



GLEN RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY THE GASLAMP

Illuminating Our Past

February 2020 Vol. XLII No. 3



President's Letter

Another Smidge of Glen Ridge

THANKS TO ALL who came out to celebrate the holidays with us at our annual holiday party. I'd like to especially thank Nicole and Michael Quinn for hosting us in their beautiful home. It's always nice to chat with our members and catch up on all things Glen Ridge.

This winter we've been hard at work putting together a terrific program for this month. On Feb. 27 at 7:30 p.m. in the LGI room at Glen Ridge High School, Historical Society member Tracey Melhuish will be offering a colorful slide talk, "Jon Russo's Smidges: A Trivial History of Glen Ridge," showcasing interesting and amusing moments in the history of Glen Ridge.

The Smidges were the creation of former resident Jon Russo and appeared weekly in the *Glen Ridge Voice* from 2008 to 2014. By turns fascinating, surprising, and funny, the always entertaining Smidges brought to life an event, person, mishap or even an animal that made news at some point in our borough's history. Melhuish will present a hand-picked selection of Smidges side by side with news headlines, photos, and maps.

As a special treat, Russo is making the trip from his current home in Paris to be our honored guest for the evening! He writes to us about how he prepared the cartoons: "Originally I used manuscripts, phone directories, *New York Times*

and local newspaper articles, and books for my research. On occasion I'd tap into longtime residents of Glen Ridge to back up my information. In working up ideas I developed a character to represent Glen Ridge: a gas lamp. I named him Ray after the gas lamp repairman who worked the lamps at that time. One of my favorite Smidges involves a home-

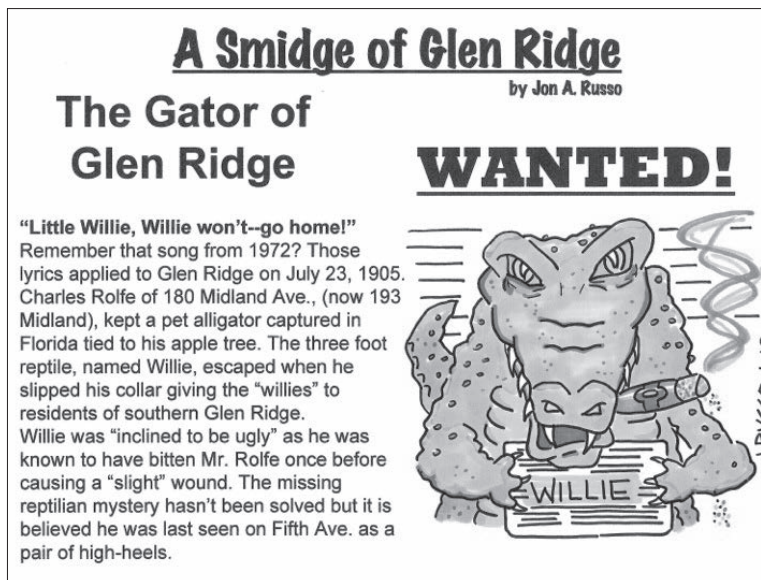
owner on Midland Avenue in 1905 who kept a pet alligator. One summer afternoon the alligator escaped from his leash, causing great havoc in the borough. Fascinated by this incident, I wrote a children's play called *The Gator of Glen Ridge*."

Following the talk, we invite you to visit an exhibit of the Smidges in the gallery space of the Terry S. Webster Museum. The exhibit will be on display Saturday, Feb. 29, and Sunday, March 1, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Our dedicated board members will

be available to answer questions and pull house files. We hope you stop by and say hello!

Do you have any old photographs of your home? Amy Owens recently donated pictures of her 1907 Tudor to her house file. We are always looking to add to our house file collection. If you have materials to donate to your file, drop us a line and we can make arrangements! Thank you for your continued support and I am looking forward to seeing you this month!

Jennifer Janofsky



News and Goings-On

Public lecture. Join us for a slide talk about Jon Russo's historical cartoon series, *A Smidge of Glen Ridge*, on Thursday, Feb. 27, at 7:30 p.m. in the LGI Room at Glen Ridge High School. Russo is flying in from Paris for the occasion. Refreshments will be served. Our museum will exhibit his cartoons on Feb. 29 and March 1.

Museum hours. The Terry S. Webster Museum located above Blue Foundry Bank is open the second Saturday of every month from 9 a.m. to noon or by appointment with Sally Meyer at (973) 239-2674. It maintains an architectural and historical file on every house in town, including old documents and photographs.

Villa on Baldwin Street

AT THE BUSY intersection of Highland Avenue and Baldwin Street, a charming Mediterranean style villa is currently home to the Montclair Child Development Center. The building at 272 Baldwin Street is located in Glen Ridge, but owned by Montclair. It replaced an earlier Italianate-style house owned by John Slayback, which was a frequent gathering place for fox hunters who ran northeast into the area of Brookdale Park.

The MCDC building was designed in 1929 as the Baldwin Street Community House by Holmes & Von Schmid of Montclair. It is T-shaped with stucco walls and a pantile roof, arched entrances and colonnade, multi-colored terra-cotta plaques of laurel wreaths and cherubim, and a ceramic roundel with Madonna, child, and cherub. The *Montclair Times* of Dec. 11, 1929, believed the style choice “to be unique in educational practice in that the building conforms architecturally with the nationality of the people it will serve.” At the time, its students were to be predominantly the children of Italian immigrant families who lived nearby in the Fourth Ward of Montclair.

The establishment of the Baldwin Street Community House was due largely to the efforts of Minnie A. Lucey of Glen Ridge, whom the paper called “a pioneer in Ameri-

canization work in Montclair.” Lucey was born in Hartford, Conn., in 1885. She moved to Glen Ridge at the age of 10 and lived on Herman Street. After finishing her nursing training, she spent several years doing social work in the slums of Paris, London, and Dublin before returning to Glen Ridge.

She then spent a decade doing social work among local Italian families and at the Baldwin Street School. She also

set up a community center in the former Slayback house where women and children could meet for socialization and instruction. Its popularity led to plans to build a larger and better equipped facility. With financial help from the Federation of Women’s Clubs and the Board of Education, the Baldwin Street Community House opened in early 1930. It included a large kindergarten classroom, a branch of the public library, a sewing room, a domestic-science room, and a comfortable community meeting room.

Tragedy struck a short time later with Lucey’s death in July 1930 at the age of 45. It was decided to rename the center the Minnie A. Lucey House. Two bronze tablets were installed, one of which read: “This tablet is erected here in loving memory of Minnie A. Lucey by her friends and by those to whom she gave consecrated service.”

Sally Meyer



Minnie Lucey and children in front of the Slayback house, 1915



GLEN RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Officers

President	Jennifer Janofsky
Vice President	Megan Blank
Secretary	Christine Brennan
Treasurer	Sandra Lefkovits
Town Historian (ex officio)	Sally Meyer
Library Director (ex officio)	Jennifer Breuer

Trustees

Megan Connolly (2020)	Karin Robinson (2021)
Toni Murphy (2020)	Rebecca Hughes (2022)
Robert White (2020)	Susan Link (2022)
Nicholas Colello (2021)	Mark Pizzini (2022)
Ann Nicol (2021)	

THE GASLAMP

Editor George Musser

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.

Except where otherwise noted, images come from the Historical Society collections.

© 2020 Glen Ridge Historical Society

The Two Houses of Winsor

ONE OF MY favorite houses in Glen Ridge is 12 Winsor Place. It is unusual to find a house in Glen Ridge or surrounding communities that can be described as Shingle Style, but I believe that 12 Winsor Place is one of those houses. It is particularly apparent when looking at its next-door twin, 14 Winsor Place. Both houses were built in 1894 and they appear to have the same floor plans. The two houses have several fairly small differences in their exterior details, and taken together those details define two very different styles.

14 Winsor Place is built in the more familiar Queen Anne Style, which builders and homeowners across the country embraced between 1880 and 1910. Their enthusiasm was fueled by the availability of pattern books, mail-order house plans and pre-cut trim.

The Shingle Style, on the other hand, proliferated along the coast from Rhode Island to Maine. The houses were often built for individual clients by well-known architects. The Shingle Style is a truly American style of architecture, although it borrows from other styles with deep roots: porches and asymmetry from the Queen Anne Style originating in England, gambrel roofs and classical columns from the Colonial Revival Style, and solid irregular shapes from the Romanesque. Shingle Style houses have long, steeply pitched picturesque roofs that end in multi-level eaves. Originally the roofs were covered in wood shingles which appeared to overflow onto the shingled walls.

I like the Shingle Style because it rarely uses applied decoration as part of its design. Doors, windows, cornices, and walls are not dressed up with ornament. Instead, a Shingle Style house is conceived of as a single sculpt-

ed volume. Its presence comes from the complexity of that volume and the fact that it is encased in a continuous surface of wood shingles.

The two styles are contemporane-

is split in two. The first floor is square. The second floor is separated from the first by the extended eave, so it is a bay window rather than a part of the main volume of the house. The bold conical roof of the turret now has small facets

True to the Queen Anne Style, the porch at 14 Winsor has small-scale ornate elements. The solid shingled half-wall of 12 Winsor becomes a row of turned spindles. The houses do have identical classical columns, evidence of the relationship between the two styles and the production process of the developer who built them.

The separate second floor eaves have a frieze of delicate swags which are emphasized by the paint colors. The shallow bay windows on the side are curious—they match the other house but are not brash enough to be Queen Anne.

Now consider 12 Winsor Place. Its primary volume has a grand gambrel roof. Other shapes grow out of that volume and the roof rolls and slopes to cover them. There are two eaves: one across the porch where the roof slants down from the ridge and one around the turret which continues along the attic floor to frame the gambrel. The shingles on the turret walls run continuously around the

corner, undulating across two shallow bay windows on the second floor. The porch stretches from the right side of the turret past the end of the house, pulling the roof out with it. A single dormer protrudes from the face of the long roof.

To me, the beauty of 12 Winsor is the success of the Shingle Style as a suburban vernacular house rather than a seaside estate. And it only took a few tweaks of 14 Winsor to get it.

Karin Robinson



How Boy Scouts Helped the Air-Raid Wardens

I WAS BORN in 1930 as a fourth-generation Newarker on my mother's side of the family. In 1934 my father moved the family to Glen Ridge as he wanted a good school system for his young family. We rented a house at 144 Essex Ave. It was a unique neighborhood as the east side of the street was Bloomfield and the west Glen Ridge. Many of our playmates were from a different town and school district.

A snowfall in the winter was a big event as Essex Avenue was closed to vehicular traffic for several hours every day to permit "coasting" (aka sleigh-riding). We would drag our Flexible Flyers to the top of Outlook Place and coast all the way down across Essex Avenue into the Anderson's driveway and through their backyard, ending up halfway to Broad Street. The thrill of this ride was exceeded in the 1940s when the Glen Ridge Country Club offered its facilities to all the borough kids for sleigh-riding. The club even provided a toboggan run off the back porch (now the enclosed dining room) of the clubhouse and, once off the chute, you had the ride of your life until you hit the hay bales set before the fence at Broad Street. As a further service to town residents, the club flooded the front parking lot for ice-skating. The obvious liabilities in all of these offerings is testament to the fact that the country was definitely a less litigious society in those days.

I will always remember sixth-grade in my boyhood as there were certain rites of passage. Your parents allowed you to wear whatever was adolescent haute couture at the time, and for us the big item was a beer jacket. This was a white canvas jacket with brass buttons worn by the waiters in the beer halls that abounded in the New-

ark area in the '30s. We would decorate these jackets with wax transfers of sports stars, cartoon characters, and patriotic emblems that could be purchased at the local penny candy store. I remember my mother ironing Joe Louis, the Lone Ranger, Buck Rogers, and



Toboggan at the Glen Ridge Country Club c1930

the Statue of Liberty on my jacket. You would augment these with your own artwork in India ink, and, of course, all your friends autographed your jacket, too. It was beyond cool.

It seems a basic human trait that we remember exactly where we were when we experienced or heard of a momentous event. So, it is no surprise that I fully recall Sunday, Dec. 7, 1941. We were in the family Pontiac driving slowly down Fifth Avenue in New York City. My father and I were engrossed in a New York Giants football game on the radio. Dad would idle the car by the curb while my mother, grandmother, and kid brother, Norman, would hop out to look at the Christmas windows at Saks, B. Altman, and Lord & Taylor. It was during one of these stops that the ominous words came over the radio: "We interrupt this program

to bring you a special news bulletin." My dad was absolutely stunned. He turned to me and said: "Do you know what this means? DO YOU? We are going to war!" This was quite frightening even to a fairly rational 11-year-old.

It became even more real to us when we had our first air-raid drills at Sherman Avenue School (when we had to flee out of the classroom and into the basement), had netting installed on the inside of those large classroom windows to catch shattered glass, heard the air-raid alert sirens tested every Saturday at noon, and saw every gas lamp and car headlight half-masked with black paint or electrical tape to reduce the glow in the night sky. I will always remember the first practice air-raid drill and blackout. We could see a good part of Bloomfield and north Newark from our attic windows

on Essex Avenue, and at the sound of sirens on this spring evening, the entire world went dark. I never realized there were so many stars in the heavens.

By mid-1942 I had joined Boy Scouts Troop 3 at Forest Avenue School. The members of Troop 3 had one assignment that was unique to Glen Ridge. During practice drills, each air-raid warden was charged with enforcing blackout regulations within his assigned area (two blocks) and to turn off the gas lamps. The wardens in Montclair and Bloomfield had their lights turned off for them by a master switch at the utility. Not so in Glen Ridge. There was a lever inside the globe of each gas lamp which, when pulled down, reduced the lamp to pilot-light status. When pulled again, the lamp reignited. These levers were difficult to reach for inexperienced wardens, particularly when sirens were blaring and speed was of the essence. My pa-

trol was assigned the task of tying milk-bottle wire (the malleable wire that secured the paper cap to the top of a glass milk bottle) to each lever and putting a loop at the end of the wire. Thus all the warden had to do was hoist himself up on the cast-iron step at the base of each light (note the steps are still there today) and pull the wire to extinguish the lamp. We were quite proud of this little innovation.

In the spring of 1942, we moved to 565 Ridgewood Ave. at the corner of Yantecaw Avenue, at the north end of the borough. As I was now entering seventh-grade, I had to go to the high-school building at the corner of Ridgewood and Bloomfield avenues. This two-mile commute was accomplished on a one-speed Raleigh bicycle. But when one reached ninth grade, it just wasn't cool to go to school on a bike. So we hitchhiked.

This was against borough ordinances at the time, but given the circumstances the police never really enforced it. Ridgewood Avenue was a commuting thoroughfare even in 1944. Every school morning, we gathered at



The Glen Ridge Civil Defense unit in 1944

Clairidge Court with schoolbooks on our hip and thumbs out. It would be boys-only. Girls hid behind trees and bushes until some unwary motorist stopped, thinking he was picking up a couple of school boys; he ended up with seven giggling kids in his back seat. Fortunately, there were no seat belts in 1944. If only a couple of us were hitchhiking from the north end of

town, we tried to persuade our benefactor to stop for kids at Sunset Avenue, Glen Ridge Parkway, Columbus Avenue, or Ardsley Road. It actually worked quite well. Very few of us were ever late for school, and I never heard of one untoward incident, despite the inherent dangers of getting into a stranger's car.

I graduated Glen Ridge High School in 1948 and never really lived in town after that. I went to college in the Midwest, was drafted and spent 18 of 24 months in the Far East, returned home, and immediately married Eileen Hudson from Belleville. We lived in Bloomfield, Cedar Grove,

and, for the past 45 years, Essex Fells. My dad, Tom Butler, became mayor of Glen Ridge in the '50s. When I drive through Glen Ridge today, it has not changed much in my mind's eye.

Bob Butler

Bob Butler lives in Little Falls. He wrote this memoir for the Historical Society's "Dear Friends" oral-history project in October 2010. An unabridged version is available in our archives.

The Glen Ridge Historical Society is grateful to our 2019–2020 sponsors and patrons for their support.

Sponsors

James and Carolyn Badenhause
Jean and Henri-Claude Bailly
Carol Borthwick
Elizabeth and Paul Brewster
Susan and Sean Cullinan
Margo Garrison and Geoffrey Darby
Art and Pam Dawson
Brooke and David Fapohunda
Joan Hayes
Sam Carlo Joseph
Jacqueline Kollinger
Alison and Scott Lang
Anne Webster Leight
Margot and Hugh Macdonnell
Harry Rush and Karen McGinn
Nancy and Dan McMahon
Sally and Ted Meyer
Maureen J. and Maureen E. Morgan
Dan and Toni Murphy
Ashish and Prachi Parmar

Stuart and Kate Patrick
Edith K. Payne
Ava Somogyi and Alden Provost
Cherry Provost
Nicole Quinn
Bob and Pamela Rice
Jan and Michael Rohal
Carolee Bol and Scott Rosenberg
Curtis Schade
Maria Vecchione
Andrea Webb
Richard and Catherine Weber
Joan and Robert White

Patrons

Michael and Anne Alix
Pam and Alex Bernstein
Ryan and Megan Blank
Katie Bogart
H. Bartlett Brown
Deirdre Comey and George Peterson
Frank and Sarah D'Angelo
David and Tara Doernberg
Polly Kernan Doyle
Joseph P. Fanning and Robert C. Kuneman
Caroline Gentile and Peter Herrigel

Marc Holzapfel and Deborah Mans
The Janofsky Family
Tom and Lisa Johnston
Spratley Kay
John and Patrice Kelly
Stephanie and Michael Koskuba
Paul and Joan Lisovicz
Brandee and Joe McHale
Tracey and Jo-Ann Melhuish
Jeff and Elaine Monacelli
Ellen Morris and Stefan Magnusson
Jean Morrow
Robert and Ann Marie Morrow
Greg and Dawn Morvillo
Karen Sockler Nisenson
Michael and Mary O'Boyle
Dan and Carmen Pence
Mark and Ruby Pizzini
Kevin Sherry
Lawrence Stauffer
Robert and Julie Stolte
Kathy Sweet
Anthony and Patricia Turiano
Melissa Vecchiarelli
Thomas and Barbara Wenzl
Jack Wooten

Address Service Requested



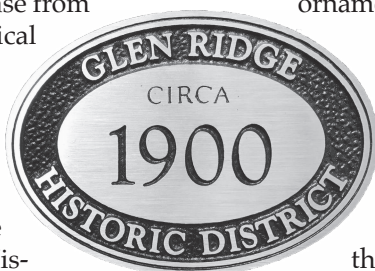
"SMIDGE" SLIDE SHOW
FEB. 27, 7:30 P.M.
HIGH SCHOOL

Glen Ridge Historical Society Catalog

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT for Glen Ridge history by making a purchase from our catalog of Historical Society items.

Historic District house plaque. Celebrate your home's history with a custom cast-bronze plaque denoting the Historic District of Glen Ridge and your home's circa construction date. Delivery takes approximately six weeks. Member price \$180

Holiday ornaments. A beautiful custom brass ornament featuring the iconic image of the Glen Ridge gas lamp is available for \$15. Each ornament comes in a red presentation box and includes a brochure on town history. You may also purchase the ornament at the Glen Ridge Public Library. We still of-



fer the older gazebo and train-station ornaments for \$15.

1906 maps. Reprints of pages from the renowned A.H. Mueller Atlas of Essex County are available for both the north and the south ends of town. Suitable for framing. Member price \$80

Glen Ridge Memory and Matching Game. A classic handcrafted memory game with 48 tiles showing historic sites and buildings in Glen Ridge. The storage box includes a description of

each image. Suitable for all ages. \$15

Gas-lamp postcards. Full-color 4x6 postcards showing a Glen Ridge gas lamp in spring, summer, autumn, and winter. \$1 each

To make a purchase, email us at glenridgehs@gmail.com or mail your order and payment to P.O. Box 164, Glen Ridge, NJ 07028-0164. Purchases may also be made by visiting our museum during regular open hours on the second Saturday of each month. It is located above the Blue Foundry Bank branch at 222 Ridgewood Ave. While you're there, enjoy our exhibits and archives.

