

In Bergen's Attic

WINTER 2018-2019

President's Message



Hello everyone and thank you for being a supporter of the Bergen County Historical Society! It's quite an amazing time to be a member of the Society with much activity going on. There are monthly scholarly lectures, site clean ups and beautification work, historic preservation efforts, protecting and expanding the collections, our monthly school of interpretation and our fantastic event schedule. All the while, no one receives a salary and everyone volunteers or contributes in

some way because they understand the value that the Bergen County Historical Society brings to the community. It is quite remarkable the efforts of everyone and for that, we should all be grateful. Sometimes when people show up for an event and everything is bustling, as Baronfest was in September, the site brimming with young and old, from different backgrounds and different areas



Proposed Museum Building at Historic New Bridge Landing

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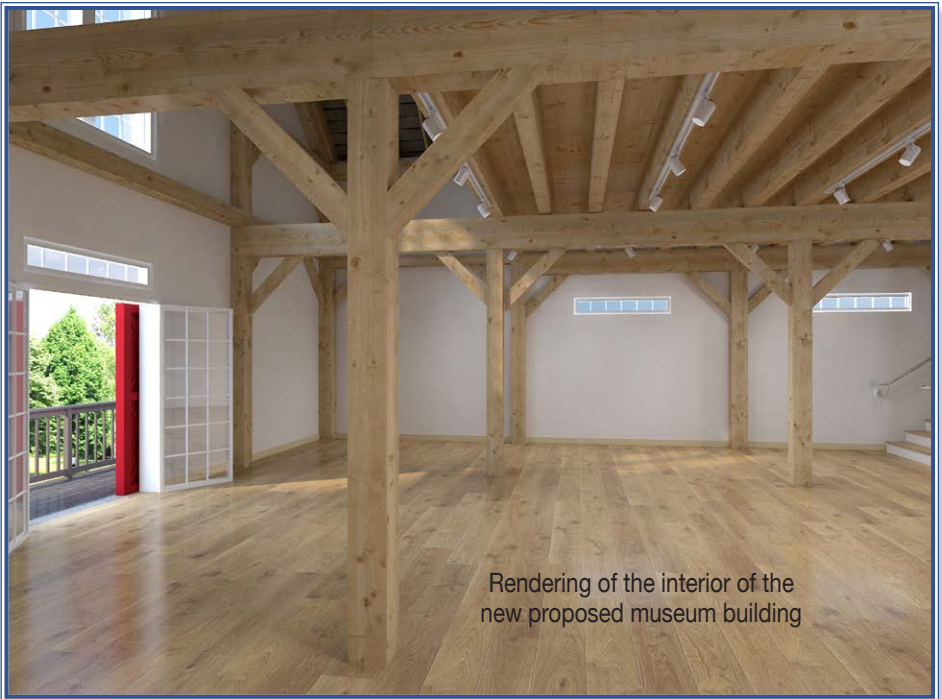
of the state and beyond, and it looks easy. However, as President, sometimes I get to see all the extra effort that goes into each and every event and it is quite amazing. Ultimately, our goal is to construct a first-class museum building here at Historic New Bridge Landing, which will be the

center of history for Bergen County. Ultimately, while most of Bergen County's roads were unpaved, it was the Society that was the pioneer and leader in the Community to preserve and promote Bergen County's rich history and this new building will continue that tradition. Our long awaited building will ultimately be the center of history for the county and allow for the further exploration of the county from the heart of it, at Historic New Bridge Landing. But we can't do this alone, we will need everyone's help to push us over the finish line. It has been

discussed in the past but finally, with everyone's help including yours, we will be the generation that constructs a first rate museum building to preserve and protect our important collection so that future generations may learn about the unique culture and history that is Bergen County.



Scott Lance with visitors at the 1776 Retreat Weekend Event at HNBL.



Rendering of the interior of the new proposed museum building



PLACE YOUR NAME IN HISTORY

Have you noticed the kiosk outside the Campbell-Christie House. One side lists our recognized donors contributing to the Barn Museum which is coming to realization very soon. Donate and add your name to the list - **BergenCountyHistory.org**
Thanks to Scott Lance for building the Barn Museum Donor Kiosk.



Congratulations Todd!

Todd Braisted received an Award of Recognition from the New Jersey Historical Commission at the New Jersey History Forum at Monmouth University on November 2, 2018.

Did You Know? Something New about Something Old!

Military historian and Historic Park Director of Palisades Interstate Park **John Muller** stopped by the Steuben House for Baronfest and was shown the 6 lb. cannonball that was recently donated. He looked it over and said "Well, it's not British... and it's not French, it's 18th century American!"

Donated to BCHS by the **Cilla family**, it was found in a 6 ft, brick-lined pit (of undetermined use) that is only 250 feet from Washington's November 20, 1776 Retreat Route and the road from New Bridge to Hackensack. The road saw much activity throughout the war and it could have been lost at another point during those "trying times" but we'll probably never know for sure.
- Deborah Powell, Museum Collection Chair



The cannonball is currently on exhibit in the Steuben House. Come see it.

BCHS Volunteers

BE ONE OF HISTORY'S VOICES!

Kate Reilly

BCHS Volunteer Coordinator



The next time you're at Historic New Bridge Landing enjoying a hot cider and doughnut, listening to eighteenth century ballads being sung in the tavern, inhaling luscious aromas in the Out Kitchen, or getting an answer to some historical question you've always wondered about, I ask you to consider this: Every single person you encountered, every interpreter who served or entertained you, every individual who planned and executed the day that you enjoyed was a volunteer. It takes between twenty-five and fifty people to conduct an event at New Bridge, and every one of them donates his or her time. Why? Because we just love American history—and we enjoy working with companionable people who share the same interest.

We are indeed fortunate in the many talented people who volunteer with BCBS, but as the Society expands and our activities at New Bridge grow to keep up with public demand, we need to add to our volunteer ranks. How about you? Enjoy visiting historic sites or reading books based in the past? Fascinated by the lives of history's heroes—or villains? Think helping at New Bridge might be fun? Don't hesitate; don't put off to tomorrow what can (and should) be done today.

Of course, there's always a reason for not doing something; perhaps you don't think you have the time—don't worry; you don't have to be at every event, and the level of involvement varies greatly among our volunteers. Maybe you don't feel well-versed enough in history to talk about it in public—don't worry about that either. We have a training program

to help you along at your own pace, and new volunteers don't "fly solo" until they're ready. You say you're not sure about giving tours? We need people to take admissions, greet people, supervise kids activities, and set-up as well, or maybe you'd enjoy behind-the-scenes work in publicity, building and grounds, fundraising, or helping with tech assistance at lectures. If you have a talent, we'll find a way to use it!

Every generation has the responsibility to preserve and pass on the American story to those that come after it. Volunteering with BCBS gives you the opportunity to be the

Historic New  *Bridge Landing*

Weeding & Working Wednesdays

**EVERY OTHER WEDNESDAY MORNING
BEGINNING ON APRIL 10, 2019**
SIGN-UP AT THIS EMAIL:
bghashimoto@gmail.com



Spring chores & planting about the farm will commence in April at the taven garden. Sowing the seeds of promise this season will reap for us a fine bounty come autumn. Come join us for the pleasant warm spring air & some fine good exercise. Bring good garden gloves, a sun hat & your favorite tool.

Before Washington crossed the Delaware...



...he had to cross the Hackensack.

TELL NEW BRIDGE'S STORY AS A BCHS VOLUNTEER

CONTACT: info@bergencountyhistory.org

voice of history, to tell the story, to give life to the deeds of Washington, Hamilton, and all the unknown people who passed through New Bridge on their way to building America. Contact BCHS today, and add your voice to the story.

Feel free to talk with any of our volunteers at an event, check out one of the School of Interpretation sessions (see the website schedule or our email blasts), or leave a no-obligation request for more information at info@bergencountyhistory.org

From Jan Steen to Bogert's Candy Kitchen

Using traditional candy making methods, members made clear toy candy with molds from the BCHS Collections as decorations for the coming holiday.

The candy molds here are pocket watches, baskets, dogs, boots, Sinter Klaas and a rooster on a stick that's associated with Dutch Christmas both in Holland and here in the New World.



A detail from *The Feast of St. Nicholas* painting by 16th cen. Dutch artist, Jan Steen, portrays a small girl carrying a leather bucket with a candy rooster on a stick inside. Our copy of the painting is in the Demarest House this season.

George Washington Mourning Art

Deborah Powell

Past President and Museum Collection Chair

Mourning Art developed out of the newly formed Republic's grief in 1799 with the death of George Washington. His death coincided with the country's growing prosperity, a period of religious revivalism and the circulation of ideas and images recently available through publications. Drawings by artists such as Samuel Folwell, John James Barralet, John Coles, Jr. and Enoch G. Gridley were copied into art forms such as drawings, needlework, paintings and jewelry by adults and children. The Washington Memorial in the collections of the Bergen County Historical Society was created from silk floss embroidery depicting eight figures with very finely painted faces in the original églomisé glass and frame.

A year ago August, I visited with needlework collectors Stephen & Carol Huber and I was delighted to identify that our memorial (c. 1805-1815) likely comes out of the girls school, **Susanna Rowson's Academy** in Boston, through the work of the late historian Betty Ring. The painting insets are thought by Betty Ring to be by **John Johnston**. Johnston was a Boston portrait painter and continental soldier wounded and imprisoned in 1776. The BCHS Washington Memorial design appears to be directly based on an engraving by Enoch G. Gridley, entitled, "Sacred to the Memory of the Truly Illustrious George Washington," c. 1800. In the left lower foreground, Columbia (an early version of Lady Liberty, representing America), is weeping and comforts the eagle which was already had been

adopted as a national symbol. The eagle has an American Shield. A soldier with an inverted musket (upside-down and crossed musket honors and shows respect) mourns at Washington's tomb.



A large angel blows a trumpet at center top of image. Some interpretations note she is letting the world know of his death, others that she is calling him to heaven. She holds a wreath, circle of time, over his head. In Gridley's version, the wreath has the text, "Pater Patriae," meaning "Father of our Country." The painted portrait of Washington in the center does not depict him in military uniform but as a citizen, farmer or President, whereas in Gridley's version, he is pictured in uniform. The Greek goddess Athena, wearing a helmet, is positioned to Washington's right. She represents wisdom, courage, civilization and warfare.

The artist added "Stoney Point" to the list of Washington's victories to the banner on the angel's trumpet. Was there a personal connection to that location by the young woman? A masterpiece like this would show how very accomplished she was and would have been proudly displayed by her family in their home. Elise Hille, of Alpine, donated the mourning art to BCHS in 1972. Hille was an antique collector.

I found a woodblock print from 1784 that seems to have been overlooked in previous studies on the origins of Washington Mourning Art; it has most of the important elements of the Gridley memorial, including a cenotaph with Washington's portrait



ABOVE - WASHINGTON MEMORIAL SILK, PAINT, AND INK ON SILK MOURNING ART, 30.5" X 30.5", BCHS COLLECTIONS.

LEFT TOP - WASHINGTON MEMORIAL BOOK PLATE BOOK BY ENOCH GRIDLEY, C.1800.

LEFT - WOODBLOCK CELEBRATING WASHINGTON WOOD BLOCK, 1784.



and trumpeting angel. It precedes Washington's death by 16 years and "mourns" not his death but Great Britain's loss of America. The book plate notes it as "The Victorious General Washington, survey'd in pleasing attitudes, by Wisdom and Valor, while Britannia deplores her loss of America" (See the images).

In an infant Republic, without ancient heroes or national myths, the apotheosis of Washington had great appeal. Author Anita Schorsch wrote, "Washington's death formed a bridge between divine sovereignty and humanity and between all that is sacred in death from one generation to another generation, thus creating an archetypal union which might be called mythic, allegorical, apocalyptic, or final."

We remember George Washington's birthday at Historic New Bridge Landing on Sunday, February 24, 2019.

This needlework is also included in an exhibit for Brigid's Day, Sunday, February 3, 2019.

BCHS Collections Committee

LINKS and SOURCES:

Girlhood Embroidery, American Samplers & Pictorial Needlework 1650-1850 Vol 1, Betty Ring.

A Key to the Kingdom: The Iconography of a Mourning Picture - JSTOR by Anita Schorsch www.jstor.org/stable/1180625.

At Home with George: Commercialization of the Washington Image, 1776-1876 by William Ayres Embroidered Picture by Sarah Montgomery Thompson. Similar size to the BCHS.

Enoch G. Gridley cropped image "Sacred to the Memory of the Truly Illustrious George Washington."

Sotheby's Auction of the Landmark Collection of Betty Ring, "Rare and important embroidered and painted silk mourning picture." January 2012. Sold for \$62,500 in 2012.

Mourning Art Exhibit: Allentown Art Museum, *Gothic to Goth: Embracing the Dark Side*.

Jazz on the Palisades: The Van Gelder Studio

Jennifer Rothschild

The Van Gelder Studio is tucked away on a densely wooded lot in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. There is no sign showing what is located down the driveway. Yet this studio is among the most influential musical spaces in the world, known for its association with recording engineer, Rudy Van Gelder and for the prominent jazz musicians who recorded there. The building is also significant for its Frank Lloyd Wright inspired architecture, crafted by engineer David Henken and Bergen County architect Eleanore Pettersen, both of whom were apprentices under Wright.



Carter. The Van Gelder Studio's discography is deep and influential. In addition to John Coltrane's "A Love Supreme" and "Interstellar Space" are major works by Eric Dolphy ("Out To Lunch"), Freddie Hubbard ("Red Clay" and "Maiden Voyage"), Christian Scott ("Jenacide/ The Inevitable Rise and Fall of the Bloodless Revolution"), and Wayne Shorter ("Speak No Evil").

Just this past June, the Van Gelder Studio hosted the release of "Both Directions at Once: The Lost Album" by John Coltrane, who recorded these pieces at the studio in March 1963 but had never released them.

Rudy Van Gelder (1924-2016).

Rudy Van Gelder was born in Jersey City, New Jersey, in 1924. As a young boy, Van Gelder had a strong interest in radio and music, and these two hobbies came together in sound recording. At his parents' urging, Van Gelder attended the Pennsylvania School of Optometry, and after graduating in 1942,



THE VAN GELDER STUDIO ENTRANCE 2017
- JENNIFER ROTHSCHILD

Rudy Van Gelder used his recording skills, knowledge of equipment, understanding of instrumentation, and the interaction of musicians and their instruments to engineer some of the most influential recordings in music history. The studio, built in 1959 under Van Gelder's direction, hosted some of the most celebrated jazz musicians in history, and its recordings appeared on labels including Blue Note, Bethlehem, CTI, Impulse, Verve, Prestige, and Savoy.

Hundreds of artists recorded at the Van Gelder Studio, including John Coltrane, Herbie Hancock, Duke Ellington, Gil Evans, Art Blakey, Hank Mobley, Wayne Shorter, Bill Evans, Stan Getz, Etta Jones, and Ron



HACKENSACK HOUSE/STUDIO CA 1958. UNFORTUNATELY, THIS BUILDING IS NO LONGER EXTANT; IT WAS DEMOLISHED SHORTLY AFTER ITS SALE IN 1987. A DOCTOR'S OFFICE NOW STANDS ON THIS SITE AT THE CORNER OF PROSPECT AND THOMPSON STREETS.
-VAN GELDER PHOTO ARCHIVE

he embarked on a career as an optometrist. However, his interest in sound recording led to his establishing the famous "Hackensack Studio" in his parents' living room in Hackensack, New Jersey. At that location,

from 1953 to 1959, Van Gelder established his reputation and recorded such jazz luminaries as Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, and Bud Powell. Musician Bill Evans remarked, while recording at the crowded Hackensack Studio with an eleven-man ensemble, “Man, Rudy, if you had a bigger place, everybody would come to record there.”

In 1958, Van Gelder purchased property in Englewood Cliffs with the goal of building a recording studio close to the George Washington Bridge and Manhattan. Because he had been impressed by a Frank Lloyd Wright exhibition in the early 1950s, Van Gelder sought someone who could design his new studio and home in Wright’s “Usonian” style. It is

Sound,” and Blue Note Records’ Alfred Lion was Van Gelder’s most loyal client; Rudy felt he was able to undertake the financial burden of building the Englewood Cliffs studio because he knew Alfred Lion and that record label would employ his talent and studio.

Van Gelder was admired throughout the music industry for his innovations that improved the sound quality of recordings. He worked to reduce or eliminate noise distortion and experimented with microphone placement. These innovations, combined with his love of jazz, his perfectionist



RUDY VAN GELDER PORING OVER THE BLUEPRINTS AT THE ENGLEWOOD CLIFFS CONSTRUCTION SITE.
-VAN GELDER PHOTO ARCHIVES



DAVID HENKEN, DESIGNER OF THE VAN GELDER STUDIO ON SITE, 1959. -VAN GELDER PHOTO ARCHIVES

possible that Van Gelder met this designer in 1953 at the “Wright’s Pavilion,” set up at the site of the future Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in order to house an exhibition of Frank Lloyd Wright’s life’s work. David Henken spent much time at the site overseeing the construction of the pavilion and a Usonian exhibition house.

Henken became the designer of the Van Gelder Studio and the attached Van Gelder residence in Englewood Cliffs, but because he was not licensed, Eleanor Petterson signed the plans as the architect. Van Gelder is known for the world-famous “Blue Note

tendencies, and his keen interest in sound engineering resulted in recordings that surpassed the productions at other studios. As digital technology became prominent, Van Gelder used an in-house mastering chain, a series of processing devices and techniques that resulted in the vaunted “RVG Editions,” remastered versions of classic jazz recordings on compact discs. Van Gelder was the recipient of many awards, including the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Jazz Master Award in 2009.

David Henken (1915-1985).

David Henken was born in New York City to Russian Jewish immigrants and graduated from Stuyvesant High School in 1930. At the age of fifteen, he enrolled in the City College of New York, from which received Bachelor of Science and Master’s degrees in
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THE VAN GELDER STUDIO INTERIOR 2017 - HANNA ATLAS



BILL EVANS (PIANO) ACCOMPANIED BY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA WITH CLAUS OGERMAN (CONDUCTOR) AT THE VAN GELDER STUDIO, ENGLEWOOD CLIFFS, N.J., SEPTEMBER 29, 1965. -VAN GELDER PHOTO ARCHIVES

mechanical engineering. In 1942 he decided to pursue his dream of designing a planned community by first learning from the master, Frank Lloyd Wright.

Henken was an apprentice to Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesin in Spring Green, Wisconsin, from 1942 to 1944. While at Taliesin, Henken asked Wright if he would like to help design a cooperative community of modern houses

near New York City. Wright agreed, and when Henken and his wife Priscilla returned from Taliesin in late 1943, they convinced supporters to help them to create the "Usonia" community in Pleasantville, New York, now a Historic District listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Under the company name "Henken Builds, Inc." Henken also was involved with the campus planning at Nason College in Maine and Fiorello LaGuardia College and Pratt Institute in New York.

The Bergen County Historical Society connection to the Van Gelder Studio.

The BCHS' Historic Preservation Committee has undertaken the process of listing the Studio on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. H. Gelfand, BCHS trustee and chairman of the committee, reached out to Rudy Van Gelder in the Summer of 2016 after learning about the studio from one of his university colleagues, a jazz musician who loaned Gelfand a Miles Davis CD. As Gelfand recalls, "I noticed in the liner notes that that the recording took place at the Van Gelder Studio in Hackensack. My friend mentioned that the Van Gelder Studio was the most significant studio in jazz music. When I was in New Jersey the following summer, I brought the subject to the attention of the Committee. One afternoon I googled the studio, dialed the telephone number that came up, and was shocked that Rudy Van Gelder himself answered the phone. He invited me to come by later that day for ten minutes while he took a break from work. Upon arriving, I was shocked that this externally non-descript building was the correct place. I entered the studio

and met Mr. Van Gelder, looked up and saw the architecture, and knew that I wanted to be involved in the building's preservation."

Gelfand subsequently scheduled another visit to the studio with members of the Committee on a Sunday, a fortuitous meeting because Van Gelder unfortunately died the following Thursday, August 25th. Van Gelder left the property to his longtime assistant, Maureen Sickler, who, with her husband, jazz musician and Columbia University music professor Don Sickler, continues to run the studio and is committed to its preservation. They are continuing to hold recording sessions at the studio and are hoping to partner with an educational institution in the future to explore other uses of the facility. The BCHS awarded the Sicklers with its Oratam Award for the preservation of a landmark building at the Society's 2018 Annual Dinner.

The BCHS was successful in obtaining a Certificate of Eligibility for listing the Van Gelder Studio and Home on both the State



JOHN COLTRANE (LEFT) RECORDING AT VAN GELDER STUDIO, 1963.
-NEW YORK TIMES

and the National Registers of Historic Places on April 20, 2018, from the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office. The BCHS and the Sicklers are currently working together to make the final application for the Van Gelder Studio's

listing on the State and National Registers. It will be a proud moment for Bergen County when that listing is accomplished.

Sources: Interviews with Rudy Van Gelder, Maureen Sickler and Don Sickler, August 21, 2016, and subsequent interviews with Maureen and Don Sickler, 2017, 2018; Email communication with Mariamne Whatney and Jonathan Henken, children of David Henken, 2017, 2018; Priscilla Henken, *Taliesin Diary: A Year with Frank Lloyd Wright* (New York: Norton, 2012); Roland Reisley, *Usonia New York: Building a Community with Frank Lloyd Wright* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Architectural Press, 2001); Dan Skea, "Rudy Van Gelder in Hackensack: Defining the Jazz Sound in the 1950s," *Musicological Studies* 71/72 (Spring 2001–Spring 2002); Blue Note Records, "Perfect Takes," (video interview with Rudy Van Gelder), February 15, 2005; "Wright's Pavilion to Open Thursday," *New York Times*, October 18, 1953, p. 121; "Rolling Stone's Definitive List of the 500 Greatest Albums Of All Time," *Rolling Stone*, 31 May 2012; Daniel Kreps, "Rudy Van Gelder, Renowned 'A Love Supreme' Engineer, Dead at 91," *Rolling Stone*, August 26, 2016.



Portrait of Mary Robinson Blair (1814-1893) and her 1826 Sampler

Mary was wife of William Blair, a River Edge sail-maker, also supplier of tents and covers to the US Army, and he served as Judge of Elections and Commissioner when the Bergen Co. poorhouse was built. They had eight children together. At age 12, Mary made this sampler. Portrait and sampler were donated by her descendants Sarah Blair Brown (pictured) and daughter, Kristen Brown. They also provided the restoration funds for the painting. (Conservator Gary McGowan, CPR, generously contributed conservation hours.)

Come see these and other needleworks on display from BCHS Collections at HNBL *Brigid's Day*, Sunday, February 3 through *March to the Vote*, Sunday, March 24, 2019.

Bergen County Needlework Shepherd and Shephardess

Recently conserved in period appropriate frames, this lovely couple tells us quite a lot about them by their dress and surroundings; the flora, fauna, etc. The iconography of the elements and style are found in other works made in the early 1700s. Their fine clothes tell they are well-enough off but still country folk. They wear heeled Dutch shoes: his has buckles. She wears a pearl necklace. Their houses are pictured as castles with flags. The suns have faces that shine through the billowing clouds.



BCHS 35th Annual
Christmas Concerts with
Linda Russell and Co.
Sat & Sun ~ Dec. 15 & 16
at 6 & 7:45 PM

Tavern Fare is available
at the Campbell-Christie House
\$34 per person (members \$27)

Reserve Now & for Details:
BergenCountyHistory.org



Join the Festivities

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COULD BE BECAUSE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS WAS ENTERED INCORRECTLY OR YOUR SERVER IS REJECTING THE EMAIL PLEASE CONTACT US IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE BCHS EVENT BLASTS: [CONTACT INFO@BERGENCOUNTYHISTORY.ORG](mailto:INFO@BERGENCOUNTYHISTORY.ORG)

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