



GLEN RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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THE GASLAMP

Illuminating Our Past

www.glenridgehistory.org

President's Letter



Our Fall walking tour, "Seeing Forest Through the Trees", was a great success. We were joined by Tim Delorm, Chair of the Glen Ridge Shade Tree Commission, and Betsy Ginsburg, also a commissioner, to learn about the history of trees along Forest and Essex Avenues, and Osborne and Baldwin Streets. Along the way we learned about maintaining trees on our properties and our responsibility for the street trees in front of our houses. If you are interested in more information about the commission and their work, please go to: <http://www.glenridgenj.org/shadetree.htm>. They have great things planned for Glen Ridge!

Our Holiday Party this year will be held at the home of Sue and Sean Cullinan at 138 Ridgewood Avenue. We have chosen the Cullinan's house this year in recognition of the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic. Henry Blank, a wealthy Newark jeweler who lived at 138 Ridgewood, famously survived the Titanic disaster by finding a place on the first life boat lowered to the water.

Another former resident of 138 Ridgewood, Sam Joseph, will join us that evening to talk about Blank, his jewelry business, and the history of the house. This event is for Historical Society members only—so check the mail for your invitation.

Karin Robinson

Save the Date Holiday Party



138 Ridgewood Avenue

**Wednesday, December 7
7:30 pm**

An Early Publishing Family in Glen Ridge

News from the Town Historian



One of the highlighted buildings on our fall walking tour was 69 Forest Avenue, a handsome sideways facing house that was once the home of Louis E. Fairchild. Louis was chairman of the board of Fairchild Publications, an association of trade and business newspapers that was founded by his brother, Edmund W. Fairchild, in 1890. In its prime there were over forty publications. One of its earliest and most successful journals, *Women's Wear Daily*, continues to provide breaking news in the capricious environment of fashion and beauty.

The company that started in Chicago with the *The Chicago Apparel Gazette* soon moved to New York City. The fashion industry in the city had been dominated by individual tailors and dressmakers but was rapidly changing to one of mass production. A new type of journalism was needed to reliably report trends. Edmund had great faith in the influence of information and ideas. His motto, "Our Salvation Depends on our Printing of the News," appeared on the walls of the company headquarters.

Louis was born in 1868 in Flushing, NY. He and his older brother, Edmund, were two of six sons of Rev. Elijah Sites Fairchild, pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church. Louis moved to 69 Forest Avenue in 1928 as a widower with two children. His wife, Jessie Boyd, died in 1922. Estelle Boyd, his unmarried sister-in-law, ran the household with five Irish maids. Louis moved to Long Island in 1949 and died the following year leaving a son, Edgar, and a daughter, Louise. Edgar later worked for the company.

Edmund came to Glen Ridge well before his brother. He had moved to 63 Highland Avenue in 1903 and lived there until his death in 1949. He was married to a third Boyd sister, Catherine, who died in 1943. Their children included Edmund, Louis and Elizabeth. Edmund and Louis became executives of the company as did their sons, respectively, Wade and John. Elizabeth's husband, Harry T. Martindale, grew up at 164 Forest Avenue. He became west coast manager of the company. His brother, Wight Martindale, who after his marriage lived at 125 Forest Avenue, became personnel director. Wight Martindale, Jr., also spent time at the firm.

Glen Ridge has been a mecca for people in the publishing business since its earliest days. Fairchild Publications, however, has been unique in its multigenerational employment of several related Glen Ridge families.

Sally Meyer

The Museum Room is located in the Glen Ridge Congregational Church. To schedule an appointment call Sally Meyer at (973) 239-2674.

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Editor's Note... The feature article on Page 3 is by Tom Meeker, who is a fourth generation Meeker to live in Glen Ridge. He describes life on Hamilton Road after his parents moved there in 1938; future Gaslamps will carry later stories of his growing up in Glen Ridge. These first-hand experiences are particularly interesting when they tell about places that no longer exist (e.g., the chicle factory in Tom's article). Related to that theme, we begin an occasional series on Page 4 on buildings that no longer exist with the story of the Glen Ridge Club that was built in 1886 and razed in 1933.

Herb Addison – herb.addison@verizon.net

Growing up on Hamilton Road

After living in rented house apartments in Upper Montclair for six years, Mom and Pop, Horace and Connie Meeker, decided that, with 3 children, Beverly, Stephen and me, we would move to Glen Ridge. In 1938 they purchased a small 3-bedroom, 1-bath foreclosed home at 14 Hamilton Road from the local bank. Because we had no car, it had to be within walking distance to the Ridgewood Avenue railroad station for Pop's commute to New York, and to Linden Avenue grade school for us children. Glen Ridge was also home to Grandpa and Grandma Meeker, Chester and Martha, who lived at 117 Clark Street, across from the Congregational Church. This is where Pop spent his formative years from 1915 through college until he married Mom in 1932.

Hamilton Road was a single long block with little traffic to endanger the many children who lived there, often playing games in the street such as kick the can and hide-and-go-seek. For a more exciting venue, there were woods on either side of Old Oak Road, a short street half way up Hamilton Road that ran down to Ridgewood Avenue. In the warm weather the trees and bushes were more than adequate for hiding from the "enemy" when playing guns! Of course one had to shout "BANG BANG" loud enough to be sure your victim knew they were shot!

As I grew older, 5 to 8 years or so, we found more exciting activities, including playing on the garage roofs. The garage of the next door neighbors was a scant 4 feet from the roof of ours. We could jump from one to the other. When tired, it was expected of us to jump the 8 feet or so to the ground. Amazingly enough, there were no broken bones or even sprains. We spread our horizons to a wooded lot at the south west corner of Washington Street and Ridgewood Avenue, where climbing trees awaited us. While the height of garage roofs didn't bother me, I dared not climb over about 20 feet up, while a pal from Douglas Road, Tommy Tuttle, scooted nearly to the top of a fir, where he could overlook the adjacent homes.

I soon realized that my preferences were of an athletic nature. There was a nearby empty lot on Spencer Road that was ideal for touch football. On the southwest corner of Linden Avenue and Ridgewood Avenue was the home of



Tom Meeker in Linden Avenue School Kindergarten in 1939. He's sitting cross-legged, third from the right next to the door to the contraption behind him with a sign at the top: "United Airlines."

my classmate, Robbie Johnstone, whose front yard was large enough for football. We could also explore the vast Johnstone estate behind his house. There were the ruins of Robbie's grandfather's chicle factory, another wonderful place for hide and seek, as well as "gun fighting." (Robert L. Johnstone had a special formula mixed into the chicle to make MO-JO, "The Clean Chewing Gum." But the formula died with him and the factory had to close.)

In the early 1940s this back area abutted the large Reynolds estate, which had not yet been subdivided. There were acres for our imaginative activities. (The estate was sold, and houses built on the property between 1950 and 1953 along newly created streets, Reynolds Road and Chestnut Hill Place.) For more organized sports, we would play softball and soccer behind Linden Avenue School, or trek to the Carteret Street Park. The Park had a baseball diamond as well as ample space for football, all activities organized by us, well before Little League Baseball and Pop Warner Football were even imagined.

We walked everywhere until 1940, when Pop purchased a new cream colored 2-door Ford sedan with a V8 engine. It allowed us to visit out-of-town family members in Montclair, to go to the Upper Montclair St. James Church for Christmas Eve candle light service, and many other exciting excursions. Most important, the auto allowed us to take our 1941 summer vacation at the Corlear Bay Club, 300 miles north on Lake Champlain.

In late 1940 Mom became pregnant again. Realizing that the 14 Hamilton Road home wouldn't accommodate a family of 6, Pop reached out to purchase another home just up the street, number 19.

Tom Meeker

To be continued in a later issue

VANISHED GLEN RIDGE**First it was the "Glen Ridge Club," then the "Glen Ridge Men's Club"**

VANISHED GLEN RIDGE is intended to preserve the history of some of the borough's important buildings that no longer exist.

Ten years before Glen Ridge declared its independence from Bloomfield in 1895 about 20 residents from both towns began to plan for a club based in Glen Ridge. They met in the Ridgewood Avenue home of Asabel G. Darwin in July 1885 and elected Darwin President, Edward Page Mitchell Secretary, and Charles T. Dodd Treasurer. In the words of *The Bloomfield Citizen* (July 11, 1885), the club was to be a "commodious house of attractive exterior, with the arrangements and appointments of a first class club." It would be built across Ridgewood Avenue from the railroad station and the architect was William Convers Hazlett of New York, who had previously designed the Music Hall in Short Hills.

Construction began in August 1885 and the completed building was opened to its members in February 1886. Again quoting *The Bloomfield Citizen* (February 13, 1886), "It is difficult to know where to begin a description of such a perfect whole." The first floor included an entrance hall, a reading room, and a smoking and



The Original Glen Ridge Club

writing room. A stairway led to the second floor and a large billiard room with an adjoining card room. Rooms for the custodian and his family were in the rear of the second floor with separate stairs and exits that shut them off completely from the club rooms.

Not surprisingly for the times, the planners were all men and by the opening there

were about 50 members. But the men made provision for women by setting aside Wednesdays from 10 am to 6 pm exclusively for women and their non-member guests, and on Wednesday evenings for men and women. The inference being that at all other times the club was for men only.

The new club not only provided socializing, reading, cards, and billiards for its male members, but also entertainment every two weeks on Wednesday evenings when women were not only welcome but often provided some of the entertainment. Of one such evening, *The Bloomfield Citizen* (March 5, 1887) gushed, "It seems almost invidious to select from a performance of such excellence any parts for special commendation, but justice would not be done to the occasion were mentioned omitted of Miss Murray's exquisite rendering of the solo 'My Mother Bids Me,' and the charming little ballad 'Somebody.'"

The initial success of the club encouraged the members to begin planning to enlarge it and in 1887 three tennis courts were constructed behind the building. By then the bi-weekly entertainments had become so popular that more space was needed for them. Plans were made to add a bowling alley and large hall for amateur theatricals and other programs. In November 1889 the architect of the original building, W.C. Hazlitt, submitted plans for adding two bowling alleys below the first floor, moving the billiard room to an expanded first floor, and devoting most of the second floor to an auditorium with stage and dressing rooms. By December 1890 construction was complete with a grand opening.

The club continued to be a social hub through secession from Bloomfield in 1895 and into the new century. But its eventual demise might have begun when the women of Glen Ridge started organizing in 1905 for their own club. Meeting first in the Glen Ridge Club, they planned for a new building that was eventually constructed in 1924. It stood next to what was henceforth referred to as "The Glen Ridge Men's Club."

Women were no longer confined to a club only on Wednesdays and together with the growing popularity of golf, with competition from the Glen Ridge Golf Club, and no doubt the effects of the depression, the membership of the Men's Club began to decline. Finally in 1933 the members reluctantly closed the club – even holding a wake in its memory – and it was demolished to make way for the new Glen Ridge Post Office building completed in 1937.

Herb Addison

Just My Type

If readers have wondered about the display typeface used in *The Gaslamp*, it's called

Victorian

and sometimes "Fetch" (that's the digital version used here). But in Victorian times it was almost certainly not called "Victorian." It's appropriate for a newsletter in a town that boasts many Victorian era homes and buildings. Ornate and decorative type like this was typical of the time and it's not a stretch to say that Victorian era houses in Glen Ridge are also ornate and decorative. Its designer is unknown.

The typeface used in the text throughout *The Gaslamp* is called

Palatino

and its elegant and restrained look contrasts nicely with the ornate Victorian type. Palatino was designed by Hermann Zapf, one of the greatest typographers of the 20th century. Zapf was born in

Nürnberg in 1918 and grew up in the turbulent years in Germany after WW I. He eventually settled in Frankfurt where he designed his first type in 1938 for a Frankfurt type foundry. After WW II, he returned to Frankfurt as a book designer and resumed designing types. In 1948 he designed the initial version of Palatino, named for the Italian writing master of the 16th century Giambattista Palatino. It's probably his most widely used type. Our digital version is called "Palatino Linotype."

Zapf went on to design over 200 typefaces, many of which are still in use. Some are found on today's personal computers (with various digital names).

In the early 1960s Zapf realized that computers offered a high level of precision in type design. Finding no interest in Germany, he came to the U.S. and was enthusiastically received and offered many opportunities. He decided to remain in Germany – while commuting to the U.S. – where he remains today in his 90s still active in digital type design.

Glen Ridge Historical Society Shop

Great gifts for yourself and your friends

Item	Members	Nonmembers
Glen Ridge Centennial Book 1895-1995 Illustrated history of Glen Ridge published in 1996 in connection with its Centennial	\$18.00	\$20.00
Glen Ridge Centennial DVD 1895-1995 Videos and stills from GR history with Town Historian, Sally Meyer, teaching school children	\$13.00	\$15.00
Glen Ridge Historic District Brochure Guide to the historic district with text, map and pictures of historic buildings past and present	\$1.00	\$2.00
Note Cards of Vintage Post Cards (12) Scenes of the train station, Moffett Mill, Glen and early gazebo, GR School, GR Hall, Men's Club	\$13.00	\$15.00
Prints of 1906 Maps (framed) Price of each of two Map of North end and map of South end showing lots and owners (from 1906 Mueller Atlas)	\$225.00*	\$250.00*
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To purchase any of these items please send a check with your order to:

Glen Ridge Historical Society
P.O. Box 164
Glen Ridge, NJ 07028

*Please contact Sally Meyer about
about delivery arrangements for the
framed maps: (973) 239-2674

Or you can order them online at: glenridgehistory.org



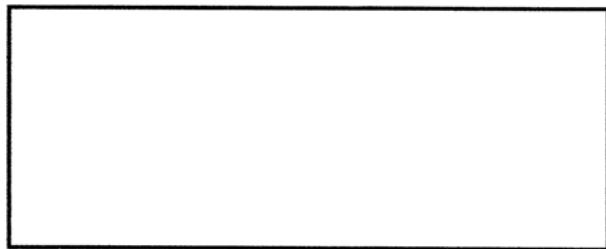
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HOLIDAY PARTY DECEMBER 7, 2011

Coming Events

Saturday, November 19, 2011 – New Jersey in the Crucible of the Civil War; Princeton University. Includes Annual Cunningham Lecture: Eric Foner, DeWitt Clinton Professor of History, Columbia University, who will discuss his Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery*. Info and registration at www.state.nj.us/state/historical/index.html.

December 23, 2011 opening – Shaping Modernity: Design 1880-1980; Museum of Modern Art, NYC. A new installation of the Architecture and Design Galleries features a selection of visionary objects, graphics, architectural fragments, and textiles from the Museum's collection that reveal the attempts of successive generations to shape their experience of living in the modern world.

News Briefs

December 1, 2011, opening – A major new permanent installation of a The New Galleries for the Art of the Arab Lands, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia, and Later South Asia; Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC. More than one thousand works from the preeminent collection of the museum's Department of Islamic Art—one of the most comprehensive gatherings of this material in the world—will return to view this fall after ten years in a completely renovated, expanded, and reinstalled suite of fifteen galleries. The organization of the galleries by geographical area will emphasize the rich diversity of the Islamic world, over a span of thirteen hundred years, by underscoring the many distinct cultures within its fold. It's an exhibit not to be missed.