank" and to meet his travel expenses. Casting for his fortune, Baron von Steuben, Knight of the Order of Fidelity, boarded a French supply-ship under an assumed name and departed for the New World. Facing storms, mutiny and fire aboard his gunpowder-laden transport, the freshly minted "Lieutenant-general," his private secretary, Peter Du Ponceau, and three French adjutants, braved a two-month ocean voyage from Marseilles and gratefully disembarked at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on December 1, 1777. Their first communication ashore was news of Burgoyne's defeat at Saratoga.

Steuben proceeded to Boston to present his letters of introduction and recommendation to Congressman John Hancock. Here he met Samuel and John Adams. On January 9, 1778, General Washington replied to Steuben, asking him to proceed to York, Pennsylvania, where he might present his credentials to Congress and receive their decision upon his offer of service. His Boston host, John Hancock, outfitted him with a sleigh and horses for the arduous overland journey to Pennsylvania.

In February 1778, a Congressional committee of five members, chaired by Dr. Witherspoon, interviewed him. In more private interviews with key politicians, however, Steuben believed that Congress employed him with the promise of ample indemnification in the event that his services proved instrumental to American victory. Congress favorably received the committee's report and ordered Steuben to join the army at their winter cantonment.

Steuben's Offer of Service to Congress

Portsmouth, December 6, 1777.

Honorable Gentlemen:

The honor of serving a respectable Nation, engaged in the noble enterprise of defending its rights and Liberty, is the only motive that brought me over to this Continent. I ask neither riches nor titles. I am come here from the remotest end of Germany at my own expense, and have given up an honorable and lucrative rank; I have made no condition with your Deputies in France, nor shall I make any with you. My only ambition is to serve you as a Volunteer, to deserve the confidence of your General in Chief, and to follow him in all his operations, as I have done during seven campaigns with the King of Prussia. Two and a twenty years past at such a school seem to give me a right of thinking myself in the number of experienced Officers; and if I am Possessor of some talents in the Art of War, they should be much dearer to me, if I could employ them in the service of a Republick, such as I hope soon to see America. I should willingly purchase at my whole Blood's Experience the honor of seeing one Day my Name after those of the defenders of your Liberty. Your gracious acceptance will be sufficient for me, and I ask no other favour than to be received among your Officers. I dare hope you will agree to my Request, that you will be so good as to send me your Order to Boston, where I shall expect them and accordingly take convenient Measures.

I have the honor to be, with respect, honorable Gentlemen
Your most obedient and very humble servant
Steuben.

Congress Replies.

January 14, 1778

Whereas the Baron Steuben, a lieutenant general in foreign service, has, in a most disinterested and heroic manner, offered his services to these States in the quality of a volunteer:

Resolved, that the President present the thanks of Congress in behalf of these United States, to the Baron Steuben, for the zeal he has shown for the cause of America, and the disinterested tender he has been pleased to make of his military talents; and inform him, that Congress cheerfully accept of his service as a volunteer in the army of these states, and wish him to repair to General Washington's quarters as soon as convenient.

On February 23, 1778, the tattered Continentals at Valley forge were treated to the wintry specter of a stocky fur-robed Prussian Baron seated in a sleigh, petting his Italian greyhound named Azor, while dragging a splendid entourage of grooms and drivers,

Boston servants, a French cook, French aides and a military secretary in his wake. Typically, the Baron had staged his grand entrance with borrowed sums.

Washington was painfully aware of the shortcomings of his makeshift army, but his recent prescription for an inspector-generalship had been rendered impalpable by political and military intrigues. Impressed by the Baron's military credentials but sensitive to the xenophobic jealousies of his staff, Washington assigned his distinguished volunteer to the post of acting Inspector-General.

The professional Prussian trooper was supposedly appalled and nearly discouraged by the sight of naked troops bearing rusty muskets. He shuddered at the pervasive indifference to proper military conduct and simple sanitary precautions. Yet, the Prussian army had spent the frigid winter of 1759 under similar circumstances.

His arrival on the scene was truly a god-send: for it was then widely believed that the American army lacked the "order and subordination" necessary to counter the "superior discipline of Howe's army." The victory at Saratoga, however, had brought an alliance with France, concluded February 6, 1778. On March 17, 1778, General Steuben set out to reform the army by personally training 100 soldiers as a model company. He habitually began instructions before dawn, drilling his select troops twice daily. His shabby audience curiously regarded the sight of an officer of rank and title performing the routine of a drill-sergeant and his antics soon became the best show in town. Unable to speak English, Steuben wielded a musket and pantomimed the manual of arms. He soon memorized basic commands in English and barked them phonetically to his trainees. Such awkward methods and the clumsy response of his pupils produced such frustration that Steuben invented legendary curses in a curious hybrid of languages.

Whatever the head winds, Steuben's progress in establishing a uniform system of maneuvers and discipline proved nothing short of miraculous. Once trained, members of Steuben's select Guard in turn schooled other troops in basic military procedures. In a sense, they became graduates of the first American military academy. In a few short weeks, large units of the army were practicing his drills. In testimony to his accomplishments, Washington recommended Baron Steuben as Inspector-General with the rank of Major General on April 30th. He accordingly received his commission on May 5, 1778.

Baron Steuben established the company (actually a battalion) as the tactical unit. Battalions collected to form a thousand-man brigade; two brigades made a division. He also inaugurated a system of administration, establishing a Department of Inspection with two ranks of inspectors: brigade inspectors chosen by field-officers from their own ranks; and, above them, five sub-inspectors with the rank of lieutenant-colonel to superintend the exercise and discipline of the troops and to assist in the execution of field maneuvers, especially in battle. Steuben insisted upon monthly inspections of all supplies and ammunition. His inspectors noted the number and condition of the men and the state of their arms and accouterments, reporting any loss or damage in standardized returns. Thus Steuben instituted such routine paperwork as was necessary to pinpoint accountability

for both men and materials. William North recalled one occasion when Baron Steuben, setting the example for his inspectors, spent seven hours with one brigade, composed of three regiments, investigating the excuses for every absentee, examining with close attention the contents of every cartridge box and knapsack, and the condition of every musket. According to an inspection return of the army submitted to Richard Peters, of the War Department, so thoroughly had Steuben's reforms corrected waste and misapplication of military supplies that "only three muskets were deficient, and those accounted for." Congress later noted that his reforms "in the department of inspector general, have been the principal cause of introducing and perfecting discipline in our army, and of establishing such a system of economy as produced an extraordinary reduction of expenses.

In training and organizing the Continental troops, Baron von Steuben tailored European military standards to fit his ill-clothed civilian-troopers. John Laurens, a son of the President of Congress then serving on Washington's staff, recognized Steuben's genius as "a man profound in the science of war" who was willing and able to adapt "established forms to stubborn circumstances." General von Steuben enhanced the potency of American firepower by simplifying the standard procedure for loading, aiming and shooting musketry. With clockwork precision, succeeding ranks of soldiers could issue a savage and recurrent venom of lead. Furthermore, the army was taught to march and maneuver punctually in orderly masses rather than in cumbersome single-file lines. This promoted the rapid deployment of troops in battle and the development of more effective and reflexive strategies. Since eighteenth century warfare was conducted much like a panoramic human chess-game, these organizational skills were indispensable in gaining the advantage over an opponent.

While at Valley Forge, General Steuben formed a life-long friendship with Captain Benjamin Walker. Born in England, Walker had been trained as an accountant. While a Captain in the Second New York Regiment, he stepped forward on the drill-ground and rescued the Baron in a moment of supreme frustration by offering his services as interpreter, being fluent in French and English. He thus became Steuben's trusted aide-de-camp. Having an excellent command of French, Benjamin Walker conversed easily with his Prussian superior and managed his correspondence. He served for a time on Washington's staff. After the war, he settled as a broker in New York City and regularly attended to the Baron's affairs. He died on January 13, 1818.

Steuben recognized the enormity of his task in turning awkward recruits into steady soldiers and organizing the distribution of armaments and supplies. He resigned himself to a gradual success, building confidence and reforming attitudes as well as skills:

"We have not time to do all. The business is, to give to our troops a relish for their trade, to make them feel a confidence in their own skill. Your officers, following the miserable British sergeant system, would think themselves degraded by an attention to the drill. But the time will come, when there will be a better mode of thinking. Then we will attend to turning out the toes."

The transformation of the Continental troops under Steuben's supervision was immediately evident as they marched out of their winter cantonment in pursuit of General Howe's army. Receiving word of the French alliance and the imminent arrival of a French fleet off the American coast, the British army evacuated Philadelphia and retreated across New Jersey toward New York. In the now famous confrontation with the British rear-guard at Monmouth Courthouse, General Charles Lee confused his attacking forces, precipitating a retreat. His report to Washington of the unaccountable confusion and retreat of the American troops under Lee's command provoked a rude reply from General Lee, for which he later apologized. Steuben rallied the broken left flank of the American army, reformed it while under a cannonade and then marched it calmly back into combat. Colonel Alexander Hamilton spoke for many in the army when he said "he had never known nor conceived the value of military discipline until that day." When the main army marched northward from New Brunswick, while most brigadier-generals were occupied by the court-martial trial of General Lee, Washington temporarily appointed Steuben to conduct one wing of the army to the Hudson River. Recognizing jealousies from native officers, General Washington declined to support Baron Steuben's request for transfer to the line, but upheld his supremacy as inspector-general to the Continental army against rivals.

Prescribing a rudimentary education in the martial arts of his time, Steuben composed a manual of military regulations (best known as the Blue Book), which soon became the "bible" of the United States Army. Steuben wrote this work in French and had it translated into English by his secretary, Pierre Etienne Duponceau, with the assistance of his loyal aide-de-camp, Captain Benjamin Walker. Alexander Hamilton edited the text while Captain Pierre Charles L'Enfant (who later achieved fame as architect of the National Capital) provided illustrations. Steuben's *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States* was endorsed by Congress on March 29, 1779 and was soon adopted as a training guide by most state militias. Steuben's handbook also imposed a system of regular monthly inspections and instruction, orderly and sanitary encampments and specific job-descriptions. Amidst all of his formulae regulating military life in even its smallest habits, Steuben recognized that officers had to command and not simply demand the respect and obedience of their troops. The *Blue Book's* "Instructions for the Captain" listed his military Beatitudes:

"A Captain cannot be too careful of the company the state has committed to his charge. He must pay the greatest attention to the health of his men, their discipline, arms, accouterments, ammunition, clothes and necessities. His first object should be, to gain the love of his men, by treating them with every possible kindness and humanity, inquiring into their complaints, and when well founded, seeing them redressed. He should know every man of his company by name and character. He should often visit those who are sick, speak tenderly to them, see that the public provision, whether of medicine or diet, is duly administered, and procure them besides such comforts and conveniences as are in his power. The attachment that arises from this kind of attention to the sick and wounded, is almost inconceivable; it will moreover be the means of preserving the lives of many valuable men."

In April of 1779, while the army was encamped at Middlebrook, General Steuben acquired a new aide-de-camp, Captain William North (1752-1836). He was a volunteer in 1775, under General Benedict Arnold, in the expedition from Kennebec into Canada. He later commanded a company in Colonel Jackson's regiment, fought in the battle of Monmouth, and then became an aide-de-camp, life-long friend and advisor to Baron Steuben. After the war, North succeeded Steuben as Inspector-general. He later served as a New York legislator, Speaker of the New York Assembly and as United States Senator from New York under the new Federal Constitution.

Steuben's desire for a field command was resisted by Washington who knew of the resentment of his officers toward the high placement of foreign soldiers of fortune. While the Continentals spent their bitter winter at Morristown, Major-general von Steuben acted as Washington's representative to Congress in a review of military policies affecting the recruitment, organization and administration of a national army. He was finally given command of Continental troops and New Jersey militiamen in the field when 6000 British and Hessian soldiers under the command of General Wilhelm von Knyphausen threatened military stores at Morristown in June of 1780. But the stubborn valor of the New Jersey Brigade assisted by their armed countrymen slowed the enemy's advance. Costly skirmishes at Connecticut Farms, the Rahway Bridge, Springfield and Elizabethtown forced a British withdrawal to Staten Island. Fearing that British operations in New Jersey were a diversion, Washington ordered General Steuben to immediately inspect, reform and strengthen his strategic post at West Point. In the waning embers of the summer of 1780, Steuben made a division commander as Washington advanced his army into Bergen County. During this campaign, Steuben supervised the construction of a blockhouse at Sneden's Landing and sat on the court-martial of Benedict Arnold's unfortunate agent, Major John Andre.

On October 23, 1780, General Steuben was sent to Virginia by Washington to assist General Greene in building a credible Southern army. In a state of emergency, he received virtual control of the State troops in Virginia but was undone by the poor showing and unreliability of the local militias that composed the main body of his command. Having rescued military stores under his protection at Point of Forks from British raiders, he was widely criticized for a tactical retreat in the face of superior enemy forces. The vexed Inspector-general cursed his unreliable self-defense forces and state officials in Virginia saying that this was a place where "every farmer is a general, but where nobody wishes to be a soldier." He concluded his war service as a division commander in the siege-trenches surrounding the British at Yorktown where the final victory was earned. It was he who ordered the American flag to be flown above the surrendered British works at Yorktown on October 19, 1781.

Serving as a soldier of fortune, Baron von Steuben hoped to be honorably recompensed for his invaluable services. The sorry state of his personal finances became evident when he had to sell his favorite horse and a set of silver tableware in order to entertain the Allied commanders after their success at Yorktown. Washington made the impoverished Baron a small loan and Steuben departed northward on horseback, his purse nearly

empty.

As negotiations in Europe dragged on toward a final settlement of the war, military matters anticipating the withdrawal of British troops occupied Steuben. Accepting Washington's recommendation, Congress sent its Inspector-general on a futile mission to receive possession of British posts on the Canadian frontier in July of 1783. During these long months of watchful waiting, Baron Steuben laid plans for his return to Europe; but the French ministry greeted his requests for compensation and for the award of a high military post with polite indifference. The Treaty of Paris formally recognized American independence on September 3, 1783. The British army evacuated Manhattan in November. General Baron von Steuben attended Washington's farewell party at Fraunces Tavern on December 4, 1783, and then accompanied the Commander on his journey to Philadelphia for the final settlement of his accounts with Congress. Shortly thereafter, Steuben leased a farmstead on Manhattan known as the "Louvre" which occupied the ground now taken by New York Hospital-Cornell University.

General Washington's Farewell Token of Sincere Friendship

Annapolis, December 23, 1783

My Dear Baron: Although I have taken frequent opportunities, both in public and private, of acknowledging your zeal, attention and abilities in performing the duties of your office, yet I wish to make use of this last moment of my public life to signify in the strongest terms my entire approbation of your conduct, and to express my sense of the obligations the public is under to you for your faithful and meritorious service.

I beg you will be convinced, my dear Sir, that I should rejoice if it could ever be in my power to serve you more essentially than by expressions of regard and affection. But in the meantime I am persuaded you will not be displeased with this farewell token of my sincere friendship and esteem for you.

This is the last letter I shall ever write while I continue in the service of my country. The hour of my resignation is fixed at twelve this day, after which I shall become a private citizen on the banks of the Potomac, where I shall be glad to embrace you, and testify the great esteem and consideration, with which I am, my dear Baron, your most obedient and affectionate servant.

GEORGE WASHINGTON

Discouraged in his hopes of returning to a profitable station in Europe, Major-general von Steuben informed the New Jersey legislature that he was "anxiously desirous to become a citizen of the State of New Jersey." In recognition of his "many and signal services to the United States of America," state legislators responded on December 23, 1783, by presenting him with the use and emoluments of the confiscated estate of Jan Zabriskie at New-Bridge, provided that the Baron would "hold, occupy and enjoy the said estate in person, and not by tenant." Accordingly, General Philemon Dickinson, of the New Jersey

Militia, informed the Baron of this legislative gift and related his knowledge of the estate based upon recent inquiries: “there are on the premises an exceeding good House, an excellent barn, together with many useful outbuildings, all of which I am told, want some repairs...there is ...a Grist-mill; a good Orchard, some meadow Ground, & plenty of Wood. The distance from N York by land 15 miles, but you may keep a boat & go from your own door to N York by water — Oysters, Fish & wild fowl in abundance — Possession will be given to you in the Spring, when you will take a view of the premises.”

General Philemon Dickinson regretted that the legislature had only vested Steuben with life-rights and not outright title to the property, saying: *“This not, my dear Baron, equal either to my wishes & your mind, but tis the best I could probably obtain — You’ll observe by the Act, that you are to possess it, but not tenant it out, I am ashamed of this clause but it could not be avoided — This may easily be obviated, by keeping a bed & Servants there & visiting the premises now & then — but I flatter myself, from the representation which has been made to me, that it will be your permanent residence; its vicinity to N York, must render it agreeable to you.”*

Under these terms, it is likely that the Prussian Inspector-general contemplate taking up residence at New-Bridge. His biographer, Friedrich Kapp (writing in 1859) says only, “Steuben, when informed that Zabriskie, in consequence of that confiscation, was left without means, did not accept the gift, and interposed in behalf of Zabriskie.” Unfortunately, the documented facts do not square with this kindly interpretation. On January 24, 1784, John J. Zabriskie, “now a refugee in the City of New York,” filed a claim for compensation from the British government for the loss of his former homestead at New-Bridge, which had been “possessed under this Confiscation Law.” He described his estate as: “One large Mansion House, seventy feet long and forty feet wide, containing twelve rooms built with stone, with Outhouses consisting of a bake House, Smoke House, Coach House, and two large Barns, and a Garden, situated at a place called New Bridge (value 850 Pounds); also One large gristmill containing two pair of stones adjoining said Mansion House (1200 Pounds); Forty Acres of Land adjoining said Mansion House consisting of Meadow Land and two orchards.”

Zabriskie’s 1784 account clearly describes the well-known sandstone mansion, which yet stands at this location. Whatever the conflicting sentiments of the Revolutionary general and dispossessed Loyalist may have been, one fact was equally evident to both: The Zabriskie mansion was not some sleepy country-estate that needed only the fires stoked and the slip-covers lifted to make it cozy. It had served repeatedly as a fort, military headquarters, an intelligence-gathering post, an encampment-ground and the scene of numerous skirmishes. Undoubtedly the abuses of war had rendered the dwelling house uninhabitable, stripped of its furnishings. The old and impecunious Saxon soldier was hardly able to restore its former grandeur. Besides, the legislature had not given him title to the property, but only a right to life-tenancy. It would hardly have been worthwhile for him to invest any large sum in the renovation of a property, which he did not own.

To comprehend Baron Steuben’s predicament we must appreciate that the conduct of the war had left the national Confederation virtually bankrupt. Unable to directly levy taxes,

it depended upon the voluntary support of the States to meet its obligations. Its paper currency was considered as plentiful and as worthless as “oak leaves.” As early as July 4, 1779, General von Steuben had written to a friend in Hohenzollern that Congress had promised him “estates in the best parts of Jersey and Pennsylvania.” The various States were better able to compensate Revolutionary veterans by awards of confiscated Loyalist estates or of vast tracts of unsurveyed lands in the unsettled interior of the country. During the war, Virginia granted 15,000 acres in the present State of Ohio to General Steuben and Pennsylvania granted him 2000 acres lying west of the Allegheny Mountains. While the Baron thus became a considerable landowner, he was in effect “land-poor” as these properties lay in an inaccessible and unsettled wilderness.

During the spring of 1784, General Steuben took temporary lodgings in Philadelphia where he performed his final duties as Inspector-general. On March 24, 1784, Steuben submitted his resignation to Congress. According to his biographers, a Congressional audit made in the winter of 1781-82 showed that Major-general Baron von Steuben was owed \$8,500 for services rendered; he received only \$1,700 and a 6-per cent Treasury certificate for \$6,800. Steuben was later unsuccessful in selling this Treasury note for 10 cents on the dollar. Congress accepted his resignation on April 15, 1784, and decided to present him with a gold hilted sword.

Congress Accepts Steuben's Resignation.

“Resolved, that the thanks of the United States, in Congress assembled, be given to Baron Steuben for the great zeal and abilities he has discovered in the discharge of his office; that a gold-hilted sword be presented to him as a mark of the high sense Congress entertain of his character and services, and that the superintendent of finance take order for procuring the same.”

Congress then moved to present the Baron with \$10,000. The motion was defeated but the Inspector-General was most generously allowed him to draw from arrears in pay and expenses that were owed him. Steuben expended part of this income on the renovation of the “Louvre” which he occupied in May of 1784 and further sums were apparently invested in the purchase and rehabilitation of his New-Bridge estate as is evidenced by his own correspondence. We can only explain this behavior by suggesting that Steuben still contemplated his removal to the Dutch-speaking environs of Hackensack. He rented the house in Jones's Woods — in the vicinity of present-day Fifty-seventh Street — from “ready-money Provost, who built it and named it the “Louvre.”

Before investing in his estate at New-Bridge, General Steuben first intended to acquire title to the property in fee simple. On December 24, 1784, the New Jersey legislature responded to his overtures by passing a supplement to its previous act (which had awarded use of the Zabriskie estate to General Steuben) by authorizing the agent for forfeited estates to sell the property to the highest bidder and deposit the money in the State treasury. Interest upon the sum was to be paid to the Baron during his lifetime. Accordingly, the Zabriskie estate at New-Bridge was sold on April 1, 1785, but its purchaser was none other than the Baron himself acting through his agent, Captain

Benjamin Walker. The purchase price was £1,500. The General's personal interest and familiarity with his Jersey estate was outlined in a letter addressed from New York to Governor Livingston on November 13, 1785:

Sir, — Having become the purchaser of that part of the estate of John Zabriskie, lying at the New-Bridge, near Hackensack, and the term of payment being arrived, an order from the commissioners of the continental treasury on the treasury of New Jersey lies ready for the agent whenever he shall please to call for it.

Before I take the deeds for this place, I have to request the favor of your Excellency to represent to the legislature, that the only lot of wood belonging to the place was withheld by the agent at the sale on a doubt of its being included in the law because it is at the distance of three quarters of a mile from the house, and therefore could not, he supposed, be considered as "lying at the New-Bridge," though on enquiry I find it was an appendage to the estate, and indeed is the only part of it on which there is a stick of wood; and it was bequeathed to J. Zabriskie by his father along with the house and mill; the lot consists of about 13 acres, it was left unsold with the house and mill, though every other part of J. Zabriskie's estate was sold some years since, and being now unpossessed, great part of the wood is cut off, and the destruction daily increases. If the legislature meant to include it in the law, I must request that directions may be given to the agent to include it in the deed. If otherwise, as it is essential to the other part of the estate, I have to request that I may be permitted to purchase it at such valuation as may be thought just.

Your Excellency will, I flatter myself, excuse the liberty I take in requesting you to represent this matter to the legislature, and to obtain their decision on it so soon as the business before them will permit.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, sir, your Excellency's most obed't humble servant,

STEUBEN

His Excellency, Governor Livingston.

Between 1783 and 1785, General Steuben withdrew \$26,000 from the national treasury including the sum that he used to purchase the former Zabriskie homestead at public vendue. He apparently spent considerable money to renovate both his leased farmhouse on Manhattan as well as his prized Jersey estate. But his improvident lifestyle and poor management of personal finances outstripped his income and daily increased the number of his creditors. On February 28, 1786, a further act was passed by the NJ legislature which provided that, if payments on the property were not met by the following March (1787), then the Baron should have the use and benefit of the estate even though he resided in another state. Thus it wasn't until 1786 — three years after the initial presentation of the property to Steuben — that the legislature abandoned its stipulation that he occupy or personally use the property in order to receive its profits. With this encouragement, Steuben apparently leased at least the mansion and mill back to Jan

Zabriskie and so enjoyed the rental fees. There is evidence to suggest that Captain Walker (as Steuben's business agent) and perhaps the Baron himself, occupied rooms in the house while managing the domestic renovation and commercial renaissance of this valuable site. Arndt Von Steuben claimed that Steuben spent winters in New York, but retired to his country home in summer. Receipts from New-Bridge Landing have survived issued under the style of the partnership of Walker & Zabriskie. There is also at least one letter (circa 1788) addressed by Senator William North to Benjamin Walker at Hackensack. On July 4th, 1786, Jan Zabriskie hosted General Steuben and his entourage at New Bridge. Unawares, the Baron paid for his own entertainment as Mr. Zabriskie's servants charged refreshments obtained from the New Bridge Inn to the General's account. But by 1786, Steuben's sights turned northward to a grant of 16,000 acres in Oneida County, New York, which he received from the legislature of that state on June 27, 1786.

By 1787, Steuben's finances were at low ebb. Bankrupt, he placed his affairs under the administration of Ben Walker. In 1788, he moved into rooms in the house of his friends, Benjamin and Polly Walker, on King Street. In May 1788, he set out for his vast estate in the Mohawk country. To pay off his debts and to gain some much needed capital, Baron Steuben wrote to Captain Walker on May 23, 1788, giving him full authority to sell his Jersey estate at New-Bridge. At about this time, his close friend and advisor William North confided: "The Jersey Estate must be sold and the proceeds sacredly appropriated to paying his debts and with the remainder he must live a recluse till the new Government [then forming under the Constitution] decides his affairs..."

Accordingly, on September 5, 1788, the New Jersey legislature repealed its previous acts and invested Baron von Steuben with full title to the former Zabriskie estate. Recognizing his predicament and hoping to save himself from further financial embarrassment, Steuben wrote to North in October of 1788, saying: "The jersey Estate must and is to be sold. Walker is my administrator, all debts are to be paid out of it." On November 6, 1788, Steuben again wrote to William North at his new home in Duanesburg, noting that "My jersey Estate is Advertised but not yet Sold, from this Walker Shall immediately pay to you the money, you so generously lend me and all my debts in New-York will be payed. I support my present poverty with more heroism than I Expected. All Clubs and parties are renounced, I seldom leave the House."

Steuben advertised his Jersey estate for sale in the *New Jersey Journal* on December 3, 1788, describing it as being

"...long-noted as the best stand for trade in the state of New Jersey. Large well-built stone house, thoroughly rebuilt lately, a gristmill with two run of stone; excellent new kiln for drying grain for export built lately; other outbuildings, and 40 acres of land, one-half of which is excellent meadow. Situated on the bank of the river by which produce can be conveyed to New York in a few hours, and sloops of 40 tons burthern may load and discharge along side of the mill."

This remarkable statement shows that General Steuben and his agent, Benjamin Walker, made a considerable investment in his New-Bridge estate, reviving and modernizing its commercial operations and rehabilitating the mansion-house. The very day after this advertisement appeared, Jan Zabriskie (1767-1793), the son and namesake of the Loyalist who had lost the property, purchased the old family homestead. Steuben happily reported in a letter dated December 12th: "My Jersey Estate is sold for twelve honored Pounds N. Y. Monney [about \$3,000]. Walker and Hammilton are my Administrators."

Steuben had hoped that the proceeds from the sale would more than satisfy his creditors and thus stave off the threatened forced sale of his Oneida tract. His hopes for a fresh start in the Mohawk valley were frustrated by the inaccessibility of the vast undeveloped estate and his perennial lack of capital and credit. Contrary to his original expectations, the New York grant was isolated from the Mohawk River by several perilous waterfalls on one of its tributaries and transport of products of the land by water was virtually impossible. On June 4, 1790, Congress finally granted him an annual pension of \$2,500 but declined to award him an additional \$10,000 bonus. Thus, we can say that the proceeds from the sale of his property at New-Bridge were the most valuable compensation for his war service to the Nation. In 1794, the Baron von Steuben died in poverty while resident in a crude log-house erected in the midst of an untamed wilderness. He was buried without ceremony in a plain pine coffin, wrapped in his military cloak and attended by his old aide-de-camp, Ben Walker.

John W. Mulligan to Benjamin Walker.

Steuben, 29 November 1794

I am at length sufficiently composed to begin, o my dear Sir, a sad tale. On Tuesday morning last our friend, my father was struck with a palsy, which deprived his left side of motion. The evening before we parted at eleven; he was well, perfectly well, at 4 o'clock. I was alarmed with the cry that he was dying, and when I entered his chamber he was in extreme agony and appeared to have suffered long. I sent for immediate assistance and dispatched White for Major North. He was sensible and could speak, reached violently, asked for an emetic, which I gave him, it operated well. I then put him to bed from which I had taken him by his desire. He continued to speak at intervals till about six and from thence was speechless. He remained apparently sensible during the greater part of Tuesday, notwithstanding he was often in convulsions. That night he was pretty quiet though the fits sometimes returned. He did not show any sign of sense afterwards. every measure, which the situation afforded, was pursued to relieve him until the arrival of the doctor on Thursday. He administered medicines, which gave some relief, but it was not long. The stroke was too violent and yesterday at 1/2 past 12 o'clock, oh, my good God, my parent died.

There was no stone to mark his grave. He named his dear friends and long-suffering advisors, Ben Walker and William North, as his heirs. Years later, when local townsmen were about to lay out a road virtually atop his resting-place, Ben Walker had his remains

removed to a safe distance and then placed a simple marker in his honor.

By the estimates of his contemporaries (both friend and foe), Major-general Frederick Baron von Steuben was a pleasant and able soldier, obliging and efficient in the performance of his duties. He achieved success by proving loyal, inventive and steadfast in the most discouraging circumstances. In so doing, he inspired remarkable confidence and devotion among his friends and comrades. An unreformed spendthrift, he was notoriously careless in the management of his personal finances and in the choice and entertainment of casual acquaintances. While justly memorialized for the economies and efficiency he effected as Inspector-general of the army; in the conduct of his private life, he proved a poor judge of business opportunities and was much given to grand and worthless speculations. Ambitious in pursuit of fame and fortune, he was known to possess a warm temper. If tempestuous at times, he was also quick to apologize for any mistake in judgment, which his anger occasioned. Ever sociable, he loved his beef and sauerkraut but hated to dine alone. He was admired as a fine dresser, an accomplished horseman and dancer. And so we return his icon to the wall — dusted but undiminished.

In February 1929, the American Art Galleries auctioned a collection of Steuben relics inherited by the family of William North, including his Revolutionary War correspondence, his sword and dress uniform.

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Q. Tantaqua and the Lenape Story of Genesis



This illustration from Captain David DeVries' *Journal* (1644) depicts a Hackensack man and woman. Note the long house just right of center in the background.

Tantaqua was listed as a native owner of lands surrounding the tidal estuary of the Hackensack River, from Newark Bay northward to New Bridge, in July 1668, February 1672, January 1676, September 1677, and November 1686. He was listed as a Sackamaker (headman) of the Hackensacks in April 1678. After selling the northern part of Teaneck (then known as New Hackensack) in 1677, he and his kinfolk moved westward across the Hackensack River. His last known residence was on the ground where the Steuben House now stands, which was called Tantaquas Plain in the 1680s. Cole's Brook, which enters the Hackensack River immediately south of the Steuben House, was originally called Tantaquas Brook.

According to a journal that he kept of his travels through the Middle Atlantic colonies in 1679-80, Jasper Danckærts, a Labadist missionary, met an old Hackensack sachem named Tantaqua at Danckærts' lodging in Manhattan. He described him as "a man about eighty years of age, whom our people called Jasper, who lived at Ahakinsack [Hackensack] or at Ackinon [Acquackanonck]." He was the brother of a sakemaker and was accompanied by a young man identified as a sakemaker's son. Danckærts' landlords related that "when they lived on Long Island, it was once a very dear time; no provisions could be obtained, and they suffered great want, so that they were reduced to the last extremity; that God the Lord then raised up this Indian, who went out fishing daily in order to bring fish to them every day when he caught a good mess, which he always did." Possessing a "great affection for him," they gave him the name Jasper and considered him their "*nitap*, that is, my great friend." Reportedly, "he sometimes got drunk..." In the Sanhican Lenape

dialect, “tinteywe” means *fire*.



Tantaqua's mark (the equivalent of his signature) on the 1677 deed for the New Hackensack Patent (northern Teaneck) depicts a Tortoise.

In October 1679, Tantaqua explained to Jasper Danckærts a seemingly godless act of creation, taking a piece of charcoal from the fire and drawing upon the floor:

He first drew a circle, a little oval, to which he made four paws or feet, a head and a tail. “This,” said he, “is a tortoise, lying in the water around it,” and he moved his hand round the figure, continuing, “This was or is all water, and so at first was the world or the earth, when the tortoise gradually raised its round back up high, and the water ran off of it, and thus the earth became dry.” He then took a little straw and placed it on end in the middle of the figure, and proceeded, “The earth was now dry, and there grew a tree in the middle of the earth, and the root of this tree sent forth a sprout beside it and there grew upon it a man, who was the first male. This man was then alone, and would have remained alone; but the tree bent over until its top touched the earth, and there shot therein another root, from which came forth another sprout, and there grew upon it the woman, and from these two are all men produced.”

The southern tribes of Lenape told the same creation myth seventy years later, as recorded in July and August 1750 by Peter Kalm:

“A large turtle floated on the water. Around it gathered more and more slime and other material that fastened itself to it, so that it finally became all America. The first savage was sent down from heaven, and rested on the turtle. When he encountered a log he kicked it, and behold, people were formed from it. In every city (of the Red Men) there is ordinarily one family, which takes the name of ‘Turtle.’

An old Indian said that when God had created the world and its people, he took a stick, cast it on the ground, and spoke unto man, saying, ‘Here thou shalt have an animal which will be of great service to thee, and which will follow thee wherever thou goest,’

and in that moment the stick turned into a dog.”

Some apparently looked beyond the turtle’s role in creation to a Prime Mover. In March 1680, Hans (alias Piewecherenoes or Pierwim), an Indian sakemaker and medicine-man residing on Newark Bay near Constable’s Hook, explained that all the Indians of North America, whether Mannhattans, Senecas, Mohawks or Susquehannocks, Southern or Northern Indians, acknowledge the existence of “a supreme first power...the first and great beginning of all things,” whose true name was “*Kickeron*, who is the origin of all, who has not only once produced or made all things, but produces every day.” It was Kickeron who “made the tortoise, and the tortoise had a power and a nature to produce all things, such as earth, trees and the like, which God wished through it to produce, or have produced.” Hans further elaborated:

“All that we see daily that is good, is from him; and every thing he makes and does is good. He governs all things, and nothing is done without his aid and direction.”

Hans, being a medicine man, observed that medicines could not cure unless it pleased Kickeron to make them work; in fact, sickness was an evil that Kickeron sent to those were bad. A wicked spirit or devil urged people to commit “all kinds of evil, drunkenness and excess, to fighting and war, and to strife and violence amongst themselves, by which many are wounded and killed.”

R. History of the Ackerman-Zabriskie Tidal Gristmill at Historic New Bridge Landing

By Kevin Wright
Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission
September 2004

At the time of his marriage to Jannetje Lozier in 1713, Johannes Ackerman settled upon lands fronting the Hackensack River, which his father, David Ackerman, purchased from Matheus Corneliuson in June 1695. He erected a dwelling house near the Steenrapie Road (now Kinderkamack Road), probably near the present intersection of Main Street and Elizabeth Court in River Edge. He also built a gristmill near the outlet of Coles Brook. High tides on the Hackensack River were trapped in the outlet of Coles Brook behind a dam, creating a millpond. The mill operated only when there was a sufficient rush and fall of water at ebb tide to drive the waterwheels.

When a “new bridge” was constructed at the narrows of the Hackensack River in March 1744, road surveyors laid out a four-rod road, following the present course of Main Street, River Edge, running “*on the Land of the Widow of Johannis Ackerman Deceased Beginning at the Road of Stien Rabi & on the said Land along the house of the deceased as the Road goes to the Mills of the deceased, about an East Course, and then Northerly*

along the Creek about Ten yards above an old Stump where the Bridge is to be Built.”

Jan and Annetje Zabriskie bought the mill, farm and dwelling of Johannes’ son, Nicolas Ackerman, in 1745, immediately after the opening of the New Bridge made it a valuable stand for trade. Jan Zabriskie built the oldest part of the Steuben House in 1752. A sandstone lozenge or date stone, set in the south gable end, depicts the waterwheel of the mill. In October 1759, miller Jan Zabriskie advertised the sale of a fully-rigged, seven-cord boat which, when fully loaded, had a draft below water of four feet, eight inches. This boat plied weekly between Zabriskie’s mill and the Great Dock in New York.¹

The gristmill was of vital interest to farmers who wished to sell their grain at the best possible price. Grinding kernels into flour or animal feed tripled the value. Two heavy stone wheels, called *millstones*, did the work of grinding. The bottom or *nether* stone was fixed in the floor of the mill while the top or *runner* stone turned above it. The grain trickled from a large wooden holder or *hopper* through an *eye* or hole in the center of the runner stone. The spinning upper stone threw the kernels outward between the two rough stone faces, reducing them to a fine meal. The finished flour dropped off the edges of the stones and was trapped in a circular wooden tub or *husk* surrounding the millstones. It fell down a wooden chute into a barrel or bag. A waterwheel turned the heavy runner-stone through a simple system of wooden axles and gears.

The merchant-miller was generally a prosperous and prominent middleman in his community. A small hamlet usually sprouted around a gristmill and its attendant river crossing or landing, attracting teamsters, farmers, and craftsmen such as blacksmiths, cart and wheel wrights. Such crossroads or stopping places also provided a convenient location for inns and schools.

New Bridge Landing quickly grew into the business center of the upper Hackensack Valley. Iron made in stone furnaces along the Ramapo Mountains was carried in ox-carts to New Bridge Landing where it was loaded onto boats for shipment to market. Flour and animal feeds were shipped from Zabriskie’s Mill. All kinds of wares came in from boats returning from the city.

Jan Zabriskie, Senior, died in October 1774, aged 58 years, bequeathing “the house where I live, the mills, and the whole farm as appears by a deed from Nicholas Ackerman” to his son and namesake, John Zabriskie, Junior.² John Zabriskie’s New Bridge estate served as a battleground, military headquarters, fort and encampment ground throughout the American Revolution and undoubtedly suffered damage and deterioration due to the ill effects of war. Being a Loyalist, John Zabriskie and his family fled to the safety of British held New York City, suffering the confiscation of his property at New Bridge as a consequence.

¹*NJ Archives, First Series, Vol. XX Newspaper Extracts Vol. IV 1756-1761*, p. 387

²*NJ Archives, First Series Vol. XXXV, Abstracts of Wills Vol. VI 1781-1785*, pp. 461-462

In recognition of his “many and signal services to the United States of America,” the New Jersey legislature presented the use and emoluments of the confiscated estate of Jan Zabriskie at New-Bridge, to Major-General Baron von Steuben on December 23, 1783, provided that the Baron would “hold, occupy and enjoy the said estate in person, and not by tenant.” General Philemon Dickinson, of the New Jersey Militia, informed the Baron of this legislative gift and related his knowledge of the estate based upon recent inquiries:

“There are on the premises an exceeding good House, an excellent barn, together with many useful outbuildings, all of which I am told, want some repairs...there is ...a Grist-mill; a good Orchard, some meadow Ground, & plenty of Wood. The distance from N York by land 15 miles, but you may keep a boat & go from your own door to N York by water — Oysters, Fish & wild fowl in abundance — Possession will be given to you in the Spring, when you will take a view of the premises.”

John J. Zabriskie, then “a refugee in the City of New York” filed a claim on January 24, 1784, asking the Crown to compensate him for the loss of his former homestead at New-Bridge, which was “possessed under this Confiscation Law.” Mr. Zabriskie described his estate as: “One large Mansion House, seventy feet long and forty feet wide, containing twelve rooms built with stone, with Outhouses consisting of a bake House, Smoke House, Coach House, and two large Barns, and a Garden, situated at a place called New Bridge (value £850); also One large gristmill containing two pair of stones adjoining said Mansion House (£1200); Forty Acres of Land adjoining said Mansion House consisting of Meadow Land and two orchards.”

The Zabriskie mansion at the Hackensack New Bridge, when owned by Steuben, was partly occupied by Steuben’s aide-de-camp, Capt. Benjamin Walker, and partly leased to the son and namesake of its former owner, the Loyalist Jan Zabriskie. The tax assessments for 1786 list Walker & Zabriskie as merchants.

Steuben’s extensive repairs to the premises are openly stated in his advertisement of sale, published in the *New Jersey Journal* on December 3, 1788:

“... Long-noted as the best stand for trade in the state of New Jersey. Large well-built stone house, thoroughly rebuilt lately, a gristmill with two run of stone; excellent new kiln for drying grain for export built lately; other outbuildings, and 40 acres of land, one-half of which is excellent meadow. Situated on the bank of the river by which produce can be conveyed to New York in a few hours, and sloops of 40 tons burthern may load and discharge along side of the mill.”

On December 4, 1788, the Major-General Frederick Wm. Baron de Steuben, of New York City, conveyed his Jersey Estate, comprising 49 acres at New Bridge, formerly belonging to John Zabriskie, to John Zabriskie, Jr., of New Barbadoes Township for £1,200.³

³*Bergen County Deed Book F*, p. 2

In 1791, John J. Zabriskie was taxed for 30 acres, two gristmills and one slave. His son, John Zabriskie, Jr., was listed as a merchant and householder. In the tax assessments, “two gristmills” does not refer to two mill buildings, but rather to two sets of grinding stones. John Zabriskie’s cousin, John Seaman, listed as a “single man,” owned one vessel.

On September 28, 1791, John Brower and his wife Mary sold two tracts upon Round Hook near New Bridge to John Zabriskie, Jr. for £53.⁴ The boundary survey for the first of these tracts began on the south side of Tantaquas Creek (Coles Brook) on the line of John Zabriskie’s lands and ran thence over the round hill, thence by various courses until it reached Flatt Creek, thence following along Flat Creek and Tantaquas Creek to the beginning point of the survey. The boundary for the second parcel began on the east side of land belonging to Jan Zabriskie, Jr. at the edge of Flatt Creek and ran to the south side of the “New dam,” thence to the Hackensack River, and finally northwest and south along Flatt Creek to the beginning point. It seems that Jan Zabriskie, Jr. restored his father’s gristmill to operation by reconstruction of a new dam on Flatt Creek, apparently a tidal arm of Tantaquas Creek and the Hackensack River.

In August-September 1792, John Seaman was not included in the tax assessments but another cousin, Peter Goelet, was included as a “single man.” John Zabriskie, Jr., married Catharine Hoagland, daughter of New Bridge innkeeper Cornelius Hoagland, on October 13, 1792, at Schraalenburgh, but he died intestate on July 6, 1793, aged 25 years, 9 months and 25 days. Tradition says that John Zabriskie fell into the waterwheel, supposedly while trying to free it from ice, and was crushed and drowned. On October 1, 1793, John E. Seaman of New York City mortgaged “those tracts devised unto John E. Seaman by the Last Will and Testament of John Zabriskie, deceased, lying and being near the New Bridge and now occupied by P. Christopher as Tenant, Also all those tracts at Steenrapie, at Sluckup, at Paskack and Werimus...by Estimate 170 Acres” to David P. Demarest, Blacksmith, for £300.⁵ He discharged this mortgage on June 6, 1794. The tax ratables for August 1793 included John Zabriskie, Jr., Deceased, as owner of 47 acres and two gristmills; John Zabriskie was also listed as owner of a slave. In 1794, Abraham Collins, who married John Zabriskie’s widow, Catherine Hoogland, was taxed for 40 acres, two gristmills and one vessel (this property being identified as the estate formerly belonging to John Zabriskie, Jr., deceased, and inherited by his widow). On March 28, 1795, John E. Seaman of New York City mortgaged his interest in the Dwelling House, Grist Mills and lands at the New Bridge, formerly the property of John Zabriskie, Jr.⁶, as well as the woodland at Sluckup⁷, to Abraham Collins for £700.⁸ He discharged this mortgage on June 2, 1798. In September 1795, the list of tax ratables indicates that Thomas Howard had taken possession of the 40 acres, two gristmills and one slave, formerly owned by the Zabriskies.

⁴*Bergen County Deed Book G*, p. 62

⁵*Bergen County Mortgage Book B*, p. 203.

⁶Purchased by John Zabriskie, Jr., of the late Frederick Baron de Steuben

⁷Purchased by John Zabriskie, Jr., from Barent Cole.

⁸*Bergen County Mortgage Book B*, p. 277



John Heaton was an Englishman who settled at New Bridge. His daughter, Rebecca, married John Van Norden, on June 23, 1754. John and Rebecca Van Norden owned a stone house, a farm, a grist and sawmill on the outlet of Zabriskies Pond, situated near what is now the intersection of Main Street, River Edge, and State Route 4. Heaton's house reportedly burned down around 1800, destroying many family portraits and other artworks of his creation.

John Heaton was the artist who probably created this unique view of the Zabriskie-Steuben estate at New Bridge, including the tidal mill, around 1790. Looking carefully, you can see a man pulling open the horizontal flap-gate in the dam to admit the incoming tide. When the tide begins to ebb, the flap will be sealed tightly by hydraulic pressure.

On May 4, 1796, John S. Banta of New Barbadoes Township gave a mortgage to John P. Durie of Hackensack Township on the following premises: the equal, undivided half part of all that certain messuage, tenements and tract of land, lying and being at the New Bridge, formerly belonging to John Zabriskie and which was by him forfeited and vested in the State of New Jersey, and which Major-General F. W. Baron De Steuben conveyed to John Zabriskie, Jr. on September 5, 1788.⁹ John S. Banta was to indemnify John P. Durie against all damages, costs, claims or demands against the premises whereon John S. Banta lately lived at Tenaflly and which was sold by him to John P. Durie. The tax lists

⁹*Bergen County Mortgage Book B*, p. 355

for September 1796 mention Derrick Banta as owner of 60 acres and one gristmill while John S. Banta was included as a merchant owning 1 gristmill, one-half a vessel. They were owners and residents of the Zabriskie-Steuben House on Main Street, River Edge. In 1797, John S. Banta owned 40 acres, 1 gristmill, and one-half vessel; Derrick Banta owned 20 acres and 1 gristmill. On February 7, 1798, John S. Banta, yeoman, and his wife Rachel, of the Precinct of New Barbadoes, conveyed five tracts to Derreck Banta of the same place, yeoman, for \$7,875.¹⁰ The five tracts comprised: first, eleven acres of woodland and meadow on the east side of the Hackensack River in present-day New Milford; second, a parcel of land near Round Hook on the south side of Tantaquas Creek (Coles Brook), across from the Zabriskie-Steuben House; third, another small parcel of land, also on Round Hook, bounded upon Flat Creek, Tantaquas Creek and the Hackensack River; fourth, seven acres of woodland at Sluckup; and fifth, all that part of the real estate at New Bridge, formerly belonging to Jan Zabriskie, that had been presented to the Baron von Steuben, comprising forty-nine acres. On April 20, 1798, these same five tracts, including the Steuben House, were sold by Derreck Banta, yeoman, of New Barbadoes to Luke Van Boskirk of the same place for \$7,250.¹¹ The tax ratables for September 1802 include Luke Van Buskirk, shopkeeper, as owner of 49 acres and 2 gristmills.

On January 3, 1815, Daniel Denniston and his wife Elizabeth conveyed five tracts of land, formerly belonging to Lucas Van Buskirk (including the Steuben House), to Andrew Zabriskie for \$5,000.¹² In 1820, Andrew Zabriskie, shopkeeper, was taxed for 200 acres, 3 to 8 tan vats, 1 fishery, 1 sawmill and 3 gristmills.

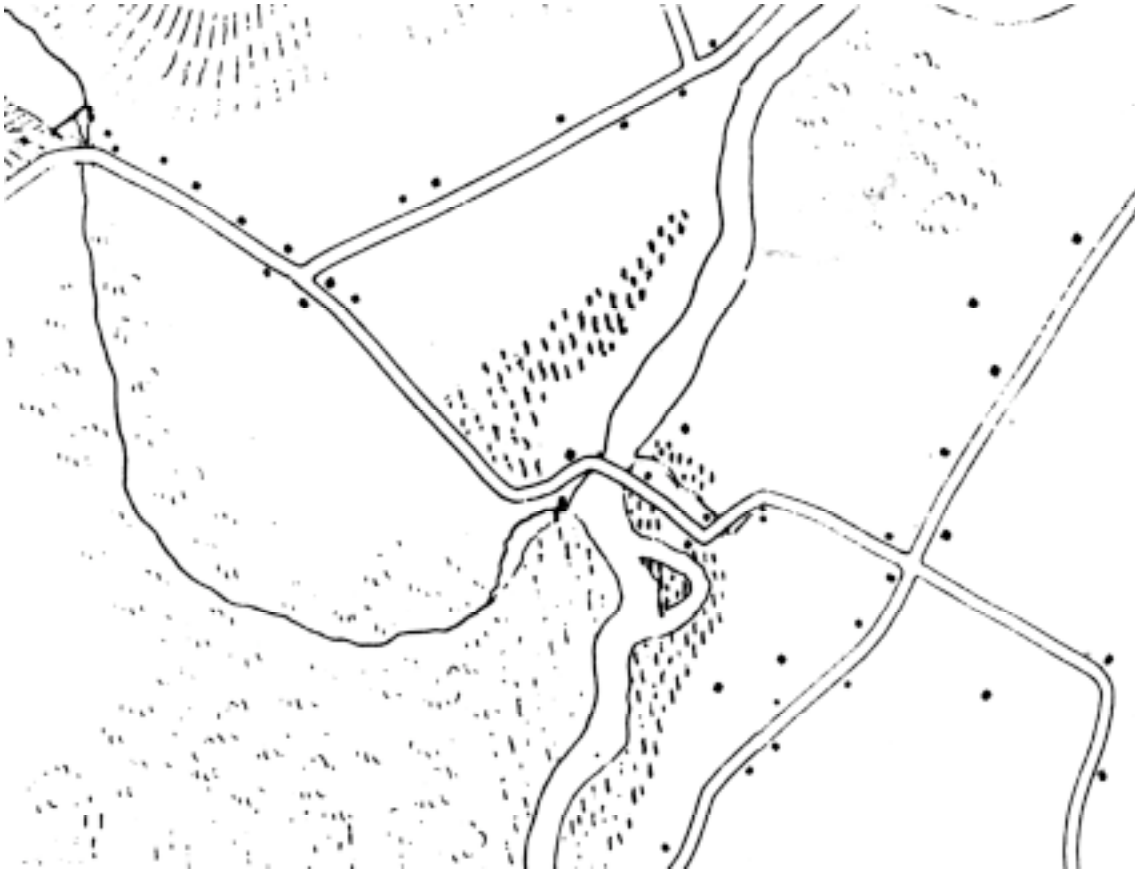
According to Thomas Gordon's *Gazetteer of New Jersey*, published 1834, New Bridge was described as a "hamlet, of Hackensack t-ship, Bergen co., on the Hackensack river, 2 miles above Hackensack town, contains a grist and saw mill, a store, tavern, and 10 or 12 dwellings. Surrounding country, level; soil, fertile loam."

In 1839, Andrew Zabriskie's son, David A. Zobriskie, took ownership of the family homestead. Captain Dave, as he was familiarly known, owned and commanded a schooner named *The Farmer*. About 1845, a wooden wing was built onto the south gable end of the Zabriskie-Steuben House for use of a store, where farmers would exchange cordwood for groceries. The 1839 Coastal Survey shows the gristmill at the confluence of Coles Brook and the Hackensack River.

¹⁰*Bergen County Deed Book J*, p. 369

¹¹*Bergen County Deed Book J*, p. 351

¹²*Bergen County Deed Book K2* p. 482



The 1839 Coastal Survey shows the gristmill, millpond and milldam at the south end of the landing and at the head of a millpond formed by Coles Brook.

The 1850 Census for New Barbadoes listed (629-659) David A. Zobriskie, aged 40 years, Waterman; his wife Jane, aged 38 years; and children: David A., aged 13 years; Cornelius, aged 11 years; Andrew, aged 9 years; May E., aged 5 years; Christiana, aged 3 years; and John, aged 5 months. Catherine Oats, aged 22 years, born in Germany, and Samuel Banta, 18 years old, a boatman, also resided there. Next door, the census listed Jacob J. Demott, aged 27 years, Merchant, his wife Catherine, aged 23 years, and daughter May Helen, aged 3 years. Judy Jackson, 12 years old, a Black, also lived with the family.

In its present configuration, the extant river landing at New Bridge does not reflect the presence of an operational tide mill, which would have required a large pond or reservoir behind the dam at the outlet of Cole's Brook, as well as wheel pits and races. One newspaper account from 1904 claimed that the tidal gristmill measured 40 by 20 feet and supposedly burned down in 1852. The Zabriskie Mill, however, is not listed in the New Barbadoes *Schedule for the Products of Industry* as part of the 1850 Federal Census. While some foundation stones are barely visible at the very south end of the landing, near where the mill stood, it is uncertain whether they indicate its foundation. Furthermore, old photographs show shafts protruding from the mud and suggest that the mill may have stood on pilings, independent of the landing. The pilings for the milldam are still visible in

the mouth of Coles Brook at low tide.



This photograph of the site of the old Zabriskie Mill at New Bridge dates to around 1905-10. The remnants of the milldam are visible at the outlet of Coles Brook to the left. The mill pilings and drive shaft are to the right foreground. This indicates that the mill may have stood where parking area of the PSE&G substation on Main Street, River Edge, is now located. The spoils from dredging Coles Brook in 1910 may have filled the site, including the old millpond.

The death of Captain D. Anderson Zabriskie in May 1907, raised concerns about the fate of the old Zabriskie-Steuben House on Main Street, River Edge, long esteemed as a Revolutionary War landmark. The Zabriskie homestead now passed to D. Anderson's daughter, Magdalena. There was a genuine sentiment to protect its memorable qualities. As reported in July 1909, the Baron Steuben House at North Hackensack was in danger of being "remodeled and made into a tenement house, unless some friend of historic structures comes forward and buys it for the purpose of preserving it." A reporter for the *Newark Sunday Call* called the Steuben House "quite as historic and quite as beautiful architecturally" as any other antique building in America, worthy of "better treatment than to be transformed into a tenement house." It was rumored that the house could be bought for about \$5,000 and "would make a delightful summer home for some one who is interested in such a building, and it really deserves preservation."

The same reporter observed one millstone being "used as a steppingstone for the house and another lying in the mud at the mouth of the creek, above which projects the shaft

upon which it turned. A few of the posts which supported the mill are still visible, but aside from that the structure has entirely disappeared.” Magdalena Zabriskie sold her family’s 30 acres, including the old Baron Steuben house, to industrialist Charles W. Bell on October 1, 1909. He intended to build a large mill on the property for the manufacture of cardboard, using the waterfront and planning a spur from the New Jersey & New York railroad for freight facilities.

Charles W. Bell engaged machinery to dredge the Hackensack River and Coles Brook, near the Steuben House, for the erection of his proposed large manufactory, which was expected to employ 500 hands. Besides foreign capitalists, William Randolph Hearst, of New York, owned an interest in the ink factory, supposedly to supply ink for his publications in case of union strikes. Where the dredging machine was operating at the mouth of Coles Brook, a tributary of the river, workmen unearthed the ancient millstone of Zabriskie’s tide mill. Another millstone and shaft were left imbedded in the mud. Andrew Zabriskie, it was said, also established a brickyard, the first in North Jersey, near the site of the proposed paper mill (located neat the “jug handle” that connects Hackensack Avenue and Main Street, where the Steuben Arms apartments stand today). Hackensack Mayor Charles W. Bell transferred his interest in the 50-acre tract at North Hackensack to the American Ink Company in May 1911.

Mayor Charles W. Bell of Hackensack transferred his interest in the 50-acre tract at North Hackensack (on which it was proclaimed that a large paper mill would be erected) to the American Ink Company; it is not known as yet what use would be made of the property. Officers of the American Ink Company were: S. S. Carvalho, president; George E. Pancoast, secretary, and George W. Palmer, of Hackensack, treasurer.

The State of New Jersey acquired the historic Zabriskie-Steuben House in 1928, but not the site of the tidal gristmill.

S. A Demographic Profile of Bergen County

Bergen County is one of the most suburbanized counties in the nation, encompassing 70 municipalities within 234 square miles. Its population density of 3,778.3 persons per square mile (2000 Census) is slightly more than three times the State average. It is also New Jersey’s most populous county with 884,118 residents (2000 Census), residing in 56 boroughs, nine townships, three cities (Englewood, Garfield and Hackensack) and two villages (Ridgefield Park and Ridgewood).

According to the 2000 Census, 21.4% of the population of Bergen County are under 18 years old, and 15.7% are 65 years old and over. Non-Hispanic Whites make up 72.3% of the population; Asians make up 10.7%; Hispanics make up 10.3%; Blacks or African-Americans make up 5.3%; and Native Americans make up 0.2%. There are 330,817 households (2000 Census), including 191,258 single-family homes (1990). The median

household money income (2000 Census) is \$59,557.

The population is well educated: 81.6% are high school graduates (25 years old and over) and 31.7% are college graduates (25 years old and over). High School graduates (25 years old and over) number 476,471 and college graduates number 185,138. There are 190 elementary, middle and junior high schools; and 40 high schools. Five colleges provide opportunities for higher education.

Baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) constitute a growing segment of the population. Residents in the 35-to-54 age group showed a gain of 49,541 (21.7%) from 1990-1998 (latest data available by age) and comprised 32.3% of the total Bergen County population in 1998, compared with 30.7% for the State. According to the 2000 Census, the number of Senior Citizens (65 years and over) also increased, advancing by 9,401 (7.5%) and accounting for 15.2% of the population (versus 13.2% in the remainder of the State), making Bergen County home to more Senior Citizens (135,075) than any other county.

Incomes in Bergen County are relatively high owing, in significant part, to well paying jobs in New York City, where many residents work. Per capita personal income in Bergen County in 1997 was \$43,123 (latest data available on a county level), which was substantially higher than the statewide figure of \$32,356, and ranked second only to Somerset County (\$46,392). By comparison, per capita personal income for the United States in 1997 was \$25,288. Furthermore, total personal income in Bergen County was \$36,760.4 million, the highest county level in New Jersey.

Since Bergen County has the highest total personal income in the State, it has become a leading retail, sports and entertainment center, with the Meadowlands Sports Complex being its premier facility. With four major shopping malls situated along Route 4 and Route 17, Bergen County is a popular regional destination for shoppers from northern New Jersey and New York City. Transportation routes and facilities make Bergen County easily accessible to the larger metropolitan population of the lower Hudson Basin.

T. Plant Lists for New Bridge Landing, River Edge, Bergen County, N. J. (Torrey Botanical Society Trip with Joe Labriola and Patrick Cooney, Leaders) August 26, 2000

Nomenclature follows Gleason & Cronquist (1991). Common names from various sources. Various manuals used for cultivated plants. Bailey (1949) often useful.

Var. = unspecified variety. (Vars. Listed in Gleason & Cronquist do not match Kartesz's interpretation.)

F = Flowering specimen(s) found.

[C.] Cultivated

Fr = Fruiting specimen(s) found).

[E.] Escaped from cultivation.

Trees

	Acer negundo var. negundo	Box-elder, Ash-leaved Maple	few
	Acer saccharinum	Silver Maple	few
Fr	Ailanthus altissima	Tree of Heaven	some
im Fr	Catalpa sp. [E.]	Catalpa	some
	Fraxinus Americana	White Ash	common
Fr	Juglans nigra [C./E.]	Black Walnut	few, plus saplings
	Morus alba [C./E.]	White Mulberry	some
	Populus deltoids var. deltoids	Cottonwood	few
	Prunus persica [E.]	Peach	one
	Prunus serotina	Wild Black Cherry	some
	Quercus rubra	Red Oak	few
	Robinia pseudoacacia [C./E.]	Black Locust	some
Fr	Tilia cordata [C.]	Small-leaved Linden	one
	Ulmus Americana	White Elm, American Elm	few

Shrubs

	Cornus amomum	Silky Dogwood	one
Fr	Cornus racemosa [C./E.]	Northern Swamp Dogwood	some
Fr	Deutzia scabra [C.]	Deutzia	one clump
Fr	Elaeagnus umbellata [E.]	Autumn-olive	one clump
F	Lycium barbarum [C.]	Matrimony vine	one clump
	Myrica pennsylvanica	Bayberry	few?
ImFr	Philadelphus x virginialis [hybrid]	Mock-orange	few
	Rhus glabra	Smooth Sumac	few
	Rosa multiflora	Multiflora Rose	some
	Rubus sp.	Blackberry	few
	Syringa vulgaris [C.]	Common Lilac	few
	Viburnum dentatum var. lucidum	Arrow-wood	one?
	Rosa sp.	Cultivated Rose	one
	Euonymus alatus	Burning Bush	one

Vines

Fr.	Ampelopsis brevipedunculata [E.]	Porcelain-berry	common
F	Calystegia sepium	Hedge bindweed	few
F	Campsis radicans	Trumpet-creeper	one patch
	Celastrus orbiculatus [E.]	Oriental bittersweet	some
F	Cuscuta gronovii	Dodder	some
F	Echinocystis lobata	Wild-cucumber	one patch
	Hedera helix [C./E.]	English Ivy	some
	Humulus japonicus	Japanese Hop	some
	Lonicera japonica	Japanese Honeysuckle	few
F	Mikania scandens	Climbing Hempweed	some
Fr	Parthenocissus quinquefolia	Virginia Creeper	few
F	Solanum dulcamara	Bittersweet, Nightshade	some
imFr	Toxicodendron radicans var. radicans	Poison-ivy	few

Herbs

Fr	Alisma subcordatum	Water-plantain	few
old Fr	Alliaria petiolata	Garlic-mustard	some
F	Amaranthus cannabinus	Water-hemp	some
F	Ambrosia artemisiifolia	Common Ragweed	few

F	Ambrosia trifida var. trifida	Giant Ragweed	few
F, Fr	arctium minus	Common Burdock	few
F	Artemisia vulgaris	Mugwort	some
near F	Atriplex hastate	Spearscale, Orache	some
	Bidens frondosa	Beggar-ticks	few
F	Cerastium vulgatum	Mouse-ear Chickweed	some
F	Chelidonium majus [C./E.]	Celandine	one patch
F	Chenopodium album	Lamb's-quarters, Pigweed, Figweed	some
F	Chenopodium ambrosioides	Mexican-tea	few
F, Fr	Cirsium vulgare	Bull Thistle	some
F	Commelina communis [E.]	Dayflower	some
	Convallaria majalis [C.]	Lily of the Valley	one patch?
F, Fr	Daucus carota	Wild Carrot, Queen Anne's Lace	few
F	Eclipta prostrata	Yerba-de-tajo	some
F, imFr	Erechtites hieraciifolia	Fireweed, Pilewort	few
F	Erigeron annuus	Annual fleabane	few
Fr	Euthamia graminifolia var. nuttallii	Flat-topped Goldenrod	some
F, Fr	Geum canadense	White Avens	few
	Glechoma hederacea	Gill-over-the-ground	common
F	Helenium autumnale var.	Sneezeweed	some
	Hemerocallis fulva [C./E.]	Day-lily	some
F	Hibiscus moscheutos var. moscheutos	Rose-mallow	some
F	Impatiens capensis	Orange Touch-me-not, Jewel-weed	few patches
	Iris pseudacorus [E.]	Yellow Flag	few
	Iris versicolor	Northern Blue Flag	few
	Leonurus cardiaca	Motherwort	few
	Lepidium virginicum var. virginicum	Peppergrass	few
	Lysimachia nummularia	Moneywort	one large patch
F	Lythrum salicaria	Purple Loosestrife	common
F	Mazus pumilus	Mazus	some
	Melissa officinalis [C./E.]	Lemon Balm, Bee Balm	one?
F	Mentha suaveolens [E.]	Apple Mint	some
F?	Myosotis laxa	Forget-me-not	one?
F	Oenothera biennis var. biennis	Evening-primrose	common
F, Fr	Oxalis dillenii	Wood-sorrel	few
F, imFr	Oxalis stricta	Wood-sorrel	common
imFr	Plantago major	Common Plantain	some
imFr	Phytolacca Americana	Pokeweed	some
F	Plantago lanceolata	English Plantain	some
F	Pluchea odorata var. succulenta	Marsh-fleabane	some
	Polygonum arenastrum	Common Knotweed	some
	Polygonum arifolium	Halberd-leaved Tearthumb	few?
F, Fr	Polygonum cespitosum var. longisetum	Smartweed	common
F	Polygonum cuspidatum [E.]	Japanese Knotweed	some
F, Fr	Polygonum hydropiperoides	False Water-pepper	some
F	Polygonum lapathifolium	Smartweed	some
	Polygonum sagittatum	Arrow-leaved Tearthumb	few?
F	Polygonum virginianum	Jumpseed	some
F	Potentilla argentea	Silvery Cinquefoil	some
F	Prunella vulgaris var. lanceolata	Self-heal	some
	Rudbeckia laciniata laciniata [E.]	Cutleaf Coneflower	few
Fr	Rumex obtusifolius	Bitter Dock	some
F, imFr	Samolus floribundus	Water-pimpernel	some
F	Saponaria officinalis	Soapwort, Bouncing Betty	some
	Sedum sarmentosum [C./E.]	Stoncrop	one large patch
F	Solanum nigrum var. virginicum	Nightshade	few
near F	Solidago Canadensis var. scabra	Goldenrod	some
near F	Solidago gigantea	Smooth Goldenrod	some
F	Solidago juncea	Early Goldenrod	few
F	Tanacetum vulgare	Tansy	one patch
F, Fr	Taraxacum officinale	Common Dandelion	some
F	Trifolium repens	White Clover	some
Fr	Typha angustifolia	Narrow-leaved Cat-tail	some
F	Verbena urticifolia var. urticifolia	White Vervain	some
	Viola sp (sororia?)	Dooryard Violet	some, lawns
	Xanthium strumarium var. canadense	Cocklebur	one patch

Sedges

F	Cyperus stri gokus Eleocharis sp.	False Nutsedge Spike-rush	some one patch?
<u>Grasses</u>			
Fr	Dactylis glomerata	Orchard Grass	some
F	Digitaria sanguinalis	Crab-grass	some
	Microstegium vimineum	Japanese Stilt Grass	few patches
	Panicum clandestinum	Deer-tongue, Panic-grass	few
	Phragmites australis	Common Reed	one patch
	Poa pratensis	Kentucky Bluegrass	common, lawns
F	Tridens flavus var. flavus	Purpletop	few

U. Plant Lists for Clarence W. Brett Park, Teaneck, Bergen County, N. J., (Torrey Botanical Society Trip with Joe Labriola and Patrick Cooney, Leaders) August 26, 2000

Trees

	Acer negundo var. negundo	Box-elder, Ash-leaved Maple	few
	Acer rubrum	Red Maple	some
	Acer platanoides [E.]	Norway Maple	some
	Acer saccharinum	Silver Maple	some
	Acer saccharum var. saccharum	Sugar Maple	few
	Aesculus hippocastanum [C.]	Horse-chestnut	one?
Im Fr	Ailanthus altissima	Tree of Heaven	some
	Albizia julibrissin	"Mimosa," Silk-tree	one seedling
im Fr	Castanea mollissima [E.]	Chinese Chestnut	one
im Fr	Catalpa sp. (speciosa?) [C./E.]	Northern Catalpa	some
	Cornus florida	Flowering Dogwood	one?
Im Fr	Fraxinus pennsylvanica	Green Ash, Red Ash	some
	Juglans nigra [C./E.]	Black Walnut	some
Fr	Juniperus virginiana var. [C.]	Red-cedar	few
F	Magnolia x soulangiana [C.]	Saucer Magnolia	one
	Morus alba [E.]	White Mulberry	some
	Picea abies [C.]	Norway Spruce	few
Fr	Pinus nigra [C.]	Austrian Pine	one
im Fr	Pinus strobus [C.]	Eastern White Pine	few
	Platanus occidentalis	Sycamore	few
	Populus deltoids var. deltoids	Cottonwood	one?
	Prunus serotina	Wild Black Cherry	some
	Quercus acutissimus [C.]	Sawtooth Oak	one sapling
	Quercus palustris	Pin Oak	some
	Quercus rubra	Red Oak	few
	Robinia pseudoacacia [C./E.]	Black Locust	some
	Salix babylonica [C.]	Weeping Willow	few
	Tilia Americana var. Americana	Basswood, Linden	one
	Ulmus Americana	White elm, American Elm	some

Shrubs

F	Hibiscus syriacus [E.]	Rose-of-Sharon	one
F	Lycium barbarum [E.]	Matrimony Vine	one clump
	Philadelphus sp. [C.]	Mock-orange	one?
	Rhus glabra	Smooth Sumac	one
	Rubus occidentalis	Black Raspberry	few
	Rubus phoenicolasius	Wineberry	two
	Sambucus Canadensis var.	Common Elder	one
Fr	Taxus baccata [C.]	English Yew	one

Vines

Fr	Ampelopsis brevipedunculata	Porcelain-berry	some
F	Calysegia sepium	Hedge Bindweed	few
	Celastrus orbiculatus [E.]	Oriental Bittersweet	some
F	Humulus japonicus	Japanese Hop	locally common
F	Mikania scandens	Climbing Hempweed	few patches
F	Sicyos angulatus	Bur-cucumber	some

F	Smilax rotundifolia	Catbrier	one
im Fr	Solanum dulcamara	Bittersweet, Nightshade	few
Fr	Toxicodendron radicans var. radicans	Poison-ivy	few
Fr	Vitis aestivalis var. aestivalis	Summer Grape	few patches

Herbs

	Acalypha virginica	Three-seeded Mercury	few
	Asclepias syriaca	Common Milkweed	one?
Old Fr	Alliaria perfoliata	Garlic-mustard	some
F	Amaranthus cannabinus	Water-hemp	few
Fr	Arctium minus	Common Burdock	few
	Artemisia vulgaris	Mugwort	some
	Aster lanceolatus var. simplex	Aster	some
near F	Atriplex hastata	Spearscale, Orache	few
	Bidens frondosa	Beggar-ticks	one?
F	Cerastium vulgatum	Mouse-ear Chickweed	few
F	Chenopodium album	Lamb's-quarters, Pigweed	few
Fr	Circaea lutetiana var. Canadensis	Enchanter's-nightshade	one
F, Fr	Cirsium vulgare	Bull Thistle	few
F	Commelina communis	Dayflower	few
F, Fr	Conyza Canadensis var. Canadensis	Horseweed	some
F	Eclipta prostrata	Yerba-de-tajo	few
F, Fr	Euphorbia maculata	Spotted Spurge	some
	Fragaria virginiana	Wild Strawberry	one
	Glechoma hederacea	Gill-over-the-ground	common
F	Helenium autumnale var.	Sneezeweed	few
F	Impatiens capensis	Orange Touch-me-not, Jewel-weed	few
	Iris pseudacorus [E.]	Yellow Flag	few
	Leonurus cardiaca	Motherwort	two, one site
	Lepidium virginicum var. virginicum	Peppergrass	few
F	Lotus corniculatus	Birdsfoot Trefoil	two
F, im Fr	Ludwigia palustris	Water-purslane	some
F	Lythrum salicaria	Purple Loosestrife	few
F	Mazus pumilus	Mazus	some
F	Medicago lupulina	Black Medick	few
F	Oenothera biennis var. biennis	Evening-primrose	some
F, im Fr	Oxalis stricta	Wood-sorrel	some
im Fr	Phytolacca Americana	Pokeweed	some
F	Plantago lanceolata	English Plantain	some
im Fr	Plantago major	Common Plantain	few
F	Pluchea odorata var. succulenta	Marsh-fleabane	some
F, Fr	Polygonum cespitosum var. longisetum	Smartweed	common
F	Polygonum cuspidatum	Japanese Knotweed	few patches
F, Fr	Polygonum hydropiperoides	False Water-pepper	common
F	Polygonum lapathifolium	Smartweed	some
F	Polygonum pennsylvanicum	Pink Smartweed	two
F	Polygonum virginianum	Jumpseed	few
F	Potentilla argentea	Silvery Cinquefoil	common
F	Prunella vulgaris var. lanceolata	Self-heal	some
Fr	Rumex obtusifolius	Bitter Dock	some
F	Rumex verticillatus (?)	Swamp Dock, Water Dock	few, river edge
F, im Fr	Samolus floribundus	Water-pimpernel	some
F	Solanum nigrum var. virginicum	Nightshade	few
F	Taraxacum officinale	Common Dandelion	few
F	Trifolium repens	White Clover	some
F	Urtica dioica (var. dioica?)	Nettle	one site
F	Verbena urticifolia var. urticifolia	White Vervain	few

Sedges

F	Cyperus brevifoliosus	Flatsedge	locally common
F	Cyperus strigosus	False Nutsedge	few
near F	Eleocharis acicularis	Spike-rush	one patch
F, im Fr	Scirpus pungens var.	Common Three-square	some

Grasses

F	Dactylis glomerata	Orchard Grass	few
F	Digitaria sanguinalis	Crab-grass	some
	Echinochloa sp.	Echinochloa	one?

F	Poa pratensis	Kentucky Bluegrass	common, lawns
	Setaria faberi	Nodding Foxtail	one clump
F	Setaria viridis var. viridis	Green Foxtail	few