



In Bergen's Attic

As another year comes to an end I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our members, supporters, and

President's Message

volunteers, who provide their precious time and financial support to make all our programming possible. Without all of you, the Society would not be able to carry on the quality programs and events that we bring to the public on a monthly basis. We again have been hit with a great tragedy. Some of our artifact collection in a offsite storage facility was damaged and some items will be beyond repair from the unprecedented tidal surge of the Atlantic Ocean during Hurricane Sandy. All artifacts located at the Steuben House and New Bridge Landing were spared, due to our dedicated volunteers who were able to move everything out of harm's way prior to the storm. The collections in the storage facility would have been a total loss, if not for the long hours put in by Deborah Powell, Kevin Wright, Peggy Norris, Joe Suplicki, and John Heffernan who worked tirelessly to save what could be saved and to find the proper qualified conservation professionals to gather and stabilize what was salvageable. We again will have to focus time, energy and money on the long restoration process. In light of this

repeated concern, I would like to take this opportunity to ask all of you for your help once again in this important matter; in these tough economic times we need



Rare Zinc & Wood Cigar Store Indian, damaged in Sandy. BCHS Collections.

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your support now more than ever. While many of you have been very generous in support of our capital campaign to build a museum to house, display, and store our extensive artifact collection, we are in great need to make this building a reality, sooner rather than later. We have plans to build a safe environment at New Bridge for this collection, and need the financial support of our membership to make this happen. This collection is all of ours, it is an important link to the past, and an important reminder of the life ways of those who passed before us. If we all do not act now, I am afraid this collection will not be around for another generation, if it is not able to be secured in a safe accessible environment for public

Hurricane Sandy Strikes Home and Heart



In the end, tide and time worked against us.

Four feet of water from Hurricane Sandy's storm surge flooded three rooms full of Bergen County's history, stored in a Hudson County warehouse, damaging furniture, dolls, toys, clothing, quilts, coverlets, manuscripts, Historical Society records, maps, books and a stock of unique publications and sales items for our gift shop. Although we worked against the clock to save as much as possible, much was sadly lost to water, mold, and time. Despite the loss of electricity in our own homes as well as suffering the other inconveniences attendant

upon the storm (well known to many of you), a heroic group of volunteers spent the last two weeks dealing with insurance companies, claims adjusters, all while trying to find a flood remediation company who could provide the emergency services required, namely, to pack-out flood damaged items and ship them to staging areas where conservation work could begin. We needed immediate professional assistance in freezing wet documents and textiles, and in disposing of whatever could not be salvaged. Accordingly, we contacted six flood-remediation companies, but, because of the scope and complexity of our situation and the large demand upon their services, three companies backed out after expressing an initial interest and offering their services—indeed, most discouragingly, one company even backed out as we awaited their arrival on Saturday morning. One determined and dedicated volunteer spent 15 hours on her cell phone between Wednesday, November 7, when she contacted the first remediation company, and Monday November 12, when the “clean out” was finally completed.

Through a timely recommendation from a Yale conservator, we finally obtained the services of Belfor, a nationally recognized disaster recovery specialist that deals with many libraries and archives. They agreed to undertake the work on Saturday, November 10th, and appeared onsite the following day to commence salvage and disposal operations. They proceeded with professional determination, working steadily to meet a deadline to vacate the building by Monday afternoon, November 12th. In the process, Belfor staff, working closely with BCHS volunteers, saved as much as they could, sorting through piles of collapsed boxes under the most difficult circumstances, wearing respirators and plastic gloves. Rescued documents were frozen in a trailer and shipped to Philadelphia for freeze-drying. The next step will

be to inventory, describe, and barcode each box. Once that is done and we know what they have and how much freeze-drying and gamma irradiation (to kill germs) will cost, we will have to wait at least a month before our “turn” in the freeze-drier. During that waiting period, the documents will remain frozen, preventing further deterioration. Besides documents, the trailer also carried some books, textiles, and photographs, which will be identified during the inventory.

Other items were removed to temporary storage to be cleaned or assessed for further conservation. Conservator Gary McGowan picked up some of the most important pieces for immediate restoration, including a magnificent collection of antique American flags, storing them either in a freeze-dry unit or a large freezer. He has also contacted experts in textile conservation who may be willing to provide some level of services gratis. Gary also made inquiries to the Fashion Institute of Technology’s conservation program to see if graduate students in textile conservation might be able to treat some materials under the direction of their professional teaching staff, thus defraying some of the costs for conservation. Lastly, his conservation group (NYRAC) is presently researching grant monies that are available for disaster recovery from the hurricane.

We especially wish to recognize and commend the extraordinary volunteer efforts of Deborah Powell, Peggy Norris, Joe Suplicki, John Heffernan, and Gary McGowan, who did so much to rescue our history from this unprecedented natural disaster. Without the dedicated services of such resolute volunteers and professionals, even more would have been lost. -- Kevin Wright

What can you do?

1. We now have critical need of free, safe storage space.
2. We need to move forward quickly with our fund-raising to build a museum. Please contribute what you can!
3. We need donations to pay for restoration of artifacts that will cost far more than our insurance will provide.

To donate: <http://www.bergencountyhistory.org/Pages/BCHSContribute.html>

If you know of space or wish to help in any way, write to:
contactBCHS@bergencountyhistory.org.

Captain John Outwater and his wife **Harriet Lozier** are buried in Carlstadt, in a little rise of ground wedged between a warehouse and a new gas station/store,



now under construction. Outwater’s grave was vandalized some years ago by a cult group, his skull was reportedly never recovered. Outwater was a Revolutionary War hero and later prominent citizen in Bergen County. As a New Jersey Assemblyman, he co-sponsored an amendment to the 1797 election law which continued the right of women to vote in state and municipal elections. D. Powell

Fundraising Efforts for BCHS Museum & Library

DONATIONS: \$101,000 Updated 12/3/2012

BENEFACTOR: \$1,000 to 4,999

Peggy Norris and Joe Suplicki,
Elmwood Park

Mary Donohue, River Edge

CIRCLE: \$100 to \$499

Anonymous, In memory of Ed Schreyer

Alex and Gail Dever, Dumont

Michelle Novak, NYC

Jane Willis, Tenafly

Eleanor and Martin Gruber, Ridgewood

Lisa Aljian, Esq., Paramus

Courtney Powell, Florida

Robert and Flo Jennes, Teaneck

Robert Ewait and Elena K. Lau, Old Tappan

Bob Roth, Bergenfield

DONOR: \$25 to \$99

Brian Krell, Bergenfield

Phyllis Angelo, River Edge

Joseph Petta, Fairlawn

Dominic Colucci, New Milford

Richard and Lousie Tandy, Oradell

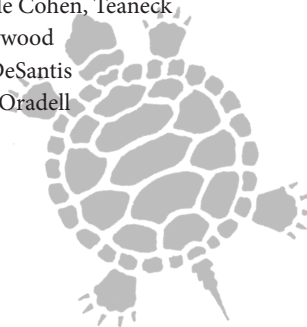
James and Gail Hurlburt, Hasbrouck Heights

Michael and Nicole Cohen, Teaneck

Steven L. Fell, Maywood

Gene and Carole DeSantis

Elizabeth Marcus, Oradell



Now more than ever.

Do you know anyone or any business that would be interested in contributing to our Bergen County Museum Fund? Please provide a contact.

Email me at: contactBCHS@bergencountyhistory.org or contact us at PO Box 55, River Edge, NJ 07661.

BCHS does not receive any public grants or operating monies, we rely on donations and membership. – Deborah Powell

Boiling Spring

by *BCHS Past President Kevin Wright*

Many an Indian relic was discovered around the Boiling Spring, located on Union Avenue in Rutherford, about 300 feet east of the crossing of the Erie Railroad. Offering a cool drink alongside of an Indian trail, it was so named “not on account of the temperature of its waters but from their copious discharge.” This gurgling pocket of quicksand, surrounded by grassy mounds, was long a natural landmark on the old Outwater farm and marked the northern boundary of 15,000 acres of upland, salt meadow and cedar swamps, lying between the Passaic and Hackensack Rivers, which William Sandford, of Barbados, purchased in 1668 on behalf of his uncle Nathaniel Kingsland. By 1762, the surrounding neighborhood was generally styled Boiling Springs.

This “powerful and never-failing spring of pure cold water” became a watering place along the Paterson & Hudson River Rail Road, when swift horses began to pull double-decker rail coaches across Berry’s Hill in 1834. When the first steam locomotives came down the line in 1835, farmers working in their fields “waved their hats and shouted in excitement...” Many chased the engine, running as far and as fast as they could. But it wasn’t until 1847 that timetables listed local stops, including Boiling Spring. By that time, New York “merchants, manufacturers and others,” who wished to build suburban residences along the route, pressured the railroad company to lower rates for daily commuters. The Union Railroad Company leased the line in 1852, selling control a year later to the New York & Eire Railway Company, which advanced funds in January 1854, to lay 31.5 miles of wide track between Jersey City and Suffern, New York, as well as a second track to Paterson, complete with turntables, stations, side tracks and two large drawbridges over the Hackensack and Passaic Rivers. Improvements included making necessary cuts and embankments, re-building culverts, cattle guards and passes, and purchasing additional grounds and facilities as required for operations over this section. But to the dismay of enterprising city folk, local farmers clung tenaciously to their ancestral soil, continuing “for years to plow and plant, while other localities less attractive were being built up and their landholders made wealthy.” Holding “no affection for strangers,” they were not easily persuaded to “part with their land.”

It is hard to imagine the natural scenery before the onset of the railroad suburbs. Describing the topography in 1862 for *Things Old and New From Rutherford*, published in 1898, Richard Shugo recalled, “Looking westward from the depot two modest looking hills completely shut out a view of the lands lying beyond. The more southerly one is now dignified by the name of Mount Rutherford, the other, a smaller one, arose in a depressed, cone-like shape directly back of the depot... Between these sister hills was a deep ravine affording a complete drainage for a large section of back land. On the laying out and grading of the lands around the depot by the Mt. Rutherford Company the smaller hill was cut down to fill up this ravine, where it was crossed by Orient way avenue, and also by the Home Land Company in forming the plateau through which runs Ames Avenue. A filling at Orient Way gave opportunity for the forming of a picturesque, lake-like pond, called Glen Waters, fed by living springs, and fringed on its southern side by a cluster of noble elms. Here in its waters was baptized the first convert of the Baptist church of Rutherford. This lake was given to the town by the Mt. Rutherford Company. Subsequently, however it was filled up from the fear of its producing malaria.” ❖



Buildings and Grounds 2012

by BCHS Trustee James Smith



If you have been to Historic New Bridge Landing lately, you will know

that many changes are occurring and it's not just the leaves. In the spring, a new gravel pathway leading to the Campbell Christie House was installed, along with the planting of a lilac shrub on the east side of the outhouse. New rails replaced the older rails along the fence line. As the summer progressed, another pathway was added, welcoming and directing visitors from Main St. to the site.

Building and Grounds has also been hard at work designing a master landscape site revival plan. We are currently in the first phase of this project which looked at the current site, analyzed what plants are currently on the site and what plants we can bring to the site to assist in interpretation. Trees, shrubs and gardens provide an excellent tool for historical interpretation. While our beautiful buildings cannot be open all the time, our lovely grounds can be. Eventually, visitors will be able to see plants and trees that would have been common in New Jersey and North America in the 18th Century and some that are not that common today in Bergen County. Many of these species provided an important balance to the eco-system, something invasive species which are prevalent today, do not do.

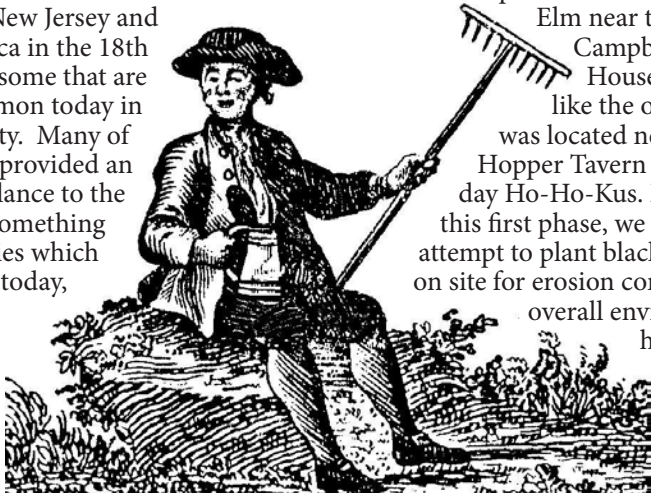
We have begun this part of the process by planting

three "Acer rubrums" or red maples, in front of the Demarest House near the fence line that runs along Main St. Eventually these trees will offer wonderful spring blooms with breath taking fall foliage, spread thirty to forty feet and most importantly, begin to block out 21st Century intrusions to the site (the PSE&G generating station located across the street).

Again, careful consideration went into this process concerning eventual tree size, proximity to buildings and overhead wires, all the while, adding to the visitor experience at Historic New Bridge Landing. Eventually we plan to have the entire fence lined with red maples. Unfortunately, due to the impact of Hurricane Sandy, we did lose the Mulberry tree that was located near the Demarest House. However, with this loss comes a new beginning. Upon this tree's removal, we will be planting a specimen tree, most likely a Princeton Elm. Elm trees were quite common in the 18th Century and the Princeton variety has proved to be resistant to the Dutch Elm's disease. We also plan to plant a second Princeton Elm near the

Campbell Christie House, much like the old elm that was located near the Hopper Tavern in present day Ho-Ho-Kus. Lastly in this first phase, we will also attempt to plant black willows on site for erosion control and

overall environmental health. It is said black willows can aid in improving



water quality and have benefits to native insects. They will also be used to create more shade on site, which is important to slow the spread of non-native, invasive species that are currently on site and provide zero benefit to wildlife or the environment.

Our final project in Phase 1 of our Grounds Renewal Project is the renovation of the kitchen garden located near the Campbell Christie House. With this renovation, it is our hope that this feature will assist with historical interpretation. Visitors will be able to get a small glimpse of an 18th Century garden, its lay out, and what crops would have been grown. Hopefully plants will be growing in it this spring that are not very common in the 21st Century garden or your local farmer's

market. Work has already begun with the garden being completed cleaned out and over the course of the winter and early spring, paths will be laid out and beds will be installed. The garden will draw inspiration from 18th Century gardens, most notably that of William Faris, a tavern owner in Annapolis, Maryland, that left detailed instructions in his diary and even included the lay out of his prized garden. However, upkeep and the continued revival of the grounds of Historic New Bridge Landing is not just the job of a few. We are always looking for members to join the Building and Grounds Committee, no matter your skill level, to help provide visitors with wonderful experience every time they visit. ❖



Last July Scott Barone, Lucille Bertram, Bob Cope and Kate Reilly joined our very energetic BCHS Board of Trustees. Mike Trepicchio, President and Denise Piccino, First Vice President were elected again. We welcomed Sue Braisted as Secretary.



Important.

If you are not receiving our email blasts and would like to, please email me here:
contactBCHS@bergencountyhistory.org

Bergen County Historical Society
P.O. Box 55, River Edge, NJ 07661
www.bergencountyhistory.org

Deborah Powell & Kevin Wright,
editors & layout

Items for the newsletter may be submitted
to D. Powell, Attn: Newsletter
contactBCHS@bergencountyhistory.org



President's Letter from on page 1

display. Please contribute to the New Bridge Conservancy Fund to support the building of our museum. Please encourage your friends and family who are not members to join, and come out and enjoy all our programs and events, and as always, we are forever grateful for your support and membership to this great organization.

Mike Trepicchio, BCHS President

Return to Shelburne, Nova Scotia

by Past BCHS President Todd Braisted



Nearly 100 years ago, Dr. Byron G. Van Horne of the Bergen County Historical Society visited the Canadian Province of Nova Scotia, and was surprised in meeting a number of residents descended from Bergen County residents, foremost amongst them that of Abraham Van Buskirk of Teaneck. He published an article shortly thereafter in the Bergen County Historical Society Yearbook for 1920. His visit, which I first read of some 35 years ago while visiting the BCHS Library at the Johnson Public Library, had a profound impact on my future research and view of history.

At the end of the American Revolution, the British had the unenviable task of evacuating not only all their army and stores from New York City and environs, but also provide for tens of thousands of Loyalists, Americans who had supported King George III during the war and now, finding themselves on the losing side, needed a new home to remain under that government. Thousands had served in Loyalist regiments or in other branches of the British military. Thousands of others, civilians, the elderly, women, children and escaped slaves, had crowded into New York during the course of the war. Now they wanted to leave. Not only wanted, but in many cases had little choice in the matter. Over 120 properties in Bergen County had been confiscated as a result of the owner's loyalty to the British, including the New Bridge home of John Zabriskie, who had served the British as a captain in the Guides & Pioneers under Major John Aldington of English Neighborhood, whose home and brewery had likewise been seized. In addition to losing their property, many had been tried, proscribed and banished from the state, making it legally impossible for them to return.

At the beginning of the war, the British had promised each Loyalist recruit

50 acres of "good land" in the Province of New York upon the end of the war. The outcome of the conflict obviously precluded giving any of New York's land away, and the thousands of civilians now likewise needed new homes to go to. The Loyalist corps demanded much larger grants than those initially promised. Sir Guy Carleton, last commander in chief in America, proposed settling the Loyalists in Nova Scotia, as Frederick Haldimand, commander in chief of the Army in Canada, similarly proposed settlements in Quebec and "Upper Canada," which would become Ontario. The British government approved and set about regulating the amount and locations. The final amount would provide each private soldier and civilian male adult 100 acres of land, with an additional 50 acres for every family member. Non Commissioned officers would receive 200 acres, and commissioned officers 500 to over 1,000 acres in proportion. The stipulation, particularly in regard to the large grants, was that the grantees would actually have to settle upon the land and cultivate it.

With the issue of whether or not to grant lands, and how much land, decided, it was left to figure out the process of how to physically accomplish this, in a relatively short amount of time. The problem was multi-faceted, including everything from evacuating tens of thousands of troops and civilians, with all their stores and baggage, moving the Refugees to Nova Scotia and elsewhere, providing for their food, clothing and shelter, and making permanent settlements in what was often a wilderness, particularly in the western part of Nova Scotia along the River Saint John, which would soon become the Province of New Brunswick. To accomplish that latter task, the land would



need to be surveyed.

Whole new cities and communities would be hacked out of nothing. Foremost amongst those envisioned was Port Roseway, soon after renamed Shelburne. In April 1783, some 3,129 Loyalist civilians, joined by 83 Black Pioneers, Artificers of the Engineer's Department, and their families, set sail for Port Roseway, which was originally envisioned as a Loyalist Nirvana, where the best of society would settle and enjoy that peace and government which was stripped from them in the United States. The Black Pioneers, part of the only black Provincial unit, and the Artificers would be the muscle to help Lieutenant William Lawson of the Corps of Engineers lay out and build this waterfront settlement.

The British evacuation of New York was a logistical challenge of immense proportions. Vessels would be needed to transport home all the German troops, British units would be going not only to England but elsewhere in British North America, the Provincial units and discharged British & Foreign troops would be going to the Maritimes, and Loyalist Refugees would be heading everywhere from Canada to Jamaica to Europe. Add to this the massive stores and ordnance to be removed, and the

provisions necessary for every group, plus coordinating the transport ships necessary for all this. In an age before instant global communications, when orders from London could take two or three months to arrive, it was an amazing accomplishment.

The evacuation of Refugees continued throughout the summer. By early September, it was time for the Provincial units, then referred to as the "British-American Corps," to embark for their destination. On 12 September 1783, Bergen County's largest Loyalist component, the bulk of the officers and men of the 3rd (late 4th) Battalion, New Jersey Volunteers, embarked on board the transport ship *Esther*. They embarked 229 officers and men, 94 women, 134 children, and 33 servants, heading for the Saint John River Valley in what is now the Province of New Brunswick. Missing from those on board was the unit's commander, and most famous Loyalist, Lt. Col. Abraham Van Buskirk of the Teaneck side of New Bridge.

Van Buskirk and others looked to Shelburne as their new home. The New Jersey Volunteers would be disbanded on 10 October 1783, along with all the other Loyalist corps in the Maritimes. The land they received as a regimental block proved unacceptable, and those

in New Brunswick were left to petition individually for land. Shelburne, located on the southwestern coast of Nova Scotia, was a different story. From literally nothing in early 1783, Shelburne within two years would boast a population of near fifteen thousand, making it one of the largest cities on the continent. It was originally intended as a small settlement, populated by an elite society of Loyalists, who had banded together at New York City to form the "Port Roseway Associates" in an attempt to control who would settle the new town. This plan proved impossible, and soon the gates were thrown open and the town filled with every manner of Loyalist, and a number of discharged British soldiers. Nearby, nearly 3,000 free blacks would form their own settlements, named Birchtown, in honor of Brigadier General Samuel Birch, last commandant of the City of New York. General Birch was instrumental in issuing the all-important passes to the black Loyalists, allowing them passage out of New York and land grants (although smaller than that of white Loyalists) in Nova Scotia.

Shelburne initially thrived. The high proportion of well-to-do settlers made the town flush with money, as some lucky Loyalists who had suffered losses in the war started receiving compensation from Parliament. After a decade of war and living as refugees, the temptation to exhale and live as normal was too great. At a time when hard work and looking to the future was paramount, many of the Loyalists squandered both their times and fortunes in idleness and socializing. Dances and parties were much more frequent than looking towards a permanent means of making a living once the cash ran out. When reality hit, and it hit hard, the town of Shelburne was the victim. Many of those who settled there needed to farm, and town lots would not suffice for that. Families started drifting elsewhere, north to Digby and the Annapolis Valley, even to Prince Edward Island or west to Upper Canada.

Abraham Van Buskirk, along with his wife Jane and son Jacob (who had served under him as a captain in the Volunteers) remained in Shelburne throughout, becoming leading residents there. Indeed, Abraham would become the town's first mayor, and Jacob major in the militia. But they were among the minority who stayed. By the end of the decade, the town was declining in population, and very quickly reduced in size to that of just a small settlement. Today, the town has perhaps 1,600 year-round residents, as the young move on to more populated areas to find their success and security. Perhaps unknowingly, they are following in their ancestors' footsteps.

It was this Shelburne, the small waterfront community, which Bergen County's Dr. Van Horne visited a century ago. There he met with many residents, both in town and elsewhere along the coast, with names that were very familiar to him. In addition to the Van Buskirks, other Bergen County families which settled there included: Van Norden, Sorrel, Ackerman, Bruce, Ackerson, Jessop, Lutkins, Parsell, Van Emburgh, Roome, Van Vorst, Van Vorehasen, Banta, Babcock, Earle, Hameon, Myers and Appleby. A descendent of Abraham Van Buskirk was reputed to have shown him a "recruiting list" of the original members of the 4th Battalion, New Jersey Volunteers, showing their residences in Bergen County, along with a letter from Jane to Abraham telling of Washington's troops taking over their property. Sadly, neither document has been publicly seen or located since Dr. Van Horne's viewing.

Reading of Dr. Van Horne's visit so many years ago definitely fostered my interest in the descendents of these Bergen County Loyalists, and the home they made for themselves in Canada. It was almost certainly the greatest concentration of Bergen residents outside the county since its settlement. The town honors its past through a museum complex along the waterfront. Tourism is a significant part of

the town's economy, and the historic district along the water is a wonderful tribute to its past. Restored homes, shops, warehousing, inns, and ship building tell the story of Shelburne's early days. The town also features a unique living history group, at least for the area, as they portray the members of Lt. Col. Abraham Van Buskirk's Company of the 3rd (late 4th) Battalion, New Jersey Volunteers. The group boasts over 30 members from the town and surrounding communities, taking part in larger events throughout the province as well as local drills and interpretation in town. While their authenticity in a material culture sense is very good, the one aspect to their portrayal that was somewhat lacking was a knowledge of who specifically they were portraying. In other words, they needed to learn how to be from (18th Century) New Jersey...

Having visited Shelburne four times previously, and working with this group since their inception some ten years ago, I was well aware of the challenges and opportunities of such a successful venture. As we in the Bergen County Historical Society rely heavily on our interpreters and docents to make history come alive at Historic New Bridge Landing, Shelburne equally needs people to promote and narrate their history. In this case however, their history and our history are intertwined. Knowing the benefits of working together, the Nova Scotians worked out the logistics of putting together a symposium in Shelburne where the group (and other interested parties) would have an opportunity to learn of Bergen County and their original battalion. This would mean another trip to Shelburne.

This past September 19th, accompanied by my wife, BCHS Secretary Susan Braisted, we set out to revisit the steps of Dr. Van Horne and the Bergen County Loyalists before him. After



Sue and Todd Braisted in Shelburne. Sue is currently serving as BCHS Secretary.

spending a night in Saint John, New Brunswick, a much more successful Loyalist city from 1783, we crossed the Bay of Fundy on the ferry Princess of Acadia, and proceeded on the two and a half hour drive to Shelburne. After settling in to our room, we proceeded into the historic district, where a wine and cheese reception at the Shelburne Museum would kickoff the event. In the presence of a 250+ fire engine from the town, Sue and I met numbers of Loyalist descendents and reenactors alike, all eager to learn about the people and places that are common to many of us here.

Over the course of the next two days, Sue and I presented a total of seven classes and sessions at the Shelburne High School, attended by about 60 people. While Sue shared her knowledge of historic dance and persona creation/interpretation, I started off with a class on the origins of Bergen County, borrowing heavily on BCHS Past-President Kevin Wright's wonderful work, followed by

four on different aspects of the New Jersey Volunteers, including their campaigns, material culture, personnel composition and post-war settlements. These, coupled with their own classes on interpretation and material culture, very much had the desired effect. The questions from the audience, which were numerous, were all very detailed and well thought out, the kind that bring a smile to any presenter's heart. The highlight of the weekend was the regimental dinner of Lt. Col. Van Buskirk's Company, where Sue and I had the pleasure of being the guests of honor.

The conclusion of the weekend was probably the most moving segment of all, and certainly brought into full circle the shared history of Bergen County and Shelburne. After the final classes, the reenactors led a procession from the historic district to Christ Church, a few blocks inland. Here were the graves of Lt. Col. Abraham and Jane Van Buskirk, marked by a small, period British flag. Jane's life was brief but certainly eventful. She was the daughter of Colonel Theunis Dey and had grown up in Preakness at the mansion of her family which still stands today. After spending seven years

wrestling with the civil war that pitted her father against her husband, she moved with the latter to Shelburne, where she died just six years later, and the age of thirty-nine. Abraham was not terribly long for this world either, passing away at the age of fifty seven, no doubt helped along on that journey by seven years of an arduous military career in the war. They are the pieces of Bergen County that shall forever remain in Canada. Three volleys were fired over the graves by the assembled troops, and a few words were spoken upon the occasion. I would like to believe it would have brought a smile to the old colonel's face, and perhaps a sense of closure to his spirit.

During the time in Shelburne, I could not have helped but think of Dr. Van Horne's trip and the people he met along the way. The stories he would write and tell about to the Society upon his return to Bergen County. It was an honor to follow in his foot steps, and I sincerely hope not the last visit to Shelburne by one of our members. ❖



The Army Comes to Franklin Lakes

by Jack Goudsward

Over the years Franklin Lakes has played host to the U.S. Army. From the Anti-Aircraft Base off of Franklin Lakes Rd to the Nike Base on top of Mays/Campgaw Mountain the Army has had a presents in town.

Late in 1937 Councilman William H. Ainley reported to the Borough Council that the WPA had approved the application for the building a new Municipal Building. (The original Municipal Building still stands as the Board of Education Building). The funds were approved in Paterson New Jersey for the sum of \$25,677.00.

The council looked to build a two story building with a brick face and a slate roof. It would measure 37x 97 feet. It would have a basement, Boiler room, Police department with holding Cells and a vault. The first floor would contain chambers and Borough Offices. The other half of the floor would contain a game room for the citizens of the town. The second floor would hold the recreation room with Basketball, kitchen and a lunch room.

The full cost of this erection would be \$ 53,561.04. But with the funds from the WPA the cost to the town would have been 27,888.04. The council said a bond issue will be used to cover this amount. They said that an increase of .22 per \$100 valuation would be added to the taxes. They also stated that decision on this would be made after consulting with the citizens of the town.

At the next meeting of the council the citizens expressed their opinion on the project. A number of petitions were presented with half to three quarters of the tax payers rejecting the project. After a long and heated debate the project was rejected. Then the war came and the Municipal Building remained where it was.

Then in the 1960's the town again formed plans to develop a Municipal Complex. Through the efforts of Council Man William McCabe the land was cleared. He approached the National Guard's 50th Armored Division. Attached to the division was the 104th Battalion, an Engineering Division. After talks the idea was formed to use the unit to clear the town's ninety acre



The distinctive Insignia of the Army Units that built the Franklin Lakes Municipal Complex.

complex area as a training exercise.

Early in 1964 elements of the 104th Battalion mobilized. They left their base at the Teaneck National Guard Armory and headed to Franklin Lakes. While advance troops of the unit were already setting up a landing zone at Fireman's Field. This would aid the landing of the Guard Helicopter that was carrying Supervisory personal along with Major Kenneth Nelson and Captain Paul Coughlin who were in command of the 350 men clearing the land.

In clearing the land the troops used the experience they learned in the classroom. This extended into the use of heavy equipment, communications, demolition, surveying and construction. Later a landing zone was created for a Helicopter. This aircraft was used to survey the land and to chart the progress of the land clearing operation. After seven months of weekend duty the land was cleared of trees, boulders and structures that once covered the land. Once this was done construction started on the first buildings in the complex. They were the New town Hall and Police Station.

Councilman William McCabe received high praise from the Mayor and Council for his innovative idea of using the Guard to clear the land. The Guard received valuable hands on experience in a real world environment. Today the Complex stands as a tribute to the combined efforts of Municipal Government and the Armed Forces.

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How Times Change, but Some Things Stay the Same

by Past BCHS President Kevin Wright

Who, in their childhood, has not grimaced at an elder chiding, “When I was your age...?” And so it goes. Times change, but so much about human nature does not. With succeeding generations, those who believe they possess wisdom gained from experience endeavor earnestly to share life’s lessons with wide-eyed, adventuresome youth.

away.

One or two constituted themselves a committee to invite congenial company, secure teams and notify the hotel man to prepare a supper and provide music. At 7 or 8 o’clock the big sleighs or sleds, drawn by two or four horses with old-fashioned jingling bells, were seen passing around town to gather in the



But, insofar as we learn by our mistakes (or at least from those mistakes we are lucky enough to survive), the warning often falls on deaf ears. In January 1904, *The Hackensack Republican* revived faded memories of old-time sleighing parties, remarking on a generational change in attitude about the seemingly innocent behavior of rural swains that only provoked frowns in a more wary suburban age of stricter decorum.

“Where are the old-time sleighing parties?” is the question that hotelkeepers and some of the merry old boys are asking during this old-fashioned winter. Twenty, twenty-five and thirty years ago there was never a fall of snow upon which runners would slide that did not move the young people and many of the older ones to start out and make a night of it at some town or road house eight or ten miles

guests.

And then away!

Laughing, shouting, singing, horn blowing—a happy company bundled in wraps that bore no relationship to anything but solid comfort, sliding over the frozen roads, past farmsteads where lights glimmered faintly out upon the white covering of the earth, through villages and hamlets to the destination. Old-fashioned hot-spiced rum—the kind that grandmother used to serve to company in winter time—drove out the chill that crept in by the way, and soon the fiddler was sawing out tunes and calling the movements.

After dancing, the hot supper, fit for a hungry king and in attendance that was lavish. Then more dancing, a brief period of rest, and then bundling up again and away for home; just a trifle less vigorous in hilarity than

on the start, but lively enough to let sleepers in roadside homes know there was somebody abroad in the bright moonlight and nipping air. Those were days when tavern-keepers made wads to swell bank accounts.

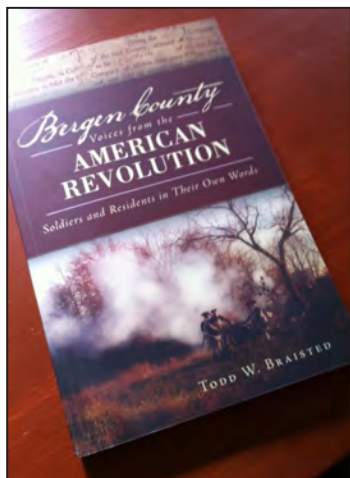
Imagine such sleighing carnivals in 1904. Think of daughters going off sleighing with young men. Why, somebody would want to break the hotelkeeper's license for permitting an orgie in his house. And yet those people

were merely having a good time in the good old way. But the time for that sort of a "good time" has vanished.

Sleighing parties are only a memory; they linger with those who dream dreams and see visions of the bygone years, of old friends and old times that will never be duplicated. What do the boys and girls of today know about the exhilarating joy of riding "in a one-horse open sleigh?" ❖

New History on Bergen County

by Past BCHS President Todd Braisted



Bergen County Voices from the American Revolution: Soldiers and Residents in Their Own Words. Close to British-occupied NYC, this corner of NJ was divided by the Revolution. Some people were staunch Loyalists or Patriots, in disagreement with their families and neighbors; others wavered or remained neutral; while still others changed their minds as was expedient. In the end, the years of hostilities led to massive damage and upheaval within the community as men either left home or stayed nearby to fight for or against secession from Great Britain. After the war, their pension applications allow glimpses into their experiences. Now available in the Campbell-Christie House Gift Shop. ❖



Joyce Hussa passed away at home on Oct. 23. She was 59 years old.

Born Oct. 22, 1953, to Frieda and George Wettach, she grew up in Fair Lawn.

Besides volunteering at BCHS events, she was active with the Montclair Historical Society, New Jersey Canal Society, ALHFAM, Grover Cleveland Birthplace historic site, and Cooper Mill in Chester.

Joyce is survived her husband, Philip Ted Hussa; brother, Lawrence Wettach; and three children, Heidi, Aaron, and Elise.

Joyce will be greatly missed by those that knew her, she was a very caring person. Shown here demonstrating candle making in the HNBL outkitchen in 2010.



History or Meadowlands Myth

by Past BCHS President Kevin Wright



Back in the autumn of 1988, I was asked to review background material for a proposed historical exhibit at the Hackensack Meadowlands

Environment Center, so it is approaching twenty-five years since I first dived into the murky history of the Hackensack estuary. As I recall, the material I was asked to review, though accurate in detail, focused almost exclusively on the surrounding citified uplands, leaving the story of the great marsh itself largely untold, buried under mounds of garbage and ripening myth. I provided an alternative view in December, 1988, compiling a historical manuscript I hoped would better address “the need for a factual and conceptual framework to interpret man’s long relationship with that unique environment known as the Hackensack Meadowlands.” In my introduction, I stated “my purpose to identify and describe major stages in the prehistory and history of the area.”

Because few serious onlookers seemed to regard what remained of this vast wetland-transformed-into-postindustrial-wasteland as worthy of study, I revisited the work of largely forgotten naturalists, geologists, historians, archaeologists and even artists. In the short time available to me, I tried not only to scrutinize twice-told tales, but also to add new research through examination of deeds, maps, road surveys, journals, diaries, letters, newspaper accounts, advertisements and works of art. Since the proposed exhibit was to be mounted in the Hackensack Meadowlands Environment Center, overlooking Kingsland Marsh, I especially concentrated on this particular setting so as to make the content of the display more immediate and accessible to the viewer. In the end, I developed a “storyline,”

providing narrative text, captioned illustrations and maps, for a five-panel exhibit covering the prehistory and history of the Hackensack Meadowlands.

One of the most romantic and imaginative myths I encountered in the course of my research was the rather modern contention that thousands of acres of cedar swamps in the Hackensack Meadowlands were deliberately burned in 1791 to destroy the hiding places of pirates who preyed upon shipping in Newark Bay. I knew cedar was highly prized for fencing, shingles, ship lumber, barrels, casks and churns, because of its resistance to rot or decay. Many local estate-inventories listed a variety of vessels, made of cedar wood, including churns, casks (notably, milk casks), tubs, bowls, and cellars (i.e., storage boxes). It therefore seemed highly unlikely so valuable a commodity would be wantonly or wastefully incinerated, especially in such close proximity to a rapidly increasing urban population and market. Since New York City served as the first (albeit, temporary) Federal capital in 1789-90, the eradication of a notorious nest of pirates so near to the burgeoning and boasting seaport would seem newsworthy, but I have yet to encounter any contemporary mention of such an event. Moreover, the Hackensack River was a busy commercial artery of the greatest importance to both city dwellers and a prosperous Jersey Dutch hinterland, where boats plied regularly on the tides.

According to peat core samples extracted in the neighborhood of Secaucus, Atlantic white cedar (*Chamaecyparis thyoides*)---actually a cypress and not a cedar---is a relative latecomer to the Hackensack Meadowlands, having arrived from farther south only about 500 years ago. By the advent of colonial European settlement, it covered one-third of the Meadowlands.

Early newspaper advertisements marked its value. For example, in August 1768, Nicholas Roosevelt advertised the sale of 114 acres of salt meadow and 322 acres of Cedar Swamp on New Barbados Neck, “the whole is bounded on the two sides by Stag’s Creek, commonly called Berry’s Creek, and by Peach-Island Creek



at Moonachie].” According to Roosevelt’s glowing assessment, “The timber and wood of every kind in the cedar swamp, is now in great perfection, as the present owner has preserved it, and prevented any wood being cut out for near upon 30 years. The conveniences of landings and easy carriage from the said cedar swamp, are in no way inferior to those of any other swamp on that neck; as a great part of the swamp is bounded by Berry’s Creek, and common sloops and wood-boats go up to the creek to be loaded; and from the other side of the tract the timber may be brought to Hackensack River, by sledding or carting it one quarter of a mile....”[1]

A few years later, in 1772, colonial authorities sanctioned a public lottery for raising £1,000 to build a “Highway through a Cedar Swamp, and over the Meadows and Marshes on New Barbados Neck, to Hackinsack River in the County of Bergen” as the contemplated road would prove “greatly beneficial to the Inhabitants of the Northern Parts of Sussex, Morris and Essex, in passing to and from New-York, by Paulus-Hook....” The enabling legislation noted, “Colonel John Schuyler, at his own private Expense, hath, at great Charge, erected a Causeway of Cedar Logs through the said Swamp and Meadows upwards of Three Miles in Length, and built proper Bridges; which

necessary Work now completed, at upwards of Three Thousand Pounds Expense, will be in Danger of being destroyed by Fire unless properly covered with Gravel; and that such Covering will be attended with an Expense too great to be born by the said Colonel John Schuyler; and therefore pray that the Legislature will enable them, by a Lottery or otherwise, to raise the said Sum of Money for the Purposes aforesaid...” Accordingly, Richard Ludlow, Michael Vreeland, Jacobus Post, John Richards, Jonathan J. Dayton and Edward Thomas were named lottery managers, who were ordered to turn over the lottery proceeds to William Dow or Arent J. Schuyler to pay for covering the cedar causeway with earth and gravel. Colonel Schuyler, it should be noted, personally benefitted from opening this outlet for copper ores from his mine. In 1784, Arent J. Schuyler again complained the maintenance of this important public improvement fell heavily upon him. Consequently, the Legislature decided Schuyler would maintain the causeway for a distance of 2,203 feet east of the ferry-steps on the Passaic River. Archibald Kennedy, a son-in-law of Peter Schuyler after he married Peter’s only child and heiress, Catherine, was charged with maintaining the remainder of the road to the ferry-steps on the Hackensack River.

The spongy expanse of wild grasses, reeds and cedar swamps was unlikely terrain for the maneuver of armies. However, Schuyler’s cedar causeway, linked by ferries, formed a vital segment in the primitive network of roads connecting New York City and Philadelphia. The natural products of the marshes---cedar, other woods, and salt hay---as well as the produce of upland

necessary Work now completed, at upwards of Three Thousand Pounds Expense, will be in Danger of being destroyed by Fire unless properly covered with Gravel; and that such Covering will be attended with an Expense too great to be born by the said Colonel John Schuyler; and therefore pray that the Legislature will enable them, by a Lottery or otherwise, to raise the said Sum of Money for the Purposes aforesaid...” Accordingly, Richard Ludlow, Michael Vreeland, Jacobus Post, John Richards, Jonathan J. Dayton and Edward Thomas were named lottery managers, who were ordered to turn over the lottery proceeds to William Dow or Arent J. Schuyler to pay for covering the cedar causeway with earth and gravel. Colonel Schuyler, it should be noted, personally benefitted from opening this outlet for copper ores from his mine. In 1784, Arent J. Schuyler again complained the maintenance of this important public improvement fell heavily upon him. Consequently, the Legislature decided Schuyler would maintain the causeway for a distance of 2,203 feet east of the ferry-steps on the Passaic River. Archibald Kennedy, a son-in-law of Peter Schuyler after he married Peter’s only child and heiress, Catherine, was charged with maintaining the remainder of the road to the ferry-steps on the Hackensack River.

farms, gained strategic significance by their very accessibility to the armies of both sides during the American Revolution. As the rebellious colonists prepared to defend New York Harbor against imminent invasion, Lieutenant Isaac Bangs joined a detachment of Continental soldiers “sent to the Jerseys to cut Cedar Wood Logs, &c, to build Fire Rafts.” According to his journal, published in 1890, he and his comrades sailed by periogue [pirogue] from Manhattan toward Staten Island on the afternoon of June 21, 1776. They passed the Kill von Kull and, caught by the ebb tide, were compelled to land on Bergen Point. After walking “9 Miles through a country very well timbered but thinly settled with Inhabitants, we arrived to the Place where we were to work, excepting the passing a short Ferry. Here we tarried all night at a Public House (Cadmus); found we were now but 13 Miles by land from New York.” The periogue carrying the party’s axes and provisions finally arrived about noon the following day. Isaac Bangs informed his journal, “We lived at the Ferry House on the W. of Hackensack River; we worked in a Cedar Swamp about 3/4 Mile Westward, belonging to Mr. (Arent John) Schuyler.[2] This Gentleman’s Father (John Schuyler, who died in 1773) had built a Causeway from the Ferry House through the Swamp, which is 64 Miles & 20 Chains, at his own expense, chiefly to accommodate the Public with a Passage to & from N. York, as it saved many People above 15 Miles traveling; & it is now used as a Post Road to Philadelphia & is a saving of about 9 Miles.”

No contemporary evidence yet discovered supports the existence of raiding pirates or even an early twentieth-century report, which claimed a large cedar swamp in the vicinity of the Pennsylvania Railroad was “intentionally burned over and totally destroyed” about the year 1804. [3] On January 21, 1804, John A. Schuyler and his wife, Eliza, of New Barbados Neck, sold a vast tract of “Cedar Swamp and Salt Meadow...commonly known by the

name of Schuyler’s Cedar Swamp and Salt Meadow” to William Halsey, of Newark, for the handsome sum of \$6,000.[4] This property, encompassing most of what is now Kearny and Harrison, was defined as that part of the Schuyler estate “whereof Arent J. Schuyler died seized, which lies on the southerly side of the Road or Causeway [now approximately the Belleville Turnpike], leading from the Bridge over the Passaic River at Belleville to the toll Bridge over the Hackensack River and Newark Bay and Passaic River...” The boundary survey began “at a heap of stones near the bend in the said Causeway at the edge of the Cedar Swamp” and ran along the division line between lands lately Arent Schuyler, deceased, and William Davis, Esquire; ... and thence along the line of the Ancient Cedar Swamp ... to the Main Road or Causeway leading from Newark to New York and thence along the line of the Ancient Cedar Swamp to the North corner of a tract of Salt Meadow belonging to William Davis and thence along Davis’ meadow to the east corner thereof and thence along another line of meadow to Cedar Creek and thence down Cedar Creek the several courses to the mouth thereof at the Passaic River and thence down the Passaic River on the northeast side thereof at the low water mark the several courses thereof to the mouth thereof at Newark Bay and thence along New Barbados towards the Hackensack River at the low water mark to the mouth of Ponky’s Kill or Punk’s Creek, which is the western boundary of a tract of Salt Meadow formerly belonging to Archibald Kennedy and thence up said Punk’s Creek the several courses to the intersection of the north line of Kennedy’s Meadow and thence along Kennedy’s Meadow ... to the mouth of a small creek, which empties into the Hackensack River a little below the Toll Bridge over the same River ... and thence up the Hackensack River to the Main Road or Causeway leading from Newark to New York and thence up along the south side of said Road or Causeway to the Junction of

the Road or Causeway leading from the Bridge over the Passaic River at Belleville, thence up said Road or Causeway last aforesaid mentioned to the upper edge of the Cedar Swamp at the beginning point.” The conveyance included the right to cut and cart away “said Swamp Cedar Wood and Timber.”

The above-quoted deed of 1804, whereby William Halsey purchased the

Ancient Cedar Swamp from John Schuyler for the rather substantial price of \$6,000, does not suggest its valuable timber had recently been destroyed by fire. Nor do other deeds for the same or subsequent years. In a deed of sale, dated December 1, 1813, Walter Smith, of Jersey City, sold 97 acres of “salt meadow and cedar swamp” to

Samuel Swartwout, which mentions “Saw Mill Creek” and includes the exception, “reserving always nevertheless to the several owners and proprietors of land lying within the Sandford Patent on Barbados Neck the right of cutting and taking from or out of the swamp hereby conveyed, cedar or other wood, if any such right now exists....”[5] Thereafter, however, embankment and drainage of the marshes steadily destroyed the habitat for any unharvested remnant of the original forest.

Other nineteenth-century deeds describe the extent of the Ancient Cedar Swamp. On July 2, 1833, Richard and Eleanor Kingsland of New York City sold their portion of the estate of the late Edmund William Kingsland, consisting of seven parcels in the Kingsland Marsh, to Henry W. and Sarah Kingsland of Lodi

Township.[6] This deed specifically makes mention of the Little Cedar Swamp, lying between Kingsland and Berry’s Creeks, which was regarded as an extension of the large cedar swamp to the south. Another 275-acre parcel of cedar bottom was described as standing along the Sandford line about 2,000 feet from the north side of the causeway leading from Belleville to the Bridge across the Hackensack River.[7]



Cedar Stumps along Mill Creek Trails, Secaucus

In his *Gazetteer of the State of New Jersey*, published in 1834, Thomas Gordon described the Hackensack Meadowlands as being “five miles in breadth by twenty in length, formed of the deposits of the Hackensack and Passaic Rivers, between the secondary valley and the Bergen Ridge. In this tract, the depth of the deposit is from 12 to 20 feet, its basis sand and shells like the shore of the sea. The whole was formerly covered with wood, of which some groves of cedar still remain, and the bodies of trees but little decayed are frequently found at various depths. Indeed, so abundant and sound are the logs on these marshes, that they are used for the foundations of the New Jersey Rail-Road, now being constructed here.”[8] In Bergen Township (now Hudson County), Gordon noted a large piece of marsh “with Cedar swamp”

extending along the Hackensack River from Newark Bay northward to the township limits.[9] He also described Secaucus as an “island in the Cedar swamp,” about four miles in length and half a mile wide “terminating in a very distinguished elevation, called Snake Hill.”

At the dawn of the twentieth century, cedar swamps still survived near the confluence of Berry’s Creek and the Hackensack River as well as in the neighborhood of Carlstadt, East Rutherford and Ridgefield. But, by that time, thousands of acres of coniferous swamps had vanished. Since only charred stumps remained among the overgrowth of cattails and high grasses in 1904, stories grew to fill lacunae in the historical record. Whatever grain of truth might reside at the core of these stories, any suggestion of the deliberate wholesale destruction of the cedar forest by burning should be

regarded with the greatest skepticism. While I may yet be proved wrong, such tales are likely the product of later imaginations, hoping to explain the rapid disappearance of Atlantic white cedar from the Meadowlands in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

[1] *New Jersey Archives, Vol. XXVI, Newspaper Extracts Vol. VII 1768-1769, 245-246.*

[2] On April 20, 1710, Colonel Edmund Kingsland sold a large tract on New Barbados Neck, adjoining the Passaic River, to Arent Schuyler for 300 Pounds (*East Jersey Conveyances B2, 181*). The deed of sale encompassed all the land presently bounded northward by Melrose Avenue in North Arlington and running south to the line of the Eire-Lackawanna in Kearny between the Hackensack & Passaic Rivers.

[3] J. Smith, *Report on Mosquitos*, 1904, 384-385.

[4] *Bergen County Deeds, Book G, 11.*

[5] *Bergen County Deeds, Book I 2, 445.*

[6] *Bergen County Deeds, Book K3, 319.*

[7] *Bergen County Deeds, Book Q3, p. 314.*

[8] Thomas Gordon, *A Gazetteer of the State of New Jersey*, 6-7.

[9] Gordon, *Gazetteer*, 102. ❖