



# GLEN RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## THE GASLAMP

Illuminating Our Past

January 2022 Vol. XLIV No. 2



President's Letter

### Pride in Our History, History in Our Pride

I ALWAYS HAVE mixed feelings at the end of the semester. While I'm thrilled to celebrate the holidays, it's always sad to say goodbye to my students. I typically end my Public History class with a unit on LGBTQ+ history. It's one that my students have been looking forward to all semester. LGBTQ+ is an exciting field of historical scholarship. It's a relatively new area populated with younger scholars producing fantastic research. Typically, none of my students have had much interaction with this history.

Together, we explored the Queer Newark Oral History Project and learned how gay bars in Newark fought back against harassment and intimidation, years before the better-known events at Stonewall. In the 1950s the state's Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) began targeting gay bars, such as Murphy's Tavern on Mulberry Street. Undercover agents posed as patrons and reported their observations of "lewd," "immoral," and "effeminate" behaviors. The state repeatedly shut down Newark's gay bars over a 20-year period. This kind of morality policing was not unique to Newark. All across America, patrons of gay bars faced threats, intimidation, blackmail, and even violence.

In 1961 Murphy's Tavern had had enough and challenged the ABC's authority to shut it down for serving the gay community. Bars in New Brunswick and Atlantic City joined the challenge. In the landmark *One Eleven* case in 1967, the N.J. Supreme Court ruled the ABC's actions illegal. This past June, the state attorney general issued an apology for the decades-long practice of targeting gay bars. The state also released a trove of old ABC documents, which show that bars in Bloomfield, Orange, and Caldwell were also targeted.

In 2020 the state passed legislation requiring schools to

include LGBTQ+ lessons, but, as of yet, this has not been implemented in a systematic way in Glen Ridge schools. As a historian and a parent, I feel it's imperative these histories are incorporated into our classrooms. Studies show that LGBTQ+ students are especially at risk for depression and suicide in their teen years.

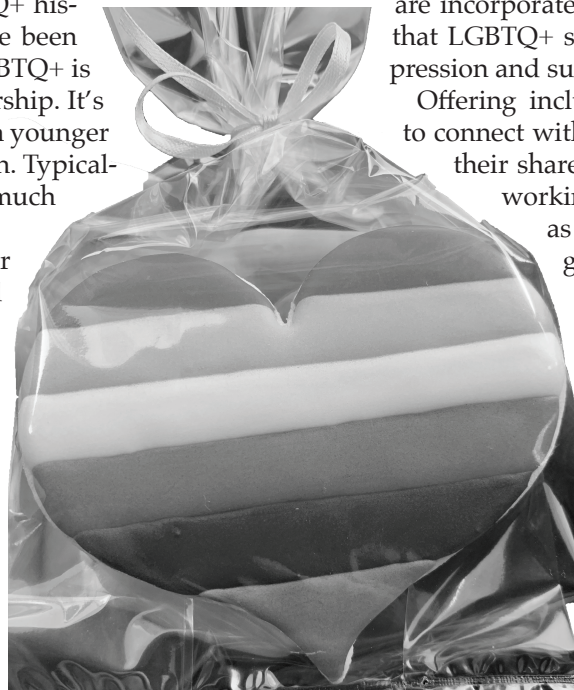
Offering inclusive curricula encourages students to connect with their collective past as they explore their shared identities. I've had the pleasure of working with many students who identify as LGBTQ+. It's beautiful to watch them guide classroom discussions, share their personal stories, and offer support to their peers. On more than one occasion a student has approached me after class to offer a personal "thank you." It's not unusual for our conversations to turn to their personal struggles for acceptance. By studying inclusive histories, LGBTQ+ students finally get to see their place in history, which can be as overwhelming as it is powerful. As our class concluded this year, we shared "Pride" decorated cookies and celebrated a long semester.

The end of the semester also signaled the beginning of the holiday season. In 2020 Glen Ridge added a menorah to the holiday display at the municipal building. I'm thrilled for my Jewish neighbors and friends to see them included in our town's holiday celebrations. The town dazzled with those holiday lights.

In this issue, we're debuting a new column, "The Glen Back When"—our version of *The New York Times's* Metropolitan Diary. We want to make it easy for you to tell your stories! If you have memories you'd like to share—things you

miss, strange occurrences, slices of everyday life, or even just a question—dash off an email to us at [glenridgehs@gmail.com](mailto:glenridgehs@gmail.com) or post it to our Facebook page. It doesn't have to be long, and it doesn't have to be polished.

Jennifer Janofsky



"Pride" cookie at the author's end-of-semester class party

#### IN THIS ISSUE

- When jogging became a thing
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- ALSO NEW! Local events calendar

## Running Around

THE PUBLICATION OF *Jogging* by Bill Bowerman and W. E. Harris in 1967 inspired many Americans to take up running at an easy pace. By the '70s Glen Ridge residents of all ages were among those who jogged daily for heart health and general physical conditioning. Initially, competition was not the goal, but many joggers soon began to sign up for local road-running races.

Participants in the Ashenfelter 8K Classic are likely unaware of its origins as the Turkey Trot, a roughly 6-mile race first held on Thanksgiving day in 1979 with about 120 runners. Entrants in the Fitzgerald's Lager Run in the spring will also probably be unfamiliar with its predecessor: the Ridger Romp, a 5K event first organized in 1977 by the high-school athletic director, Bill Horey. Both races now are nationally sanctioned long-distance events attracting several thousand runners, organized primarily through the efforts of Dan Murphy. The Glen Ridge Educational Foundation and the Glen Ridge Community Fund have benefited greatly from their success.

Before the jogging boom, a singular and unusual running event took place over the summer of 1966. Nineteen Glen Ridge sophomore and junior boys decided to challenge the

record of 3,472 miles of continuous running set the previous summer by a group of students in River Edge, N.J. The around-the-clock endurance feat was soon dubbed the Mad Marathon. On the evening of June 29, a well-known local track official, John Tomasko, firing the starting gun at Hurrell Field. The boys worked in groups of three, racing three hours per shift. Runners passed a souvenir baton of Horace Ashenfelter, the 1952 Olympic steeplechase champion, to each other at the start of each lap. After completing 24 laps during a shift, they went home for food and sleep.

Supporters and curiosity-seekers cheered on the runners both day and night. Progress was noted by marking the miles run on a U.S. map. The boys hoped to complete the challenge in 22 days and nights without stops, but injuries, fatigue, waning enthusiasm, and a heat wave slowed the pace. On July 28, all able-bodied runners took to the track to run the final lap together. Parents of the boys chipped in to buy each of them a commemorative plaque. The tally was 17,120 trips around the cinder track, for a total of nearly 4,300 miles—the equivalent of a round trip to Santa Fe, N.M.

Sally Meyer



*The Ridger Romp in 1978, precursor of the Lager Run*



# GLEN RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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### THE GASLAMP

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*Our Favorite Houses*

## Shingles Never Go Out of Style

60 SHERMAN AVE. is one of my favorite houses in town. It is a fascinating example of Shingle Style architecture. It was built in about 1906, toward the end of Shingle Style era. It is modest compared to the famous examples that appear in inventories of architectural styles, yet it belongs with the others.

Its one departure from Shingle Style is that its layout is symmetrical. Exemplars of the style are informal and rambling, with irregular roof lines and quirky windows of many sizes and shapes. The architect of 60 Sherman may have adapted the style because of the size and suburban setting of the house.

The large gambrel (double-sloped) roof is draped over the entire volume of the house. The eaves are pulled down low over the front porch, which itself is cut back into the first floor rather than being built onto the front of the house. The foundation and corner columns on the porch are constructed of river stone—rounded rocks of roughly similar size and color. It's an unusual material for a foundation in Glen Ridge, where brownstone quarried from the present-day site of Central School, at Bloomfield Avenue and High Street, is more commonly used.

Then there are the cedar shingles. They cover every wall surface and originally the roof as well. The walls and roof are undifferentiated, as the shingles fold around the walls, gambrel roof, and dormer. I particularly like the use of shingles to wrap the porch columns, instead of inserting wood posts or classical columns. In the same way, the edge of the porch has half-height shingled walls rather than wood spindles or balusters. It completes the wrapping of the house and emphasizes the way the porch is

cut back into the volume of the house. Porches such as these were often used as additional living space—another sitting room that was often cooler than the rooms inside the house. The design of this Shingle Style porch provides more privacy than an open colonnade on a house in the Queen Anne or Colonial revival style.

The exterior details on the upper floors reinforce the Shingle Style approach to design. The second-floor porch is cut back into the house and has shingle-clad columns. It has a long

low overhanging eave folded out of the main roof, which matches the first-floor porch roof.

Shingle Style houses often exclude historically based elements; the craft of the wood shingle takes the place of overt decoration. In this case, the trim boards along the edge of the gable dormer are replaced by shingles. The shingles line the angle of the roof where it meets the face of the building. This house is unusual in that two rows of shingles are used instead of one, giving them more presence.

The design of the attic window is one of my favorite features. It is found more frequently on neocolonial or Queen Anne style houses because of its historic roots, but it is not truly out of place here. The simple rounded window has a pattern of panes that resolve into pointed Gothic arches of different sizes.

For a building that looks simple at first glance, this house has much to offer if you look carefully. It became even more interesting to me when, thanks to Sally Meyer's extensive re-

search for our October walking tour, I learned that the house originally sat on a double lot. Each lot measured 68 by 165 feet. The house occupied the southern lot, while the northern had an elaborate rose garden. A two-car detached garage rounded out the property.

The Historical Society archives include a collection of real-estate listings for 60 Sherman, as well as almost every other house in town. According to these records, the two lots were sold together through 1957, at least. By 1971 they were split up. The lot to the north was sold off separately and a contemporary raised-ranch style house was constructed there in 1974.

**Karin Robinson**



## The Glen Back When

*curated by the officers and trustees*

### Tear Down This Wall

A STRANGER VISITING this town for the first time, upon alighting from the train on the Erie Branch at the Glen Ridge station, is confronted by a six foot fence, enclosing two sides of the large three-cornered plot of ground close up to the railroad and street lines. The visitor's first inquiry naturally would be: "For what purpose is that horrid fence?" "Is there a lunatic asylum here, or a prison that must be shut in in this manner?"

The stranger can get no very satisfactory answer.

To everyone (except the builders) the fence is a conundrum....

*Bloomfield Record, July 16, 1897*

The people residing in the vicinity of the Glen Ridge Station on the Erie Branch decided among themselves on Monday that the wire fence erected across Benson Street in front of the station by G.C. Collingwood had stood long enough. With this determination a large delegation, numbering around thirty, appeared before the Glen Ridge Council Monday evening to inquire when the Borough authorities intended to assert the rights of the public to Benson Street. They were informed that part of the fence was unquestionably an encroachment, and that it would be removed as soon as the Borough road force was put to work in that vicinity. The delegation offered to relieve the Council of all trouble and responsibility by returning immediately and tearing down the fence....

On Tuesday afternoon about 6.30 o'clock the citizens who had organized themselves for the purpose of destroying the fence formed in order on the Ridgewood Avenue bridge. Marshal Jacobs and two of the Glen Ridge police took the lead. Close following them were John W. Stewart of Ridgewood Avenue, who shouldered an axe. J.F. Place of Forest Avenue had in his hand a pair of keen nippers. Others prominent in the procession when it reached the railway station were, Henry V.

Allen, F.L. Purdy and D.S. Standish, equipped with cold chisels, hammers, axes, etc. Borough Engineer Crane brought up the rear with his bicycle....

The summary work accomplished on Tuesday evening should not be re-suspended until the whole nuisance of posts and wires is wiped out of existence, and unrestricted liberty of an outlet from Forest Avenue to Benson Street is established.

*Bloomfield Record, Aug. 13, 1897*



### Unexpected Objects

MR. R.M. GRUMMON [on Hill Street] has recently invented a device for fastening stair carpets in their place. This application does away with rods and tacks, while the carpet can be taken up and put down without removing the fixtures. The fastener is called the Glen Ridge, and like the place of that name, is decidedly ornamental.

*Bloomfield Citizen, July 16, 1887*



MANY YEARS AGO, Julia Roberts's movie *Mona Lisa Smiles* was being filmed in Glen Ridge. The influx of trailers, gaffers, lighting technicians, caterers, and extras caused a certain pandemonium among the denizens along Ridgewood Avenue. Tensions were not eased when the generators for the trucks and commissary tent fired up at 5 a.m.

Naturally, in this heightened state of anxiety, no one needed a bomb.

Returning from work that evening, I noticed police, vans, equipment, and an inordinate number of fire trucks. Evidently, I thought, the film crew's 18-hour day was not yet over. But when I got home, my son greeted me with the news that bombs had just been found at his friend's house at 117 Clark St.

The friend's dad had found three bombs while cleaning out the basement crawl space. The police came and called the fire department, which called the Army. The Army evacuated the upper end of Clark Street and adja-

cent Snowden Place, as well as mourners at a memorial service at the Congregational Church.

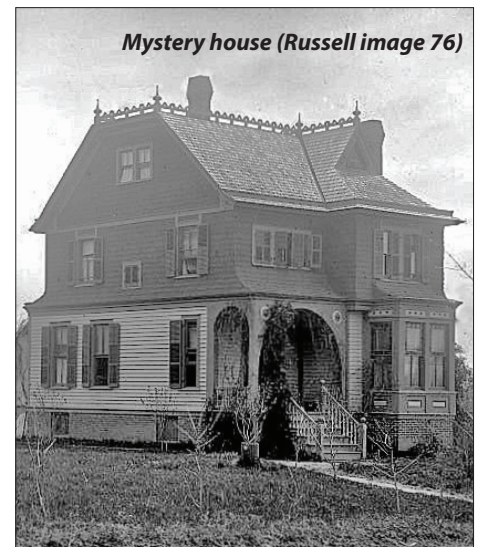
The bomb expert tried to determine whether these were from World War I or II. The homeowner suggested they could instead be from the Spanish-American War. A Navy admiral, William T. Sampson, owned the house at the turn of the century. At any rate, the crisis passed. The residents returned home. I don't know whether the mourners continued mourning or just called it a night.

**Jean Boland**



### Name That House

RICHARD ROCKWELL OF the Bloomfield Historical Society needs your help in identifying photos of old houses in the Nathan Russell photo collection. Visit [hsob.org/zenphoto/RussellCollection/glen-ridge](http://hsob.org/zenphoto/RussellCollection/glen-ridge). If you can figure out where they are (or were), please email Rockwell at [rockwell@comcast.net](mailto:rockwell@comcast.net).



*Mystery house (Russell image 76)*



DO YOU HAVE a story, a memory, or a thought you'd like to share? Don't be shy! Please email us at [glenridgehs@gmail.com](mailto:glenridgehs@gmail.com) or post it to our Facebook page at [facebook.com/GRHistoricalSociety](https://www.facebook.com/GRHistoricalSociety).



## Events Calendar

curated by Tom Coleman

### Glen Ridge Historical Society

**Museum closed.** Our new space is too small for standing exhibits. For research requests, please contact Sally Meyer at glenridgehs@gmail.com or (973) 239-2674.

### Neighboring Towns

**Montclair Art Museum.** A new exhibit, "Tenacity & Resilience: The Art of Jerry Pinkney," opens on Feb. 6. Pinkney, who died last October, was a pre-eminent illustrator of children's books that focus on issues of social justice and convey powerful messages related to the history of the Civil Rights movement in America. montclairart-museum.org/exhibition/tenacity-resilience-art-jerry-pinkney

### Farther Afield

**Zimmerli Art Museum, New Brunswick.** The Zimmerli's art collection at Rutgers University in New Brunswick is strong in works on paper and has numerous temporary exhibits on display, including "The New Woman in Paris and London, c. 1890–1920" through March. zimmerli.rutgers.edu/art

**Morris Museum, Morristown.** The Morris will have on display "On and Off the Streets: Urban Art New Jersey" through Feb. 27. It features the work of studio artists who also produce large-scale public murals and sculptures, including murals created expressly for this exhibit. morrismuseum.org



Cycles G. Richard, unidentified artist, circa 1900. Print on paper. Collections of Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers University. Gift of Herbert D. and Ruth Schimmel. Photo by Peter Jacobs

**Newark Museum of Art.** The NMOA show "Endangered!" is an examination of extinct and endangered species, including an immersive exhibit on avian species contained in John James Audubon's famous book *The Birds of America*. Through April 24. The museum also recently unveiled its redesigned galleries showcasing its distinguished collection "Native Artists of North America." newarkmuseumart.org

**Newark Public Library.** The library's main branch at 5 Washington St. will be showing "September 11, 2001: The Day that Changed the World," drawn from the 9/11 Memorial Museum, through Feb. 28. Also on continuing view is the recently opened "Phillip Roth Personal Library." The renowned novelist and Newark native left his entire library to the NPL after his death in 2018. npl.org

**New Jersey Historical Society, Newark.** The Society draws fascinating exhibits from its collections, currently including "Ebb and Flow: New Jersey and its Rivers," examining the history, industry, and ecology of major waterways, and "Send the Word: New Jersey in the Great War," featuring uniforms, equipment, posters, letters, and other personal items that recall New Jersey in World War I. jerseyhistory.org



## GLEN RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY New Member Form

You can join by visiting glenridgehistory.org/join or clipping this form and sending it with a check to: Glen Ridge Historical Society, P.O. Box 164, Glen Ridge, NJ 07028. Your membership contribution is tax-deductible.

Please enroll me as a member in the following category:

☐ Senior \$10 ☐ Household \$30 ☐ Patron \$75 ☐ Sponsor \$125

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address Service Requested



**NEW COLUMN:  
SEND US YOUR STORIES!**

## Glen Ridge Historical Society Catalog

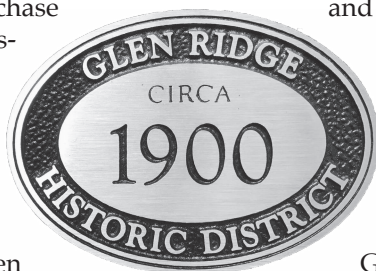
SHOW YOUR SUPPORT for Glen Ridge history by making a purchase from our catalog of Historical Society items.

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

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

**Gas-lamp postcards.** Full-color 4×6 postcards showing a Glen Ridge gas

lamp in spring, summer, autumn, and winter. \$1 each



**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

**Holiday ornaments.** A beautiful custom brass ornament featuring the iconic image of a Glen Ridge gas lamp is available for \$15. Each ornament comes in a gold presentation box and

includes a brochure on town history. We also still offer the older gazebo and train-station ornaments for \$15.

To make a purchase, email us at [glenridgehs@gmail.com](mailto:glenridgehs@gmail.com) or mail your order and payment to P.O. Box 164, Glen Ridge, NJ 07028-0164. For house plaques, we will send you a form to enter your details. Purchases may also

be made at our archives by appointment with Sally Meyer at (973) 239-2674. The archives are located on the third floor of the Glen Ridge Congregational Church at 195 Ridgewood Ave. You may also buy ornaments at the Glen Ridge Public Library with a personal check or exact change.

