



Bergen County Historical Society

In Bergen's Attic

**Bergen County,
Where America Begins**

Greetings from New Bridge!

The Bergen County Historical Society continues to move in a positive direction

President's Message

on multiple fronts and I am excited to see where we will be at the same time next year. Amazingly, New Bridge Landing was the site of eleven major engagements or skirmishes during the war, not to mention it being a constant military outpost throughout the American Revolution. And yet, many people are unaware of this strategic location and best preserved Revolutionary War battleground in northern New Jersey. To reintroduce residents of Bergen, the state, and nation to the role New Bridge Landing played beyond the critical retreat over *the Bridge that Saved A Nation*, the Society has embarked on a modern painting that will capture this story, much as Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze immortalized George Washington crossing the Delaware. The stories of Bergen are so compelling that this could be the first in a series and we would welcome sponsors for such an endeavor.

Our membership continues to grow, with 85+ members joining this fall, making us one of, if not the largest, historical society



in the State! This is an exciting achievement and is testament to quality programming. Through our dedicated volunteers, we are able to successfully tell the important stories of Bergen County as a whole. History may be viewed by some as long past events that we know everything about, yet time and time again, we are pleasantly surprised



Nov. 21, 2015

Reading Thomas Paine's "American Crisis" at *the Bridge that Saved a Nation* concerning Nov. 1776: "Our first object was to secure the bridge over the Hackensack, which laid up the river between the enemy and us, about six miles from us, and three from them. General Washington arrived in about three-quarters of an hour, and marched at the head of the troops towards the bridge, which place I expected we..."

that there are still plenty of stories to be discovered and our history is constantly being re-written. This gets to the heart of the Society's mission, keeping true to our founding purpose. As always, I am thankful for your support of the Bergen County Historical Society. Be sure to sign up for the email blasts or visit Facebook to find out the latest information. From my family to yours, have a wonderful holiday season!

James Smith, BCHS President ❖

In this issue

President's Letter	1
"Ackerman & Goff"	2-3, 15
Lustron houses in Bergen County.....	4-6
Stanton in Tenafly.....	7-14
News.....	15, 16



“Ackerman and Goff” *By BCHS Trustee Peggy W. Norris*

“Ackerman and Goff,” short-hand for the church records and cemetery inscriptions recorded and published

by Herbert Stewart Ackerman and Arthur James Goff in the 1940’s. In the introduction to *Thirty-seven Cemeteries*, they wrote:

We have personally copied and checked these cemeteries and also carefully compared them with records taken at earlier dates by others. The result is, we think, the most complete record that could be made of these old and genealogically important cemeteries. Some of the earlier records consisted only of the old families. We have listed all interments.

Why use these books in the days of findagrave.com when most Bergen County cemeteries now have online listings? If there is a good photo on findagrave you can verify the information on the stone. However, if there is no photo or the stone is now weathered or damaged, resort to the old lists provides confirmation of the original information. Findagrave is a compiled record, the transcriptions, relationships, etc. being contributed from many sources, usually not specifically identified. Other important reasons to consult cemetery transcriptions (Ackerman and Goff’s and others) are for the relationship among the stones, interments missing from findagrave, and to verify the inscription on the stone.

Herbert Stewart Ackerman was born in 1875 in New York and pursued various careers before becoming an accountant. He married Marjorie Ross and they had moved to Ridgewood by 1930. The Ackerman’s had no children. Marjorie died in 1938. Ackerman died in 1960 and his obituary notes:

“Interested in family and church history,

Mr. Ackerman compiled many histories and genealogies, and was well-known as a genealogist throughout the United States.” (*Ridgewood Herald News*, 9 June 1960)

In addition to the cemetery books he also published books on the Bogert, Hopper, Romeyn, and Tallman families.

Arthur James Goff was born in Brooklyn in 1881. He also was an accountant or statistician. He married Margaret Isabelle Wood in 1917 and they moved to Ridgewood. They had a son Everett, but unfortunately, Margaret died in 1928. Goff died in 1949 and his obituary notes:

“He was much interested in historical and genealogical research work, especially in connection with American Revolutionary history...” (*Ridgewood Sunday News*, 27 November 1949)

Goff was especially active in the Paramus Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution.

Sometime after Marjorie Ackerman died in 1938 and before Goff’s death in 1949, Ackerman and Goff started tramping the local cemeteries and recording the inscriptions on the markers. They privately published at least 14 books of church records and cemetery transcriptions, which are still basic resources today. Many of the inscriptions they were able to read will never again be read in the cemeteries. The markers have been victims of weathering, spalling, lichens, or vandalism. We all owe a special tribute to Ackerman and Goff for making lasting contributions to the study of our local history.

“A Tribute to my Grandfather, Arthur James Goff”

by Debra June Goff Compton

I only met him once. I was 2 months old and a pre-term infant at Paterson General Hospital in Paterson, New Jersey. Little did I know the impact my grandfather, Arthur James Goff, would have on my life.

He died on 28 Nov 1949, aged 69, when I was 3 months old.

Arthur James Goff was the youngest child of James Henry Goff and Sarah Elizabeth House. He was born on 10 Aug 1881 in Brooklyn, New York. He lived in Brooklyn except for a short time in Pennsylvania until 1917. Arthur had to leave school early to help his family out financially. Because of his lack of

education, he was very adamant that his son receive a college education—Arthur collected pennies and saved over \$3000 to send his son to college. Arthur’s natural intelligence and voracious reading made up for his lack of formal education. He loved history and knew more than most history teachers. During the years before he married, he became an avid genealogist and spent every Saturday at the New York City Public Library. He also collected stamps and other coins. He was a quiet, shy, gentle man who was considerate of others. He was honest to a fault.

Arthur married Margaret Isabelle Wood in 1917 and moved to Ridgewood, New Jersey, where he spent the rest of his life. Arthur was 35 years old when he married 21 year old Margaret. Arthur’s only child, my dad, Everett Wood Goff, was born on June 10, 1922. Tragically, Arthur’s wife, Margaret, died of a brain tumor in 1928. Arthur never remarried. She was the love of his life. He adored my Dad. I have a picture of Everett when he was about one with Arthur sitting in the playpen with him! As Everett grew older, he said his friends always wanted to “hang out” with Arthur. My mother simply adored him and lived with him while my Dad served in World War II.

Arthur worked exhaustively on his own genealogy and compiled accurate,



Arthur James Goff with Everett Wood Goff about 1923. Collection of Debra June Goff Compton.

well researched work. I have taken over this work and am amazed at what he accomplished with such limited resources. He would have embraced the technology today! He would be so thrilled that one of his descendants has the same love of family history he did. I feel such a connection with my grandfather!

Arthur co-authored 11 books of cemetery inscriptions with

Herbert S. Ackerman. My mother remembers driving him to these cemeteries so he could compile the names. As with everything he did, he was methodical, accurate and thorough when he performed those labors.

Arthur worked as a statistician for U.S. Steel Corporation until his retirement.

Arthur was active in the Paramus Chapter of Sons of the American Revolution. He held many offices in this organization including Registrar, Historian, and President. He served as a genealogy consultant for many people and prepared genealogies on the House, Bush, and Bayliss families. We have a beautiful hand written book Arthur prepared, entitled, “The Record of My Ancestry” that is truly a work of art as well as a treasure trove of genealogy of the Goff family. He was a member of the Long Island Historical Society. We still have a flag pennant that was used on a float for a 4th of July parade that Arthur was involved in—it is framed in my home.

Although I only met my grandfather one time, his influence on my life has been immeasurable. Every once in a while when I find a record on-line that someone indexed, I think of Arthur combing through all those cemeteries so people could find their people! Oh, how I wish I could have known him!

bibliography included on page 15



Mid-Century Landmark Rescued from the Wrecking Ball *By Jennifer Rothschild*

Closter's Harold Hess Lustron House, listed on both the state and national registers of historic places, was scheduled for demolition in 2014. Two attempts to designate the house locally, in 2004 and 2013, had failed due to the council's unwillingness to designate the property over owner

the property was sold at a higher price to a developer who wanted to subdivide it and build new homes. Thanks to advocacy by then-mayor Sophie Heymann and positive action by the Zoning Board, an unusual compromise was reached with the developer-owner of the property to donate the historic house to the Borough of Closter.

The house, located at 421 Durie Avenue, has a blue Bergen County Historical Society marker in the front yard that states:

"To ease post WWII housing shortages, the Lustron Corp. of Ohio made an unique house of all pre-fabricated steel parts on an assembly line basis and shipped them directly to owners' lots. Harold Hess purchased a Westchester Deluxe model with attached



Hess family photo in front of their Lustron home

objections. The Borough was awarded a matching grant from Bergen County for acquisition of the house in 2014; however,

garage from an NJ dealer and assembled it on this site in 1950. All walls, roof and chimney are porcelain enameled steel panels. Between 1948 and 1950, Lustron made 2,498 homes."

There are only two Lustron houses remaining in Bergen County. The other is located in Alpine and has no local historic preservation protection. Approximately nine have survived statewide and an estimated 1500 remain nationwide. Thanks to the tireless efforts of Pat Garbe Morillo, founding chairwoman of the Closter Historic Preservation Commission, a thematic nomination of Lustron Houses in Bergen County was filed with the state in 2000, after a similar Lustron house in Closter was demolished for new development. Along with the BCHS marker in front of the house, the state and national historic designations have brought awareness to the governing



Hess family kitchen

THE LUSTRON INTERIOR (Kitchen) The Lustron includes built-in metal cabinets that come with the house, and a combination washing machine-dishwasher, and sink.



A family dining in a Lustron home

body and the public of the house's historical significance.

Closter Mayor John Glidden has appointed Bobbie Bouton Goldberg, a member of Closter's Historic Preservation Commission, to chair the Lustron Committee. The Committee, along with the Closter administrator, mayor and council, is working on a plan to restore and maintain the house so that it can be opened to the public for special events. Closter's Lustron house was vacant for eleven years and utilities remain disconnected, so progress in cleaning and restoring the space has not yet begun in earnest.

An arrangement with a local painting contractor, Mick Pisano, is being negotiated for maintenance and restoration work at the house. Mr. Pisano has perfected a method of safely removing layers of paint from the enameled steel surfaces and has experimented with auto waxing compounds to address conditions of the interior metal paneling. Architect-Planner and Closter Historic Preservation

Commission member William J. Martin assessed the house in August, 2015. He described it as being in remarkably good condition and showing a high level of architectural integrity. The Lustron committee has begun the process of interpreting the space by placing Mid-Century furniture and furnishings in the house.

The Lustron Story—a modest piece of the American Dream

"Lustron" is a trademarked name that stands for "Luster on Steel." The shiny efficiency of these homes mirrors the optimism that was felt by this country as its GI's returned home triumphant from the Great War. Lustron homes are one-story ranch-style houses built on concrete slabs. They are very modest in size, averaging 1000 square feet of living space. Most of the Lustrons built were two-bedroom models, although a three-bedroom model did become available towards the end of production.

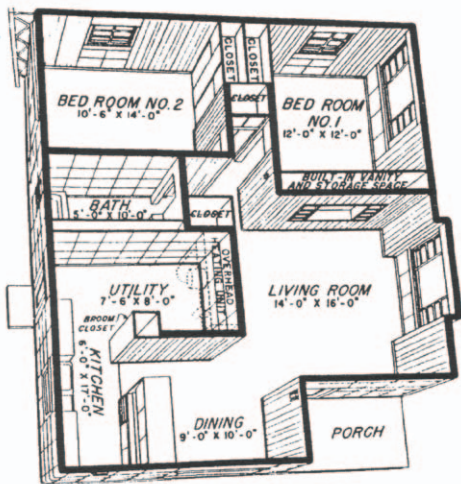
Elements of streamline design abound



Lustron advertisement for 1946 model home

in Lustron homes, which feature built-in vanities, bookshelves and dining room/kitchen cabinetry, as well as pocket doors and sliding closet doors—all made of porcelain-enameled steel. Lustron homes were marketed as having "cheerful convenience" and "easy-to-keep-clean brightness." They cost approximately \$10,000 each and came in four colors: maize yellow, surf blue, desert tan and

continued on page 6

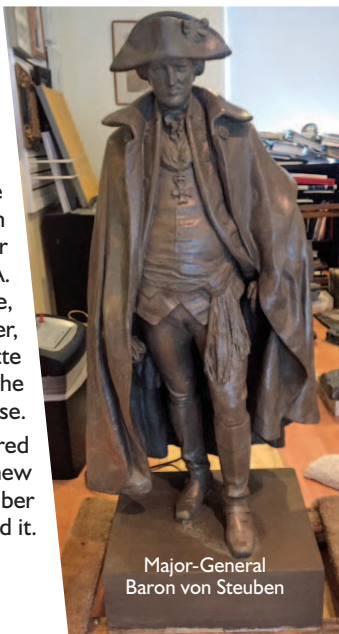


Westchester Deluxe floor plan dove gray. All of the pieces of a Lustron home could be carried to the building site in one specially designed truck, and construction could be completed in as little as one week.

Interesting features of the Lustron house included the “Thor” dishwasher-clothes washing machine that was located in the cabinetry next to the kitchen sink. Another unique aspect of these homes was the heating system, which supplied radiant heat through a plenum chamber in the space above the metal ceiling panels. Each Lustron house came fitted with a metal identification tag stamped with the

Steuben comes home

We thought he was a goner but Gary McGowan at CPR repaired the Sandy-damaged scale model (50" high with base) through our application to FEMA. The full-size statue, also by Albert Jaeger, is located in Lafayette Park across from the White House. Trustee Manfred Wegner made a new wood base and member Carol Restivo painted it.



Major-General Baron von Steuben

model and serial numbers and located on the back wall of the utility room.

The Lustron house was the brainchild of Carl G. Strandlund, who saw the possibilities of utilizing steel left behind from the war effort to create needed housing. Strandlund had previously worked for the Chicago Vitreous Enamel Products Company that manufactured steel enamelware for refrigerators, stoves, and other household appliances. Connecting this technology to the housing industry was the ticket to success in securing federal funding necessary to start production. The Lustron Corporation opened a one-million-square-foot plant in Columbus, Ohio in 1947. But just as quickly as the company’s star rose, it plummeted, and the Lustron Corporation closed in 1950 due to overwhelming debt.

JENNIFER ROTHSCHILD is Vice Chair of the Closter Historic Preservation and serves on the Preservation Committee of BCHS.

Her educational background includes a law degree from New York University in 1990 and a Certificate in Historic Preservation from Drew University in 2012. She has presented on “Best Practices for Historic Preservation Commissions” panels at Drew University and at two annual New Jersey Historic Preservation Conferences (2013, 2014). She has written

several local individual and district nominations for historic designations, as well as a nomination to the (NJ) state and national register, and wrote the Bergen County historic preservation acquisition grant in 2013 for acquisition of the Closter Lustron house. She is a member of Closter’s Lustron Committee. Now living in South Nyack, New York, Jennifer serves on the board of the Historical Society of the Nyacks. In March 2015 she co-curated an exhibit “An Underground Railroad Monument comes to Nyack: Inspired by Toni Morrison, Honoring Cynthia Hesdra.” Founding member of the John Green Preservation Coalition and contributor to the successful “save” of Nyack’s John Green House on lower Main Street—the only remaining early sandstone house in Nyack (built 1819). ❖



Elizabeth Cady Stanton in Tenafly

By Past President Kevin Wright

A tract of 2,120 acres, one mile in width, extending between the Hudson River and the Tiene Kill, was patented to Colonel Jacobus Van Cortlandt, of New York, on April 27, 1688. He conveyed it on April 10, 1738, in equal parts to his three daughters, namely, Margareta (1694-1770) and her husband Abram De Peyster; Anna (1701-1774) and her husband John Chambers; Mary (1705-1777) and her husband Peter Jay (1704-1782), all of New York City. Upon her death on April 14, 1774, Anna Chambers devised her share to nephew Sir James Jay, who also inherited his mother’s third upon his father’s death in 1782. Sir James Jay later devised the northern third to his son Peter Jay and the other third to his daughter Mary O’Kill.

Sir James Jay, the son of Peter Jay and Mary Van Cortlandt, was born in New York on October 27, 1732. He studied medicine at the University of Edinburgh, graduating in 1760. He returned to New York, but visited London in 1762-63 to solicit funds for King’s College, when King George III knighted him. He served in the New York senate during the American Revolution. He lived with Anne Erwin in Springfield, New Jersey, in 1780, but he never officially married because she refused to include the vows to “honor and obey.” She was a pioneer feminist who admired the writings of British feminist Mary Wollstonecraft, author of *A Vindication of the Rights of Women: with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects* in 1792. She especially argued for women’s equal access to education.

A detachment of Loyalists from Staten Island captured Sir James Jay whilst he was sleeping in bed at the

house of Arent Schuyler in Second River (Belleville) on April 15, 1782. The captors described their prize as a “Child of the Rebellion.” At the time, he carried a letter from New York governor George Clinton, authorizing Jay to procure a loan in specie from New York City.

Paroled upon the arrival of Sir Guy Carleton, James inexplicably traveled to England in July 1782, raising great controversy over his loyalties and causing embarrassment to his younger brother John Jay, first American minister to Spain, who was then in Paris acting as a peace commissioner. Sir James Jay’s eccentric adventure at such a delicate diplomatic moment inevitably raised suspicion that his capture had been by his own design. At least as early as 1789, Sir James Jay and Anne Erwin resided on a farm in “Closter,” the name given to a broad neighborhood atop the Palisades in Bergen County, on property he inherited from his father in 1782. He however died at Springfield, NJ, where he practiced medicine, on October 20, 1815. Anne Erwin died in 1840.

Mary Jay, daughter of Sir James Jay and Anne Erwin, married John O’Kill (who was born in New Jersey about 1780) on August 13, 1807, at St. John’s Church in New York City. In keeping with her mother’s strong feminist beliefs and practices, Mary O’Kill founded a school for women in New York City in 1810. John O’Kill was listed as living in Ward 5, New York City, in 1820.

Compelled at her father’s insistence to either divorce John O’Kill or be excluded from her inheritance, Mary chose divorce. According to census records, Mary O’Kill resided with her widowed sister, Jane Swift, 35 years of age, in New York City, in September 1850, along with thirteen other women and two men between the ages of 20 and 60, presumably comprising the

faculty and student body of her school. According to the *New York City Directory for 1857*, Mary O'Kill kept school at 8 Clinton Place (in the Bronx?), New York City. She died in 1859.

Mary Helena O'Kill, the daughter of John O'Kill and Mary Jay, was born around 1815 in New York City. She was presumably educated at her mother's school. Mary H. O'Kill married Dennis Hart Mahan on June 29, 1839, in New York City. He was born April 2, 1802, in New York City, but grew up in Norfolk, Virginia. He received an appointment to West Point in 1819, graduating at the top of his class in 1824. The following year he was appointed an assistant professor of military engineering at the West Point Military Academy. After a brief tour in France, he accepted a permanent professorship at West Point in 1832, which he held until his death by suicide on September 16, 1870. He and Mary Helena O'Kill had several sons, Alfred Thayer Mahan, born on September 27, 1840, at West Point; Frederick Augustus Mahan, born in 1847, and Dennis Hart Mahan, born in 1849.

Highwood Park

After Mary (Jay) O'Kill's death in 1859, Jane L. Swift seems to have resided with younger sister Mary H. (O'Kill) Mahan at Cornwall, New York, just outside of West Point. The Northern Railroad opened between Jersey City and Piermont, New York, on May 26, 1859, spawning "beautiful parks and villas" along its route and making their inherited lands in Hackensack Township attractive to suburban developers. On August 1, 1866, Mary H. Mahan and Dennis H. Mahan, of West Point, New York, released 183.68 acres, bordering the Tiene Kill in Hackensack Township, to Ashbel Green and Francis Howland for \$42,000. Excepted from the sale were three previously sold lots, comprising 13.8 acres, and the rights-of-way for the

public road and the Northern Valley Railroad, leaving about 166 acres, more or less. The sale price was therefore about \$253 per acre. The survey for the property began at a stake in the northwest corner of the farm or plantation of James Jay and at the southwest corner of land belonging to Michael F. Connelly, who acquired about 100 acres of the former Jay estate, which he divided into 43 splendid villa sites, ranging from 1-1/2 to 2-1/4 acres each, and 217 building lots.

On the same date, August 1, 1866, Jane L. (O'Kill) Swift, a widow, residing at West Point, New York, conveyed two tracts in Hackensack Township to Ashbel Green and Francis Howland for \$40,000, the first containing 40.46 acres bordering the division line between Jane L. Swift and Mary H. Mahan, and the second containing 128.94 acres bordering the Tiene Kill and the division line between Jane L. Swift and Mary H. Mahan. Several previously sold parcels were excepted from the sale, including 1.26 acre that Jane L. Swift sold to the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church at Tenafly (55 Magnolia Avenue) on March 23, 1866; another 1.36 acre she sold to John B. Sloat on March 24, 1866; and another .98 acre to Joseph Wall. The sale also excluded .92 acre occupied by the public road and 1.75 acre for the Northern Valley Railroad. A deed between Francis Howland and Ashbel Green, dated December 1, 1863 refers to "a certain public highway from Englewood to North Englewood called the new County Road." Subtracting from 6.27 acres previously sold from 169.4 acres, the sale price was about \$245.20 per acre.

Investors Ashbel Green, Francis Howland, R. C. Bacon, Andrew Clerk, Charles G. Sisson and J. B. Wortendyke laid out about 500 acres near the Tenafly train station into building lots on macadamized serpentine streets, planting double rows of young maples to

shade the sidewalks. This, adding to the naturally wooded hillside, suggested the name of *Highwood Park*. As an added bonus to prospective buyers, there were reputedly no mosquitoes, owing to the relatively high elevation of the ground. *The Map of Highwood Park and Villa Sites at Tenafly Station on the Northern Valley Railroad* was filed in the Bergen County Clerk's Office on July 6, 1867.

Thus a new subdivision was planted on the western slope of the Palisades, 16 miles north of Jersey City along the Northern Valley Railroad and about a forty-minute commute from New York City. Sixteen trains came and went daily and commutation cost \$87 per year. Highwood Park's well-advertised view shed originally extended northwest to Orange Mountain in Essex County and south to Snake Hill and Newark Bay. The mountain slope also yielded a beautiful 'cream-colored stone' for building purposes, which was used to great effect in a new Gothic church near the equally new Highwood Hotel.

Truman & Houghton opened the Highwood House, about 1,200 feet from the Tenafly train station, on June 10, 1867. Truman was formerly associated with the Continental Hotel in Philadelphia. Standing on an eminence with a commanding view, the Highwood House stood three-stories tall and was built in Italianate style with a basement, mansard roof and tower, fronted on three sides with wide piazzas, 220 feet in length. A billiard room, kitchen and laundry occupied the first floor. A public hall, offices, dining room, sitting room and family suites occupied the principal floor, while single rooms and suites filled the second and third floors. Gas, manufactured in an adjacent gashouse, lit the hotel and a steam pump continually filled a large tank on the top floor with water. This wooden palace proved short lived: Valued at \$60,000, the Highwood House burned down on

October 20, 1874.

On Sunday, June 16, 1867, only ten days after the opening of the Highwood House, A. J. Bleeker, Son & Co. conducted an auction at Highwood Park for "about one hundred plots of ground, varying from a quarter of an acre to an acre and a half [...]" The attendance of buyers from New-York was very large. Four or five hundred persons were on the ground, and followed the auctioneer for hours under a burning sun." Prices ranged from \$1,900 for a lot measuring 200 x 200 feet, located on the west side of Park Street between Forest Road and Highwood Avenue, down to \$360 for seven lots on County Road, near Central Avenue, each measuring 50 x 255 feet. The sale generated \$112,000.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Many New York merchants in particular found it cheaper and more pleasant to reside in Highwood Park and commute daily rather than endure living in New York City. But other successful professionals were also to be counted in the ranks of buyers, including a reformer for women's rights of international renown. Elizabeth Cady Stanton moved her family from Seneca Falls to New York City in 1862 when her husband Henry B. Stanton accepted the job of deputy collector of the customs house for the port of New York. He resumed lawyering and also wrote for the *New York Tribune* and later *The New York Sun*.

At the conclusion of the Civil War, Elizabeth Cady Stanton decided to test whether a woman could hold political office, running for Congress in 1866, but, far in advance of her times, she received only 24 votes. She and close friend Susan B. Anthony launched their newspaper, *Revolution*, in New York City on January 8, 1868, continuing its publication until 1872. When the first American Woman Suffrage Convention met in Washington

continued on page 10

in 1869, Elizabeth Cady Stanton lobbied for a constitutional amendment to enfranchise women. Rejected as too radical, she and Susan B. Anthony formed the National Woman Suffrage Association.

Wanting to own property in her own name, Elizabeth Cady Stanton used her own income to purchase lots and build a house in Highwood Park. First, on April 17, 1868, Ashbel Green and his wife Louisa and Francis Howland and his wife Frances sold Lots # 89 and 90, situated at the northeast corner of Highwood Avenue and Park Street, to Andrew Clerk for \$2,000. Three days later, on April 20, 1868, Andrew Clerk, of Jersey City, a Brooklyn fishhook manufacturer, and his wife Louisa, sold the same lots to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, of New York City, for \$2,500, subject to a mortgage, dated April 17, 1868, by Andrew Clerk to Mary H. Mahan for \$885.

According to the *Map of the City of New York And Its Vicinity*, published in 1863, Highwood Avenue did not exist in 1863 and there is no house depicted east of Engle Street in the vicinity of the present intersection of Park Street and Highwood Avenue. Therefore, it is safe to say Elizabeth Cady Stanton built her home in Tenafly in 1868, a fact confirmed by its architectural style, naming it *Cedar Hill*. Given the strong feminist upbringing of Mary (Jay) O'Kill and her daughters Jane L. Swift and Mary Helena Mahan, one wonders if they had any influence in bringing Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Tenafly?

After visiting in October 1869, the New York correspondent for the *Cincinnati Inquirer* described the Stanton home in Tenafly as "a pretty little brown cottage nestling charmingly among the firs and cedars on a hill overlooking the town. It is an unpretentious house, with a Mansard roof, a small veranda and a bow window at one side. There are flowers dotted about, a hammock slung

to a couple of magnificent oaks on the lawn, and vines carelessly clambering over picturesque stumps." The famed suffragist greeted her guest in "a pleasant parlor, small and quiet in tone, to be sure, but full of refinement. Music books and pictures, stereotyped but expressive. On the wall on one corner is a queer mixture of little portraits—Wendell, Phillips, Horatio Seymour, Gerritt Smith, Calhoun and Clay." The charming hostess next ushered the correspondent into "a charming little library opening upon the veranda and seats us by a window, from whence we can see the distant palisades, the Orange Mountains and the roofs of Newark glowing in the sunlight." Dedicated entirely to her life's cause, the motherly suffragist employed a model housekeeper, who reputedly made "the most delicious bread and butter imaginable."

Elizabeth Cady Stanton attracted not only journalists to her suburban abode, but also newspaper editors and many leading social reformers. She composed many lectures and letters here, undertaking some of her most important work in her home, including writing the *Declaration of Rights of the Women of the United States*, which Susan B. Anthony read at the Centennial Fair in Philadelphia on July 4, 1876. Stanton was instrumental in placing woman suffrage on the ballot in Kansas in 1867 and in Michigan in 1874. She also annually addressed a congressional committee in support of a constitutional amendment on women's suffrage.

Attempt to Vote at the Valley Hotel

As autumn leaves fluttered down on Highwood Park in 1880, Elizabeth Cady Stanton was hard at work upon her *History of Woman Suffrage*. On October 27, 1880, the *Times-Picayune* of New Orleans reported, "Miss Susan B. Anthony has come from her home in the city of Rochester, N. Y., to aid her

friend and collaborator, Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, in preparing for the press the first volume of their history of the agitation for woman suffrage. The two are working in Mrs. Stanton's royally shaded nook of three acres on a gentle declivity midway between the railroad station in Tenafly, New Jersey, and the brow of the Palisades."

In response to an invitation received at Boston from Elizabeth Cady Stanton, suffragist Elizabeth Boynton Harbert traveled "to the home of one of America's greatest women" to celebrate Foremothers' Day on October 18, 1880. Upon arriving, she passed a silver nameplate on the gate and followed a winding path to the front door. Mrs. Harbert noted, "The house, spacious and convenient, planned by Mrs. Stanton, stands in the midst of an enclosure of three acres, and from garret to cellar, from kitchen to drawing-room, is a model of neatness, the grass plot and honey-suckle about the back door being as perfectly cared for as that at the front." She also reported, "In Mrs. Stanton's library, one soon becomes interested in her collection of pictures of representative people, a collection at one time amounting to hundreds, and classified in groups (for benefit of her children), composed of authors, poets, inventors, educators, reformers, statesmen, and others." She also informed her readership, "Miss Anthony is making her home with Mrs. Stanton at present, in order that they may complete before the holidays the first volume of their history of the woman suffrage movement."

In the midst of contemplating women's history, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony decided to make a memorable show of defiance against the time-honored male order of things. In an account written within days of the event, Elizabeth Cady Stanton explained:



Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton

"Sitting in my library in the early morning of our great national election day [November 2, 1880], that had dawned so bright and beautiful, my thoughts naturally turned to our grand experiment of government, the deep significance of a national election, and the blessed freedom of thought and speech our people here enjoy. My heart swelling with gratitude and hope that our right to be a nation might to-day be fully vindicated at the ballot-box, I seized my pen to give an outpouring of my patriotic soul to a woman's journal; when lo! 'The Republican carriage and horses,' all decked with flags and evergreens, drove gayly to my door. One of our leading citizens announced himself in search of voters. As my six legal representatives were scattered far and near, in the old world and the new, I offered to do the voting for them and represent myself, a most fitting thing for me to do, being the owner of the homestead, and having paid my own taxes in person, and having resided in the Democratic state of New Jersey twelve years; being also of sound mind, sufficient education to read the constitution, and the ticket I offered, and of the legal age three times over. My staunch Republican friend accepted the proposition, and accordingly Susan B. Anthony (always ready to make an escapade on the ballot-box) and I donned our Sunday attire,

stepped into the carriage and were borne in triumph to the polling-booth mid the crowd of American sovereigns, their crown and scepter, the ballot, in their own right hand.

This greatest of all duties of an American citizen we found was to be performed in a wayside inn, where the aristocracy of Bergen County are wont to seek the elixir that keeps them warm in winter and cool in summer, though suppressed on election day until the clock strikes 7, when the polls close and the sun is supposed to set on this 2nd day of November.

Ushered into the august presence of the inspectors of election and of the imposing ballot-box, with the Holy Bible pressed to its inanimate lips, my champion announced:

‘Mr. Stanton has come to vote a clean Republican ticket.’

As this occurred precisely in the same spot where I usually paid my taxes, I felt quite at home, and at the prospect of enjoying the highest privilege of citizenship, much lighter hearted than on any former occasion when compelled to pay its penalties; and when my heart did not respond to the tender Scriptural sentiment, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’

At the first proposition for a woman to vote, one of the inspectors, whom I knew well, dropped into his chair, looking as meek as Moses; another stood back with bowed head, as if searching for grains of mustard seed in the cracks of the floor, while the chosen champion for the combat took his position with dogged determination that ‘none but male citizens could vote; that there was no precedent for females voting.’ I told him that in the opinion of many learned judges, lawyers, and statesmen, women were enfranchised by the fourteenth amendment to the

National Constitution, which declares ‘the citizen’s right to vote.’ I am here as a United States citizen to vote for United States officers. It is not the duty of a town inspector to decide on my liberties. As to a precedent, there are many precedents for women’s voting. Women are voting on school questions in eight States of the Union to-day, and on the sacred soil of New Jersey, were we now stand, women voted thirty-one years, from 1776 to 1807.

But this stolid Democrat (for the two Republican judges had cunningly thrust him forward), was impervious to argument or appeal, and in his stress for something to say, he innocently admitted what his assailants and the bystanders had already perceived, that he knew nothing about the matter—never having read our constitutions, State or national. Shades of Jefferson and Jackson forgive, ‘that of such material we now make town inspectors of election.’ At this point Mr. [Cornelius] Cooper, a Democratic State Senator, seeing his brother Democrat pushed to the wall, impertinently called from the corner:

‘Pray proceed with the voting; we have wasted time enough over this trifling matter.’

‘Gentlemen,’ said I, ‘this is the most momentous question the citizens of



“Women at the Polls in New Jersey in the Good Old Times” by Howard Pyle, *Harpers Weekly*, Nov 13, 1880. Published in response to Stanton attempting to vote in Tenafly the week before.

our town have ever been called upon to consider.’

The acting inspector then asked his Republican coadjutors if they agreed with him to refuse my vote, and each solemnly lowed his assent. I then tendered my ballot, but, as no out-stretched hand was ready to receive it, I laid it on the box, the inspector meantime keeping one hand heavy on the Bible, evidently fearing that, with the heroic Miss Anthony at my elbow, who ever and anon, in a low tone, had made suggestions, the two might with some dextrous maneuver slip the proscribed ballot into the sacred enclosure.

In retiring I said: ‘I leave my ballot here. With you rests the responsibility of refusing to count it.’

We returned in the ‘Republican carriage’ in waiting to our home, leaving the voters of Palisade Township to discuss the merits of the question. Several called on us during the day for papers, pamphlets, and constitutional arguments, and we have thrown down the glove for a series of public discussions.

What a spectacle this gorgeous autumnal sun shines down upon this 2nd of November. A free people with millions of voters enthusiastically assembling round the tens of thousands of polling booths to express their will in regard to the principles of government. And what a grand education to our people are these political campaigns, in which the ablest minds of the nation teach the men in every school district their duties as citizens, and the value of free institutions.

It is an inestimable loss to the nation that the large class of intelligent, educated women, ever loyal to the best interests of

society, should stand silent witnesses of this sublime spectacle; denied the right to express their will. But the good time is coming when we, too, will share in the great national uprising, and march in the grand procession of freedom.

Meantime let us American citizens rise above the personal injustice we suffer, above the dust and smoke, the frauds and corruptions of politics, and remember the great experiment of government we are now making, based on human equality.

Though failing at so many points to maintain our declared principles, yet we are steadily moving, step by step, toward the consummation of what philosophers have predicted, poets sung, and artists painted, the golden age, when among the sons and daughters of earth there shall be no class nor caste.”

The *Ottawa Daily Republic* of Ottawa, Kansas, noted on November 9, 1880, “Mrs. Elizabeth Thompson, of New York, has made a liberal contribution for the publication of the ‘History of Woman Suffrage in the United States,’ which Miss Susan B. Anthony, Mrs. Stanton, and Mrs. Gage are now completing. Miss Anthony and Mrs. Stanton have cancelled all lyceum lectures for the season, and will spend the winter together at Mrs. Stanton’s rural home in New Jersey.”

In 1882, Elizabeth Cady Stanton was the only woman featured among 185 biographical sketches in W. Woodford Clayton’s *History of Bergen and Passaic Counties, New Jersey*. Therein, she not only advertised her *History of Woman Suffrage* (including the name of the publisher), but she revealed, regarding her attempt to vote, “it is Mrs. Stanton’s intention to do for the women of New

continued on page 14

Jersey what she has already done for those of New York, and to give the rulers of this State no rest until all of its citizens stand equal before the law.”

Elizabeth Cady Stanton departed Tenafly in 1882, but returned to “the comforts of home, on the blue hills of Jersey” three years later. She sold her Tenafly home in May 1887 and died in New York City on October 26, 1902, at 86 years of age. Ahead of her time, Stanton fought ignorance and braved ridicule to secure “justice to Woman,” being an early advocate of an amendment to the United States Constitution, ratified in 1920, giving women the right to vote.

The Valley Hotel

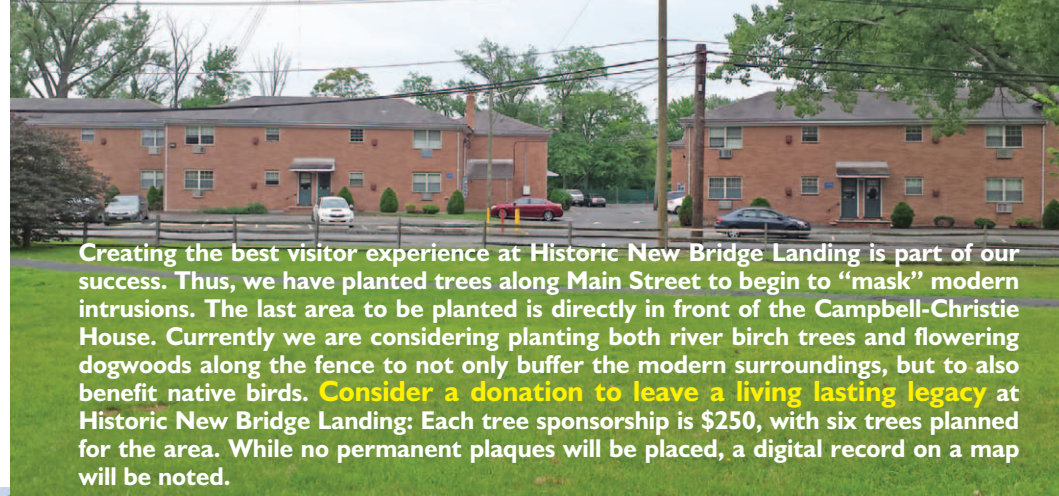
The place where this historic event took place was the Valley Hotel on County Road in Tenafly—a landmark soon to be relegated to the rubbish heap despite the international significance of its great moment in time. A German immigrant named Hermann Heinrich Eicks built the Valley Hotel at the intersection of County Road and Highwood Avenue, a short walk from the passenger station, in 1868. He was born in Hanover, Germany, about 1816, and arrived in New York City sometime before 1855 when he was first listed as a baker, residing at 276 W. 19th Street. He appears in the IRS Tax Assessment List for 1864 as a liquor dealer and hotel owner in the English Neighborhood. The federal census for 1870 also lists him as a hotel owner, residing with his wife, Anna, who was of French origin, and their children: William, 14 years old; Maria, four years old; and Annie, two years old. George Hoffman, who was 30 years old and born in New York, was the hotel clerk. Hoffman’s wife Eliza was 20 years old and “without occupation.” Lizzie Clark, 25 years old, was a domestic servant.

Andrew Boyd’s *New Jersey State Directory for 1872* lists “Eicks H. H. saloon” in Tenafly. A notebook preserved in the collections of the Bergen County Historical Society records the expenses of the Palisade Township Committee for 1876, showing \$25 paid to “H. H. Eicks ... use of Room for Spring Election” on April 10, 1876, and on November 7, 1876, \$25 paid to “H. H. Eicks use of room for fall election.” According to the 1880 census, Hermann and Anna Eicks resided at the Valley Hotel with their four children: Herman H., 19 years



old; Maria T., 15 years old; Anna M., 12 years old; and Augustus W., 9 years old. Eliza Hoffman, 30 years old, was a servant, who resided in the hotel with her six-year-old daughter Georgiana.

The last will and testament of Hermann H. Eicks Sr, of Tenafly, probated 10 March 1889, bequeathed the use and income of his real and personal property to his widow for and during the time of her widowhood. Upon her death, he ordered his property be divided equally among his five children. In a codicil dated 27 March 1888, he gave his executors full power and authority to sell “my homestead known as the Valley Hotel and from the amount received therefrom set aside three thousand dollars to build purchase a home for my wife Anna Maria for her use during her natural life if she so long remains my widow.” Anna M. Eicks made “her X mark” on a list of articles selected and set apart for the use of the family in *An Inventory of the Goods, &c., of Hermann H. Eicks, proven on 31 May 1889*. ❖



“Cemetery Inscriptions by Herbert Stewart Ackerman and Arthur J. Goff”

1. *First Hackensack Reformed Church 1801-1886*: (1943) BCHS 285.7 HAC
2. *Records of Four Methodist Churches in Northern New Jersey* (1948) New Prospect Methodist Episcopal Church of Waldwick (1797-1870), Cross St. Methodist Ch. of Paterson (1862-1903), Prospect St. Methodist Episcopal Ch. Prospect St. Station, Paterson, NJ (1845-1901) and Market Street Methodist Episcopal Church (1860 1877) BCHS 287 MET (1946)
3. *New York Cemetery Records*. (1945) Now Maple Grove Cemetery, 583 Hudson St. Hackensack BCHS 285.7 Hac
4. *Paramus Reformed Dutch Church Records: Marriages 1799-1900, Baptisms 1851-1900*. (1944) BCHS 285.7 PAR DR A
5. *New York and New Jersey Cemeteries*. (1947) BCHS 929.1 ACK
6. *Records of True Reformed Church at Paramus, Members 1823-1899 Marriages 1856-1892; Bap. 1823-1897; Cemetery inscriptions, 1830-1938*, (1945); BCHS 285.7 Du
7. *Pascack Reformed Church and Cemetery Records, Park Ridge, NJ.* (1946) BCHS 285.7 Pas
8. *Records of Ramapo Lutheran Church at Mahwah, N. J.* (1944) Includes gravestones
9. *Records of Saddle River Reformed Dutch Church, Upper Saddle River, NJ 1812-1924*. (1944) BCHS 285.7 Sar
10. *Records of Zion Lutheran Churches at Saddle River and Ramapo, N. J.: 1821-1907*. (1943) Includes gravestone inscriptions from the church in Saddle River BCHS 284.1 SaR LUT
11. *Thirty-Seven Cemeteries in New Jersey*. (1946) BCHS 285.7 ACK
12. *Valleau Cemetery Records. Ridgewood, NJ.* (1944) BCHS 285.7 Par
13. *Records of Wyckoff Reformed Protestant Dutch Church.* (1945) Including Gravestone Inscriptions from the Churchyard: 1864-1925. BCHS 285.7 WYC DR E
14. *Inscriptions from tombstones in graveyard of the Protestant Reformed Dutch Church at Acquackanonck* (1942) BCHS 285.7 Acq

Ackerman and Goff cemetery inscriptions are available at the following libraries: BCHS Library (see call numbers above for titles owned), Ridgewood Public Library, FamilySearch Books, Family History Library microfilm ❖

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“New Jersey was battle ground in the war of the revolution; and our good county of Bergen, though not distinguished by those brilliant though brief successes that gave lustre to the names of Trenton, Princeton and Monmouth, was the constant arena of war. Tradition has well preserved the story of many a fray, and the sufferings and stout resistance of the Bergen yeomanry, who with a few inglorious exceptions, in the years when the stronghold of the enemy was in our great city, stood shoulder to shoulder in that protracted strife and slept not but on their arms.”

In 1847, A. O. Zabriskie, Esq., of Hackensack provided a eulogy for Capt J. W. Zabriskie, 1st Regiment of Illinois Volunteers, who died during the Mexican War. This astute observation from the 19th century offers us a window into how later generations viewed the American Revolution in Bergen County. Judge Abraham Zabriskie was indeed correct: The Steuben House likely saw more action during the Revolutionary War than any other spot in the original thirteen colonies. In an effort to raise public awareness of Historic New Bridge Landing as a battleground and its story during the American Revolution, the Bergen County Historical Society has commissioned **Trexler Historical Art** to bring the climatic battle at New Bridge during the March 23rd, 1780 raid



Jeff Trexler at work on a painting

on Bergen County to life. During this encounter, the county courthouse was burned, a Continental outpost in present day Ridgewood was attacked, and a two-hour fire fight ensued at New Bridge while Continental and Bergen County forces attempted to prevent Crown forces from returning to New York.

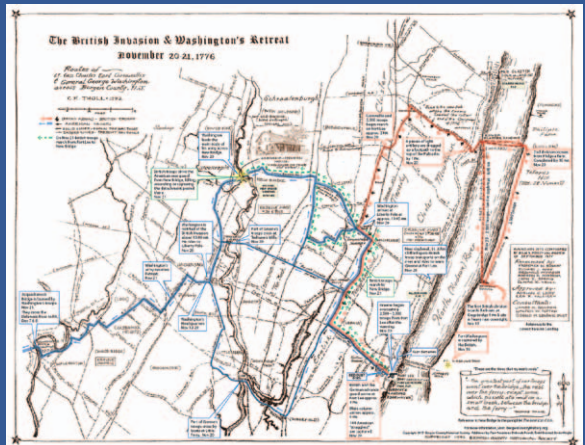
This painting will help to further the tale of Bergen County’s role in the American Revolution with a stunning visual and will also be used to benefit the Society on future projects. — James Smith, BCHS President. ❖

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1776 British Invasion & Washington’s Retreat Map

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