



GLEN RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY THE GASLAMP

Illuminating Our Past

February 2016 Vol. XXXVIII No. 3



President's Letter

Quadrageennial of the Bicentennial

MY SINCERE THANKS to Kendra and Michael Poster for graciously hosting our annual holiday party. Their stately historic home and its fabulous new kitchen were much admired by our members.

Thanks, too, to board member Megan Connolly, who organized our first-ever gingerbread decorating event. Participants transformed over 35 houses into fanciful examples of edible architecture.

It has been 40 years since Glen Ridge joined the rest of nation in a festive reflection on its past. Our February program will re-examine the happenings and aftermath of that year-long celebration of America's bicentennial. The broad-based plans of the Bicentennial Committee fueled patriotic feelings in every age group and set the stage for founding the Glen Ridge Historical Society and establishing a historic district. Come laugh at pictures that show costumed participants alongside 1970s onlookers in sideburns and polyester pants. The slide presentation will take place at the Ridgewood Avenue train station on February 25 at 7:30 p.m.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act. On April 7 at 7:00 p.m., the Glen Ridge Public Library will co-host a program entitled "The National Register of Historic Places: The Role it Plays in Our Local Communities." Percentage-wise, Glen Ridge

has the largest historic district in New Jersey on both the state and national registers. The speaker, Kathleen Galop, Esq., is a historic preservation consultant at Preservation Possibilities in Maplewood.

It's time to nominate a restoration project for the annual Preservation Award. Last year's winner was 16 Ridgewood Avenue. Criteria for the award include quality craftsmanship in a historically significant manner in the preservation or restoration of the exterior of a home. We have given the award each year since 1985. To nominate your own project or that of a neighbor, please contact Karin Robinson for an application at karinrobinson.

The award will be presented at our annual meeting on April 21.

In closing I'd like to acknowledge the branch manager of the Boiling Springs Savings Bank, Daniel Fragale, and his staff for their unwavering support of our efforts. For the past two and a half years as second-floor tenants of the bank, the Terry Webster Museum has expanded our visibility in the community and greatly increased the number of our visitors. I look forward to the continuation of our friendly relationship. **Sally Meyer**



Bicentennial hijinks, courtesy of George Luedeman.



News and Goings-On

Slide show. Town historian Sally Meyer will look back on the Bicentennial. It wasn't just a big party but the impetus for founding the Historical Society and establishing the Historic District. At the Ridgewood Avenue train station on February 25 at 7:30 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

Public lecture. Kathleen Galop, a historic preservation

consultant in Maplewood, will recount the successes of the National Register of Historic Places. Come to the Glen Ridge Public Library on April 7 at 7 p.m.

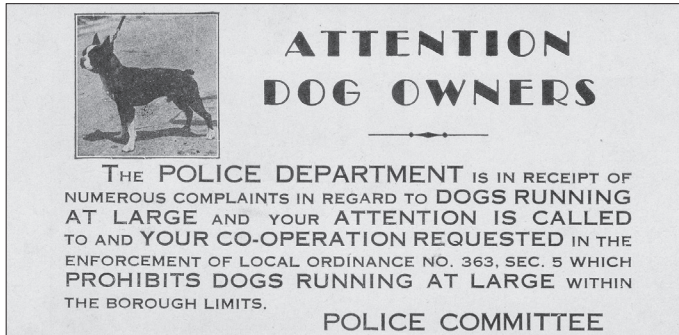
1906 maps for sale. Reprints from the famous 1906 A.H. Mueller Atlas of Essex County are available for \$100, or \$80 for members. Email us at glenridgehs@gmail.com.

News From the Town Historian

From Runaway Horse Carts to Stolen Silverware

FOR MANY PEOPLE, reading the weekly police blotter is inexplicably alluring. From recent experience, I've discovered that reading the blotter over a 42-year period is even more so. It's like taking a college class in criminal sociology.

During the Great Depression, WPA workers living in the borough compiled 16 typewritten volumes dealing with the history of Glen Ridge (1895–1937), as part of the



New Jersey State Library Project. Subjects included everything from schools to streets and churches to clubs. Coming across a photograph of the first Glen Ridge police motorcycle (see photo at right, from 1913) prompted me to read the volume on the Police Department. It includes excerpts from the police blotter, annual reports of the Police Committee, and newspaper accounts from the scrapbook of the borough clerk, John Brown. A handwritten note by Cora Hendee, the library director, reads: "Not to be given to students."

A year after it broke with Bloomfield, Glen Ridge had five police officers. Their salary was \$50 a month. Uniforms included a \$3.75 pistol and second-hand badges from Montclair. On February 11, 1896, burglars stole furs, clothing, and 11 pieces of silverware from a house on Highland Avenue. Burglaries, especially second-story jobs, would become the main category of crime.

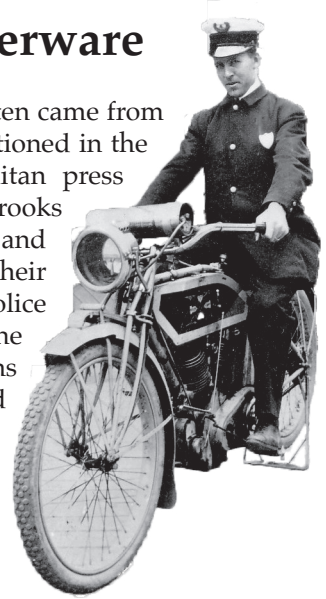
In-house theft by maids, chauffeurs, laundresses, and gardeners was some-

times an issue, but suspects often came from out of town. Travel plans mentioned in the social pages of the metropolitan press guaranteed empty houses for crooks from Brooklyn, Staten Island, and Philadelphia. Many times their plans were thwarted by a police force that knew nearly everyone in town. After a few questions and a pocket search that turned up jimmies, flashlights, skeleton keys, and cotton gloves, would-be thieves were sent to the lock-up in the basement of the train station.

One of the more jarring elements of the police blotter is the disparaging and unapologetic use of racial and ethnic descriptors. On December 27, 1909, Mrs. Zabriskie of Hillside Avenue left a bundle of shirts on the back porch and "when the Chinaman called the bundle was gone." She "saw a Jew trading pots and pans for old cloth," but wasn't sure if he was the thief. On October 28, 1927, police in Darien, Conn., "wired that they were holding a Japanese" who was driving a car owned by David Kay of Park

Avenue. He was released after Kay assured them he had given the man permission to borrow his car to visit a friend.

Lively tales abound of errant horse carts, straying cows, stolen hens, and rabid dogs. Just like today, bicycles were stolen, children ran away from home, and cars sped on Ridgewood Avenue. From 1921 to 1927, so-called safety isles adjacent to the trolley line on Bloomfield Avenue were the site of many serious—and several fatal—accidents. The borough installed flashing beacon lights at the corner of Ridgewood Avenue and Washington Street in August 1922. Two months later a car going south on Ridgewood struck the light and moved it south about 12 feet. **Sally Meyer**



Cardboard perp and police dog from Belgium, 1910. All images courtesy of the Glen Ridge Public Library Historical Collection



Boy Scouts in the 1950s

Rocky Mountain Trek

IN THE SUMMER of 1952 I was one of 11 Boy Scouts from Glen Ridge who joined Troop 3 Scoutmaster George Gimbel on a 73-day cross-country adventure. The trip took in 22 states and two Canadian provinces. Nineteen fifty-two was years before the construction of the Interstate Highway System, so all of our travel was via state and local roads. We saw the country up-close. We camped out every night in national parks, state forests, and Boy Scout camps.

We departed from Glen Ridge on June 17, just a couple of days after the start of school vacation. The prior three months we had worked together to refit Gimbel's Jeep truck with seating benches, storage chests, canvas curtains, a galvanized roof to carry two 18-foot aluminum canoes, and a trailer for tents, packs, provisions, and two more canoes. Our itinerary called for us to travel south and west through the Ozarks to Little Rock, Ark., and continue west through Oklahoma and the Texas panhandle.

Driving through the Ozark Mountains, it became obvious that the local lifestyle was worlds away from anything I had experienced in Glen Ridge. By the time we reached Drumwright, Okla., with oil wells in all directions, the upholstered green benches in the Jeep had turned a dusty brown. In early July, we reached Philmont Boy Scout Ranch in eastern New Mexico, where we spent nearly a week with fellow scouts from all over the country. One evening while there, we watched as professional rodeo cowboys at the Raton Rodeo wrestled steer to the ground and rode bareback on broncos. Next we headed north to Colorado. After establishing our campsite in Rocky Mountain National Park, five scouts, including me, headed off on a two-day hike to the summit of Long's Peak. Halfway up the open mountain face we encountered a July snow storm. Very scary!

In northwestern Wyoming we visited Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks. It was here that I celebrated my 14th birthday on July 22. We rigged masts on our

canoes with lodge pole pine trunks that we found in the woods, adding ponchos as sails and driftwood as daggerboards. Sailing in the shadows of the Tetons was unforgettable. One fine day we embarked on a canoe trip down the Snake River in Wyoming. We linked up with a local guide who assured us he had everything under control. Not so! We had to rescue two scouts as their canoe disappeared downstream near Jackson Hole.

Some of my clearest memories are of Glacier National Park in northern Montana, where we hiked to the forest fire observation towers and were educated by the rangers in charge. We also spent a memorable day hiking on the surface of glaciers and dropping rocks down the crevasses to get a sense of their depths. One night after falling sleep on the shore of Saint Mary Lake, we were interrupted by unfamiliar sounds. About 30 feet beyond our tents were two bears competing for the food we had suspended by rope from a tree limb. Eventually they were successful and wandered off.

One of our frequent distractions was flat tires. We became Nascar-proficient at unexpected pit stops. The most memorable took place in the Blackfoot Confederacy territory of northern Montana. While changing the tire we heard unusual noises that sounded like distant firecrackers followed by whistling zings. Turned out two guys on the next ridge were using our truck-mounted canoes

for target practice. That tire change set a speed record.

Our scoutmaster, an engineer by profession, included non-touristy visits across the country, such as a refinery, copper mines, and a power plant. My father, Herb, also arranged a visit to General Motors in Detroit through a college friend who was a vice-president. On our arrival at the outskirts of Detroit, we received a police escort to the downtown headquarters, where we were photographed and interviewed. We arrived back in Glen Ridge on August 28, just in time for the school year. **Ted Meyer**

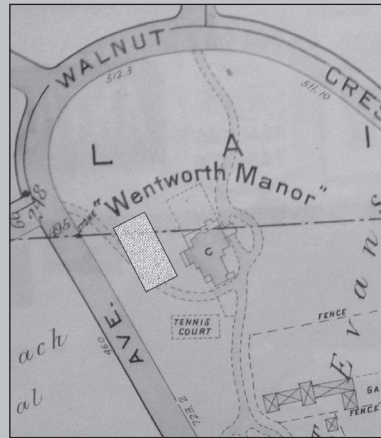


Mountainside Hospital School of Nursing

Mountainside Care

This spring students from the last graduating class from the current location of Mountainside Hospital School of Nursing will receive their diplomas. The school was established in 1892 shortly after the founding of the hospital the previous year. It occupies the former site of Wentworth Manor, home of the artist George Inness Jr. and, later, of businessman and art collector William T. Evans, founder of the Montclair Art Museum. Evans built the first residence for nurses in 1908 on Highland Avenue. He fell on hard times and sold the manor to David Mills, a spark-plug manufacturer, who donated part of the vast grounds to the hospital in 1922 and built the Ella C. Mills Home as a student residence. The building was expanded in 1931 and again in 1940. In August 2014 HackensackUMC, current owners of the hospital, announced plans to demolish the complex to erect a medical office building. The nursing school will continue at Montclair State University.

Sally Meyer



1906 map showing Wentworth Manor. Box marks site of main school building.

OVER 3,000 PEOPLE have graduated from Mountainside Hospital School of Nursing since the first class of 1894, and our journeys have all been unique. I owe all of my professional success to this amazing place and am sickened that it is closing in June. What I share with you now is my story

I made the choice to become a nurse in the fifth-grade, inspired by a science teacher who taught basic anatomy. I went from dissecting chicken hearts to knowing that nursing was for me. My resolve deepened when my father was involved in a terrible car accident and suffered brain damage. I entered the halls of Mills Residence on September 14, 1970, as my mother lay in a hospital bed in Plainfield dying. The school became not only my safe place, but also my home. I was surrounded by people who helped me stay centered, in an environment of purpose. What is astounding to me is that I also received a full scholarship from an unknown donor. To this day I do not know who did this for me. Had it not been for that scholarship, I would not have been able to stay in school.

Diploma schools of nursing then were very structured, some might call rigid. We had to sign out of the dorm

the end, snuck her out in my laundry bag. In another silly incident, we found a toilet in the attic, hauled it to a classmate's room, and painted it pink. All of this helped us find an outlet to lower the stress of the workload.

The instructors instilled in us what I have come to call "Mountainside care." We put in over 1,500 hours of clinical work in our three years. (Today the program is completed in two years.) Diploma nurses were responsible from week two of freshman year for providing hands-on care to a wide variety of sick and injured people of all ages: newborns, children, emergency-room victims, and critically ill

patients in intensive care. We had multiple rotations in a wide variety of clinical settings, as well as

hours of lectures, page after page of note-taking, and other assignments that prepared us for the rigors of nursing. As graduation approached, I was conflicted—knowing that I was ready to leave, but sad at the same time. Nursing school was all that I'd had in my life for three years and I would now be leaving for the unknown.

Was I prepared to be a Registered Nurse? Absolutely! On June 7, 1973, the date of my graduation finally arrived and I proudly

Student nurses at Mountainside, from The Glen Ridge Paper, Sept. 12, 1941. Used by permission



put the black stripe on my cap and my school of nursing pin on my uniform knowing that I was ready for the world of nursing. The nursing boards came and went and I passed the exams on the first try! I have not looked back ever since, and I have enjoyed a rich, full nursing career in gerontology, my true love, for over 42 years. I have been a staff nurse in a hospital, in multiple long-term care facilities, and for home-care agencies. For the past 24 years, I have taught at a county vocational school, where I have taken the tough love of my instructors and in turn taught hundreds of high-school students how to become Certified Nurse Aides or Emergency Medical Technicians. Because of the rigor of my nursing education, I have been able to give back what I was given during my journey through nursing school. I provide regular care for a woman who is herself a graduate of the Mountainside Hospital School of Nursing, and she rates my students on how well they give Mountainside care.

The nursing profession has changed dramatically over the decades. It has morphed from a single-woman-only profession to one that welcomes and needs diversity. Men are great nurses and now make up one in ten of all nurses. Nursing has gone from providing basic hygienic care to becoming extremely specialized and high-tech. Registered



Postcard showing nursing school in the 1930s

profession, I've been involved in our alumnae association and have been able to help students with scholarships. It has brought me great satisfaction to help others just as someone did for me. This is one of the many reasons that I am saddened that the school is closing. To know that no one else will be able to attend this wonderful institution makes me cry. The Mountainside nursing program may carry on, but it will not be the same.

Amy Hotaling Berkemeyer

Amy Berkemeyer, Class of '73, is president of the Mountainside Hospital Alumnae Association. She lives in West Milford, N.J.

Nurses are encouraged to earn advanced degrees and practice medicine on their own as Nurse Practitioners. Whereas nurses used to scrub floors and make baby formula from scratch, they now administer anesthesia, manage huge corporations, serve in the military, and travel the world providing care to any and all in need.

Out of gratitude to Mountainside and dedication to the pro-



GLEN RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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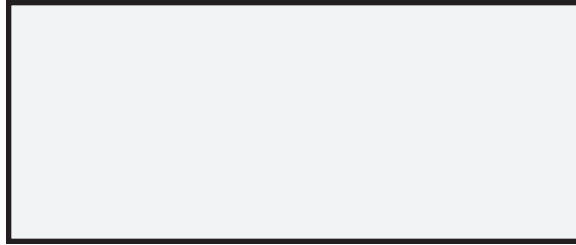
THE GASLAMP

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SLIDE PRESENTATION
AMERICA'S BICENTENNIAL REVISITED
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Upcoming Art Installations at the Whitney

Whitney Museum.

The new Whitney Museum in New York is making inventive use of its space. The fifth floor of the museum extends the full width of the building and has panoramic views of the city to the east and of the Hudson River to the west. The museum says it is the largest column-free museum exhibition space in New York. Soon to open in the space is an exhibition called *Open Plan*, in five parts. First is Andrea Fraser, a multimedia artist, who will explore the relationship between prisons and museums, both of which are enjoying construction booms (Feb. 26–March 13). Next is Lucy Dodd, who will create a painting in the space that “emphasizes the ritual and performance of painting” (March 17–20). Michael Heizer is third with photographic projections of his 1970 earthworks installation, *Actual Size: Munich Rotary* (March 25–April 10). Then Cecil Taylor, a pianist, will play a series of live performances of free jazz (April 15–24). Visual artist and filmmaker Steve McQueen will conclude the exhibition with works based on documents compiled by the FBI on Paul Robeson, the African-American singer, actor, and activist (April 29–May 14).



Photograph by Nic Lehoux 2015. Courtesy of the Whitney Museum of American Art

Terry S. Webster Museum. The Glen Ridge Historical Society maintains its own small museum with exhibits on local history. We keep a file on every building in town, containing the research that volunteers conducted to justify establishing the Historic District, as well as other materials we have collected—an essential resource if you’re planning home renovations or are just curious. Located above Boiling Springs Savings Bank, the museum is open the second Saturday of every month from 9 a.m. to noon or by appointment with Sally Meyer at (973) 239-2674.