



GLEN RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# THE GASLAMP

Illuminating Our Past

November 2014 Vol. XXXVII No. 2



## President's Letter

## Save the Date for Our Annual Holiday Party

OUR ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY is scheduled for Friday, December 12. Our hosts will be Debbie Lebow and Tom Altier, owners of 105 Forest Avenue. The house was built in 1914 by John Koch, the 11th mayor of Glen Ridge. It retains many of its Craftsman-style details, including the original chestnut woodwork, leaded glass-fronted bookcase, hand-hammered fireplace accessories, and rustic light fixtures. The party is a members-only event. Look for your invitation in the mail.

This past summer, former president Karin Robinson and I were privileged to welcome George Webster and his daughter, Anne Webster Leight, to the Terry Webster Museum Room. They were very pleased with our new exhibition space and enjoyed reminiscing about Terry's role in the establishment of the historical society. We are most grateful to George for his generous support.

Thanks are also in order to several of our board members. George Musser, editor of *The Gaslamp*, is currently a Knight Science Journalism Fellow at MIT and Harvard. He is overseeing the publication of our newsletter long-distance, while taking classes on various scientific topics and how best to write about them for the public. Sarge Gardiner, George Azrak, and Karin Robinson ably led the the fall walking tour. The leisurely walk through the north end of Glen Ridge provided an eye-opening look at

the often underappreciated history and architecture of this section of Glen Ridge.

Looking for a holiday gift for lovers of Glen Ridge? A beautiful brass ornament featuring the iconic image of a gas lamp will be available for sale at the beginning of December. It will be similar in style to ornaments we offer of the Ridgewood Avenue train station and the gazebo in the Glen. Details to follow.

When you visit the Glen Ridge Public Library in December be sure to look in the display case on the first floor. Eileen Connolly will be setting up an exhibit of vintage ornaments and holiday cards that were donated to the historical society by Lois Schenck.

Two new initiatives are planned for the coming months. First, in an effort

to spread the word about our house files, we are organizing an open

house for local realtors. After they see the wealth of information we have gathered, we hope they will frequent the archives and encourage their clients to do the same. Second, we are planning an open house for senior citizens. These long-time residents have untold stories to share about life in Glen Ridge in the earlier years of the 20th century. Perhaps a visit to the museum will trigger memories that will lead to the telling of those tales.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the holiday party!

Sally Meyer



George Webster and Anne Webster Leight in front of our tribute wall to Terry

## News and Goings-On

**Holiday party.** All members will receive a mailed invitation to our party on Friday, December 12, at 105 Forest Avenue. Our hosts will be Debbie Lebow and Tom Altier.

**Museum hours.** Come read your house file and enjoy the exhibits in the Terry S. Webster Museum Room. 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.

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

**Facebook.** Visit us on Facebook for news, event notices, or just to Like us: [facebook.com/GRHistoricalSociety](https://www.facebook.com/GRHistoricalSociety).

From the Museum Room Archives

## That Championship Season

SEVENTY YEARS AGO, the Glen Ridge High School football team was awarded the state championship for the only time in its history. The team had already racked up an impressive record. Playing for the previous nine years in the Group I Suburban Conference, the Ridgers had won 38 games and tied two, out of 45. The 1943 team had won all of its conference games, losing only to its Group IV archrival, Montclair.

Yet before the '44 season started, hopes did not run high. Coach William Cartwell said he was "not at all optimistic." He believed he had eleven strong players, but no bench. Moreover, the team was "light," in the sense of having lost several key players, as well as in the literal sense of having too many lightweight. That meant the team could succeed only by executing a superior running and passing game.

Early scrimmages did not augur success. But then the team ran roughshod over East Orange's Clifford Scott High School and went on to defeat its group rivals by an average spread of 27 points. But it was not all smooth sailing. In the third game of the season, the Glen Ridge offense was stopped cold by a scrappy Verona team throughout the first half. It was only in the third quarter that the Ridgers' John Whitney intercepted a pass and dashed 70 yards for a touchdown, leading to an eventual 19-6 win. Even more agita was dished up two weeks later, when Caldwell shackled the Glen Ridge offense un-

til co-captain Jimmy Studwell ran 33 yards for a touchdown with only seven minutes left.

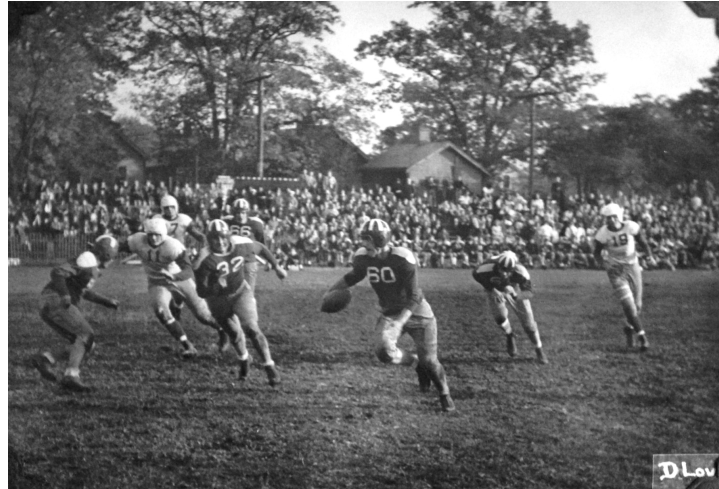
Next, Glen Ridge played Montclair, which, with Bloomfield, was the only unbeaten, untied team remaining in Group IV. So it was that 7,500 fans packed Hurrell

Field to see the Glen Ridge "gridsters" take on the Montclair "gridmen." Montclair scored a touchdown with only seven seconds remaining in the first half. But in the third and fourth quarters, the Ridgers scrabbled their way through a bulkier Mounties' line for two touchdowns, resulting in what the *Newark News* called the "No. 1 major upset of the season."

That left little Glen Ridge the indisputable choice for the *Newark Sunday Call's* state champion-

ship trophy. "'Cause our team was R-E-D H-O-T, and now the whole dog-goned borough is red hot and all steamed up!" crowed the *Glen Ridge Paper* on December 15. A Citizens' Committee with 39 members planned a townwide celebration for December 22. Players and coaches were treated to dinner at the Country Club, but the main event, to which all residents had been invited by postcard, was held at the Women's Club. The speakers of the evening, including Coach Butch Fortunato of Montclair and Coach Bill Foley of Bloomfield, paid lavish tribute not only to the team, but also to Cartwell. Sports columnist Gus Falzer, who officially presented the state trophy, told the players it was their "night to howl."

Elizabeth Baker



Ridgers defender Pike Sullivan intercepts a Millburn pass.



## GLEN RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Editor	George Musser
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The *Gaslamp* is published four times per year by the Glen Ridge Historical Society, P.O. Box 164, Glen Ridge, NJ 07028-0164. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Glen Ridge Historical Society, P.O. Box 164, Glen Ridge, NJ 07028-0164.

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*Windows: Repair, Replace, Or Just Leave Alone?*

## A House's Eyes on the World

YOU HAVE PROBABLY been subjected to commercial wisdom that you must replace the aged, inefficient windows in your historic house. Or you may have reached the same conclusion on your own after suffering through one too many drafty winters. But don't jump to conclusions.

Changing windows within the existing opening does not require a building permit, so it is not subject to review by the town's Historic Preservation Commission. This strikes many homeowners as desirable; however, you will miss the opportunity to have commentary from the professional architects serving on the commission. Their knowledge of what options are available is not likely to come from a salesperson. Not all products will suit the physical constraints of your house or maintain its historic look.

Windows are a major contributor to a building's character. Think of them as the eyes of the building's face, which determine the mood of the building as it presents itself to the world. Multiple factors create this effect: the relative proportions of the opening and the wall, the height-to-width ratio of the opening, the pattern of organization and subdivisions within the opening (known as muntin patterns), the treatment or detail of the framing surrounding the opening, and the grouping of openings.

Window replacement places special demands on the homeowner to adhere as closely as possible to the original detailing, material, profiles, and the setback of the glazing plane from the wall face. For example, when a multipaned sash is replaced by a single-paned sash, the building looks as though it is blankly staring into space. The encroachment into the glazed area by the sash and perimeter frame should be maintained as much as possible; changes in encroachment alter the proportion of the glazed openings, thus changing the expression of the building face. Since older buildings generally have larger windows than present-day standards, you need to obtain special subdivision patterns to match the existing ones, or you will get more lights for a given width—resulting in a jarring change in the proportion of the glazed openings.

A special concern is leaded-glass windows, in which small panes are held together with metal strips, or comes, rather than wood mullions. Glen Ridge has some superbly designed houses with such windows, which are works of art in their own right. No replacement can replicate the coming. Owners, beware of the window salesman who can "fix the problem"! You should consider al-

ternative means to improve thermal insulation without lessening the architectural quality of the original design.

Repairing rather than replacing your windows is often an excellent option. The original wood can be more durable than replacements. Usually failed glazing putty and lead-paint build-up are major issues. Broken sash cords or chains can be fixed with a trip to a hardware store. Older double-hung windows have an access opening on each side to gain access to the sash weights.

If you still decide to replace your windows, you can choose among metal (aluminum), vinyl, and wood. Unless coated with a paint-like finish, metal has a gray look without the sparkle of the original painted sash. Metal windows also lack depth and cast noticeably different shadows; muntins tend to look like lines drawn on the glass. Vinyl units tend to have a heavier appearance than the original, also altering the historic look.

For historical integrity, wood is the best choice, since wood frames will match existing profiles more closely. Wood is also a better thermal insulator. Good wood units can come close to the original appearance. They should have half-muntins mounted on the interior and exterior faces of the insulating

glass, with a spacer bar giving the appearance of continuity through the glass. One problem with these units is that the glazing is one panel, so that if one window breaks, you might need to replace the entire sash.

When selecting a manufactured unit, remember that the detailing by different manufacturers is unique and not interchangeable. Over time, this can present problems when corporations are bought out by competitors (as frequently occurs) and the original detailing cannot be matched any longer, forcing homeowners to replace the entire window system. Whereas the original historic window sash can be readily matched by a good millwork shop, the same cannot be done for a patented manufactured design. You can minimize the risk by limiting your selection to products of a well-established firm that has built a reputation over many years of service, so that you can be more certain that they will be around if and when you need repair work or replacement. These experienced firms also often offer special designs which respond to the needs of installations requiring historic reference.

**Kenneth Underwood**

*The author is a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and former Trustee of Preservation New Jersey.*



*Leaded glass windows at 140 Forest Avenue*



*Porches of Glen Ridge*

## “An Expression of Domestic Enjoyment”

*At the Historical Society’s 2013 annual meeting, Sally Meyer spoke about the history of porches in our town. She credited the idea for the topic to Curt Schade, whose porch restoration won the Historic Preservation Award in 2012. Here is an abridged version of her presentation.*

**George Musser**

IN BEGINNING MY RESEARCH I was very fortunate to find a book called *The American Porch: An Informal History of an Informal Place* by Michael Dolan. It is a well-researched and witty account of the evolution of the American porch from its earliest form until today. Dolan examines the Italian portico and the Indian veranda as possible antecedents to the American porch, but concludes that West African vernacular architecture brought to the Americas through slavery was the real inspiration. Slave houses had wide overhanging roofs providing shelter from the elements and a hearth that served as something of an outdoor living room. Slave owners from England, France, Holland, and Portugal had never seen houses like them. In those countries, you were either inside or outside, with nothing in between. They were soon convinced that porches were a practical addition to their homes, too.

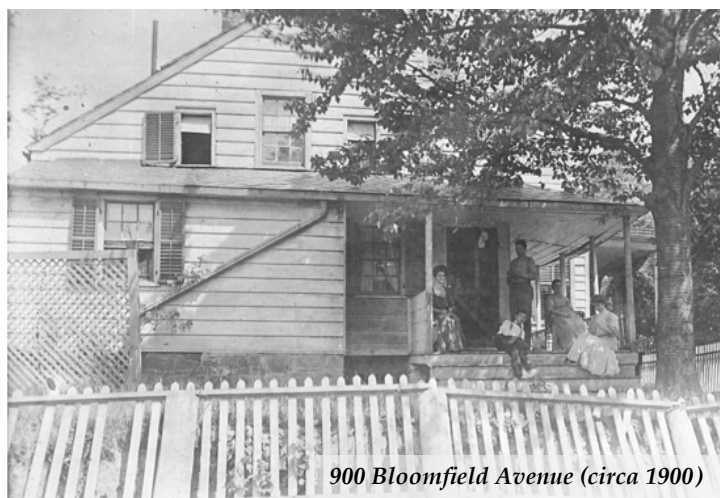
By the late 19th century, the porch had become the

most exuberant and ubiquitous design element of suburban American homes. Architects and builders outdid themselves in its creation. The noted American architect, Alexander Jackson Davis, described the porch “...as an expression of domestic enjoyment.”

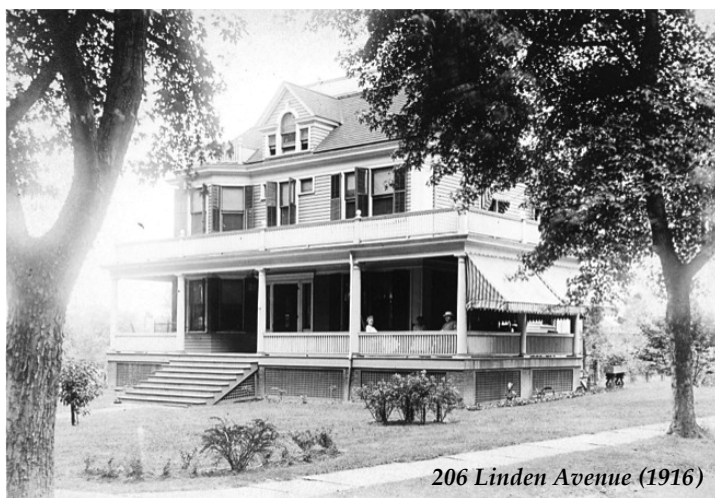
Porches are the most versatile space in a home. You can entertain visitors, read a book, eat a meal, sleep in a hammock, shell peas, sneak a kiss, talk with neighbors, listen to the rain, look at the moon, swing in a glider, play bridge, and check the mail. In the good old days, you would order from the grocer, air the baby, count the carriages on the way to the train station, talk politics, and serve your neighbor tea.

If you’re an architectural detective like me perhaps you’ve wondered about the mix of older and newer houses along the earliest streets in Glen Ridge. Usually the reason is simple: earlier houses were torn down. And many of them had porches. Fire was probably one of the causes. Fashion was another.

Humans are enthralled by fashion. We like to dress in the latest style, buy the newest gadget, swing to innovative music, and pick out the hottest new car. Homeowners, too, want the latest in design. With the introduction in the early 20th century of the Colonial and Tudor Re-



900 Bloomfield Avenue (circa 1900)



206 Linden Avenue (1916)

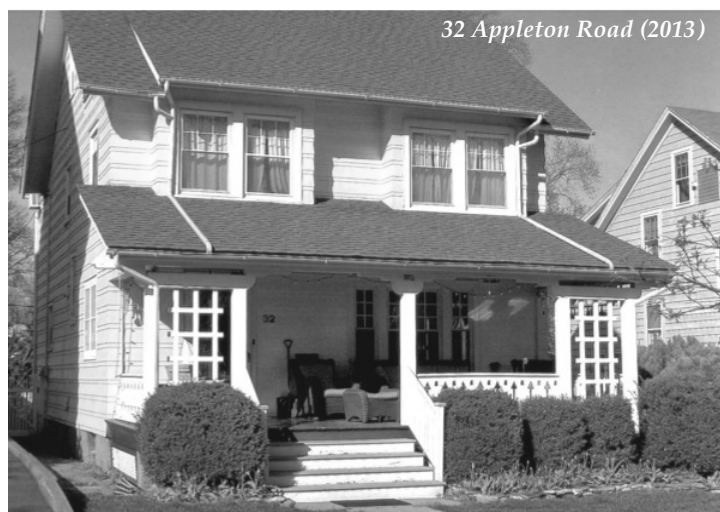


143 Highland Avenue (1971)



130 Ridgewood Avenue (1899)





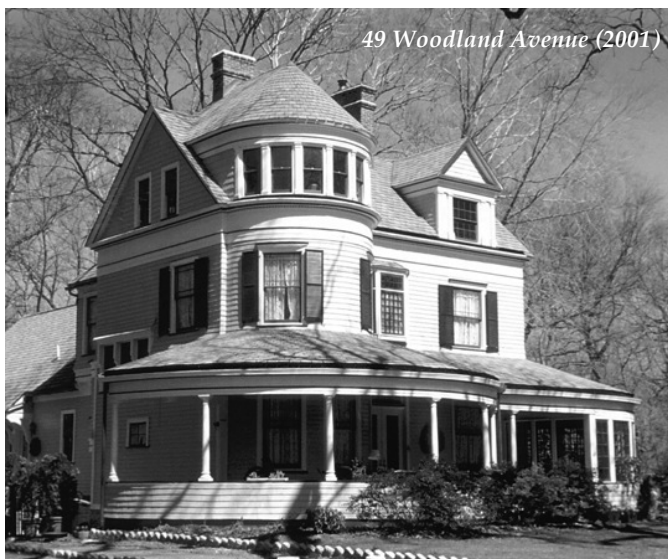
32 Appleton Road (2013)



80 Highland Avenue (2011)

vival styles, porches were seen as a relic of yesteryear.

Sometimes when you look at a house your eye tells you something is wrong: the house looks flat—almost two-dimensional. In many cases the fault is the result of a missing porch. By the beginning of World War I, front porches served fewer practical purposes. With air conditioning, one needn't sit outdoors to cool off. With automobiles, socializing with neighbors out for a walk became a thing of the past. With supermarkets, visits from the butcher, the grocer, and the egg man were unnecessary. The natural disasters of fire, dry rot, falling trees, and termites also took their toll. Porches moved to the rear of the house, where the backyard had become a much more pleasant and private place to gather. Indoor plumbing meant no more privies, cars replaced horses and their piles of manure, and oil heating ended the ash heap.



49 Woodland Avenue (2001)

Open porches have their drawbacks. Mosquitoes nestle in their shade and cold weather sends people indoors. Screens and glass enclosures improve and extend the porch experience. In many cases, owners turn the porch into a permanent part of the interior structure. There are hundreds of houses in Glen Ridge that fall into these categories.

Over the 25 years that we have given the Historic Preservation Award, many of the houses have included a porch. Earlier tonight we recognized two such projects. Other works are in progress. In light of the many missing houses and porches that we have looked at tonight, it is thrilling to see the restoration of this beautiful wrap-around porch at 380 Ridgewood Avenue. I have a feeling that at this meeting next year we will continue the tradition of recognizing a much appreciated porch restoration.

Sally Meyer

38 Woodland Avenue circa 1900 with its original porch...



...and in 2013 without it.





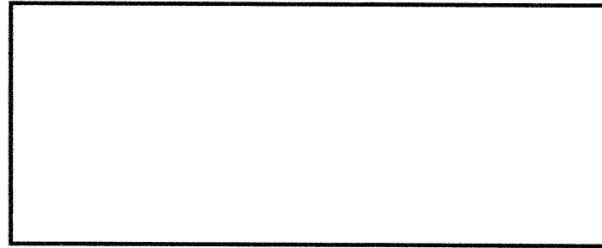
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## ***HOLIDAY PARTY DECEMBER 12, 2014***

### **Current Events-**

Sunday, November 9, 2014 – “Union Army Balloon Corps” – Ocean County Historical Society, 26 Hadley Ave., Toms River, 2 pm. The Union Army Balloon Corps played an important role during the American Civil War. Russell Dutcher, former Air Force historian, will explain how the Balloon Corps aided the Union side, was the precursor of the U.S. Air Force and spawned the first aircraft carrier. Reserve seating by calling 732-341-1880. No admission fee; refreshments will be served.

Saturday, December 6 and Sunday, December 7, 2014 – “Essex County House Tours” – Montclair Historical Society, 1-4 pm. Begin at the Nathaniel Crane house. Next tour the Israel Crane house and see food historian Carolina Capehart demonstrate 1800s hearth cooking on a fire in the exterior kitchen. Finally visit the Charles Shultz House. Admission is \$5 per adult, \$10 per family for all properties. Tickets can be purchased at 108 Orange Road, Montclair.

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### **What was the Source of Water for the Delaware and Raritan Canal?**

Saturday, November 8, 2014 – Canal Walk by the D&R Feeder Canal – Canal Society of New Jersey. Meet at the Ellarsie Mansion (the city mansion) in Cadwalader Park, Trenton, 10 am, for a 3.8 mile walk. We all know that the water for the Morris Canal came from Lake Hopatcong. Now learn how the water for the Delaware and Raritan Canal came from the Delaware River itself along a feeder canal parallel to the river leading to the main canal at Trenton. The feeder canal was navigable and at Lambertville connected to the Delaware Canal in Pennsylvania near New Hope by a cable ferry. Barges crossed the Delaware here to New Jersey. At the height of its use it transported tonnage exceeding the more famous Erie Canal. Information at: Answering machine and Fax: 908-722-9556.