



# In Bergen's Attic

WINTER 2019 / 2020

## President's Message



“Those who do not study the past, are doomed to repeat it.” This is a phrase that has been repeated by many a history teacher and historian alike, some crediting Edmund Burke or George Santayana. There is a thread of truth to this but I think it also sets us up humans for failure, as if there is nothing that can be done, because it will just happen anyway. I recently read a quote attributed to Carl Sagan saying, “You have to know the past, to understand the present.” I believe, more than ever that this quote exemplifies the study of history today and shows the importance of the subject. I must confess I am a bit biased as a History Teacher, but never the less, it is a topic worth exploring and highlights the importance of what the many of the members of the Bergen County Historical Society do on a daily basis with the organization.

Consider if you will, Historic New Bridge Landing. It is the quintessential test lab for understanding history. Its set up can teach us so much about the past

and can greatly influence decisions today. Three unique Bergen County sandstone houses occupy the grounds, a tavern (the Campbell Christie House) a small stone cottage (the Demarest House), and the stately Zabriskie Von Steuben House, sitting on the banks of the Hackensack. Each dwelling offers us insight to what Bergen County was like in the past, from the trees used in their construction, the style and set up of the floor plans to the carved red sandstone, so synonymous with our County. And yet, the story does not end there. How did Bergen County



THE STEUBEN HOUSE-  
PAST AND PRESENT.

residents deal with traffic and a burgeoning population in the 18th century? 20th Century? The study of New Bridge can answer that. Lastly, when one gets to the core of the site, your attention most certainly is drawn to the large stone house but also the Hackensack River, so long a defining characteristic of our County, even going back to the indigenous peoples who called the area home. But why did they call the area home? How was renewable energy used in the 18th century?

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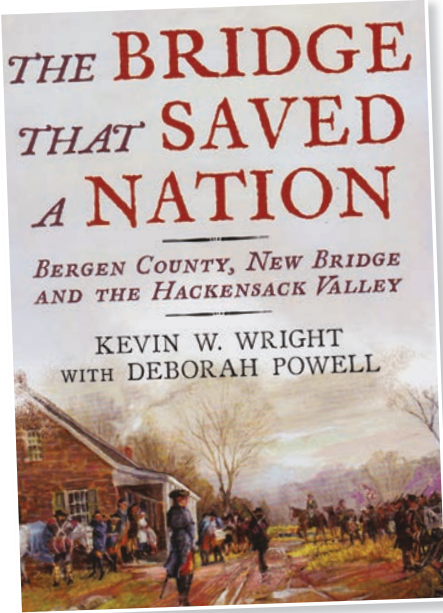
# The Bridge That Saved A Nation

Deborah Powell

With the publication of the new book *The Bridge That Saved a Nation, Bergen County, New Bridge and the Hackensack Valley*, we have an opportunity to reach new audiences to tell the history of Bergen County. Linda Masullo, Vice President

and gift shop manager, has often noted visitors were asking for a book on the museum site, Historic New Bridge Landing. Husband and historian Kevin Wright was writing the book when he was struck down by cancer in October 2016. When I could, I reached out to his publisher of his last book, *The Morris Canal and the Age of Ingenuity*, and Fonthill was interested in this one too. I was able to edit the manuscript, add some segues and include photographs. I drew three maps for the book. I added a history he wrote on African-Americans. Vice President Kate Reilly helped edit and both she and Rosemary Jerkovich helped proof-read it. As a sweetener, if you buy the book at New Bridge we can emboss the title page with the BCHS seal.

I could see when working on the book what authors often face... when to let go and actually publish. The more one looks the more questions come to mind. I am glad I could do this for him, hopefully it honors him well and benefits the museum site and the BCHS. 🍀



RIGHT - DEBORAH POWELL SIGNS BOOKS IN THE STEUBEN HOUSE.  
BELOW - KEVIN WRIGHT GIVES A TOUR ON "THE BRIDGE THAT SAVED A NATION", MARCH 2016.



## *BCHS Around the Landing*

**October 11** Representatives from the Army Corps of Engineers and other stakeholders including NJDEP and County of Bergen joined us (BCHS & HNBL Park Commission)



LEFT - LOOKING SOUTH DOWN THE HACKENSACK RIVER.

at Historic New Bridge Landing to review the tidal and storm damage to the 18th c. wharf in front of the Steuben House. We had a very positive meeting on what could be done to protect the wharf and the Steuben House (a state-historic site) in the future.

In the 18th century goods were being shipped by sloop to the Great Dock on the tip of Manhattan and back New Bridge Landing.



RIGHT - THE REMAINS OF THE WHARF CAN BE SEEN AT THE WATER'S EDGE IN FRONT OF THE STEUBEN HOUSE.

**October 20** Members from the HVVA (*Hudson Valley Vernacular Architecture*) organization visited the site. At HNBL, we have such a varied and storied history to share. It was a chance to network with people who study, live in and/or save 18th c. houses. We obtained some leads on projects we're working on. The day was broken up by lunch at an establishment of one of our supporters, the Coach House in Hackensack.

HVVA MEMBERS AND DEBORAH POWELL ON THE FRONT STEPS OF THE CAMPBELL-CHRISTIE HOUSE.



Kerry Hardy (left) reached out to us as a researcher and mapmaker for an ambitious Rutgers/Newark project on telling the human history of the Hudson River estuary from glacial times to the Revolutionary War. Attention to this subject is very interesting when you consider how little is known about our region, how little archaeology has been done. We'll have to see if we can get Hardy back for a future talk. He pointed out how favored Bergen County and Staten Island were by the Native Americans.



# BCHS Buildings & Grounds

## A GARDEN JOURNAL

### The Tavern Garden and Other Growing Concerns at River Edge with a nod to Thomas Jefferson

Beverly Hashimoto



2019

New Bridge Landing

April 24

Sowed four beds of Three Sisters-

- ♦ bed 1 Bloody Butcher corn
- ♦ bed 2 Seneca Red Stalker corn
- ♦ bed 3 Delaware Black Flint corn\*
- ♦ bed 4 Strong Start corn & Early Bicolor corn

Sowed one bed of cabbages & Brussel sprouts-

- ♦ bed 5 row 1 Golden Acre cabbage
- row 2 Parel Hybrid cabbage
- row 3 Long Island Improved Brussel sprouts
- row 4 Brunswick cabbage



Sowed one bed bird bottle gourds

Sowed one bed of root vegetables-

- ♦ bed 7 row 1 Salad Mixed radishes
- row 2 Half Long Guernsey parsnips
- row 3 Purple Top turnips
- row 4 Early Wonder beets
- row 5 Little Finger carrots

April 24 was our second Weeding Wednesday of the season. Volunteers are welcome to lend a hand in any way they can, mostly in the tavern garden but wherever there is a need on the grounds or even in the buildings. No gardening experience necessary! We meet every other Wednesday spring through fall from 9 to 11AM or noon or whenever our knees and backs give out.

Three Sisters was a farming technique shared with early settlers by the native people. Corn seeds were first sown in foot high hills of soil and when the corn reached 6 to 8 inches in height, bean and squash seeds were added to each hill. The soaring corn stalk provided a pole for the beans to climb while the dinner plate-sized leaves of squash or pumpkin shaded the roots and retained moisture. Corn, beans and squash were basic elements of the native diet.

A corn new to us is *Sehsapsing Delaware Black Flint* from Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Co. From the seed packet: "*Sehsapsing produces 6 to 8 foot plants, with 1 to 2 cobs low on the stalks. Each ear is small, 7 to 8 inches in length with 8 rows per cob. This was a classic ceremonial corn of the Lenape/Delaware peoples recorded as early as the 1640s. When young, in the milk stage, the corn was eaten raw as sweet corn or roasted to caramelize it for winter dishes. In the mature stage it makes extraordinary cornmeal for grits. Extremely rare.*"

April 27

- ♦ bed 6 planted alpine strawberries in the tavern garden, replacing those grown previously, which failed to survive

Wrote Thomas Jefferson to John Mason, 1810 June 22. "*I have the genuine Alpine strawberry, which I received [sic] from Italy. but it bears so little that I think it would take acres to yield a dish.*"

- ♦ out kitchen herb garden continues to be improved, a sturdier edging being constructed from found materials



The deer have little regard for most herbs, disliking their strong aromas, so we need not confine them behind the fence of the tavern garden.



- ◆ re-constructed the flax bed, edging with ties, supplementing with manure-amended soil
- ◆ add'l soil spread beneath locust trees near SH for new formal bed to be constructed Spring of 2020-edged with boxwoods to contain a crepe myrtle or Virginia magnolia.

We have high hopes for growing flax—the first step in producing linen—as we have equipment in the barn and Demarest House, a flax break, a scutching knife and a heckle (or hackle) used in the process. This was a big job!

∞ **April 27** Saturday was our Spring Clean-Up Day and we had 15 participants—a good number! Very productive work on a lovely spring day.

Not noted in our Garden Journal was the other work accomplished that day. The camp kitchen covered with a tarp to prevent weeds from growing, the compost pile cleared of larger refuse so the garden clippings can break down more quickly, and the garden shed re-organized – again! The lilac by the Campbell- Christie House was pruned to encourage flowering. Irish Spring soap tied in newly planted trees to deter deer from nibbling the bark and killing the tree. And Litter

Patrol—there's always litter to be picked up before an event!

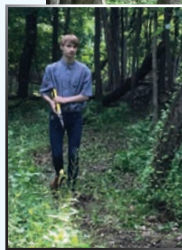
∞ **May 8** ∞

- ◆ seeded Marigold, a flower from K. Wegner, in Steuben House side & back beds and CCH front bed
- ◆ seeded Four O'Clocks (*Mirabilis*) in barrels near SH

July 18, 1767, Thomas Jefferson wrote about Four O' Clocks in his Garden Book: "*Mirabilis just opened, very clever.*"

∞ **May 18** ∞

- ◆ community work day as members of St. Peter's, River Edge lent a hand re-stacking fire wood & bricks in the herb garden
- ◆ stone planter in parking lot re-planted—Russian sage though hardy has an indifferent flower & is neither of short enough stature nor period appropriate and so removed
- ◆ other perennials divided



∞ **June 1** ∞

- ◆ nature trail made passable—leads from meadow to riverbank
- A Yale alumni group volunteered: they mulched trees and worked on the nature trail.

∞ **June 5** ∞

- ◆ marigolds are flourishing wherever they were seeded
- ◆ no sign of Four O'Clocks seedlings
- ◆ chives blooming in the OK herb garden



Four O'Clocks seeds were sown a year or two ago in the barrels and thrived. Not to be this year, so we'll try other seeds and plants to see what takes.

🌀 June 19 🌀

- ◆ corn and cabbage grow hesitantly, no sign of beans or squash

It turns out to be a disappointing planting season. Far too much rain early on drowns out seeds and seedlings alike and we have little to show for our work. Every other Wednesday we weed. Have sown cabbage and root crop seeds yet again. It is fortunate that we do not rely on these beds for our sustenance.

🌀 July 2 🌀

- ◆ Monarda Bee Balm blooms in the OK herb garden



🌀 July 3 🌀

- ◆ Flowering Tobacco (nicotiana) surprises as it was not sown this year



- ◆ Balsam & Sweet William in bloom with Thyme edging the flower beds that may keep deer at bay



- ◆ beans & squash sown once more, come harvest time we may do without

🌀 July 17 🌀

- ◆ cabbages have provided a meal for pests—rabbits perhaps—none survive the season
- ◆ Alpine strawberries will come to table in a week or so

During construction, wire fencing was dug into the ground a foot below the pickets of the tavern garden fence but animals have since found their way in. Last year we found a nest of some 5 or 6 kits—baby rabbits—IN the garden. None of us had the heart to hurt them . . . The subsequent Weeding Wednesday they were gone.

🌀 July 21 🌀

- ◆ Salad Mixed radishes & Little Finger carrots come to table

We sow carrots and radishes to be ready for harvest by Summertime Tour. Some child visitors have grown their own vegetables at home. While others have no idea that carrots come out of the ground! And they are thrilled to pull their own carrot or radish to take it home with them.

🌀 July 27 🌀

- ◆ Delaware Black Flint corn delights—the stalks and husks are actually black



The Delaware/Lenape *Sehsapsing Delaware Black Flint* Corn is a surprise. The seed packet having pictured only an ear with kernels dark and glistening

as anthracite coal; we hardly expected the stalk and husks to likewise be black. What other surprises await us? It almost makes up for the loss of other crops.



∞ August 9 ∞

The State of New Jersey/Parks Commission planted a dozen trees along the fence in the meadow—four of each: October Glory Maple (*acer rubrum*), Sweetgum (*liquidambar styracifula*), and Exclamation London Plane Tree (*plantanus x acerifolia* 'Exclamation').

The state provided Gator bags (watering bags) which are being maintained (filled by a water truck) under contract. The Weeding Wednesday crew put protective soft fencing and hung bars of soap on each tree to deter the deer. More trees to be planted in the fall.

∞ August 14 ∞

- ◆ Delaware Black Flint continues to amaze, in some cases bright green & in others pink tassels have appeared



∞ August 28 ∞

- ◆ corn comes to table: Bloody Butcher & Seneca Red Stalker produce some ears. Strong Start & Early Bicolor made no showing at all

∞ September 11 ∞

- ◆ strawberries come to table



The Alpine strawberries begin producing mid-summer but are few and take time to ripen. By late summer they are still few but they ripen more quickly and are larger and sweeter.



∞ September 12 ∞

- ◆ mums, asters & pansies planted in SH beds prior to Naturalization ceremony

Still yearning for blossoms and color as fall approaches, surely the summer cannot have passed by so quickly! Chrysanthemums, so common in our gardens now, were unknown in colonial America. In future, we will scatter more marigold seeds – easy to grow, not appealing to deer and they last into the colder months. Next Spring, we start anew.





**We Need You to Like Us...  
Really, Really Like Us...  
And Share Us...  
And Favorite Us...**

Christine George

More and more, cultural institutions are taking to social media to share their collections, advertise events, and interact with their members. With social media—mainly speaking of Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter—there is the opportunity to reach people who may not have even heard of the Bergen County Historical Society before. Unfortunately when it comes to social media, unless we have a little help from our friends, it can be like shouting into the void. In the ever ongoing fight against the algorithm, we need you—yes you—to help us spread the word on social media. In that vein, here are some things you can do to help us and any other cultural institution that strikes your fancy. But please do these things to help us.

*Follow Us*

It sounds ridiculously simple, but it's true. The first step in any of this is to follow us on Facebook, which is the main social media channel we use. We are also on both Instagram and Twitter.

*Like Our Posts*

That little thumbs up—or a heart if you're on other platforms—means a lot. It lets us know that you're out there, seeing what we're posting. It also helps with the algorithm that adjusts the visibility of posts in people's feeds based on the interactions people have with the posts.



*Comment on Our Posts*

Do you have something to tell us? Maybe about how much you enjoyed an event the previous year and are looking forward to attending again? Maybe a fun fact you learned at your last visit? Maybe that you think the painting we posted is really neat? Let us know. We like hearing from you. It also has the added benefit of letting others know attending our events or what have you is worthwhile.

*Share Our Posts*

Your network of friends and followers goes beyond ours. By sharing (or retweeting) our posts, you're extending our reach to people who would not have seen them otherwise. When you add a comment to that share, it's an extra endorsement.

*Post About Us*

If you're at a BCBS event, consider taking a photo and posting it. In that post, it would be greatly appreciated if you would tag our account. Much like sharing our posts, this will allow people who may not know about us otherwise to find out





about us. By tagging us, that will make it easier for someone to find our account and then follow us.

The Bergen County Historical Society is a volunteer organization. People who are able to take some time from their busy lives to help out are the reason we're able to put on highlight historical events at New Bridge Landing and fundraise to build a museum building to showcase our incredible collections. It is the support of our

volunteers and membership is what keeps us going. These social media tips may not seem like that big of a deal, but those few clicks can help us continue to expand our reach. So won't you show us some social media love?

Facebook:

**Bergen County Historical Society**

Instagram:

**@bergencountyhistory**



**On Exhibit in the Steuben House is this stunning pair of 1783 watercolors of George Washington & Nathanael Greene from the Hallowell Black Americana Collection**



Marta Black gave a talk: *Washington's General: The Rise of Nathanael Greene* in the Steuben House at BCHS Nov. 24 event: *British Invasion and American Retreat*.

**Veterans Wreath Laying & 1776 British Invasion Blue Marker Dedication**

**Sunday, November 10** This year the BCHS honored our Veterans with a wreath laying ceremony held at the Palisades Interstate Park Headquarters, 1 Alpine Road, Alpine, NJ at 1PM.

Following this ceremony was the dedication of a new BCHS Blue Marker for **Huyler's Landing** commemorating the **British Invasion of November 1776**. This Blue Marker, located along the Shore Path, is not visible from the road. The drive to the marker is on a narrow road, requiring a walk down hill on uneven and rocky ground. Currently, there are over 160 BCHS Blue Markers throughout Bergen County. BCHS is a 501 (c)(3) volunteer non-profit organization.

RIGHT - BCHS MEMBERS HIKED DOWN TO THE BLUE MARKER LOCATED AT THE HUDSON RIVER WATER'S EDGE.



## Demarest House had a former life as an artists' club

Peggy Norris



The Demarest House, which was moved from New Milford to New Bridge Landing in 1956, has a surprising history. From 1903-1938 it was the headquarters of the Pochade Club<sup>1</sup>, a group of artists, many from New York City, who wanted a rural location near a train station. In 1903, when they “lost their lease” on a building in Cherry Hill (near the, now-named, Historic New Bridge Landing train station) they searched for another location nearby. They found a “tumbled-down stable” next to a cemetery and near the Hackensack River. This dilapidated building was the Demarest House in its original location in New Milford near the French Cemetery. It had holes in the roof; windows were broken; and it showed evidence of the previous occupant, a cow. The Pochade Club leased the house and the members cleaned it up and began repairs. It was their home for the next 37 years.

MEMBERS ON THE FRONT STEPS.



The BCHS Library has the club’s expense ledger and a collection of snapshots taken by the members. Entries in the ledger include dues, food, oil for lighting, and building supplies. From the photographs it is clear that the club members had a good deal of fun, as well as practicing their arts. One photo is titled the “Pochade Club Little Symphony Society,” which consisted of ten people playing (or pretending to play) music on giant gourds.



THE POCHADE CLUB LITTLE SYMPHONY SOCIETY PERFORMS ON THE FRONT STEPS. BETWEEN THE DOORS IS SIGN (CROPPED) READING VERTICALLY *POCHADE CLUB*.

The artists included painters Walter Meyner, K. Pratt Campbell, and Francis William Vreeland. Member Rudy Dirks







GARDENS BUILT AROUND THE DEMAREST HOUSE.

was the creator of the comic strips, “Katzenjammer Kids” and “The Captain and the Kids.” O. Grover and Charles Hellmuth were photographers and Louis Schlesinger was head of Museum of Art’s department restoring its Egyptian artifacts. Henry J. Haecker designed and manufactured calendars.

As the Record put it in 1940, “the house would not have there for Mr. Blauvelt

to save if it had not been for the artists who saw it through the earlier crisis of its history.” Hiram Blauvelt purchased the house in 1939 and eventually disassembled and moved it to Historic New Bridge Landing. All thanks to a small group of artists who turned a stable into a hideaway for the Pochade.



<sup>1</sup> A POCHADE IS AN IMPRESSIONISTIC KIND OF SKETCH USED BY PAINTERS.

PHOTOS FROM THE BCHS LIBRARY & ARCHIVES.

INTERIOR WITH THE ARTISTS’ MATERIALS.



PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Can it still be utilized today? How can homeowners and historic sites deal with environmental challenges? How were they dealt with in the past?

By having an understanding of these questions and many more, we begin to look at the past through a different lens. We understand that events that occurred in the past are really not that distant. We can learn and study these to impact our decisions today but also educate others. This has been a defining characteristic of

the Bergen County Historical Society. As an organization, we continue to grow and develop over time, never losing sight of what our organization stands for. I want to personally thank all those that have continued to study the past to have a positive impact on the present. So many hours go into creating an event at Historic New Bridge Landing or researching a new topic all for the benefit of education and others. Thank you. James Smith, *BCHS President*





## George Way Estate Collection

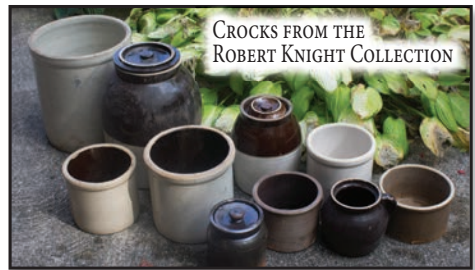


INSIDE THE APARTMENT WITH THE GEORGE WAY COLLECTION.

BCHS was fortunate to receive items from the collections of the George Way estate in October; made possible by Jonathan Friedman and facilitated by Patrick Grenier. George Way passed away suddenly last spring. We viewed his stunning collection of paintings and material culture from the 1600s in his Staten Island apartment which was filled top to bottom with sadness for the loss of someone so spirited in collecting. The museum committee is planning a Jersey-Dutch exhibit in the early spring of the BCBS collections and these new additions.

## Robert Knight Estate Collection

Patty Daurizio and Roger Politzer represented BCBS at the estate of Robert Knight who was a life member of BCBS. Robert Knight collected numerous books on local history and items that told the history of both Rockland and Bergen Counties. BCBS acquired some history reference books, several prints, crocks and irons for the Out Kitchen, plus a trio of boat models for a display on shipping at New Bridge. And for a future exhibit on winter ice



harvesting, we now have an ice saw, an ice house fork and two large ice tongs.

# BCBS 36th Annual Christmas Concerts

with *Linda Russell & Co.* (RIDLEY & ANNE ENSLOW)

Sat & Sun ~ Dec. 15 & 16 at 6 PM & 7:45 PM

## Tavern Fare

IS AVAILABLE AT THE

*Campbell-Christie House*

\$34 per person  
(members \$27)

Reserve Now & for Details:  
[BergenCountyHistory.org](http://BergenCountyHistory.org)



*Join the Festivities*

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IT 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 BCBS EVENT BLASTS:  
[CONTACTINFO@BERGENCOUNTYHISTORY.ORG](mailto:CONTACTINFO@BERGENCOUNTYHISTORY.ORG)

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