



# In Bergen's Attic

**Greetings.** As the long winter days fade away and we are welcomed by the blooms of daffodils, tulips and the shadbush at

## President's Message

New Bridge, the changing seasons provide a great analogy for life and the Society as well. I am confident that the Bergen County Historical Society continues to move forward in a positive direction, thanks to its dedicated volunteers, the support of our growing membership and our commitment to our mission, preserving and promoting Bergen County's past. I would also encourage our membership to get involved. One does not have to dress up in 18th century clothes to help out, many diverse talents are utilized at the Bergen County Historical Society, an all-volunteer organization, and if a committee does not exist for something you would like to help with, we can create it. As members, it's our historical society, not mine.

## Commission Update:

I was recently appointed by the Board of Trustees to the Historic New Bridge

Landing Park Commission as well and subsequently appointed the Chairman. I want to thank Past Chair, **Mike Treppichio**, for the hard work and dedication to Historic New Bridge Landing. Since taking over the Commission, we have refocused our



**Saturday, July 11  
11 AM to 2 PM  
(approximate end-time)**

**Don't miss the Vintage Baseball Game at Historic New Bridge Landing between the Flemington Neshanocks and the Brooklyn Eckfords.**

efforts and have worked together with all of the stake holders involved to move our common interests forward. Recently, the Teaneck Representative, **Larry Bauer**, helped to organize a clean-up of Brett Park, which will help to tie the park in with the site and improve the visitor's experience at the heart of the site, the New Bridge crossing. All the Commission members have been active at the meetings and more exciting news from our fellow Commission members will be discussed in the next newsletter. In the meantime, if you have not been to Historic New Bridge Landing lately, I encourage you stop by and enjoy the beautiful 18th century setting in the heart of Bergen County.

**James Smith**, BCHS President ❖

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## TURN: WASHINGTON'S SPIES COMES TO BERGEN COUNTY *By BCHS Past-President Todd Braisted*

Well, sort of. The AMC Revolutionary War cable show is now in its second season and the plot has finally included Bergen County, in a clandestine encounter in Hackensack! The show itself revolves around the fabled “Culper” spy ring on Long Island, but also delves into intelligence gathering and spies in the larger New York City area.

Bergen County was a hotbed of spies and others working in the shadows of the secret service. The county’s most impressive intelligence gatherer remains unknown to this day, known only by the moniker AZ. During the course of the war, AZ provided the British with highly detailed accounts of Continental Army posts and dispositions, which directly led to their successes in the raids of March 23rd and April 16th 1780. Some have speculated that the spy was the Loyalist Albert Zabriskie, but no spy would be foolish enough to use his actual initials as a cover. There was



one Zabriskie however that was indeed involved with the British Adjutant General’s Department, the staff officers responsible for gathering intelligence.

New Bridge’s own John Zabriskie was well known for being a Loyalist. He had resigned the lieutenant colonelcy of the Bergen County Militia in 1776 rather than fight the British, and the following year had been arrested for his loyalty by order of New Jersey’s governor, William Livingston. By 1780, Zabriskie was ready to take an active role for the British, and presented himself to the mayor of New York, David Mathews, making a tender of his services. Mathews in turn, wrote to British Commander in Chief Sir Henry Clinton on Monday, September 25th, 1780, reporting the offer:

“Mr. Zobriskie came to Town [New York City] this morning and is at Mr. Godlet’s in Hanover Square. He is able to give you some intelligence relative to the present situation of the Rebel army and the confusion that prevails amongst Them. He informs me that from what he could Learn Major [John] Andre would be safe. I hope to God it may be true. I wish You would call on Zobriskie as he wishes to keep house for some days.”

“Mr Godlet” was Peter Goelet, a prominent merchant in the city, and possibly a relative of John Goelet of New Bridge. John Zabriskie’s work was deemed of sufficient worth by the British that it entitled him to a captain’s commission in the Guides & Pioneers, the corps commanded by Major John Aldington of English Neighbourhood. Zabriskie never commanded men in the field though; his commission (and those given to a number of others in the corps) was simply meant to protect him in case of capture and provide him subsistence for his work.

While TURN itself is by no means historically correct in terms of facts and timeline (Hollywood is there to entertain, not educate), it is making many people what we call “spy curious.” A blog site has been created to help provide some accurate, historically correct information on events and people portrayed in the show. Visit <https://spycurious.wordpress.com/> and find out the rest of the story! ❖



Period dress (late 18th, early 19th century)  
is welcome, but not required.

### **Calico Frolic for St. Swithin's Day at Historic New Bridge Landing Saturday, July 18, 2015, 6:30 - 9:30 PM.**

Ladies and Gentlemen, please take partners! BCHS invites the public to a Calico Frolic. Watch or join in old-fashioned country dancing to the musical accompaniment of Ridley & Ann Enslow on fiddle & hammered dulcimer. Dance Mistress Denise Piccino will instruct eager beginners in basic steps and movements at the start of the evening. Dancing continues until 9:30 PM, when guests may partake of lemonade, light refreshments.

\$15 per person and \$12 for BCHS members. 1209 Main St, River Edge, NJ

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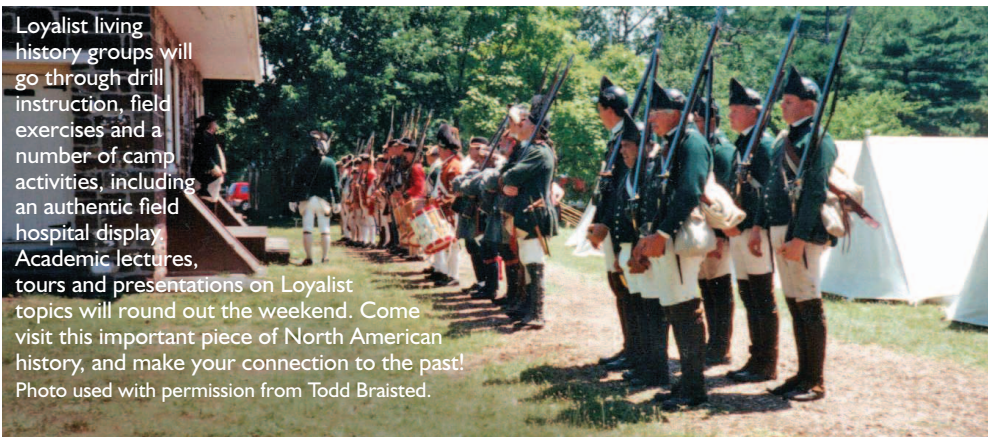
### **The School of the Loyalist August 28–30, 2015, Historic New Bridge Landing, River Edge, New Jersey**

The 4th Battalion, New Jersey Volunteers and the Bergen County Historical Society are once again pleased to be hosting The School of the Loyalist, a weekend of academic presentations, workshops, research and interpreting geared towards the Loyalist living history community.

Historic New Bridge Landing, nestled along the Hackensack River, was the home to both Loyalist **Captain John Zabriskie**, whose house still stands there, and the property of **Lieutenant Colonel Abraham Van Buskirk**. The site of no less than ten battles, skirmishes and encampments during the war, it is a fitting place for Loyalist interpreters and reenactors to gather and hone their craft. More info on BCHS website.

Those interested in attending, contact Todd W. Braisted [IVBNNJV@aol.com](mailto:IVBNNJV@aol.com).

Loyalist living history groups will go through drill instruction, field exercises and a number of camp activities, including an authentic field hospital display. Academic lectures, tours and presentations on Loyalist topics will round out the weekend. Come visit this important piece of North American history, and make your connection to the past! Photo used with permission from Todd Braisted.





## BCHS and the Camp Merritt Monument

By Past President Kevin W. Wright

Camp Merritt was the largest embarkation camp of its kind in the United States during the First World War with barrack accommodations for 40,438 enlisted men and quarters for 2,012 officers. Over 700,000 men received their final training and equipment at the camp before departing for Europe and about the same number were cared for there upon their return while awaiting discharge. The idea for a memorial originated with the camp newspaper, *The Merritt Dispatch*, on Memorial Day, 1919. Major Francis G. Landon, morale officer at Camp Merritt, communicated with Theodore Romaine, secretary of the Bergen County Historical Society, on June 17, 1919, asking for the Society's assistance in acquiring "a bit of land for such purpose...." Secretary Romaine immediately forwarded the request to the Society's President, Lewis Miller, of Leonia, who immediately

endorsed "the idea of erecting a monument not only to indicate the site of Camp Merritt, but to commemorate the important work begun, accomplished and finished there." He appointed a special committee comprised of Cornelius V. R. Bogert, Dr. Byron G. Van Horne, of Englewood, and M. J. Bogert, of Demarest.

As plans to decommission the camp progressed, the Bergen County Historical Society met on October 25, 1919, and resolved "to see to it that the site of Camp Merritt is marked by a noble and impressive Memorial which shall commemorate the wonderful work carried forward and accomplished in such a short time." This was very much an expression of the Society's mission "to suitably mark by monument or tablet historic sites, to preserve them from oblivion." The Society specifically intended for the memorial "to stand as testimony to the activity of the Bergen County Historical Society in fulfilling its obligations to Bergen County."



The special committee introduced the idea to the Bergen County Board of Chosen Freeholders, who agreed to become custodians of the monument and to handle funds raised for its construction, appointing Reid Howell, of Rutherford, William H. Roberts, of Closter, and Charles K. Allen, of Ridgewood, to cooperate with the Historical Society. General Duncan, commandant of Camp Merritt, appointed three officers, namely, Major Francis G. Landon, Major Max W. Sullivan and Major Jessie I. Sloat to represent the US Army. These committees met at the Officers' Club and organized the Camp Merritt Memorial Association, electing Cornelius C. R. Bogert as president, William H. Roberts, vice-president, and Major Francis G. Landon as secretary.

Twenty members of the Bergen County Historical Society originally comprised the Camp Merritt Memorial Committee. This grew into the Camp Merritt Memorial Association, formed on April 1, 1920, comprised of men stationed at the camp, officers of the US Army, and committees of the Bergen County Historical Society and the Bergen County Board of Chosen Freeholders. Freeholder Director Robert H. Wells headed the new association. The State of New Jersey appropriated \$50,000, one third of the monument's cost. Officers and enlisted men at Camp Merritt collected and donated \$7,500 to the cause. The Bergen County Historical Society raised the bulk of the \$150,000 cost, however, much coming from other state contributions.

Harvey Wily Corbett worked in collaboration with Hackensack architect C. V. R. Bogert on the design, which the American Federation of Fine Arts approved. A site on the south side of the traffic circle at the intersection of Knickerbocker Road and Madison Avenue was chosen, being close to the junction of Cresskill, Tenafly and Dumont. The Bergen

County Board of Chosen Freeholders awarded the construction contract to the Harrison Granite Company of New York City for the sum of \$27,950. Work on the granite obelisk began in June 1922. The granite sculpture of an American soldier, added to the one side of the pedestal, was done by independent contract.

General John J. Pershing, Commander-



in-Chief of the American Expeditionary Force, headed the list of dignitaries who participated in the dedication of the Camp Merritt Monument on Memorial Day, 1924. On August 6, 1919, the Bergen County Board of Chosen Freeholders assumed title to the property and responsibility to maintain, preserve and protect the monument.

The Camp Merritt Monument is a shaft, 66 feet tall, made of Stony Creek granite, inscribed with the names of fifteen officers, 558 enlisted men, four nurses and one civilian, who died at Camp Merritt during the war. The Harrison Granite Company built it. An inscription on the south side states the obelisk "marks the centre of the camp and faces the highway over which more than a million American soldiers passed on their way to and from the World War, 1917-1919." ❖

# The Spring Valley Poet

By historians Joe Suplicki and  
BCHS Trustee Peggy Norris

Joe Suplicki and I were visiting the Spring Valley Cemetery recently, viewing the many interesting stones, and noted one with lettering, not only on the front, but completely covering the back. The marble stone, reflecting 150 years of weathering, is almost unreadable in parts, but there standing boldly forth on the back of the stone, are the words: “The Spring Valley Poet.” It is the marker of Lucas J. Voorhis (1824-1855). It can only make one want to know more.

The story as best it can be put together so far, relying on the stone and secondary sources, is a tale of a young man who was an only child and chronically ill. Although he had little schooling he was well-read and wrote poetry. The father, John L. Voorhis (1791-1849) had a farm near the intersection of Howland and Spring Valley Roads in New Barbados Township, Bergen County. He married Elizabeth Banta (1792-1869) and they had a son, Lucas J. Voorhis (1824-1855) who also worked on the farm. Their stories are told in their three matching tombstones in the Spring Valley Cemetery (accessed from Viola Way (off of Spring Valley Road), Paramus, NJ on the banks of the Behnke Brook and at the rear of the former Behnke Farm).

The father, John L. Voorhis, was



“Modest and unassuming in his deportment/ and happy in his domestic relations” and “a tender parent” according to the words on his stone, perhaps composed by his son. The father died in 1849, leaving his wife, Elizabeth, and 26 year old Lucas living at home in 1850. In 1855 Lucas died and his “widowed mother” erected the monument to him. His widowed mother, having lost both her husband and her son within six years, erected his stone with the long inscription. Joe returned to the cemetery three times seeking just the right angle of the sun to illuminate and shade the letters so that they could be read. The inscription is revealed and the story is told:



**LUCAS J. VOORHIS,  
DIED**

**MAY 4, 1855,  
AGED 30 YEARS,  
8 MONTHS AND 25 DAYS.**

As a citizen, he enjoyed the esteem of all who knew him. As a friend, he was steadfast and confiding—as a son dutiful and affectionate. His life was consistent, and his death happy.

His dying language was— :  
“Jesus sought me when a stranger,  
Wand’ring from the fold of God:  
He to rescue me from danger:  
Interposed his precious blood.”

This stone was erected to his memory  
by his widowed mother.

**On the Back of the Stone:**

He was the only issue of his fond parents, and though cherished with the tenderest regard, his life was one of affliction and pain. He loved rural life and was much attached to his native place. Although of but moderate education, he was well read and being much confined from frequent and protracted disease, he acquired a habit of study and wrote much, particularly in rhyme, in which he evinced a high degree of talent, and became generally known throughout the community as:

**“THE SPRING VALLEY POET.”**

The following stanzas are of his own composition:

Though to the grave we have consigned  
His cold and silent dust,  
A resurrection unto life  
Awaits him as we trust.

Then wherefore tears of sorrow shed?  
Refrain from weeping more:  
Our friend has made a blest exchange  
His sorrows all are o’er.

The ending lines of this stanza are buried  
and unreadable.

Elizabeth Voorhis, remarried Benjamin B. Demarest (1793-1861), but she is buried in Spring Valley next to her beloved son and her first husband. Her second husband is buried in Maple Grove Cemetery, Hackensack.

I’ve found no other record of this poet. Keep an eye out for his writing. Somewhere in a letter or diary or newspaper his words may appear. Did he write only religious verse? Was it only his mother that saw him as a poet? How did this young farmer come to love and write words? There are wills and death certificates to be pursued. There’s more to learn about the Spring Valley Poet and his parents.

The last two lines of the poem on the back of the monument are now buried underground, but were found in a notebook of Frances Westervelt’s (a former BCHS president) in the BCHS Library and Archives.

Transcriptions of all three stones have been posted on [findagrave.com](http://findagrave.com).

**THE INVENTION OF THE  
WHITE RACE: THE ORIGIN OF  
RACIAL OPPRESSION IN  
ANGLO-AMERICA  
Saturday, June 20, 2015, 10 AM**

BCHS Lecture by  
Historian & Author **Jeffrey B. Perry**

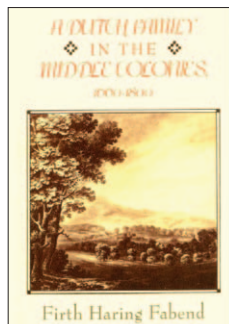
Lecture location:  
**CIARCO LEARNING CENTER**  
335 Main Street, Hackensack, NJ 07601

“When the first Africans arrived in Virginia in 1619, there were no ‘white’ people there; nor, according to the colonial records, would there be for another sixty years.” Perry discusses Theodore W. Allen’s work—a full-scale challenge to “The Great White Assumption.” This is the root of a new approach to American history, one that challenges the master narratives we teach.

## BERGEN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT



Firth Haring Fabend has written extensively about the history of Rockland and Bergen County. *A Dutch Family in the Middle Colonies, 1660-1880* was published in 1991. Fabend is a long-time member of BCHS, a Charter Fellow of the New Netherland Institute, a Fellow of The Holland Society of New York and of the New York Academy of History.



**Interviewee:** Firth Haring Fabend

**Interviewer & Transcriber:**  
Deborah Powell

**Date:** May 6, 2015

**Place:** Firth's residence in Montclair. Firth had just come back from a garden club flower-arranging school meeting that took place at Rutgers Gardens.

**DSP:** How did you wind up in Montclair?

**FHF:** We decided to leave the city. I had a new baby, Carl was working in NJ and I said "Tell me 3 towns that are convenient to where you work." Montclair was one of them, I had heard of Montclair from the book, *Cheaper by the Dozen* written about the Gilbreth family who lived here [Frank B. Gilbreth, Jr. & Ernestine Gilbreth Carey, 2 children of the efficiency experts]. I sent postcards to 3 realtors in 3 towns and a Montclair realtor sent back photos. I made an appointment for that Saturday and we drove out and bought our house that day.

**DSP:** I guess the train line was part of that decision?

**FHF:** Actually the train situation wasn't as good as it is today, 48 years later, but there was a bus right in to Port Authority. I commuted until my second child entered first grade and then I stayed home and wrote.

**DSP:** What was the first thing you wrote?

**FHF:** My first book was a novel, called *The Best of Intentions*, set in a town resembling Nyack and then I wrote five novels all published between 1968 and '85. Around that time the publishing industry was changing and I was finding it was getting more difficult to sell what I wrote. So at this point I went to graduate school and learned to write history, concentrating on the Dutch period. I vaguely knew my father's family had settled Tappan in the 1680s, which is where I was born and where my ancestors are buried. And where one of the Haring homesteads is now a Buddhist meditation center on Route 303 just north of Kings Highway [303 connects Tappan to Haverstraw]. I've written about it, the Bogert-Haring House. It's been in my family in one form or another from 1707 until 1885. They were still in the house in the '85 NY State census. My grandfather



was born in it. And then they moved to Nyack and it all changed. To get back to your question how did I know about them, when I was engaged to Carl one of his mother's friends gave me a copy of the history of the Tappan Reformed Church and in there it's all laid out who the founders of the church were, the founding families, and they're all my ancestors.

**DSP:** So you were well into adulthood. I find that it's a personal treasure hunt that becomes this lifelong quest. You've obviously delved into it more than most people are able to. When you were a child, did you visit the cemetery?

**FHF:** Yes, visiting the cemetery was a family ritual and we would always drive by the house where I was born. It was a private hospital. My mother's doctor owned it, a Victorian house right on Kings Highway; the last time I drove past it, it was for sale. It was a little Charles Adams-y looking. Tappan has always meant a lot to me for those reasons. I was married in the Tappan Reformed Church.

**DSP:** Did you have any family, grandparents trying to show you those connections or was it really your own process of discovery?

**FHF:** My own discovery. I remember when my grandfather Haring died my mother and his other daughter-in-law were cleaning out the stuff, the barn and books that were in the barn. They didn't know what to do with them, they were dusty and moldy, and...they threw them out. And to this day I wonder what was in those books.

**DSP:** Yeah, all of us have so many stories like that. They almost make it...some things do.

**FHF:** Thank god for historical societies!  
[laughter]

**DSP:** You were able to find a lot of info anyway, you've done a lot of deed research.

**FHF:** Yes, *A Dutch Family in the Middle Colonies* was done completely from public records. Deeds, wills, inventories, tax records. It was just digging for four years basically and taking lots of notes. It was a wonderful period in my life when I was able to do that because I felt I was unearthing the history not only of my family but all the other families that were so like it in Bergen County. So many were interrelated and basically have the same history as my family so I felt that anyone reading *A Dutch Family in the Middle Colonies* would feel that this is probably very much like what their own family



## Books by Firth Haring Fabend

### American History

*New Netherland in a Nutshell: A Concise History of the Dutch Colony in North America*

A concise history of the colony that became New York and New Jersey and parts of Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut. (2012)

*Zion on the Hudson: Dutch New York and New Jersey in the Age of Revivals (2000)*

Describes the efforts of the descendants of early Dutch settlers to preserve their Old World standards and traditions while developing a taste for a new kind of theology and a preference for an American identity.

*A Dutch Family in the Middle Colonies, 1660-1800 (1991)*

A prize-winning study of a large colonial American family over five generations.

### Historical Fiction

*Land So Fair*

A family saga set in eighteenth-century New York and New Jersey

Please visit <http://members.authorsguild.net/fhfabend/> to see other publications by Fabend.

continued on page 10

experienced. And that was one reason that book disappeared out of libraries; people felt they were entitled to take it because it was their family. And so in most of those libraries it's now under lock and key.

**DSP:** It is a challenge trying to save items for the future. Did you have a grandparent who was a story teller?

**FHF:** No. I had a professor at college who published a book called *The Columbia Historical Portrait of New York: An Essay in Graphic History*. His name was John A. Kouwenhoven, an old Dutch name from the city and one day he opened the book to the page with the 1639 *Manatus map* [Manatus gelegen op de Noot Rivier, 1639] and there's a key to it, he said "this was your ancestor and this was my ancestor and their farms were here and they definitely knew each other because there were only 300 souls in New Amsterdam in 1639." This was when I was a sophomore in college and it blew my mind to think that you could learn things like that from 350, 400 years ago. I had moments like that when I was working

on the Dutch family book. I was trying to locate a will, I think it was my fourth great grandfather's. I called Trenton and I said "It seems you have a copy of this will," and they said "Oh yes, we have the original right here." "You do!?" I got up from my desk and drove to Trenton to look at this document. It was so astounding to me. He was born in 1780 and died in 1868 so the will was written in the '60s. His name was Johannes Haring. All their names were Jan or John or Johannes.

**DSP:** So it was reaching out to you from the past. Did you inherit any objects from the Dutch period?

**FHF:** No. I have a few things from the 19th century, like andirons, but they were from my father's mother's family. A gold locket that came down from the Armstrong family of Blairstown area. Nothing from the Harings. I wish I did.

**DSP:** Yeah, it's kind of amazing from the museum perspective how many things make it down and how many don't.

**FHF:** Yeah, what happened to all that stuff!



Manatus gelegen op de Noot Rivier, 1639, Library of Congress. The upper half of the map shows what is now New Jersey. Spring/Summer 2015 Bergen County Historical Society

**DSP:** So not even a bible?

**FHF:** No...there was an old Haring bible. We gave it to the Tappan Reformed Church. In the front it recorded family members. One line had "Old Joe died 1853." Old Joe was probably a former enslaved person, who stayed on with the family after manumission in 1827 or '28.

**DSP:** Were all your ancestors Dutch?

**FHF:** There were a number of French Huguenots, Pierre Cresson and Jean Demarest. There were others; these are the two that I researched.

**DSP:** I'm curious on what comes down, did any Dutch customs come down to you, a favorite recipe or even words, language?

**FHF:** My grandfather, the one who was born in the Bogert-Haring House in Tappan, married a woman of English-Scottish background so at that time all of the cooking probably came from that side of the family. I don't remember anything remotely Dutch.

**DSP:** What was her name? Isabelle Firth Armstrong.

**DSP:** In *Land So Fair* you explored how people lived over several generations. I wondered if you could describe a typical weekday for a woman — pre-revolutionary.

**FHF:** The families that I'm writing about are the fortunate ones, they had land and houses, the sandstone houses, some of which are still standing like the Haring-DeWolf House. Their lives were easy compared to the lives of poor people, they had slaves, and field workers, house workers who could help. The women still had to do a great deal of the work. There's a whole chapter in the book on what a typical day would be. The women had to preserve everything for the winter, canned, salted, dried and put away in some way. Weaving, spinning, the women did that work including childcare and cooking. They worked side-by-side with the enslaved women. A woman may have had 8-10 children and the enslaved woman's children were also about so they



Manatus map — key enlarged. The reference to Fabend's ancestor is No. 41.

were surrounded by children running around as children do today. They had a baby every two years, as soon as they stopped nursing, they would get pregnant again.

**DSP:** Did you find a typical number of enslaved persons in a household?

**FHF:** In the first generation of the Haring family there were four brothers, and they shared. If one needed a worker, he could borrow from his brother. Daniel De Clark built the De Clark/De Wint House in Tappan in 1700 where George Washington stayed on four occasions. He owned eight slaves. Frederick Philips across the river at Philips Manor owned 40 slaves. He was much richer, with merchant ties that spread out even down to the Caribbean. De Clark was a prominent member of the community. He had the free time to serve in the church or hold office in the community. He was also a brewer and also no doubt grew most of his own produce on the farm.

**DSP:** Did you ever find a description of how they were employed? Were any of them building houses, for instance?

**FHF:** There are descriptions of the houses and how they were constructed in my book *Land So Fair*.

**DSP:** Most of the sandstone houses are privately owned. You've been to many of them?

**FHF:** I've been to the ones that are open to the public which are far and few between and I've been invited to a few of the private ones. I went to Girl

Scout camp with a girl who later married someone in the DeWolf family and they lived in the Haring-DeWolf house on DeWolf Road in Old Tappan. This house figures largely in *Land So Fair*. It's center-hall, 2-rooms deep. There's a picture of it in *A Dutch Family*.

**DSP:** Like the Campbell-Christie House at New Bridge Landing?

**FHF:** Yes, but bigger.

**DSP:** With a gambrel roof?



The Bogert-Haring House, 1881. Firth Haring Fabend's great-grandmother, Mary Amanda (Gillingham) Haring is standing on the back stoop. Courtesy of FHF.

**FHF:** Yes, there's a picture of it as well as the houses next to it which were built by brothers Garret and Frederick Haring in the 1750s. There's nothing much from before that. The first houses were so primitive and rudimentary, they probably just fell down.

**DSP:** I think we're all worried about the sandstone houses, we hear about them being threatened in the news.

**FHF:** The Lent house in Orangeburg was destroyed just a couple of weeks ago; it was bull-dozed out of existence!

**DSP:** I've heard there's a couple of others from Bergen County that are threatened and those are just the ones that have

come to attention. We could wish for more leadership in a way forward, on a way to save them with a preservation easement, for example.

**FHF:** Yes, that would be a good thing.

**DSP:** So still thinking about the way you grew up and you didn't have much sense of how long your family had been living in the area, it was taken for granted, it was just how everyone was in the neighborhood...genealogy wasn't in the consciousness.

**FHF:** No, I never heard the word until Howard Ackerman wrote a letter to my father and grandfather asking for \$5.00 for support for his Haring genealogy. This produced total consternation in our household, I think I was in high school, 9th grade. "What is this word genealogy? What does he mean? No, they decided, we are not going to give that man \$5.00, we don't know him." So for that reason, we are not in the genealogy! This resource is how I happened to be able to trace the family. The plot we are still using was purchased by a John Haring in 1868. He was my great-great grandfather, and he is in Ackerman's genealogy. So I could just go back up to the first generation. You have this genealogy in the BCHS library collections.

**DSP:** I really enjoyed reading your deed research and how you looked at the way the Dutch treated women's inheritance differently. And then the English took over and how it gradually changed. It seems something sparked your interest.

**FHF:** Well, it's well known, that the English allowed the Dutch to continue their inheritance practices but eventually English took over a lot of the Dutch practices too. The English gave up primogeniture, in favor of equal inheritance for children. Some of it was the economy changing, less land. Actually

the Harings had so much land to begin with – as did the Blauvelts, Bogerts, Smiths, Demarests – that they did not have to go west. There were a whole bunch of Dutch folks who went down to Kentucky. In fact, I'm speaking to their descendants in the Dutch Cousins group in September.

**DSP:** Blauvelts?

**FHF:** No, no Blauvelts, some are Bantas. None of my family though. My family did not leave. It was relatively easier to find information on them than if they were out in Indiana for instance.

**DSP:** Are you the only Haring left in the area?

**FHF:** In my line. My father's father had nine children, six died in infancy and his two other brothers had no children and he had two daughters. So genetically it goes on through my children and grandchildren but not the name.

**DSP:** Listening to *the Island of the Center of the World* by Russell Shorto on my commute and my experience at the Steuben House, I find people are very unaware of the Dutch influence on the area and American history. You give a lot of lectures and speak with many people, does anything come to mind?

**FHF:** People are always very interested, come to my talks, ask very good questions and they buy the books but it's not taught in the schools and that's the problem. After all, the English won the war and so they got to write the history and we just don't teach it. There's a big effort by the New Netherland Institute to get it into the NY state curriculum. When the NNI published my book *New Netherland in a Nutshell*, they gave a copy to every library in NY state. I said "Why don't you do it for every library in New Jersey? New Jersey was part of New Netherland too." "We couldn't do that, that would be too

continued on page 14

expensive.” New Jersey kind of gets the short end of the stick when it comes to history.



Dutch tile, BCHS collections

**DSP:** That does seem to be so. I know you could probably go on for hours but can you describe the big points on the Dutch contribution.

**FHF:** Some scholars feel our founding documents are based on Dutch documents like the de facto Constitution of the Dutch Republic called the Treaty of Utrecht, 1579. There was a Declaration of Independence from Catholic Philip of Spain that is very similar to the American Declaration of Independence. The Treaty of Utrecht has echoes in our Constitution, Articles of Confederation, Bill of Rights. So I think that’s an important area that really needs more research. There’s no smoking gun, or annotations in Thomas Jefferson’s library, but by doing textual analysis scholars could find quite striking similarities. Of course the place names in our part of the world, Bergen County, Rockland County, all the way up and down the Hudson

Valley there are many, many Dutch place names. The Dutch Reformed Church, now called the Reformed Church of America, came from the Dutch roots. It’s one of the smaller of the main line denominations but it has a seminary in New Brunswick, NJ, with a lively presence.

**DSP:** I can’t quite articulate why but I feel like the NYC area is much different than the Boston area.

**FHF:** Oh it is. They say New York is the original melting pot, but of course Amsterdam itself was a melting pot.

People came from all over Europe to seek religious refuge in Amsterdam because they were allowed to practice their religion. Even though they couldn’t do it publicly, the authorities “winked,” and the people had a synagogue over here, a Catholic church over there. They let them go ahead and practice.

**DSP:** It’s really taken for granted. I’ll end with that new material is becoming available all the time.

**FHF:** Yes, the translations from the New Netherland Institute.

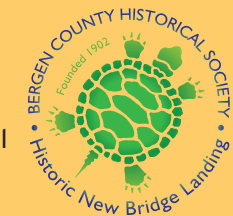
**DSP:** Are you looking forward to anything in particular?

**FHF:** I’ve been very busy with a move this past year but I do hope to get to delve into the translations.

**DSP:** Thank you, Firth.

**FHF:** Thank you, Deborah. ❖

Did you know  
Oradell wildlife artist  
Charles Livingston Bull  
designed the Turtle  
for BCHS in 1928?



**Bergen County,**  
Where America Begins

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**Bergen County Historical Society**  
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# BERGEN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY LIBRARY

The mission of the BCHS is to collect and preserve data, papers and documents of genealogical, biographical, and topographical information having historical significance to the civil, political, military, and general history of Bergen County and its adjoining areas.

The BCHS began building their library collection more than 100 years ago. The BCHS Library has grown to be one of the most important collections of Bergen County materials.

## Resources for Genealogists

**Local Published Histories** — The BCHS Library holds more than 2,500 volumes, including many rare and unusual titles.

**Family Genealogies** — The BCHS collection includes more than 200 individual family genealogies — some of which are not easily available anywhere else.

**Family History Manuscripts** — The library also has in its vertical file a number of manuscripts of family histories.

**Town Monographs** — A large collection of town monographs which often mention the families who lived in & contributed to the history of their communities.

**Revolutionary War Resources** — The book collection contains an extensive set of materials relating to the American Revolution including a number of volumes on those who remained loyal to England.

**Manuscript Files** — There are more than 650 file envelopes in the manuscript files containing original deeds, letters, tax lists, receipts, mortgages, and road petitions. Most of the items have been indexed for easy access. Among the manuscripts are handwritten lists of early 19th century Bergen County officials.

**Photographic Collection** — A large collection of photos of Bergen County homes, businesses, townscapes, and other items of interest to the genealogist and historian are housed in the collection. The images are housed in a set of 38 binders and are indexed.

**Church & Cemetery Records** — The library boasts an extensive and unique collection of Bergen County church and cemetery records compiled by local DAR Chapters, other groups, and dedicated individuals. Some examples: Vital Records of Edgewater, NJ; School Records of Fort Lee; Funeral Records of the Heus Funeral Home in Fort Lee; The English Neighborhood Reformed Church of Ridgfield Cemetery Burial Records.

## Bible Records & Diaries

**Maps Collection** — The BCHS Library may be the only repository in Bergen County to house the entire Sanborn Insurance map collection for the area. The

Library's extensive collection of maps is fully indexed and the collection contains a number of unique atlases covering Bergen County, including the Franklin Survey Atlas and the Bromley Atlas.

**Newspaper Clippings & Scrapbooks** — News clippings about local communities compiled by persons interested in Bergen County history and scrapbooks about various organizations.

## Hours, Fees, and Other Info

The BCHS Library is located at:  
Bergen Community College  
Philip Ciarco, Jr. Learning Center, Room 124  
355 Main Street, Hackensack NJ

Use of the BCHS Library is free and open to all.

The Library is currently open two days a week, Wednesdays 12–5pm & Thursdays 10am–3pm. (Additional hours may be added in the near future.) The BCHS Library's collection is also available by appointment to researchers by contacting [thebchslibrary@gmail.com](mailto:thebchslibrary@gmail.com).

The staff of the BCHS Library will provide help to all who visit.

Email and letter queries from members of the BCHS are answered for free. We charge \$10 per e-mail or letter query from non-members.

There is a small charge for photocopies.

The building and the BCHS Library are handicapped accessible. Handicapped parking is available in the large lot behind the Philip A. Ciarco building.

Metered parking is available on the street.

There is a food area with tables and chairs in the lobby of the Ciarco building with vending machines for snacks and drinks. No food or drinks are allowed in the BCHS Library.

## Research Specialist

For any additional questions or research queries (see possible BCHS non-member applicable research fees, above) send an e-mail to: [thebchslibrary@gmail.com](mailto:thebchslibrary@gmail.com)

View more information about the collection, & membership, at [www.bergencountyhistory.org](http://www.bergencountyhistory.org)

Information from Lucille Bertram and Michelle Novak.

Bergen County Historical Society Spring/Summer 2015



Michelle Green got the big walking wheel going – spinning wool – watch for her at an upcoming event.



Tracy Horan gave tours in the garden at a recent event. The Building & Grounds committee has been busy making garden plans.

*Buy a raffle ticket, support the Museum Fund*

**A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY**

**FIFTY-FIFTY RAFFLE**

*Sponsored by*

Bergen County Historical Society  
River Edge, NJ 07661

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August 15, 2015 - 7:00 PM  
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Proceeds used for Construction of a New Museum

Subscription \$100      Number 423-5-26992

**50/50 Raffle Tickets:**

The drawing is August 15, 2015. This is a fundraiser for the planned BCHS museum building.

**See if your lucky number is available. We expect to have two \$5,000 winners if the 200 tickets are sold.**

**Jim Purcell:** 201-693-6301  
- jepurcell@optonline.net to obtain your ticket.

Or pick one up at one of our events.

Raffle No. 423-5-26992

**Of the Best Materials and Good Workmanship:**  
19th Century  
New Jersey Chairmaking  
**April 23 – Oct. 18, 2015**

This exhibition explores the craft of chairmaking in New Jersey from the 1790s to the end of the nineteenth century. This was an era when chairmakers worked actively in virtually every corner of the state, from large cities and towns to small crossroads communities. morven.org



BCHS lent a Collington folding chair from our collections for this exhibit at Morven Museum & Gardens, Princeton. (BCHS chair is not shown here.)

