



GLEN RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THE GASLAMP

Illuminating Our Past

November 2016 Vol. XXXIX No. 2



President's Letter

Save the Date for Our Annual Holiday Party!

THE ANNUAL MEMBERS-ONLY holiday party takes place on Friday, December 16, at 43 Wildwood Terrace, a distinctive shingle-style house that was built circa 1894. Our gracious hosts will be Ryan and Megan Blank. The back of the house was extensively altered in 1938 when the original 'L' shape was filled in. While the interior has been updated to meet modern standards, the 1930s footprint is intact. The festivities begin at 7:30 p.m. and I hope to see many of you there.

The second annual gingerbread-house decorating event is scheduled for Sunday, December 11, from 1 to 3 p.m. at Linden Avenue School. An assortment of edible building materials will surely inspire your inner architect. Members have priority signup privileges for the event, which is limited to 40 families. An email with the details will be sent soon.

We are in the process of updating the *Directory of Resto-*

ration Resources with a goal of publishing next spring. It compiles member recommendations for architects, contractors, suppliers, and businesses that provide for home restoration and upkeep. The greater the input, the better the results, so

please send us your suggestions. Questionnaires were included with the September issue of *The Gaslamp*. They are also available on our website.

Could you help us with the Community Alliance Program at Boiling Springs Savings Bank? We need three more individuals or businesses to open an account at the bank to become eligible for a quarterly reward. No monies are withdrawn from the donor's ac-

count—all donation dollars come directly from Boiling Springs. If you already have an account but have not yet designated an organization for support, we would be very grateful to be so named.

Sally Meyer



43 Wildwood Terrace, circa 1915

News and Goings-On

Annual holiday party. All members will receive a mailed invitation to our party at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, December 16, at 43 Wildwood Terrace.

Gingerbread decorating event. Come to Linden Avenue School on Sunday, December 11, at 1 p.m. Capacity is limited, so please sign up as soon as you get our email.

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.

Gaslamp ornament. A beautiful custom brass ornament featuring the iconic image of a gaslamp (*right*) is on sale

for \$15. It comes in a red presentation box and includes an insert with a brief town history. Out-of-town delivery is available for an extra charge. Supplies are limited. Order forms can be found on our website, www.glenhistory.org. The ornaments are also sold during open hours at the Terry S. Webster Museum and the public library.



A School for a School

IN SEPTEMBER 1928 Marion and Nadine Borden opened the Sherwood School for Girls at 71 Ridgewood Avenue. The two sisters provided a progressive education with personalized guidance based on the tutorial methods of English private schools. Four years later, they moved to larger quarters at 204 Ridgewood Avenue. The 30-room house had been built on five acres of rolling hills in 1886 by local developer Asabel Darwin. It was described by some as the most beautiful house in New Jersey. The gray traprock and red-brick trim were enhanced by Gothic-style stained-glass windows, a covered veranda, and a glass conservatory.

Sherwood School taught children from nursery through high school. Students were recruited from the entire metropolitan area. A brochure promised that “nearby homes with their picturesque landscape gardens afford an atmosphere of beauty and refinement not found in the busy sections of cities.” In the 1930s non-day students could board either full time or during the week. Annual room and tuition cost \$1,200 to \$1,400.

There were five classes a day from 8:40 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and three one-hour study periods. An otherwise traditional curriculum included the study of French in all 12 grades. In the belief that “healthful exercise both indoors and outdoors tends to make an active mind,” recreation was mandated from 3:15 to 5:15

p.m. Tennis, volleyball, and basketball were customary, with horseback riding available for an extra charge. The students published a monthly newspaper and a quarterly magazine. Other activities included trips to New York City museums

and the Metropolitan Opera, the annual school play, and formal teas.

In the 1940s, as part of their progressive philosophy, the Bordens recruited the services of William Glenn of the New York University Testing and Advisement Center, and he used the school as a testing ground for his revolutionary system of grading pupils for advancement through psychological and aptitude testing. At the end of the decade, the school went co-educational, and boarding was no longer an option. By the late 1950s, enrollment was at an all-time high.

The public school population was also having a growth spurt. In 1966 the town decided to build a new high school on the sites of 196, 204, and 216 Ridgewood Avenue. Negotiations for the purchase of 196 and 216 Ridgewood Avenue went well, but the Borden sisters held out. The town condemned the property and paid them \$104,900. They reestablished

their school as part of the Carteret School in West Orange. To be dispatched against their will after years of tireless effort seemed to refute the truth of the school motto, *Finis Coronat Opus*, or “The End Crowns the Work.”

Sally Meyer



Marion and Nadine Borden, founders of the now-defunct Sherwood School. Photo reprinted in full with permission from Worrall Community Newspapers, Inc. / The Glen Ridge Paper, August 28, 1952



GLEN RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THE GASLAMP

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Latecomers to Freedom

NEW JERSEY IS a Northern state. It would be easy to assume that slavery didn't exist here or didn't amount to much. Unfortunately, that was not the case. Slavery existed in New Jersey from its very earliest days as a colony through the end of Civil War. Not only did New Jersey have the second highest number of slaves in the North, after New York, it was slow to free them. And our part of the state was especially slow. In fact, the number of slaves in Essex County rose by nearly a third in the final decade of the 18th century, the largest percentage increase in the state, at a time when New England and Pennsylvania had already enacted abolition. Local newspapers were filled with classified ads for "Negro boys" and "wenches," as well as notices of runaway slaves.

When New Jersey was part of the Dutch colony of New Netherlands, Dutch privateers seized slaves from Spanish ships and brought them into the city of New Amsterdam. Some were given their freedom; some were kept as slaves and forced to work. By 1664, when the English took over, the colony had about 300 slaves scattered over a region that extended from Connecticut to Delaware.

Slavery became institutionalized under the English. The new rulers of New Jersey wanted to attract settlers, so they granted land to qualified "freemen." Able-bodied white men were entitled to 150 acres, plus 150 acres for each "able" servant—white men or women who voluntarily worked for the landholder—and 75 acres for each "weak" servant, either an indentured white person or an African slave over the age of 14. Whereas an indentured servant received the 75-acre allotment after his or her term of service, a slave had no hope of ever owning land.

The first piece of legislation that directly mentioned slavery in New Jersey passed in 1675 and forbade the trans-

portation or harboring of slaves who had left their master or mistress without permission. From that year on, the documents relating to slavery in N.J.



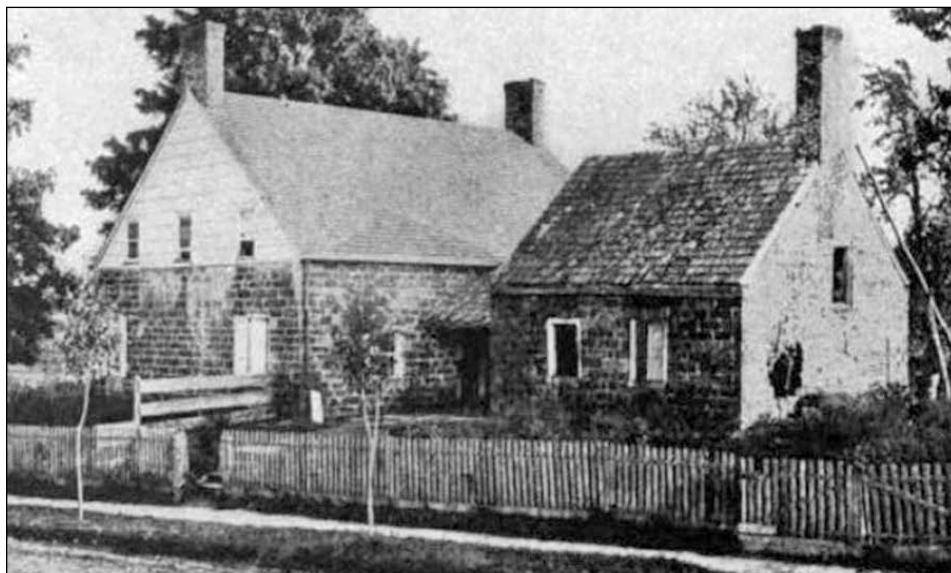
Harriet and Lafayette Hoag. The latter was an ex-slave from Virginia who settled in Rutherford after the Civil War. Courtesy of Meadowlands Museum

became more numerous, indicating that slavery was increasingly common. In 1695 so-called slave courts were established to mete out (severe) punishment to slaves who were convicted of murder and other felonies. The courts also levied fines on owners whose slaves were convicted of theft.

In 1702 Queen Anne and her suc-

cessor, George I, began to promote slavery in the New World more actively. They made it difficult to free slaves by demanding that the owners post a £200 bond, meant to reimburse the colony should it have to care for the freed person. Bergen County also saw an influx of planters from Barbados, who brought in slaves and set up plantations in what is now the Meadowlands. In 1726 approximately 2,600 slaves lived in New Jersey (8 percent of the population); by 1745, there were about 4,700 (7.5 percent). The founding families of Newark and its environs held slaves. Thomas Davis, who owned much of the land that became Bloomfield and Glen Ridge, bequeathed five slaves to his sons when he died in 1739.

Some rebelled. The *New York Gazette* reported a revolt in Somerville in 1734. The correspondent wrote that slaves in the area were under the impression that local slaveowners were ignoring an order from King George II to free them. When the plan for an uprising became known, 30 blacks were arrested. One was hanged, several others had their ears cut off, and the rest were whipped. We have no independent documentation of the alleged conspiracy, but white New Jerseyans were clearly on edge, and the colony tightened its restrictions on slaves: restricting the number on any given farm,



Kitchen and slave quarters behind the original Thomas Cadmus house on Washington Street in Bloomfield. From Bloomfield, Old and New by Joseph Folsom

banning them from carrying hunting rifles when not in the presence of their masters, and forbidding them from assembling, being on the streets at night, or traveling more than five miles from home without written permission. Those who fought back were sometimes burned at the stake. In 1741 Daniel Harrison of Orange sent the Essex County Freeholders a bill for the wood he had used to burn two transgressors.

Among white colonists, the main opposition to slavery came from Quakers, especially through the efforts of preacher John Woolman of Mount Holly in the 1750s and '60s. Quakers freed the slaves they owned and became the major force behind ending the institution, especially in the western part of the colony. Other New Jerseyans started to join them, but it was a long and painful process.

By the start of the Revolution there were about 4,500 slaves in New Jersey, a little less than 7.5 percent of the population. The British offered freedom to any black who joined their cause, and thousands took them up on the offer. Runaway slaves swelled the population of British-held New York and, at the end of the war, were evacuated to Nova Scotia or London. The British recorded their names in a document they called the *Book of Negroes*. Thomas Davis's grandson Caleb had a slave, Ceasar Jones, who escaped from his homestead in Bloomfield and departed with the British.

Other African Americans served

courageously in the Continental Army. One was Cudjo, the slave of Benjamin Coe in Newark; after the war, Coe set Cudjo free and gave him an acre of downtown real estate. Many fought for America's freedom from Britain only to be forced back into bondage.

Revolutionary ideals inspired some whites—notably future governor Joseph Bloomfield, after whom the town is named—to oppose slavery. But in the near term, the war entrenched the institution, because wartime devastation led whites to fear further economic instability from abolition. New Jersey was the last Northern state to act against slavery—and even then, progress was fitful. In 1786 the Assembly banned the importation of slaves from Africa and eased some of the impediments to freeing slaves, although a slave could still not be freed if he or she was under the age of 21. The Gradual Abolition Act, passed in 1804, stipulated that every child born to a slave after July 4 of that year had to be given freedom at age 25 for men and 21 for women.

But no one who wanted to own slaves in New Jersey was ever forced to give them up. The law was riddled with loopholes. One clause let slave-owners formally abandon children and "place" them in the owner's household at state expense. In other words, slave-owners could become foster parents of slave children, not only retaining effective ownership, but getting subsidized to do so. The effect was state-sponsored slavery. In 1809 disbursements for

abandoned slave children devoured 40 percent of the state budget, and the legislature scrapped the system in 1811. That was a mixed blessing for slaves, however, since it eliminated the only legal incentive for slaveholders to register their chattel. Many began to keep slaves off the books.

Nor did the law end the slave trade. In 1810, Joseph Munn, who owned a tavern in what is now downtown Montclair, sold his slave Jem to a resident of Bergen County for \$275.

The law thus created degrees of unfreedom—a confusing hierarchy of slaves, bound laborers, and free people. In Bloomfield, there was the example of Massy, a slave of Caleb Davis's son, Joseph. In 1796, Joseph's daughter Sarah married Benjamin Coe's grandson Sayers, and among the possessions she brought to her new household was Massy, then 12 years old. Massy later married another of the couple's slaves and had five children. She was a slave for life, but her children served only until adulthood. Her eldest son, Peter, gained his freedom in 1831, but decided to remain with the Coe family—illustrating how the interdependence of slave and master was more complicated than a question of legal ownership.

White New Jerseyans had conflicted attitudes toward slavery. Few were troubled by its persistence, and the largest abolitionist organization in the state dissolved in the early 1810s. The state's original constitution provided for universal suffrage, but the legislature stripped blacks (and white women) of the vote in 1807. In the 1830s thousands of whites protesting an abolitionist speech rioted in Newark, ransacking homes, shops, and a church.

At the same time, most whites opposed the interstate slave trade and the expansion of slavery into the West. The legislature cracked down on slaveholders who deported young slaves to the Deep South, where they lost

*Trans all men by the Property
that I cannot before of Property in
the County of Bergen in the State
of New Jersey for a considerable
of the sum of fifty Dollars to me
in hand paid (the receipt whereof is
herby acknowledged) by Israel Crane
of Bloomfield in the County of Essex
& State of New Jersey a slave & sold
by the said Israel Crane a certain Negro
Boy named Joe a slave to have &
to hold the said Negro boy Joe
a slave for & during the term of
Nineteen Years from the twenty
fifth day of December next ending
& at that time when the period
of his time the slave expired a
slave the said Negro boy*

Ten Dollars Reward.
RAN-AWAY from the subscriber on the
night of the 15th inst. a black boy nam-
ed **BILL**, about 20 years of age but of small
stature; had with him one blue sailor jack-
et and trousers, striped swansdown vest—
Also a pair of thin shoes, two shirts one
white the other brown, besides other clothing
Also one pair of mixt blue and white stock-
ings and for hat. The above reward and all
reasonable charges will be paid to any per-
son who will return the said negro to his
master near Newark; or secure him in any
 Jail and give information thereof to the sub-
scriber.
ISRAEL C. CRANE.
N. B. Said boy was in company with an
Irish lad, about 19 years of age, but of small
venture and limps when he walks—it is sup-
posed they have taken the road to Philadel-
phia.
Newark, Oct. 17, 1816. 44-3w."

Prominent Montclair businessman Israel Crane held slaves even after abolition began in 1804. He bought Joe for \$50, according to a bill of sale in the Montclair Historical Society archives (far left). Crane posted about a runaway in the Newark Centinel of Freedom, October 22, 1816 (left).

even the minimal rights they had in New Jersey. Gradual abolition, for all its injustice, did phase out the institution. The 1800 census recorded 12,422 slaves in the state. By 1810, there were 10,851; by 1820, 7,557. (These numbers are imprecise because census-takers may not have properly accounted for gradations of slave status.) Many freed blacks moved to Newark, which became the center of a thriving African American community.

Samuel M. Ward of Montclair liberated his slave Anthony Thompson in his will, executed in 1822. Thompson stayed on to serve Ward's widow for six more years. Afterwards, he bought a house at Tory Corner in West Orange.

The Essex County Manumissions Book has 95 listings between 1827 and 1853, showing that many of our area's leading families, such as the Dodds and Baldwins, held slaves well into the 1830s. Nathaniel Crane manumitted the slaves that worked on his father-in-law's farm in Montclair sometime before his death in 1832. His will left a house and six acres to ex-slaves James and Susan Howe. The house still stands at 369 Claremont Avenue.

Another of the final generation of slaves in Essex County was Nancy, held by the Speers in Nutley. She lived over the detached kitchen at the family's house, which still exists on Chestnut Street in that town. Apparently, she was famous locally for her molasses



Howe house on Claremont Avenue in Montclair, once owned by former slaves James and Susan Howe. Photo by Mike Farrelly



Abraham Speer House in downtown Nutley, home to one of the last slaves in Essex County, Nancy. Photo by Mike Farrelly

cookies. Given her freedom in 1834, she chose to stay with the family, which legally had to provide for her in old age.

Through the 1830s and 1840s, the abolition movement stirred back to life. Intrusions by Southern slave catchers, who burst into Jersey households in search of fugitive slaves, made slavery a law-and-order issue for whites, and the legislature formally abolished slavery in 1846. Even then, it wasn't completely gone. All former slaves who were still in captivity were now to be called "apprentices." They did have some new rights; for example, they could file legal complaints about their working conditions. Nonetheless, they were to remain apprentices until their owner decided to manumit them. As of 1860 there were officially still 18 so-called apprentices left; the true number could be closer to 300, according to historian James Gigantino of the University of Arkansas, an expert on abolition. Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 did not apply to them. The institution known as slavery did not end in New Jersey until the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment.

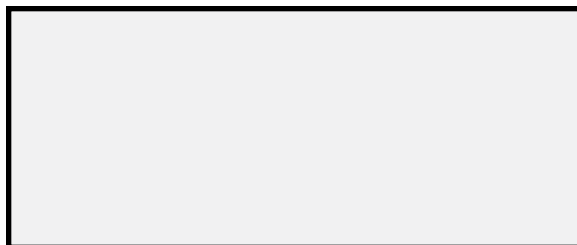
A number of books elaborate on the history of slavery in New Jersey. One of the first was Henry S. Cooley's *A Study of Slavery in New Jersey* from 1896. Russell Shorto's *The Island at the Center of the World* offers a glimpse into colonial Dutch life. Clement Price's *Freedom Not*

Far Distant: A Documentary History of Afro Americans in New Jersey describes slavery and the laws governing it. Price was also one of the authors who contributed to a project called "New Jersey Afro Americans From Colonial Times to the Present." James Gigantino's *The Ragged Road to Abolition* analyzes the tortuous process of gradual abolition. Several academic articles also describe the steps involved in ending slavery here: "The Emancipation of Slaves in New Jersey" by D.H. Gardner; "Steal Away, Steal Away: A Guide to the Underground Railroad in New Jersey" by Giles Wright and Edward Wonkeryor; and "The Persistence of Slavery and Involuntary Servitude in a Free State (1685–1866)" by Simeon F. Moss. Useful websites include njlegallib.rutgers.edu/slavery/bibliog.html and slavenorth.com/newjersey.htm. The story of Anthony Thompson appears in a newsletter published by the Montclair Trust Company in the 1930s. That of Jem appears in *Things Old and New from Rutherford* by Margaret G. Riggs.

Mike Farrelly and George Musser

Mike Farrelly is the Montclair Township Historian. George Musser is the editor of *The Gaslamp*.

Address Service Requested



MEMBERS' HOLIDAY PARTY
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16

Current Events

Insecurities: Tracing Displacement and Shelter. Where can the world shelter and settle the millions of refugees fleeing their embattled homelands? *Insecurities: Tracing Displacement and Shelter* explores the ways in which contemporary architecture and design have addressed notions of sheltering refugees. Refugee camps, once considered temporary settlements, now have the makings of cities. The exhibition brings

together projects by architects, designers, and artists. Through January 22, 2017, at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

Icons of American Culture: History of New Jersey Diners. Dubbed "the land of diners," New Jersey's highways and main streets are dotted with silver air-streams and neon signs. The state also used to be the diner manufacturing in-

dustry's hub. This exhibition explores the rich history of the Garden State's favorite casual eatery through classic photographs and historical artifacts. Through December 31 at the Morris Museum in Morristown.

Whitney Biennial. With a history of exhibiting the most promising artists and provoking intense debate, the Whitney Biennial—the museum's signature exhibition—is the most important survey of the state of contemporary art in the United States. The Biennial, which began in 1932, presents invited work produced in the preceding two years. This will be its first time in the Whitney's new building in the Meatpacking District. Opens March 2017.



Nizip II, Container Camp. Tobias Hutzler, 2014. Courtesy of the artist and the Museum of Modern Art, New York