

# BASS RIVER GAZETTE

A newsletter from the History Committee of the Bass River Community Library

Issue No. 2- October, 1998

## BASS RIVER AND ITS NEIGHBORHOODS

by Peter H. Stemmer

We tend to think that the things around us today are the same as they always were. Such is not the case with Bass River Township. The area that we now call Bass River Township was a part of Little Egg Harbor Township until 1864 when the New Jersey State Legislature, acting on a petition from prominent residents of the area who complained of inadequate services and the long distance to the seat of the township government in more heavily populated Tuckerton, created the Township of Bass River. The majority of the 79 square mile township, named for one of the three rivers which flow through it's borders, was taken from Little Egg Harbor Township with the northern portion, consisting of the Harrisville-Martha-Calico area, taken from neighboring Washington Township.

Early "Bass River" consisted mainly of large farms owned by the Mathis, Cramer, and Allen families. There was no town as we know it today. The first area to be called Bass River was the present Pilgrim Lake Campground-Fir Bridge area. A saw mill and the old Bass River Hotel were built here before the Revolutionary War. The hotel housed a post office, tavern, and stage coach stop on the much traveled stage road from Tuckerton to Philadelphia and was an important landmark in the area for many years. It closed in 1855 as a result of the town center shifting two miles down Allentown Road, now North Maple Avenue, to New Gretna.

The name New Gretna appears to have been first used in 1850 when Joseph B. Cramer was appointed postmaster of the New Gretna Post Office. The first map to identify the village as New Gretna is the 1858 Kuhn & Janney map of Burlington County which shows the New Gretna village area about the same as it is today.

The center of New Gretna was the Bass River Hotel, built in the late 1840's by Thomas French on the southeast corner of today's Rt. 9 and Maple Avenues. He sold the business in 1856 to Franklin Adams who ran the hotel and was postmaster until his death in 1885. Adolphus Lamson started a wheelwright business in 1856 and built heavy wagons which he shipped to the western states. Caleb Cramer was the first blacksmith. By 1883 the village contained the hotel, a Methodist and Presbyterian church, the wheelwright and blacksmith shops, four stores, and a few scattered dwellings surrounded by large family farms. At this time the New Gretna House was being built as a smaller family home for Joseph B. Lamson, Adolphus' son. It would evolve over the next few years to a restaurant and eventually, in 1885, to a saloon and hotel.

Howe's 1887-88 Burlington County Directory lists the following businesses for New Gretna: Francis A. Adams, grocer; Mark W. Adams & Co., flour and feed; Allen & Co., millinery; Richard S. Bartlett, saw mill; Chalkley S. Cramer, general store; Charles Deacon, wines and liquors [Deacon inherited the Bass River Hotel from his father-in-law Franklin Adams.]; Burrows M. French, general store; Adolphus H. Lamson, wheelwright; J.B. Lamson, restaurant and post-master; Howard Mathis, general store; New Gretna House, J.B. Lamson, prop; and Joseph Truax, blacksmith. Clearly, the village of New Gretna was much more active prior to the turn of the century than it is today.

Tradition says that the name "New Gretna" came from a town in Scotland called Gretna Green where people went to quickly and conveniently get married. It is likely that some enterprising businessmen thought that establishing such a village along the banks of the Bass River would attract tourists and related business thus enhancing the economy of the emerging village. If true, it is obvious that the scheme did not work as there is

(Continued on page 3)



The Bass River Hotel was the focal point of the village of New Gretna. Franklin Adams, the proprietor, can be seen standing out front in his white outfit. (Photo courtesy of Franklin W. Gray, the great grandson of Franklin Adams.)



The northwest intersection of Allentown Road (North Maple Ave.) and New York Road (Rt 9) showing the New Gretna House, circa 1910. (Photo courtesy of Ruth Cramer Soles)

The Bass River Community Library History Committee members are Steve Eichinger, Peter Stemmer, Almira Steele, Elaine Mathis, Harry DeVerter, and Jean & Murray Harris. In addition to a quarterly newsletter, we are working on a Bass River Township history book. If you have any information such as photos, postcards, family bibles, deeds, letters, documents, maps, local recipes, newspaper clippings, store advertisements, family genealogies, etc. related to Bass River Township that may be helpful to us, please contact us individually; write us c/o The Bass River Community Library, P.O. Box 256, New Gretna, N.J. 08224; or call Pete Stemmer at 296-6748. We can use your help.

# YESTERDAY'S RECIPES by Elaine Weber Mathis

## Mother-Daughter Fall Recipes

The Cramer family is one of the oldest families in Bass River Township. Margaret (Peg) Cramer is the daughter of Doughty and Alberta Cramer. Doughty was a direct descendant of Stephen Cramer who settled in Bass River in 1729. Peg is a life-long resident of New Gretna. She married Ruby McAnney who owned Allen's Dock. The Cranberry Salad Mold is a recipe she inherited from her mother. It was a family favorite that was prepared and served in the fall when cranberries are in season. Peg has also given us her recipe for her delicious Apple Pie. I have been told that her husband and children loved it. They used to say "It's sooo good!" Peg said that she got the recipe from a magazine many, many years ago. She still uses the same recipe today. Try it and see how good it is.



Doughty & Alberta Cramer in 1958 with their 5 children (l to r) Ethel, Peg, Preston, Minerva, and Almira. (Photo courtesy of Almira Cramer Steele)



Ruby and Peg McAnney with their son Jim and daughter Ruth in 1958. (Photo courtesy of Peg Cramer McAnney)

### ALBERTA CRAMER'S CRANBERRY RELISH MOLD

- 1 - 9 oz can (1 c.) crushed pineapple
- 1 - 3 oz. pkg. cherry flavored gelatin
- ½ c. sugar
- 1 c. hot water
- 1 c. ground fresh cranberries
- 1 c. chopped celery
- 1 small orange (peel on, seeds removed) ground
- ½ c. chopped walnuts

Drain pineapple, reserving syrup. Add enough water to pineapple syrup to make ½ cup. Dissolve gelatin and sugar in the hot water. Add reserved syrup. Chill until partially set. Add pineapple and remaining ingredients. Pour into a 5 cup ring mold. Chill overnight.



Alberta before her marriage to Doughty. (Photo courtesy of Peg McAnney)

### PEG McANNEY'S "SOOO GOOD" APPLE PIE

- Mix ¾ cup sugar and 1 tsp. cinnamon.
- Mix lightly through 6 or 7 cups sliced tart apples.
- Heap up in pastry lined pie pan.
- Dot with 1 ½ tbsp. butter.

Cover with top crust, then press edges with tines of a fork to seal. Cut slits for steam to escape. Bake in a 450 degree oven 50 minutes or until crust is well browned and apples are tender when pierced through a slit.

#### PIE CRUST (9 inch pie pan)

- 2 cups flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2/3 cup plus 2 tbsp. shortening. (Crisco)
- ¼ cup water

Measure flour into mixing bowl. Mix salt through it. With pastry blender, cut in shortening until particles are the size of peas. Sprinkle with water, a tbsp. at a time, mixing lightly with a fork until all the flour is moistened. Press firmly into a ball. Divide dough in half. Then roll out.

**Correction:** In the July issue that featured Woodrow Allen's Clam Hurrier recipe, I am sorry to have omitted the name of Eleanor as one of Woody and Dot's daughters. If you log on to our internet site at <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Meadows/1658> you will find a picture of Woody and Dot's 3 lovely daughters.



Peg Cramer in 1936 before her marriage to Ruby. (Photo courtesy of Peg McAnney)



Ruby & Peg on their 1946 wedding day. Peg promised to love, honor & bake plenty of pies. (Photo courtesy of Peg McAnney)

### Household Hints

(From *Heaven and Home Family Hour Handy Hints and 1003 Household Hints and Time Savers*)

- Add a teaspoon of vanilla to cranberries for a different flavor.
- Use leftover cranberry sauce to fill holes in baking apples, flavor blend is delicious.
- To prevent the juice from leaking out of a fruit or berry pie, cut the bottom crust a half inch larger than the top.
- If a pie runs over in the oven, smoke and odor can be prevented by sprinkling salt over the juice.

**Thank you to Ruth Cramer Soles** for submitting several recipes from the files of her mother, Mary Quick Cramer, and her grandmother, Carrie Johnson Cramer. Some of these recipes will be featured in a future newsletter.

# BASS RIVER NEIGHBORHOODS

(Continued from page 1)

nothing related to present-day New Gretna that would suggest that it was ever the "marriage capital" of south Jersey.

There is some confusion over the name "Harmony" which is found on an 1849 Otley & Whiteford map of Burlington County to designate what was to become the New Gretna area. It is likely that this is in error or a name that was used for a very short time by a very few people, as no other reference to Harmony can be found except in a few Gazetteers of the same time period which probably took the name from the Otley & Whiteford map.

Various sections of Bass River have been given neighborhood names over the years. Most of these designations go back to that time when Bass River Township was a part of Little Egg Harbor and were useful in identifying locations in the spacious township. These names were unofficial, the areas had no exact boundaries, and they were not noted on most maps. They were used to help communicate general locations. One would say "Meet me at the Frogtown School." or "The Mathistown saw mill has the best cedar this year."

Many of these place names are still in use today. They include:

**Bridgeport** (later called Wading River) is that area along the Wading River adjacent to the Wading River bridge. John Leak was the first settler in this area. A cellar hole from the Leak store, a short distance upstream from the present bridge, is the only physical reminder of the Leak wharf which was a busy ship building and dock facility for many years in the late 1700's and early 1800's.

**Leektown** is the area from Bridgeport to Union Hill. It was originally owned by the Great John Mathis who sold the land to John Leak (later spelled Leek). Most of the early houses in the area were built by members of the Leek family hence the name for the present day Leektown Road.

**Union Hill**, the area around the present Union Hill Campground, is said to have been named during the Civil War when the men gathered in this area for drill exercises. Since they supported the Union Army and trained on high ground the area became known as "Union Hill."

**Allentown** begins about a mile north of Rt. 9 on North Maple Avenue (previously called Allentown Road) and runs to the old Bass River Hotel. It was originally settled by Robert Allen and for many years his descendants inhabited most of the homes in this area.



A small cluster of homes in southern Allentown, circa 1920. Today they are owned by (l to r) Alston & Claire Allen, Dorothy Allen, the Ronald Cop family, and the Kevin Groff family. The lone house on the east side of the road was owned by Thomas Jefferson Gaskill and has since been torn down. (Photo courtesy of Winfield Allen III)

**Bass River Neck (later called Frogtown)** is located between Route 9 and Hammonton road running down to the Mullica River. It was here that the first Quaker and Methodist churches were built in the Hillside Cemetery area. When the Methodist Church moved to its present location on Route 9, the old church building was moved from the cemetery across Hillside Lane and converted to the "Frogtown" schoolhouse.

**Mathistown** runs from the present Ocean County line at Belangee's Creek along Route 9 to the village of New Gretna. It was largely inhabited by the direct descendants of the Great John Mathis, the first white settler in the Bass River area.

**Herrintown** was used locally to refer to New Gretna. When used by a Clamtown (Tuckerton) resident it was a derogatory term, but New Gretna residents used the term proudly as "herrin" was important to the local economy for many years.

## How "Herrintown" Got Its Name

A little silver fish we have to blame  
For how our town got its name.  
We've heard of towns from East to West  
With names that seem to suit them best.

Bean Town - Big Apple - The Windy City.  
Now most folk think that's pretty witty.  
To name a town for a thing unique  
But to name a town for a fish? That's cheek!

Wondering how it came to be?  
Come back to long-ago with me.  
When the bay and river produced the wealth  
And added to the people's health.

Long ago in a different clime  
We can watch the scenes flash through our mind.

Up in the north in the cold and deep  
Off Nova Scotia's rocky reef.

In the days of March when the wind is raw,  
When the ice in the river begins to thaw  
Something stirs within their heart,  
And like their fathers before- off they start.  
They take the long and ancient trail  
Every season without fail.

This silver fish with streamline frame.  
It never gained the sport man's fame.  
Cared not a wit about its fate.  
Called it worthless, call it bait.

But how could they know of a time and place  
And this lowly fish in the watery trace?  
How could they know of the native here,  
About the folk that counted this fish so dear?

They packed the fish in a barrel of brine.  
Kept it in the cellar til winter time.

When breakfast came at early morn,  
Wood stove burning to keep them warm.  
Smoke from chimneys hangs over town  
And smell of pancakes turning brown.

Salt fish poached and served up hot  
With plenty gravy poured on top.  
Think it strange fare as well you may.  
But this was the start of the bayman's day.

Let's turn back now to a scene in the bay  
The wind picked up since break of day.  
Nor-wester's blowing cold and clear  
A sail in the river is drawing near.

The boatman leans out over the side  
Shouts "Let 'em know far and wide.  
The shoal of fish came through the bight."  
To him it was an old familiar sight.

The silver sides flashing in the sun.  
The multitudes in the migration run.

It was Sunday morn this day in the Spring.  
The Presbyterians were gathered and had started to sing.  
The lad that was spreading the news all around  
Had turned the corner and headed up Allentown.

He knew the baymen, all but a few,  
Would be there in church in their usual pew.  
He pushed on the door. It flew open wide.  
"Boys you better put churching aside."

He shouted so loud his voice in a quiver.  
"Hurry up boys . . .  
**'HERRIN' UP RIVER!**"

The meeting broke up to the preacher's dismay.  
How could a fish lure them away?

I'll leave you with your thoughts on this.  
Here in the town that was named for a fish.

The "Herrintown" Poet - July, 1998

# ANOTHER THING I REMEMBER by Almira Cramer Steele

## Bass River Nicknames

Bass River has always been known for the many nicknames of its people. Years ago, the three most common last names in town were Cramer, Allen, and Mathis and a few of these also had the same first name. To distinguish between them, the nickname came into being.

The men were the ones who usually got the nickname that was often handed down to their wives and sometimes other family members as well. For example:



Winfield F. "Winnie" and Hannah Elizabeth "Lizzie Winnie" Allen with their children (l to r) Albert, Cliff, and "Winnie" Jr. (Photo courtesy of "Winnie" Allen IV)

- Frank Allen's nickname was "**Flick**" and his wife was called "**Lena Flick.**"
- Joseph Mathis was known as "**Joe Pottie**" and his wife as "**Lizzie Pottie.**"
- Harvey G. Cramer's nickname was "**Gid.**" His wife "**Mabel Gid.**"
- James Cramer was called "**Jim.**" His wife "**Lottie Jim.**"
- Winfield Allen's nickname was "**Winnie,**" his wife "**Lizzie Winnie,**" his son and grandson were both called "**Winnie**" and his great-grandson is known by the same nickname. That's four generations of "**Winnie.**"

- Robert Maxwell was called "**Bob**" and his wife "**Maggie Bob.**"
- Lorenzo D. Robbins was known as "**Dow.**" His wife, "**Lib Dow.**"
- Caleb Mathis was called "**Calie,**" his wife, "**Ellie Cale.**"
- Caleb Allen was known as "**Calie Flem.**"
- Jenkins Mathis was called "**Jenksy.**" His wife, "**Bertha Jenksy.**"
- Harry Mathis was called "**Harry Nick**" and his wife "**Sally Nick.**"
- Another Harry Mathis was known as "**Harry Kid.**"
- Edward K. Allen was known as "**Keeper,**" his wife "**Lynn Keever.**"
- Horatio Cramer was called "**Tater,**" his wife, "**Annie Tater**" and oldest son, "**Stan Tater.**"
- Eugene Mathis was known as "**Boot,**" his wife, "**Stella Boot**" and his son, "**Jack Boot.**"
- Earl Cramer's nickname was "**Crow,**" his wife "**Viola Crow**" and his daughter, "**Eleanor Crow.**"



"Keever" and "Lynn Keever" outside their North Maple Avenue home. (Photo courtesy of Earl Allen)

- Earl's brother, Arnold, was known as "**Biscuit,**" his wife, "**Gertie Biscuit,**" his oldest son, "**Harold Biscuit**" and his grandson "**Jim Biscuit.**"
- George A. Cramer's nickname was "**Govey,**" his wife, "**Emma Govey,**" His oldest son, Mahlon, was also "**Govey**" and his second son, Townsend, is known as "**Towny.**"
- Lemuel Cramer was called "**Tea-berry,**" his son, Samuel, was called "**Huckleberry**" and his grandson, Nelson, was also known as "**Huckleberry.**"
- Arthur Loveland, known as "**Cooney**" had five children and his youngest son, Arthur, was the one who inherited the nickname.
- Amasa Mathis was nicknamed "**Mace,**" his son "**Dan Mace,**" his

granddaughter "**Helen Mace,**" and his grandson, Walter, was known as "**Macey.**"

- Marvin Mathis had the nickname of "**Pugg.**" His wife was called "**Ida Pugg.**"
- Uriah Allen was fondly known as "**Piper.**" His oldest son, Uriah, was also known as "**Piper,**" and his great-grandson, Gary Steinhauer, goes by the same nickname today.
- Lane Mathis was the father of Roy who was known as "**Roy Lane.**"



"Piper" Allen, Sr. supervising workers in the New Gretna bogs. (Photo courtesy of Etta Allen Bannan)

Sometimes the husband had no nickname while his wife was given a nickname to identify her with her husband:

- Jesse Loveland's wife was known as "**Lide Jess.**"
- Milton Cramer's wife was called "**Marie Milton.**"
- Albert Cramer's wife was "**Lib Albert.**"
- John Mathis' wife was "**Sara John.**"
- Harold Gerew's wife was "**Lizzie Harold.**"

Some nicknames were given to the men only:

- Alvin McAnney was called "**Elvy.**"
- Talbert Loveland was known as "**Tabby.**"
- Walter Loveland's nickname was "**Ditty.**"
- Milton Kaufin's nickname was "**Mutt.**"
- Gerald Hickman was known as "**Skeets.**"
- Leon Allen was called "**Minky.**"
- Socrates McAnney was known as "**Crate.**"
- Ashton Lamson was known as "**Ash.**"
- Woodrow Allen was called "**Wood.**"
- Washington Allen's nickname was "**Washy.**"
- Irvin Cramer was called "**Greaser.**"
- Patrick Loveland was known as "**Pokey.**"
- Reuben McAnney was called "**Ruby**" by the female population and "**Rube**" by the men and boys.



"Ash" and Anna Lamson. Ash owned a restaurant on the NE corner of Rt 9 and Maple Ave. from 1899-1929. (Photo courtesy of Betty Lamson West)

James Adams was the father of Margaret Adams who was the principal of the New Gretna School for many, many years. She was called "**Miss Maggie**" and "**Miss Margaret**" by her students but "**Maggie Jimmy**" by most of her friends.

Harold Gerew, Jr. loved to watch the older boys play football. Of course being younger, he was much smaller than the players, but every time they would go into a huddle, Harold was right in the middle of it. Therefore, "**Huddle**" is his New Gretna nickname to this day.

George Hedevary was nicknamed "**Spinny**" because, I am told, he liked to take his car out on the ice in the dead of winter and spin around and around.



Miss Margaret in 1926 with (l to r) Sara Loveland, unknown & Doug Lambert (Photo courtesy of Myrtle Falkinberg)

(Continued on page 6)

# NEWS FROM THE PAST

by Harry DeVerter

The following are actual news articles transcribed from old issues of the Mount Holly Herald.

## MOUNT HOLLY HERALD

December 11, 1875

One day last week, John Mathis, of **Mathistown** (three miles west of Tuckerton), attacked and killed with a club an otter, measuring from its nose to the end of its tail, 4 feet and 8 inches, 23 ½ inches around the body and weighing 35 pounds. There were two of them, but the other took for a ditch and John took for the otter, but John having but two feet and the otter four, of course got beaten, and it plunged into the water and hid. John says he will have "that other one's hide on the fence yet." Vincentown boys look to your laurels.

## MOUNT HOLLY HERALD

January 13, 1883

**Bridgeport** possesses a rare curiosity in the shape of a talking machine. It is very quick in its motions and makes the circuit of the neighborhood in a very few hours, giving all the latest news and gossip, together with a few necessary additions to spice the news up. It also has a receptacle for holding whatever it can pick up that will interest the inhabitants. Uncle Gid has explained this phenomenon thoroughly and pronounces it "a well got up thing." It also has a few small machines that are connected with it, which furnish a part of the talking material, but the principle concern is known as the "Hannergraph".

## MOUNT HOLLY HERALD

December 6, 1902

Residents of **Mathistown**, a hamlet situated between Tuckerton and New Gretna, are up in arms against the apparent work of a fire bug who has been operating in that section. A barn on the farm of the George Lipponcott estate was burned Tuesday night, and a house on the farm owned by Thomas Speck the following night.

## MOUNT HOLLY HERALD

December 2, 1916

An interesting meeting was held in the Knights of Pythias hall last week when the question of closing the **Union Hill** school and have the children transported to the graded school here was discussed by taxpayers in the presence of members of the board of education. County Superintendent Kayser, of Mount Holly, was present. The educational authorities have not yet come to a decision in the matter.

## The following item was taken from Leah Blackman's "History of Little Egg Harbor Township."

(See Leah Mathis Blackman article, page 6)

At quite an early date the Friends built a meeting house in **Bass river neck**. It was situated near the old Methodist church, and on the lower main road from Bass river to **Bridgeport**, and opposite the Uriah Cranmer place. (page 199)

# A Place Called "Goldacker"

By Steve Eichinger

As you drive from Bridgeport to Lower Bank you will notice a small street sign identifying Goldecker Road [This is an Americanization of the German spelling of the family name.] on your right just before you pass over the Wading River bridge. This road leads to a place that was known as "Goldacker's" many years ago.

The name Goldacker came from Charles Goldacker and his wife Catherina who immigrated from Prussia (now Germany) to the United States in the mid 1800's. They settled on the banks of the Wading River in the 1860's, clearing upland for farming and lowland for cranberry bogs. Here they raised their two sons, Charles, Jr. (born 1847 in Germany) and Robert (born 1851 in Missouri).

The Goldacker farm was located on a spur of the old Mail Stage Road which ran southeasterly from Bodine's Tavern (now called Bodine's field) outside of Harrisville, paralleling the east bank of the Wading River, past the old Half Moon Tavern at the present entrance to Chips Folly Campground, and on to Bridgeport where it turned and ran to the old Bass River Hotel (later called the Red Tavern and now the site of Pilgrim Lake Campground). Here it met with the Tuckerton Stage Road which generally followed the present route of Stage Road to Tuckerton.

Robert married in his early twenties and lived in Bass River with his wife Mary and their daughter Maria. Charles, Jr. moved to the midwest where he married his wife Kate. They had a son Robert (born 1882) and daughter Katherine (born 1884) while living in Missouri and a daughter Florence who was born in 1888 after Charles, Jr. moved back to Bass River.

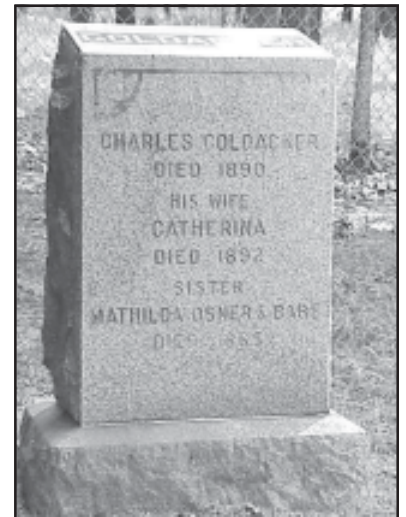
Charles Goldacker, Sr. died in 1890 and his wife Catherina died two years later.

By 1920 Charles Goldacker, Jr., now 72 years old, and his son Robert who remained unmarried were living on the Goldacker farm with his son-in-law, Charles M. Terrell who married Charles, Jr.'s daughter Katherine.

The land remained solely in the Goldacker family until 1926 when Kenneth Bell purchased 1 acre from Robert Goldacker and built a cottage overlooking the Wading River. In 1934 another 1 3/4 acres was sold to William Boardman from Philadelphia, and in 1939 Radcliff Royal bought acreage. Both Boardman and Royal built cottages. Bell and Royal went into partnership and had blueberry fields in the area.

By 1940 the descendents of Charles Goldacker no longer owned land in Bass River Township. Today the only connection to the Goldacker property overlooking the Wading River is Radcliff Royal's grandson who lives with his family in the cottage built by his grandfather.

Nothing is left of the Goldacker homestead but an old stone cellar. The only reminder we have of the Goldacker family in Bass River Township is the small "Goldecker Road" street sign and a family tombstone in the Adams-Leek-McKeen Cemetery on a hill a short distance from a place called Goldacker.



Charles and Catherina's tombstone in the Adams-Leek-McKeen Cemetery. (Photo by Elaine Mathis)

## NICKNAMES

(Continued from page 4)

There was a restaurant on the corner of South Maple Avenue and Route 9 and the owners, at one time, were William and Annie Cramer. Mrs. Cramer ran the restaurant while her husband had a butcher shop in the rear of the building. Mr. Cramer was known as **"Bill Butcher"** and his wife as **"Annie Bill."**

When Elaine Allen who was from Long Island, N.Y., joined the Allen family, her father-in-law nicknamed her **"Shorty"** right off the bat. I guess that was her christening into the life and times of New Gretna.

Peg McAnney, whose husband teased her about working so hard, jokingly chose the nickname of **"Tillie"** from the comic strip **"Tillie the Toiler."**

Alberta Cramer's son-in-law appropriately called her **"Queenie."** I guess he saw right from the start who ruled the roost on Cramer Hill.

I, too, have had a nickname all my life. My friends and family have always called me **"Al."** Wherever I go, if I hear someone call out to me by my nickname, I know it's a good friend from New Gretna. It gives me a real nostalgic feeling, and I believe that is what the nickname is all about. It's the warm and friendly camaraderie of the folks in our hometown, and I hope we never lose that special, tender touch with our Hometown Folks.



Harry Allen & his wife Rayetta with their daughter-in-law "Shorty" in 1942. (Photo courtesy of Ben & Elaine Allen)

## THIS OLD HOUSE



(Photo courtesy of Bette McAnney)

The Isaac Loveland house on Hammonton Road in the Sherman's Corner section of Frogtown. Leah Ann Loveland, Isaac's wife, is in the front yard with her father James McAnney from Wading River, Washington Township. Leah was the mother of Danny Loveland who lived in the house for many years. The house burned down in 1994 and has since been replaced by Danny's granddaughter, Michelle Taryani, and her husband Robert.



5 Generations of "Lovelands" (r-l) Leah Loveland, Danny Loveland, Doris Loveland McAnney, Bette McAnney & Walter Percy III. (Photo courtesy of Michelle Taryani)

## EARLY BASS RIVER FAMILIES

by Murray and Jean Harris

### LEAH MATHIS BLACKMAN

The definitive text on the genealogies of the early families of Bass River is Leah Blackman's "History of Little Egg Harbor Township." This remarkable book was written in 1880 by a woman with little formal education and no access to many of the sources of information we have today. Leah Mathis was born on January 21, 1817, the eldest of six children. She was descended from Great John Mathis through the line of his son Micajah. Her father was Elihu Mathis, a farmer, surveyor, and a member of the New Jersey Assembly. Her mother was Amelia Seaman.

Leah's father's farm was located in the vicinity of what is now the shopping center on Mathistown Road in Little Egg Harbor. From here she walked to school in West Tuckerton when she was able to attend. Often her duties on the farm, cooking for her father's hired hands and helping to care for the younger children, kept her at home. She had the further handicap of being brought up in a century when it was thought that education for girls was a waste of time. Despite the gaps in her formal schooling, Leah obtained an excellent education and became a very articulate writer. In her own words, "the Mathis family is remarkable ... for their aptness in learning." She must certainly have possessed this family trait to a high degree.

Leah Mathis married Ezra Blackman, a farmer, and raised a family of 7 children. She began publishing her genealogical articles in the New Jersey Courier in a weekly column which was simply signed "L.B." Later the complete collection of articles was published in the 1880 "West Jersey Surveyors' Association Proceedings" under the title of "History of Little Egg Harbor Township."

Ezra Blackman died in 1872, and Leah moved from the farm to Marine Street in "downtown" Tuckerton, where she lived until she died in 1886. She and Ezra are buried in Greenwood Cemetery, Tuckerton.



Leah Blackman's 1880 "History of Little Egg Harbor Township" is the definitive genealogical work of the area. (Photo courtesy of Arnold Cramer)

In 1963 the Great John Mathis Foundation extracted Leah's text from the West Jersey Surveyors' Association publication and re-issued "History of Little Egg Harbor Township" as a hard-cover book. It can be consulted at most of the local libraries, and is also for sale at the Bass River Community Library. This book is an invaluable resource for those interested in the history of Bass River, the location and ownership of the original farms, and the genealogy of the local families up to 1880.

Visit the Bass River Community Library's website at

<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Meadows/1658>