



In Bergen's Attic



Greetings. New Bridge Landing developed due to its location as a river landing for trade, a prosperous tidal mill and a vital

President's Message

river crossing immortalized in Thomas Paine's "The Crisis"... "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." Today, the Bergen County Historical Society first object continues to be focused on preserving Bergen County's past, to be preserved for the future. Our membership continues to grow, and without the support of our members, we would not be able to fulfill our mission, to preserve and promote our County's rich history. Our digital footprint increases daily due to an extensive email list, along with an expanding Facebook Page and the Westervelt-Thomas Barn has once again reopened!

Despite the dog days of summer turning into the crisp cool autumn nights, the Society has continued to advance important projects that will have a major impact moving forward. The summer months saw the return of Vintage Base Ball to New Bridge, which has turned into an annual tradition, to the renovation of

the Campbell-Christie House, in conjunction with the Historic New Bridge Landing Park Commission and the County of Bergen. I would personally like to thank past Historic New Bridge Landing Chairman, Mike Trepicchio for facilitating this process and ensuring the future of this



The Sgt. Walter Scott Brown Legion Post #226 make a significant donation to Bergen County's history. Jim Smith, Kevin Wright, Jim Purcell accept a donation for the museum building from Legion's Finance Officer, Pete Marion, center.

building for years to come. The Society is also very grateful for the Blauvelt-Dearest Foundation for their funding of the restoration of the Westervelt-Thomas Barn. This beautiful structure helps to tell the agriculture past of Bergen County for future generations, and is yet another sign of our storied organization moving forward.

This fall also saw a new twist on our remembrance of Baron Von Steuben, with the event aptly being named Baronfest. This was a highly successful event that helped to raise funds for our museum building and also exposed a new group of individuals to the Society and New Bridge. Not to be outdone, the Bergen 350th Committee organized a gala for the ages, honoring true Bergen County legends, raising the Society's profile, and putting us even closer to our museum building goal.

In this issue

President's Letter	1 & 15
Westervelt-Thomas Barn.....	2-3
Historic Preservation.....	4-5, & 13
BCC & BCHS Library Re-Opening....	5
1776 Guard Duty	6-7, & 13
Ku Klux Clan in Northern NJ.....	8-13
Hay Rake at New Bridge	14
Museum Collections	15
Volunteering & Fund-raising	16



The Westervelt-Thomas Barn

A Restoration Project

By BCBS Past President Tim Adriance

“Has that barn always been there?” Such was the question from a recent visitor to Historic New Bridge Landing. My reply: “Always? . . . Well, at least since 1955 when it was moved here.”

In August 1954, J. Henry Thomas, a farmer in Washington Township, was retiring after 49 years and approached the Bergen County Historical Society offering his mid-19th century barn (built by Peter A. Westervelt, the farm’s former owner). At this time, the Society’s treasurer David Demarest Bellis and BCBS President Francis Kohler were the driving force behind the vision of an eventual “Williamsburg on the Hackensack.” David Demarest Bellis was responsible for making New Bridge Landing much of what it is today: Doubled in size (with property west of the Steuben House being acquired); having Hackensack Avenue relocated to the north over a new highway bridge; moving The Demarest House to the site; and re-erecting the newly donated Westervelt-Thomas Barn – all of which were completed by 1955.

Fast forward to 2013. Jim Bellis, Sr. (son of David Demarest Bellis, also a man with a vision) shares his father’s love for his Jersey Dutch heritage and the desire to see New Bridge Landing become a premier tourist destination. Jim approached Kevin Wright and me, and said, “Let’s make the barn a real museum.”

Jim went on to describe how the visitor would approach the barn as a significant piece of architecture. Once inside, visitors could look around and see a fantastic collection of artifacts – not just farm items, but curiosities of every kind, all relating to Bergen County. Jim suggested putting items along the lofts, along the aisles, and in every nook and cranny. And so the project began.

Before doing anything with a historic structure, one needs to know all they can about the building and its type. I began studying the barn and created a 73-page report on the building. If you’d like to know more about how unique the barn is to Bergen County, the report is available at the Society’s new library room in Hackensack.

Not only was the barn envisioned as a wonderful museum; it would also serve as a greatly needed storage facility for items in the very-overcrowded “Bergen’s Attic” (a.k.a. the Society’s museum collection). Because the barn had more holes than Swiss cheese in the walls, nothing of great value could be stored there. Compounding the storage problem, the only way to access the lofts was to bring in ladders and crawl under the beams.

To address that problem, I designed a hidden stairway that leads up to the west loft. And to connect the west loft to the east loft, there is now a catwalk above in the hay mow. One can now safely transport museum objects without worrying about breaking them (or your own neck) in the process. Storage shelves were installed in the lofts, as was proper lighting. All of the loft storage areas are hidden from the visitor’s view with curtain walls (nearly invisible since everything is painted flat black).

The outside of the building needed the greatest attention. Weatherboard siding no longer kept out the weather, and families of raccoons and other assorted critters had taken up residence. I determined that the siding on the west side was in the worst shape and needed to be completely replaced. Fortunately, this is the side most people do not see close up. Each board on the west side was removed by cutting the nails from behind so that the remaining good boards could be used on the sides visitors see. Our friends at Kuiken Lumber (a nice Dutch family company) had siding that matched the original profiles exactly.

The sills on the west side and half of the north side were rotted (in fact, the entire west wall was ready to slide off the foundation). It was necessary to repair framing members in such a way that repairs could not be seen (there are no inside walls, so everything is visible).

The north, south, and east sides of the barn involved making “a silk purse out of a sow’s ear.” Despite deteriorated siding, we wanted to keep as much of the original material as possible. All of the missing, or “too far gone,” pieces of siding were replaced with reclaimed ones. The siding on the entire building was re-nailed (over 2,500 nails), and the nail heads, siding end joints, and other major voids were filled with a strong adhesive compound to bind everything together.

Then the painting began. An oil-based primer was applied to protect the wood, which was so “thirsty” that a gallon of paint estimated to cover 300 square feet only covered 100 square feet. A special filling paint (with a consistency more like Cool Whip dessert topping than paint) was applied to the original boards to fill all of the cracks. And finally, two top coats of the best-quality Benjamin Moore latex paint (custom-tinted to the correct barn color) were applied. After painting the barn —four times! — I really don’t want to see a paintbrush again for a while.

The barn’s windows, which had been removed in the 1960s, were recreated in my shop and installed. Of particular



Jim Bellis, Jr and Jim Bellis, Sr., Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation at the Westervelt-Thomas Barn Grand Re-Opening Photo by Kevin Wright

note are the six-pane windows near the upper corners of the big main barn doors on the front and back: They are unique to Bergen County and the Jersey Dutch settlement region. Also recreated were the ramps by the front and back main doors. They were discovered in old photos, but never on the barn since the move to New Bridge. People and wagons now move easily in and out via the ramps, rather than a step.

Our good friends at the Blauvelt Demarest Foundation completely underwrote the restoration work on the barn. The Bergen County Historical Society can now move forward once again opening the barn for events at New Bridge. ❖



Photo by Deborah Powell

Historic Preservation: Let's Think about the Future

By H. Gelfand

Bergen County is a place where history looms in so many ways, whether it is our Dutch sandstone houses or the quaint storefronts of the downtowns of many of our seventy municipalities. For those of us who are lifelong residents of the county, we have lived among the physical and spiritual reminders of the many generations of people who preceded us. It is also true for those of us who have lived here for long periods that many of the tangible remnants of the past have disappeared, making way for housing, malls, road projects, and other developments. I can remember when Paramus Road still resembled a quiet, historic-house and farm-lined colonial road. I can recall walking in the winesap apple orchard at Tice's Farm when I was a young boy. And I remember how beautiful the greens were at Tammy Brook golf course when I was there for my high school prom.



It is remarkable to think how dramatically the county has changed during my lifetime. Fortunately, for all of us, many of the county's residents have committed their time and money to preserving and repurposing any number of types of historic homes, train stations, commercial buildings, and landscapes so that even in 2014 we can appreciate and imagine what it was like to be in Bergen County 50 or 100 or even 200 years ago. The sad fact, however, is that each of our municipalities faces pressures from developers seeking to construct projects that are drastically altering the visual and historic fabric of our communities. Many projects have happened so quickly that no one seems to have noticed until green space, old trees, cemeteries, or old houses have disappeared, leaving us astonished as to why anyone would want to destroy such beauty.

Development, of course, does not have to be a bad thing. Sensitive architects and developers, working closely with preservation-minded attitudes and techniques and in coordination with municipal governments, have devised some truly terrific projects county-wide, and we can be proud of such efforts. The county's Open Space Trust Fund, similarly, has enabled the preservation of much of the green space, trees, and meadows that allow us to enjoy fresh air and outdoor experiences. These are among the many attributes that make living in Bergen County, just across the river from the nation's biggest city, such a treat.

Those of us who are amateur or professional historians, researchers, librarians, and historic preservationists spend a great deal of time thinking about the past. In Bergen County, we have so much remarkable history as a result of the Native Peoples, European farmers, and subsequent generations of immigrants, workers, commuters, and residents and all that they have done and continue to do here. Some of this history is acknowledged, such as the many Revolutionary War actions that happened across the county, and how much of the early film industry recorded its works along our Hudson River banks.

On the other hand, some of the more remarkable parts of our past are barely known at all. For example, Rudy Van Gelder, born in 1924, put Bergen County on the music world's map due to his interest in jazz and blues music. As a young man, he convinced his parents to set up a recording studio in their home on Prospect Avenue in Hackensack. For seven years there, and subsequently in a much larger studio Van Gelder built in Englewood Cliffs, which still stands in a grove of trees along 9W, Van Gelder oversaw some of the most celebrated and influential recordings in all of the history of jazz music. Count Basie, George Benson, John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Willie Dixon, Duke Ellington, Lionel Hampton, Herbie Hancock, Freddie Hubbard, Milt Jackson, Charles Mingus, Hank Mobley, Thelonious Monk, Anita O'Day, Max Roach, Sonny Rollins, and Cecil Taylor all recorded major works in Bergen County. Such a set of recordings puts



The BCHS Library Reopened in Hackensack at the Philip J. Ciaro Jr. Learning Center on October 25, 2014. Pictured here at the signing: BCC, William P. Mullaney, Ph.D., Vice President of Academic Affairs, B. Kaye Walter, Ph.D., President, BCC, Sandra Sroka, Dean, Philip J. Ciaro Jr. Learning Center, BCC, Amy Beth, Dean of Library Services, BCC. BCHS President James Smith, and BCHS Past-President Kevin Wright are center and front right. BCC staff greeted BCHS and guests very warmly with festive displays and food at the signing event. Open to the public: Wednesday, 12-5 pm and Thursday, 10-3 pm, subject to change. Located at 355 Main St, Rm 124, Hackensack.

Photo by Deborah Powell

Bergen County on musical par with places like Chicago, Los Angeles, Memphis and New Orleans, and New York City, yet this remains a part of our history that virtually no one outside of the jazz world even knows.

Those of us who think about the past have an obligation to think about the future too. How do we show an appreciation for the contributions of such a diverse group of people in our county in a way that enables future generations to understand how unique Bergen County is? How do we go beyond the Bergen County Historic Sites Survey, which is now over thirty years old, and rethink what has cultural, architectural, and historic significance for us? How do we begin to think, for the first time ever perhaps, about historic preservation in a county-wide way? How do we enable and empower local residents to list resources in their communities on the National Register of Historic Places, to demand that their governments create and empower activist preservation commissions, and to stand up to insensitive developments? How do we cross municipal boundaries so that residents in different towns can learn from each other's successes and failures, and contribute to each others' preservation efforts?

These are all difficult questions. However, it is clear that it is feasible and possible for us to have an active role in historic preservation. There are so many examples of activist communities across the United States that have taken steps to preserve what is beautiful and unique about them, offering to residents and visitors a sense of place. Residents in communities as diverse as Annapolis,

continued on page 13



The Naugle House sits boarded up



The Corporal, the Deserter & the General

By BCCHS Past-President Todd Braisted

As the autumn turns to winter, our thoughts reflect on the tumultuous campaign of 1776, and how

Bergen County was filled with soldiers, famous and ordinary, engaged in lethal actions occasionally but more typically performing mundane duties. Amongst the most common activities was that of guard duty. Those on such duty would be drawn from the different regiments of a post and be ready to take turns being sentries on the look out for the enemy. After an hour or two, they would be relieved by other men of the guard, who would rotate in shifts, day and night. It could be tedious, but certainly important. The following is an account of one soldier's experience on guard duty at New Bridge.

John Adlum was born in York, Pennsylvania on 29 April 1759. When the American Revolution broke out, he was living at that place in his father's house. The teenager thus described the exciting events surrounding the Declaration of Independence and his entering the service:

"Independence was declared on the 4th day of July 1776, And on the evening of the 6th of July following the Honorable James Smith one of our neighbors (and one of the Signers of the said declaration) with Capt Francis Wade and Doctor Young arrived at York Town to see how the good people of the Town and its vicinity, relished the said declaration - Accordingly on the morning of the 7th day of July, The four companies of the Town militia was paraded / Mr. Smith (the Colonel of the Regiment) when the Declaration of Independence was read, Mr. Smith made a speech, as did Capt. Wade & Doctor Young pointing out the advantages that it would be of to our Country & Mr. Smith made a short concluding speech, and then threw up his hat and hurrahed

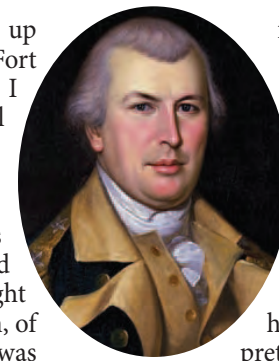
for liberty & Independence and others attending followed this example - There was then a proposition, of who will go to Camp? When I believe every one on parade without exception volunteered to go, and of which I was one, But it was thought prudent to retain and keep them at home that was more then forty years old to take care of & guard the Town - And on the 11th day of July we marched for Camp - The four Companies of the Town were commanded by Capt. Charles Lukens the Sheriff of York County, (and to which I belonged) Capt. Wm Baily a respectable man a copper smith, Capt. Rudolph Spangler a silversmith and Capt. Michael Hahn, I am not certain as to his occupation but I believe it was a Smith - And it was generally believed that he was the most sensible and smartest man of the four Captains..."

As a member of Colonel Michael Swope's Pennsylvania Regiment of the Flying Camp, young Mr. Adlum found himself serving at Fort Lee in General Ewing's Brigade. From these troops, guards were furnished all about Bergen County, from Bergen to the Palisades north of the fort and to Hackensack, from which last post sentries were furnished to New Bridge. One day Corporal Adlum found himself in charge of the guard at the bridge. Amongst the men of his guard was a British deserter who had enlisted in Swope's regiment. Deserters from both sides filled each other's armies, so this circumstance was not unusual. It often worked to the benefit of the fledgling Continental Army, as these former British soldiers brought with them experience, military bearing, and leadership. Adlum would soon draw upon all these traits as he came face to face with the commanding officer of all the 3,000+ troops in the county at the time, Major General Nathanael Greene.

"Before New York was evacuated

by our troops our Brigade was sent up North river when we began to erect Fort Lee, Colonel [Rufus] Putnam who I believe was a nephew to General Israel Putnam was the Engineer who laid it out. I think this was to towards the last of the month of September, and after the battle of the White Plains General Greene assumed the command and if my memory is correct he brought two or a part of two brigades with him, of the New England troops, I think one was called Glovers, and I recollect a Colonel Meigs, I do not recollect the names of any other officers of these Brigades.

"When General Green assumed the command of the troops at Fort Lee, I was out on command about twenty miles from the camp at a bridge over Hackensack river, where there was a commissaries store, and to intercept deserters from our camp, And while I was there and before I had ever seen General Green, an Irishman named Kilpatrick, and who had been in the British service and who came over to us while our troops lay before the City of Boston,* was the centry on the Bridge. General Greene with another Gentleman was passing that way when Kilpatrick stopped him and called for me. I went to the Bridge, Kilpatrick observed here is a Gentleman who says he is General Greene, and your orders to me is not to let any one pass into the Country that had the appearance of a Soldier &c. I felt very much confused not to say frightened, but I handed him my orders, which was written by Brigadier Ewing, and endorsed from one Serjeant to another, General Greene read them, and then handed me a letter



from General Putnam introducing him to a Gentleman in the Country, a few miles from the bridge. I told the sentry to let him pass. After he had passed the bridge I told Kilpatrick that he had got me into a

pretty hobble, as I was afraid the General might not be pleased with my conduct or being stopped. But Kilpatrick answered this will be the making of your fortune, you may depend on it that the General, will rather approve of than censure you, and he added, now we must be prepared to receive him on his return in the best manner we can; We accordingly dressed ourselves as well as circumstances would admit of, and as we saw the General returning we formed and when he came up to us we presented our arms. He told me to bring the men to an order. He then asked me a number of questions - As to whether any disaffected people were in that neighborhood and what supplies might be got on an emergency &c. To all which I could give him tolerably satisfactory answers. There was an intelligent farmer who lived within forty or fifty rods from the bridge, who was in the habit of coming and sitting with me in the evenings, and he gave me a history of the neighbourhood for several miles round, with the real or supposed disaffected, with its resources. A thing which probably should not have thought of enquiring after, if this old Gentleman had not communicated them to me. This command always lasted for a week. General Greene after this always took notice of and frequently spoke to me when I chanced to meet him in Camp or otherwise."

Neither Greene nor Adlum realized it at the time, but their time in Bergen County was running out. On 14 November 1776, General Greene

continued on page 13



Next page, 1836 sketch of a draw bridge over the Hackensack.



The Ku Klux Klan in Northern Bergen County

By Kay Yeomans

The first time I heard the words Ku Klux Klan and Upper Saddle River in the same sentence was in 1999. The Upper Saddle River Historical Society was holding a program at the 1842 Methodist Church building, now the Saddle River Valley Cultural Center. John Kroner, age 90 and a life-long resident, was talking about his memories of Upper Saddle River. At the end, during the question and answer period, someone piped up with a question, "What about the Ku Klux Klan here? They burned a cross on my grandfather's lawn."

Dead silence. You could have heard a pin drop. We had been collecting local history for twenty years and it was the first time anyone had mentioned the Klan. But then someone responded, "Sure. They were here. It was in the 1920s, around 1925 or 1926. It was just a small group of men. They burned three crosses, one at Mrs. Israel's up where they built Western Union, one at Michael Filips, and one on the property now owned by Wulsters. It had gotten around town what the Klan members were going to do. I was just a youngster but my family took me along to watch. They came on horseback wearing

their robes and hoods but we all knew who they were. You could tell by their horses feet."¹ He went on to say, "They had a recruitment meeting right here in this church. The Klan members were in their white robes and spoke to the audience."¹

John Kroner, born in 1909, responded that the meeting had occurred but the church had had nothing to do with it.¹

I left that meeting feeling shaken. The bucolic little town we had been collecting history about had suddenly been shown to have a darker side. It's funny. I grew up in New Jersey but never learned in school that New Jersey had been a slave state. It wasn't until the 1970s when I became involved in researching local history that I learned about New Jersey's slave history. And now, here was something else that people had been silent about. It was history swept under the rug. These were subjects that, as our grandparents used to say, were best not spoken about. They might put us in a bad light or might embarrass someone's family.

But then there is that much repeated quote by 18th century Irish politician Edmund Burke: "Those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it." It is worth looking at what happened and some of the forces in play at the time.

Kay Yeomans, Curator for the Upper Saddle River Historical Society prepared this paper for the Seminar "Housing Discrimination in Suburbia: An Historical Perspective" held in September at the Ridgewood Public Library. (Joe Suplicki read the paper, as Kay was unable to be present.)

One of the ways in which majorities try to control who lives in their neighborhood is by intimidation. A pointed glare, shouted taunts, a rock through the window, or a cross-burning on a lawn all send the message that you (Catholics, Jews, blacks) are not wanted here. Although Kay's paper relies on oral history from Upper Saddle River, this is not just an Upper Saddle River story. The Ku Klux Klan was in many of our northern Bergen County towns in the 1920's—including Closter, Glen Rock, Hackensack, Haworth, Hillsdale, Mahwah, Midland Park, North Hackensack, Oakland, Paramus, Ridgewood, Ramsey, and Wyckoff. In case you dismiss this as the lesser Klan, an innocent movement of good citizens, this is what "Application for Citizenship" in the collections of the Ridgewood Historical Society reads:

I, the undersigned, a native born, true and loyal citizen of the United States of America, being a white male Gentile person of temperate habits, sound in mind and a believer in the tenets of the Christian [Protestant] religion, the Maintenance of White Supremacy and the principles of "pure Americanism," do most respectfully apply for membership in Leif Erickson Klan No. ___ Invisible Empire Realm of New Jersey, Inc.

Let this no longer be a story that we choose not to tell. — Peggy Norris and Joe Suplicki

By the beginning of the 20th century, the influence of the Klan, originally founded in 1865, in the south had faded. Then in 1915 at Stone Mountain, Georgia, a giant cross was ignited and the Klan was reborn, led by "Col." William Simmons. He made his living selling memberships to fraternal organizations and saw the Klan as a financial opportunity. The cross burning was timed just days after he saw *Birth of a Nation*, a silent film directed by D.W. Griffiths, that portrayed the Klan as the defender of white womanhood, a noble force protecting the imperiled heroine.²

"In its second incarnation, the Klan moved beyond just targeting blacks, and broadened its message of hate to include Catholics, Jews and foreigners. The Klan promoted fundamentalism and devout patriotism along with advocating white supremacy. They wrapped themselves in the hallowed flag and the church. They used the churches to reach potential members. The initiation fee was \$10. Ministers received a free membership. The Klan blasted bootleggers, motion pictures and espoused a return to 'clean' living. Appealing to folks uncomfortable with the shifting nature of America from a rural agricultural society to an urban industrial nation, the Klan attacked the elite, urbanites and intellectuals."²

After World War I there was a rise in Nativism. People were disturbed by the increase in immigration, especially from Eastern Europe and southern Italy. It was the time of the roaring twenties. Prohibition was in place giving rise to speakeasies, rumrunners, and loose morals. New Jersey, with its proximity to New York and Ellis Island, was in the thick of these changes.

Finding information on the Klan is not easy. The local newspapers did not carry

the stories. And what the internet yields are articles taken from Klan magazines and histories. One article is by David Chalmers. It gives some history, while presenting the Klan in a positive light.

"The KKK first spread to New Jersey from the states of New York and Pennsylvania early in 1921 and has had a history of being a peaceful Klan. Attorney Arthur Bell was N.J.'s first and longest reigning Grand Dragon. He ruled the New Jersey KKK right up to the Klan's disbandment in the 1940's. His wife Leah

WOMAN DEFIES THREATS OF K. K. K.



Real estate office of Mrs. Schulz, with K. K. K. warnings in red paint. Inset is Mrs. Elizabeth Schulz.

Defying repeated warnings issued by the Ku Klux Klan, Mrs. Elizabeth Schulz, a real estate broker of Closter, N. J., continues to maintain her business there. Her office has been covered repeatedly with "K. K. K." warnings and orders for her to leave the town.

Elizabeth C. Schulz's small real estate office was threatened with violence if she did not leave town. Graphic source: fultonhistory.com

Bell was the state leader of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan. The Klan's first strongholds were in Passaic, Bergen, Essex, Union, and Morris counties and in the area around Trenton and Camden. But the Klan grew strongest in Monmouth County."

In the mid-twenties, the Klan marched, rallied, and worshipped. It reached a membership of around 100,000. The Klan built Monroe Recreational Park and Shark

River Recreational Park, where the Grand Dragon lived and the Imperial Wizard visited. The Klan placed the valuable Shark River Recreational Park in the name of the Monmouth Pleasure Club Association.

Before long the Klan prospered and spread throughout the state. Its purposes were to protect the Constitution and pure womanhood; preserve the White race, the separation of church and state, and uphold law and order. There were no substantiated reports of actual Klan violence and ceremonial cross lightings were uncommon. Drunkenness, wife beatings, mixed marriages, child abuse, and immorality were particularly opposed by the N.J. Klan. Apart from its nocturnal rituals and fraternalism, the primary concern of the N.J. Klan was the preservation of the traditional American values. As the Klan's Tri-K-Girls put it, "The return to the teachings of our mothers." This meant stressing the virtues of Christian fundamentalism and temperance. It was not surprising, therefore, that in New Jersey this often led to friendly relations and cooperation with many churches.

It became characteristic of the N.J. Klan to receive support from the ministry. Although Baptist, Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed, and Evangelical pastors and churches supplied pulpits and prestige for the Klan, its truest friends came from the Pillar of Fire Church and the Methodists.⁴

What actually happened in Upper Saddle River? We will never know exactly. People are afraid to offend descendants of those involved. A few weeks after our meeting, I asked Jim Hennion if he could tell me more. He said that he had said all he remembered. He didn't know who the men were. There were just those three incidents and then it died out.⁵

John Kroner added a little more to the story. He said that Upper Saddle River had about 14 active Klan members. That's not a lot but back then the population of Upper Saddle River was about 350, probably 100 adult males. Upper Saddle River was still a very rural farm town with just the main

roads paved. There were about 100 homes in town. Starting in the late 1800s, men began leaving to find work in the cities, leaving some homes abandoned. Some of the abandoned homes were purchased for summer places by city people from Brooklyn, New York, Passaic and Hoboken. Others were empty.

John Kroner said that the Klan met in the Methodist Church at the invitation of a neighbor. They got into their robes in the basement and came upstairs for the recruitment meeting. He said they also held a recruitment meeting at the Reformed Church but Hen Zabriskie, a member of the Reformed Church, told John that they asked the Klan to leave.

A huge meeting was held at the home of E. H. Smith at the top of Lake Street. He lived in Ramsey just beyond the Upper Saddle River border and close to the Israel property. John said he was a big Klan member. The night of the meeting, John said hundreds of cars came up West Saddle River Road and turned up Lake Street to go up to Smith's. They had a huge bonfire and set off dynamite explosions at the meeting.⁶

John Hopper, whose family goes back to the beginning of the Old Stone Church, told me his father talked about the cross burnings. He was against them. Most people in town were.

On March 6, 1975, Margaret Capuano recorded an oral history tape with Marie Fleming. Margaret was born in 1918 and was the school librarian for Bogert School. Her grandparents had a summer bungalow on Lake Street in the 1920s where she stayed as a young girl. Later she and her husband built their own house down the road.

Margaret said, "The Ku Klux Klan had an emergence in the 1920s. I remember there was a Mr. Sullivan running for mayor in Allendale. The KKK was against Catholics and Jews and Negroes. Mr. Sullivan was a Catholic. They burned an enormous cross over on the hills over at Darlington. I remember standing on the porch of our bungalow and seeing the fiery cross burning on the hill ...

One night, when we were out in the car near the Old Stone Church, we were actually stopped by some men in white cloaks and white hoods."

Margaret said 1929 but it was probably earlier. Jim Hennion also spoke about the Old Stone Church incident and it was around 1925 or 1926. The KKK burned a cross on the lawn of the Michael Filips house, the same Polish people Margaret mentioned and the parents of Marie Skinner who was running the farm stand in the 1970s. The Darlington cross was probably in November 1928 and had to do with Al Smith, a Catholic, running for president.

I spoke to the woman whose grandfather had been one of the targets. She said the story had been passed down in her family. Her grandfather Michael Filips and her mother, who had also witnessed it, had talked about it. It was an extremely upsetting moment in their lives. He had emigrated from Poland and was a Catholic. He had worked in Paterson first before buying a farm in Upper Saddle River in 1919. His grandchildren still live in Upper Saddle River.

John Kroner talked about meeting Michael Filips at the Farmers Market in Paterson. They would get there early and would stand around and talk while waiting for the crowds to arrive. John said he was "a nice old gent and interesting to talk to."

In a conversation unrelated to the Klan, John Kroner had said there were three Jewish partners who bought the property later owned by Wulsters. Izadore Spitz and Joe Spitz. They had a kosher chicken farm in the 1920s. They had 20 coops, 20x20, with 125 chickens in each. It was a Jewish concern and they sent all the eggs into New York City. Later they added 100-foot long coops. The house where the Wulsters are now had burned around 1905-1908 and was rebuilt. Some of the names that were there were Levi Fredricks and the Spitz family, a Polish family, They had Leghorn chickens, the best layers. No roosters. Trucks every day taking eggs to NYC.

This would have been the property

where Jim Hennion witnessed the cross burning as a young boy.

Upper Saddle River was not an isolated incident. Other towns in Bergen County were experiencing the same recruitment. It is hard to find information but bits and pieces turn up.

On April 6, 2008, Richard Muti, former mayor of Ramsey, wrote a piece on immigration for the *Opinion* page of The Record. He said: "The United States of America once prided itself on being a nation of immigrants, a country embracing the sentiment of Emma Lazarus' famous poem. Yet there were times when less tolerating attitudes showed.

Know Nothings, members of a nativist fringe party in the 1850s, were the first politicians — but not the last — to use xenophobia as a vote-getter. The Ku Klux Klan terrorized Southern blacks, but also marched against Catholics and Jews because of their foreign origins. Its reach extended to northern New Jersey."⁸

Muti went on to say, "As a child of Italian immigrants living in Ramsey in the 1920s, my father witnessed Klansmen in their trademark white sheets parading down Main Street."⁸

Henry Bischoff wrote in his book *The History of Mahwah*.⁹ "Some rural people did suffer economically from the decline in farming, and many more suffered psychologically as a traditional way of life was being overshadowed. One manifestation of this feeling of loss and helplessness was the simplistic and often bitter reaction found in the upsurge of fundamentalism and the Ku Klux Klan. In 1923, when filing for a charter in New Jersey, the Klan reported that its purpose was to 'teach patriotism, protect freedom of speech and press, States' Rights, preserve separatism of church and state, and to fight foreign immigration.' Implied was its intention to fight Jews, Catholics and blacks.

The Klan had its first meeting in Bergen County in July 1923 in Paramus. In April 1924 there was a meeting at the farm of

continued on page 12

E.H. Smith in Ramsey with some 1,500 members present. [Probably the same meeting mentioned by John Kroner.] A cross was burned. In April 1926 the Klan met at The Pond's church in Oakland for a prayer meeting with 500 in attendance. Although there was no reported meeting of the Klan in Mahwah, some of its citizens were involved and sympathetic. Many local residents recall crosses being burned on Houvenkopf Mountain and in the Stag Hill area.

John Storms recalled that the Klan tried unsuccessfully to rent his ice truck for their activities. Toward the end of the twenties the Klan was declining in popularity in this area and its last hurrah seems to have been the burning of a cross at the Catholic church in Suffern on election night November 1928 when Al Smith, a Catholic, was running for president.⁹

Years ago I met a woman in Mahwah who remembered seeing those crosses burning up in the Mahwah mountains.

In their pamphlet produced for their 250th anniversary, Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church in Airmont wrote about their history. The church began as the Island Lutheran Church in Mahwah founded by Palatine settlers in the early 18th century. They shared a church with the Reformed Dutch. In 1850 they terminated that agreement and formed the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ramapo and built a new church in Airmont. Many from the Masonic area of New Jersey as well as from the northern part of Upper Saddle River attended that church.

The pamphlet acknowledged the influence of the Klan in the 1920s. The early 1900s were difficult ones for the church. The area, which was predominantly rural farm country, had been passed by. People were poor and the church was poor. It was hard to find ministers and those they found often did not stay long. They had 9 ministers and times without any minister in the 1920s. The church, because of its rural congregation, was often in conflict with the orthodox Lutheran training of

its pastors. They leaned more towards "a fundamentalist, biblical literalism which grew out of revivalism...in the long periods while the church was without pastoral leadership." The Ku Klux Klan fit easily into their mindset. "The Ku Klux Klan encouraged a pseudo-patriotism for a Protestant democracy."¹⁰

In 1926 the church council accepted a Christian and an American flag from the Ku Klux Klan.¹⁰ In 1930 the Rev. Ernest Kallenbach accepted a call to the church, beginning a period of prosperity and stability, and an end to any influence from the Klan.

The Ku Klux Klan was also very active in the Pascack and Saddle River Valleys. The Ridgewood Historical Society has in their collections a number of Klan items that were donated including a uniform and hood for a woman and membership cards.

When you read the articles written for the Klan newspapers, the writers were convinced that the Klan was upholding traditional American values and doing good. But their hold here in Bergen County did not last in the small towns. The town populations did not rally around them. The people who were being targeted were neighbors who were doing no harm. They met each other at the market in Paterson or around town.

At its height in the mid-1920s the Ku Klux Klan had over 100,000 members in New Jersey. By 1940 the influence of the Klan anywhere in America was no longer strong. The Klan would rear its head again in the Civil Rights movement, but not here in Bergen County. The towns were no longer rural and their populations were becoming more and more multi-cultural.

In Upper Saddle River the Klan was gone within a year. All three of the families targeted by cross burnings stayed in town. The Spitz family sold to the Wulsters in the 1940s. The daughter of Michael Filips and her husband continued to farm the property and had one of the best farm stands around. Michael Filips' grandchildren still live in town. Mrs. Israel

sold her property in the 1960s. Western Union built their headquarters there. ❖

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6. Interview with John Kroner by Kay Yeomans, December 2004
7. Margaret Capuano, USR Oral History Tape, interviewed by Marie Fleming, March 6, 1975
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11. Smith, Page, *Redeeming the Time: A People's History of the 1920s and the New Deal*, Vol. 8, McGraw Hill Book Company, 1987, pp. 3-7, 274-275.
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Todd Braisted's article, continued from page 7

sent over 1700 men across the river to reinforce Fort Washington, which was in imminent danger of being attacked. Two days later, after a brief but bloody struggle, Corporal Adlum, most of his regiment and all the fort's garrison were prisoners with the British. History does not record of what became of Kilpatrick the deserter. Lord Cornwallis though would cross the Hudson less than 96 hours later and send General Greene and the remainder of his men across the same bridge where he had met the young Pennsylvania corporal the previous month, now starting upon the road of the Great Retreat. John Adlum's narrative comes from his 1833 application for a pension for his services during the war, which he received. It is but one of thousands of stories of the American Revolution, many of which happened right here amongst the streets and towns we call home today. ❖

In Memoriam



Richard W. Lenk, Jr.

August 29, 1936 - May 24, 2014

BCHS President 1980 - 1983

H. Gelfand's article, continued from page 5

Savannah, San Francisco, Key West, Park City, Santa Barbara, and Austin have taken action to protect what is best about their built and unbuilt environments, preserving significant portions of their buildings and open space to provide everyone a sense of the past. Not coincidentally, each of those cities is a magnet for tourists and a highly desirable place for people to live. It is clear from communities across our country that tangible, preserved remnants of the past make for great places to live and visit. We are fortunate to live in such a place, but we must all become responsible for identifying, protecting, repurposing, and preserving the best of what makes Bergen County such a terrific and remarkable place! ❖

RENEW TODAY • WE VALUE MEMBERSHIP

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Rarity Revived

By Luke Kucinski

During the second half of the nineteenth century, industrial and agricultural advancements blazed the pathway to modern technology. Preluding steam power and the internal combustion engine was the transition from human power to horse power, resulting in great agricultural advancement.

With horses hitched to the front of the hay rake, farmers could gather hay quickly and efficiently. To elaborate, the fields would be first cut with a mower (a separate piece of equipment), and then gathered by the hay rake to be collected into piles. Prior replication of such efficiency required farmers to use handheld rakes, grain cradles, or even their bare hands to gather the hay. The efficiency level of equipment often correlated with economic well-being, yet even the most advanced of these methods required many days of hard, back breaking labor and further need for slavery on large plantations. In fact, modern archaeological research shows evidence of hand-held rakes dating as far back as the first and second centuries A.D. in areas such as Southern Sweden, Northern Germany, and Britain.

This hay rake, which now rests on the grounds of the Bergen County Historical Society, is a magnificent reminder of peoples will to improve, innovate, and achieve. A seat for the farmer would be attached upon the green arm-like piece extending upward from the frame. The green handle next to the seat is actually not part of the original design. In the earliest documentations of the hay rake, the farmer would stop the horses and back up the equipment once filled. However, on this improved model, the farmer could pull the handle to lift the tines allowing the hay to remain in a neat pile. The tines would pass over the hay as

the rake moved forward, then the handle would be pushed back down to continue on. This allowed the work to be done even faster than before.

Despite manufacturing numbers embedded into several parts of the hay-rake, no maker could be identified. With the main frame of the piece itself standing unlabeled, and several wheel parts yielding numbers, it is safe to say that either an



Photo by Robert Kirsch

individual of great skill or a manufacturer assembled this rake.

The individual parts of the hay rake, however, can still be much appreciated. For example, our ability to borrow and share ideas to create something new is amazing. With the knowledge of farming at hand, the invention of the rake dating back to the first century A.D., and wheels and a hitch similar to that of a horse drawn carriage, a piece of equipment was assembled that changed agriculture forever. One can picture the farmer sitting on top of the hay rake, calling to his horses and pulling the handle to release the hay. A vision of luxury compared to blistered hands, bending with a crooked back, moving hay under the hot sun for thousands of years. ❖

Luke Kucinski is a summer volunteer for the BCHS. He researched the color choice of 19th and early 20th century hay rakes using magazine advertisements to help in its preservation. Currently, Luke is a rising sophomore at the University of Massachusetts, studying Anthropology and Archaeology.

BCHS Collections

by BCHS Past-President Deborah Powell

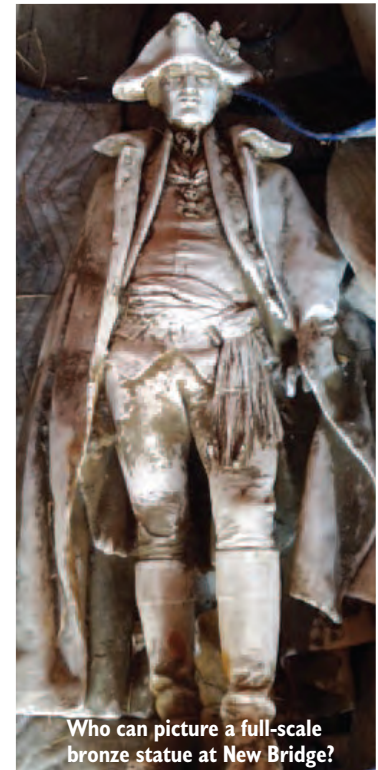
The two year mark of Super Storm Sandy came and went and we have the continuing saga of collections that were stored in Hudson County and damaged in that monstrous storm event. Having finally closed out the insurance claim in January we reached out to FEMA for help to stabilize and clean items that were not covered. Our scale model of Major General Baron Von Steuben is at the top of the list as we move forward. The full-scale version by Albert Jaeger is in Lafayette Park, across from the White House. ❖

President's Letter, continued from page 1

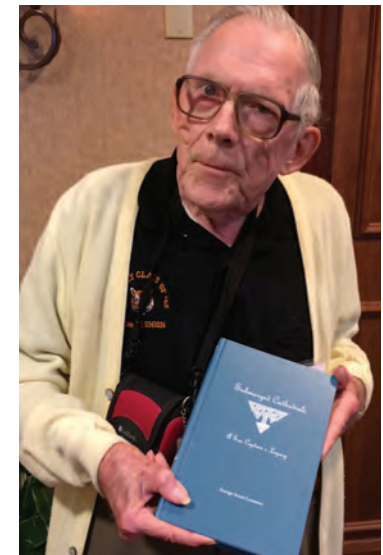
We are very grateful to all the volunteers that made these and all our events a success. We are also very excited to be moving closer to our ultimate goal of construction a building to house our collection.

In November, we were able to officially sign an agreement with Bergen Community College to reopen our library and archives collection. This has been a project that has been many years in the making and would not be possible if it were not for the hard work of our volunteers. Already, we have had visitors from Hackensack to Canada, showing the true global importance of this collection and its impact on advancing research. November also marked the first time in many years that we have had a wedding ceremony on the grounds. This does open the potential for future fund-raising but does not provide the only solution.

In conclusion, I think there are two very important themes occurring with our organization in 2014. One, our success is marked by the professionalism of our volunteers who demonstrate their passion for local history and preserving it for future generations. It is these volunteers and our members who ensure that our shared history will be preserved for future generations. Secondly, we have made tremendous progress enhancing the visitor experience at New Bridge Landing so that visitors not only get to look at structures that tell the collective history of our county but that visitors actually get to walk in the footsteps of the true history makers of our country, right in the center of Bergen County and get a chance to experience these first hand. As President, I am proud to be a member of the Bergen County Historical Society, an organization so dedicated to preserving our County's past for its future. **James Smith**, BCHS President ❖



Who can picture a full-scale bronze statue at New Bridge?



Trustee Emeritus George S. Laurence recently became a life-member. Visiting at the Clinton Inn for a class reunion, he presented BCHS a copy of his book *Submerged Cathedrals, A Sea Captain's Legacy*. The book is now in our library.

Photos by Deborah Powell

Help (Always) Wanted *By BCHS Trustee Kate Reilly*

When we think of the Bergen County Historical Society as an all-volunteer organization, the first image that springs to mind is that of the people who staff the events the Society conducts at Historic New Bridge Landing, those faithful folks who make your historical afternoons possible and pleasurable. That public face of the Society is, of course, only part of the story, for behind the scenes there are the building and grounds crew who maintain the HNBL property, the library staff now working in our new Library and Archives in Hackensack, as well as people who handle publicity, membership, cataloging collections, preservation, and the committee members who plan and direct each of those activities. We always welcome newcomers to any of these areas, but none of those activities would be possible without money, and no money



**Bergen County,
Where America Begins**



would be secured without fund-raising. It is a regrettable fact of life for all non-profit organizations that a good deal of time and effort is spent in raising the funds to sustain and expand the things that are really close to the heart, in our case, preserving and passing on our historical heritage.

This is not an appeal for your money—though that is always most appreciated—but for something equally precious: your time and your talents. In the past three years, BCHS has held four major fund-raisers, as well as soliciting sponsors or donations for particular events, and conducting traditional fund drives. We have done very well, but now we need a final push to get a museum built and equipped at New Bridge before it becomes a task for another generation. We need more people to serve on the fund-raising committee bringing new energy to this endeavor and enabling us to realize many of the fund-raising avenues we would like to pursue, but currently lack the personnel to do so. Are you an organized individual? A good salesperson? Do you have connections within the community that might help further our goals? Are you a creative thinker? A problem solver? Persistent? Like the satisfaction of a job well done? Any of those attributes would be helpful to our fund-raising purposes, and if you have any or all of them, we can use your help! Have you previously been involved in fund-raising for your children's school, your church, or charity? Come and bring your energy and experience to the BCHS table!

Most people think history enthusiasts are concerned with the past. Not quite. We are concerned with preserving the past for the future—for your children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and the kid next door. We continue to investigate the past and tell its tales not as an end in itself, but so that others may be inspired, educated, and enlightened by its lessons. The fund-raising we do now to build a historical museum for Bergen County will continue to have benefits throughout many decades ahead. You are asked to consider giving your time to a project with long-term and far-reaching effects.

If you can be of service as a volunteer on the fund-raising committee, or in any other capacity that interests you, please contact Kate Reilly, BCHS Volunteer Coordinator, through the Society's email at contactBCHS@bergencountyhistory.org. ❖ Photo by Deborah Powell