

BASS RIVER GAZETTE

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

Issue No. 4- May, 1999

donations appreciated

THE SHORT AND TALL ALLENS OF BASS RIVER

by Peter H. Stemmer

The Allen family tree can be traced back to England where the family came into prominence in the 9th century with the rise of Allan, Duke of Brittany as chief general of the Norman army. The name is a British corruption of the Latin *Aelians* meaning sunbright.

The Allens of Monmouth and Ocean Counties appear to be descended from George Allen who came to Boston from Weymouth, England in 1636. His son, George, became a Quaker and migrated to Monmouth County in the Province New Jersey in order to freely practice his religion. Harold F. Wilson (*The Jersey Shore*, Vol. III, p. 162) states that George, Jr.'s great grandson, Ralph, of Shrewsbury fathered Robert who came to Bass River. It should be noted, however, that the father-son link between Ralph and Robert, while probable, is somewhat tenuous and may be based upon circumstantial evidence and supposition rather than concrete genealogical documentation.



Tall Allen brothers (l-r) Winfield, Albert & Cliff Allen. Cliff started Allen's Clam Bar in New Gretna (Photo courtesy of Winnie Allen)

We know little about Robert Allen's life other than he came from Shrewsbury; was a Quaker; married Edith Andrews, the daughter of Mordecai and Mary Andrews of Tuckerton in 1717 in the ancient Tuckerton Friends Meeting House; and settled on the west bank of the Bass River in the area that was later to become known as Allentown from Robert's many descendants who remained in the area. He left no paper trail to document his life as did his contemporary, the Great John Mathis. I could find no deeds to his property, no record of the birth and baptism of his children, no record of his death and burial place, and no will.

While Leah Blackman in her *History of Little Egg Harbor Township* sheds little light on the life of Robert Allen, she does a credible job chronicling Robert Allen's descendants, particularly the line of his first son, Peter, whose descendants we find in Bass River today.

One would think that all of the Bass River Allens could be traced back to Robert, but this is not the case. Many cannot. A closer look at Blackman's book provides the key to this mystery. Two lines on page 373, under the Burton Family heading, provide the answer: "*Prudence Burton married David Allen. Their children: Isaiah, Mary, Elizabeth, William, Theodore, Sarah, Edward, Samuel and David.*" It is through Edward that the "other" Bass River Allens come.



Harry Allen's sons, George (l) & Benjamin Allen (Short Allens) in 1942 (Photo courtesy of Ben & Elaine Allen)

Leah does not connect David Allen to the Robert Allen line nor does she follow David and Prudence's line beyond their children. Clearly she knows little about him. He stands alone, simply married into the Burton family. No one to my knowledge has been able to connect David with Robert Allen.

David may have come from another part of New Jersey, possibly Monmouth or Salem counties, and may be connected to the Robert Allen line prior to settling in Little

Egg Harbor Township. Woodrow Wilson Allen told me that Winfield Scott Allen believed David Allen came to Little Egg Harbor from Canada. However, no documentation can be found to verify this family tradition.

The local Allen families may not be aware of the formal genealogical history of the two Allen families, but they are keenly aware that two separate, distinct Allen families live in New Gretna. For generations they have called them the "Short" and "Tall" Allens, a reference to the body types perceived by the locals regarding the families. Those in Robert Allen's line are the "Short" Allens. Those in David Allen's line are the "Tall" Allens. Of the two, the Short Allens were the more numerous.



Chet Allen, a Short Allen, started Allen's Dock on the Bass River. (Photo courtesy of Margaret Cramer McAnney)

Following are members of the two Bass River Allen families who would be recognizable to today's "Oldtimers." **Tall Allens** would be related to Edward "Keever" Allen, Leslie Allen, Woodrow Wilson Allen, Alston and Earle Allen, or Cliff and Winnie Allen of the Allen Clam Bar family. **Short Allens** would be related to Harry Allen, Benjamin Allen, George Allen, Leon "Minky" Allen, Samuel Budd and Everett Allen, Chester Allen, Caleb Flemming Allen, or Caleb Washington "Washy" Allen.

The next time you meet a Bass River Allen, see if you can guess if they are a "Tall" or a "Short" Allen.

The Samuel Budd Allen family, circa 1914, a Short Allen family who lived in Allentown. Samuel Budd (1) & wife Lida Mae (2) with children Ida (3); Grove (4); baby Margaret (5); Ada (6); Everett (7); and Elizabeth (8). As a fire Warden, Sam was said to have had the first telephone in New Gretna. (Photo courtesy of Jean Allen Lainhart, Everett Allen's daughter)



The Bass River Community Library History Committee members are Harry DeVerter, Steve Eichinger, Jean & Murray Harris, Elaine Mathis, Almira Steele, and Peter Stemmer. If you have any information such as photos, letters, documents, maps, local recipes, newspaper clippings, 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 again thank the Herrintown Poet for his guest article and welcome a new guest writer, John Milton Adams. Readers who are interested in Bass River Township area history are encouraged to submit comments to our columnists and/or an article for publication. We hope to include a "Letters to the Editor" column in the future, so let's hear from you.



Edward K. Allen's children (l-r) Dot, Ted, and Les with baby Woody in front are all Tall Allens. (Photo courtesy of Dorothy Steele Allen)



Les Allen, a boy in the photo at top of this page, sits with his son Gary on their Adams Avenue porch. Gary now lives across the street from his dad's old house. (Photo courtesy of Earl Allen)

ANOTHER THING I REMEMBER

by Almira Cramer Steele

MEMORIES OF NEW GREटना SCHOOL

The fall of 1927 I entered kindergarten at the four classroom School House at Bass River in the building that still exists today. Miss Margaret Adams was the Principal and teacher of three grades- kindergarten, first, and second. The room was heated by a big coal stove and outside privies were our bathrooms. Within a few years we were privileged to indoor plumbing and central heating. I can also remember the white ABC's on a black background in capital and small letters, tacked above the blackboard and the first sentences we learned to read: "This boy cannot color. This girl cannot paste."



Miss Margaret Adams taught many New Greटना School children in her forty and one half years of teaching. (Photo courtesy of Steve Eichinger)

Miss Margaret, as we called her, did an excellent job giving us the foundation on which to build our future education. With three grades to teach and principal besides, she really had her work cut out for her, but she did it and did it well. I've heard many former students say "Thank God for Miss Margaret," and I agree.

After second grade we went into Mrs. Leola Hickman's room. She taught third and fourth grades. The atmosphere there was a bit different. We were getting older and more was expected of us, I guess. She had a short temper to say the least. Sometimes, if she saw someone misbehaving, you might see a blackboard eraser, a book, or whatever was handy flying through the air aimed at the victim and lots of times those flying objects connected. She was married to Gerald "Skeets" Hickman, and they lived in their new home on South Maple Avenue, later becoming parents of two beautiful daughters, Louise and Lori.

Fifth and sixth grades were taught by Miss Ruth Matchett. She was fresh out of college when she came to Bass River and only taught at our school for two years before moving on to greener pastures. Our class had her for both of those years. She had a habit of screaming at us when things went wrong, and things went wrong an awful lot, it seemed. Believe me, two years of that was long enough.



Elsie Smith in her early years of teaching (Photo courtesy of Steve Eichinger)

Our last two years were taught by Miss Elsie Smith, a very mild mannered individual who taught at Bass River for many years and made lots of friends in our community. One of her dear friends was Alvin (Elvy) McAnney who was Township Clerk at the time. She was very civic minded and participated in most of the town's activities. Late in life she became the wife of Robert Maxwell, and they lived happily together at their home on Rt. 9 next door to the old New Greटना post office building.

Besides the four teachers, we had professionals who came down periodically from Burlington County to assist in the school programs. Mr. Kaiser was the County Superintendent of Schools, Miss Hewitt, the helping teacher, Miss Troxell, the truant officer, and Miss Carey, our music teacher. I especially remember what a tiny, sweet lady Miss Carey was and how she played the piano and sang so beautifully. In fact, one boy thought she sang so sweetly, he called her "Miss Canary."

A sick room was provided upstairs for the children, and Dr. Lane was the attending physician. Every so often we all lined up for a checkup. He was an old country doctor and took a real interest in the school children. One time he sponsored a poetry contest, and each student in our room recited the poem "The House by the Side of the Road." The three best speakers won a monetary prize. That was real exciting for us; however, I can't remember who the three winners were. Needless to say, I wasn't one of them.

We also had a cafeteria in the basement. Food was prepared each school day by Mrs. Hedervary. We ate at long tables and sat on benches that were as long as the tables. I can still hear the scraping sound on the cement floor as we moved those benches to get close to the table to eat our lunch. Mrs. Hedervary was an excellent cook, and the hour we had for lunch was a real satisfying time.

Our custodian was Mr. Joseph Hickman, and his little nook was the heater room. He saw to it that we were warm and cozy and everything was clean and working. A nicer man I've never known. He moved throughout the school very quietly, checking things out every day. He was a favorite with the boys because he would let them visit him on occasions in his little abode just to chat for a while. The boys thought that was great!

The boys and girls lavatories, the heater room, and the stage for performing arts were all added on to the four classroom building and our playground, where competing baseball games were played each Spring, is now the site where the new school building is located. It was on this very stage that our famous minstrel shows were performed during the 1950's. What great memories those shows left for us, but that's another story for another issue.

After nine years at Bass River our 1936 eighth grade graduating class of ten students was ready to move on to Tuckerton High School: William Reynolds, Richard Hickman, Newman Mathis, Anna Allen (Newman), Etta Allen (Bannan), Mildred Leepa



The New Greटना School (circa 1929) was built in 1900 when the old Squab Hill School was moved down the street and incorporated into the new building. (Photo courtesy of Steve Eichinger)



My 3rd and 4th grade teacher, Leola Hickman (Photo courtesy of Steve Eichinger)



Dorothy Hedervary prepared many delicious lunches over the years. (Photo courtesy of Marge Hedervary Frantz)

JOE B AND THE RUNAWAY CAR

by the Herrintown Poet

The Delivery

The year 1910 will be remembered as the year that Joe B received the delivery of a new car. It was Joe B's first car and the first car ever to enter Herrintown. The car was built in Detroit by the Ransom E. Olds Co. It was a black, open touring car and had a leather upholstered seat with room for two. It was furnished with pneumatic tires made in Mr. Firestone's rubber factory at Toledo, Ohio and were mounted on woodspoke wheels painted yellow. It was truly a machine of excellent form and beauty.

Joe B's new car was shipped direct from the factory in Detroit to Newark and then on south to the Tuckerton siding. As was customary in those days, the factory sent along a trained mechanic to instruct the new owner in the care and maintenance of the machine.

Wally, the mechanic that accompanied Joe B's car, was a short wide heavy set guy with possum eyes and, by his own account, an expert driver. He boasted to all that would listen that under his guiding hand Joe B would, very soon, be skilled in the fine art of automobile handling.

Joe B

I suppose I should tell you a little about Joe B first before I go on with the story. Joe B. lived on Allentown Road which was lined with handsome houses with well trimmed gravel walks and large maple trees that had been planted orderly along both sides of the roadway. Joe B's house was the large white, two story directly opposite the school house. Standing above all was the spire of the Presbyterian Church pointing upward as a constant reminder of the sovereignty of God.

Joe B was a keen-witted, shrewd businessman who took risks that required the nerves of a riverboat gambler. He was instrumental in forming the first Building and Loan Bank in Herrintown of which he was secretary-treasurer. He built and operated the New Gretna House Hotel and was also well connected to the political establishment in Mt. Holly, the county seat, where he served as secretary to the Board of Freeholders. So it was not surprising that it was none other than Joe B who brought the first car to town.



Joe B's house can be seen across the street from the New Gretna School on the graveled Allentown Road where Joe B experienced his moment of fame. (Photo courtesy of Ruth Cramer Soles)

The Schoolhouse

It was a bright, warm September day and all of the windows in the schoolhouse were opened wide letting in a faint breeze. In the classroom the day was not going as planned. Miss Margaret, the primary grade teacher, was having a hard time of it trying to keep order. The room was fairly buzzing with excitement. The children had seen Joe B and his mechanic in the car speeding down Allentown Road past the school, and they were anxiously listening for the car to return.

Children were hanging out of the windows, each one determined to be the first to catch a glimpse of this mechanical marvel. Miss Margaret, attempting to gain control of the classroom, gave orders in a stern voice. "Everybody sit down and put your head on the desk and cover your ears with your hands!" Her command went unheeded. Dogs barking in the distance were a tell-tail sign that the car was

ANOTHER THING I REMEMBER

... REVISITED

by Walter L. Mathis



Walter L. Mathis
1908-1996

Joe B's Car

When I was a small boy I had a ride in one of the first cars in New Gretna. It was owned by Joseph B. Lamson who lived across the street from the school house. In those days when you bought a car, the dealer sent a man to teach you how to drive. While Joe was learning he ran into the school fence and broke it.

I rode from his house to his brother's house on North Maple Avenue. The thing that impressed me the most was the way the car vibrated and shook. I think it had a single cylinder engine and long brass rods that went from the top down to the mud guards. Of course, the roads were bad in those days. They were made of gravel and in the winter when the ground froze and thawed, they would be full of holes and deep ruts. In the summer when it got hot and dry the roads would be so dusty that you had to wear a long coat called a duster and goggles to keep the dirt out of your eyes. If you lived on the highway the dust would cover everything in your house.

Walter edited the original "Another Thing I Remember" column in the mid 1980's when the short-lived Bass River Historical Society published a newsletter. This is his column from October, 1984.

coming back now toward the schoolhouse. The sound of the machine could now be heard as it labored to climb Hickman's Hill.

Children started whistling and clapping as they watched the car pass the church. As the car came in to full view, little puffs of white smoke could be seen trailing the car. Some boys let their imaginations get the better of them. One boy said he saw flames, then another shouted "We're going to die!"

The car sped on, gaining speed and bouncing on the hard sand road. Joe B was gripping the steering wheel with both hands and frantically twisting it from side to side while Wally was yelling "Put your foot on the brake, not the gas!" all the while looking for some place to hang on. With the engine racing wildly, the car jerked and skipped out of control. It skidded at an angle, and in one split second it was half way to the schoolhouse door, knocking over thirty feet of picket fence on the way. It came to a stop with a loud ch-chug noise and the clatter of gravel stones. It was covered in a thick cloud of dry dust.

Twenty six children wasted no time. All piled out the door to gaze with wide eyes and mouths opened at this "wonder of American ingenuity" now setting askew in the school yard. When the dust had settled, Wally, surveying the car for damage, leaned over the front wheel, looked at it thoughtfully and said "We-e-e-l. Won't take much to fix it up and put her back good as new again."

Joe B, dressed in a white linen suit and wearing a driving cap with goggles pushed back, struck a cavalier pose with his hands stuck in his pockets and looked over Wally's shoulder at the bent wheel. He let out a little humorless dry laugh, "Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.", and turned and walked away.

The next day there was no school.

This was a story told to me by F.A. Gray who was a schoolboy in Miss Margaret's classroom and an eye witness to the events on the day Joe B's car ran away.



Franklin Adams "F.A." Gray (left) & his brother Bill (Photo courtesy of Franklin Willets Gray)

YESTERDAY'S RECIPES by Elaine Weber Mathis

Jean McNeil of Little Rock, Arkansas said that she enjoyed seeing a picture of her grandfather's grocery store in the July, 1998 Bass River Gazette. Her grandparents were Clarence and Helen Gerew Mathis, and her mother is Leila Mathis Pitts. Clarence and Helen raised three children- Norman Gerew, Orval, and Leila Rae. They took over the grocery store business from Clarence's father, Howard, and operated it through 1954 when it was sold to Russell Seville. Jean sent us her grandmother Helen's favorite lemon pie recipe. Thank you, Jean. Many of us remember Helen fondly and will enjoy making her favorite lemon pie.



Norman & Leila ate many of Helen's lemon pies over the years. (Photo courtesy of Leila Mathis Pitts)

HELEN MATHIS' LEMON PIE

2 cups sugar
4 heaping tbs. cornstarch
2 lemon rinds grated
4 egg yokes
½ tsp. salt
4 cups water (a little added at a time)
juice of 3 lemons – add after cooking
butter cube walnut-size...added after cooking.

Add egg yolks to sugar, cornstarch, lemon rind and salt. Mix slightly and add the cups of water gradually. Cook over medium heat until very thick. Remove from stove and cool in cold water. Add butter and lemon juice after mixture thickens. Whip 4 egg whites to a thick peak and add 4 Tbs. sugar and beat until stiff. Place over cool lemon filling in a baked pie shell. Run in the oven (300 degrees) until browned on top. Cool and enjoy.



Clarence & Helen Mathis at their 50th wedding anniversary celebration. (Photo courtesy of Ann & Norman Mathis)

I have been told that Bess Mathis made a most delicious pound cake. I found a copy of the recipe that I believe is in Bess' own handwriting. Bess was the wife of Howard Zebulon (Zeb) Mathis, who was a brother to Clarence. Their children were Howard, Mildred, and John (Jack). Bess was well known, not only for her pound cake, but also for her dedication to the First Presbyterian Church in New Gretna. She played the organ for the church services and was also a Sunday School teacher there for many years.



Mildred & her younger brother Jack looked forward to their mom's pound cake. (Photo courtesy of Ruth Cramer Soles)

BESS MATHIS' POUND CAKE

1 lb. 4x sugar
3 cups flour
1 tsp. baking powder (heaping)
1 cup milk (scant)
4 eggs
1 cup shortening (½ Crisco & ½ oleo)
1 ¼ tsp. salt
2 tsp. vanilla
½ tsp. lemon extract

Cream sugar and shortening. Add egg, one at a time and beat after each addition. Sift flour, baking powder and salt. Add ½ the dry ingredients alternately with ½ of the milk, beating after each addition. Add flavoring and beat. Put batter into large tube pan that has been greased and floured. Bake at 375 degrees for 15 minutes, then at 350 degrees for 45 minutes.



Zeb & Bess at their 50th wedding anniversary celebration. (Photo courtesy of Ann & Norman Mathis)

HOUSEHOLD HINTS

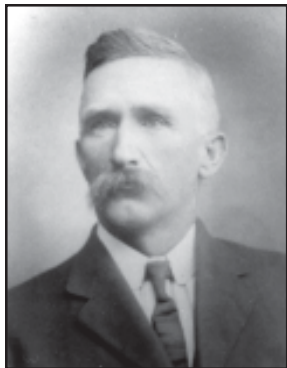
[From 1003 Household Hints and Time Savers-1941 & Heaven and Home Hour Family Handy Hints]

Soak lemons, oranges, and limes in a pan of water before squeezing them and you'll get a lot more juice from them.

Avoid a soggy crust for custard or lemon pies. After the dough is fitted into the pie pan, coat entire crust with egg white. A dandy way to **keep a cut cake fresh** is to put an apple cut in half in the cake box with the cake.

To remove a cake from a tin easily, place the cake-tin on a cold damp cloth for a few moments after removing from the oven.

If you would like your family featured in a future "Yesterday's Recipes" column, please send a few recipes to Elaine Weber Mathis c/o Bass River Community Library, P.O. Box 256, New Gretna, N.J. 08224. I look forward to hearing from you.



Joe Hickman, school janitor, made school more comfortable & enjoyable for many students. (Photo courtesy of Brian Maxwell)

MEMORIES OF NEW GRETNA SCHOOL

(Continued from page 2)

(Yalaz), Sabrina Downs (Horner), Ann Carr (Smith), Naomi Post (Maurer), and myself, Almira Cramer (Steele).

These are some of the memories I have while I attended the Bass River School. I am sure others who went to the same school have lots of memories too. If you would like to share some of them with us, naughty or nice, please write to me c/o Bass River Community Library, and we will try to share some of your memories in a future issue of the Gazette.



In the 1930's it was a tradition for the school to present a graduation play for the parents and the community. Our 1936 graduation play cast poses on the steps of the old Civic Hall which has since been converted into today's firehouse. (Left to right) Front Row: Naomi Post, Sabrina Downs, Ann Carr, William Reynolds, & Cliff Brown. 2nd Row: Hubert Adams, Newman Mathis, Richard Hickman & John Maxwell. 3rd Row: Irma Allen, Lawrence Archer, Budd Allen & Jean Shropshire. Top Row: Jane Saligny, Etta Allen, Mildred Leepa, Almira Cramer, Anna Allen, Phyllis Brown & unknown. (Photo courtesy of Naomi Maurer)



A portion of the cast from the 1931 graduation play taken on the steps of the Civic Hall. A life subscription to the Bass River Gazette will be awarded to the first person who mails me the names of all the students. I'll give you a start. I'm the third person from the left in the first row. Naomi Post (Maurer) and Helen Sears (Carty) are standing behind me. (Photo courtesy of Ann and Norman Mathis)

THIS OLD HOUSE



(Photo courtesy of Betty Schutte Kalm)

Joseph Hickman's Allentown Road (North Maple Avenue) home stands at the top of "Hickman's hill" also called "Squab Hill." The old Squab Hill School house that was moved to the present New Gretna School site in 1900 to become part of the New Gretna School stood just north of the Hickman house in what is today a vacant lot between the old Hickman house and Cassie Heinrichs house.

Joe and Eliza/Lida Cramer Hickman had nine children: Stella, Orville, J. Aubrey, Walter, Gerald who married Leola Stackhouse (Almira's 3-4th grade teacher - See "Memories of New Gretna School", p. 2), Nettie, Elizabeth, Pauline, and Eliza. Elizabeth married George Schutte and raised Betty in the old Hickman house.

NEW GRETNA HOMES DAMAGED BY LIGHTNING

Two homes were damaged, a child was stunned by lightning in New Gretna in an electrical storm Monday afternoon.

Lightning struck a tree in front of the home of Joseph Hickman, Allentown road, and entering the house wrecked the telephone and house wiring. Hickman's granddaughter, Betty Shutte, 8, was knocked unconscious, but apparently suffered no serious injuries.

Volunteer firemen were called to put out a fire started by lightning at the home of Eben Voorhis of Hammonton road.



Betty Schutte, Joe Hickman's granddaughter, grew up in the Hickman hill house. (Photo courtesy of Betty Schutte Kalm)

Newspaper account of an incident at the Hickman house with a misspelling of the Schutte name. Date & newspaper unknown. (Courtesy of Naomi Maurer)

Corrections

There was an error in the caption of the top right photo in the Jan. 1999 "Yesterday's Recipes" column. It should read: John Emery Cramer with his mother Carrie (left) and sister Theora. Nephew Chalkley Newton Mathis, son of Zeb and Bess Cramer Mathis, is on John Emery's lap.

Subscriptions

A yearly subscription (3 issues) of the Gazette is now available for anyone who sends 3 business size, 4" x 9 1/2", stamped, self addressed envelopes to Gazette Subscriptions c/o Bass River Township Community Library, P.O. Box 256, New Gretna, NJ 08224. Donations are appreciated. The subscription will start with the next issue unless otherwise specified and will expire after the 3 envelopes are used. It may then be renewed by sending 3 additional envelopes.

A PLACE CALLED TUB MILL RUN

by Steve Eichinger

When I started this little trip from Wading River (Bridgeport) to Bodine's Tavern in the July, 1998 Gazette, I should have indicated that I was taking a ride on the old mail stage which ran from Tuckerton, past the old Bass River Hotel (the first post office in Bass River) at what is now Pilgrim Lake Campground, to the Wading River post office at the old McKeen store, and then on to Bodine's Tavern.

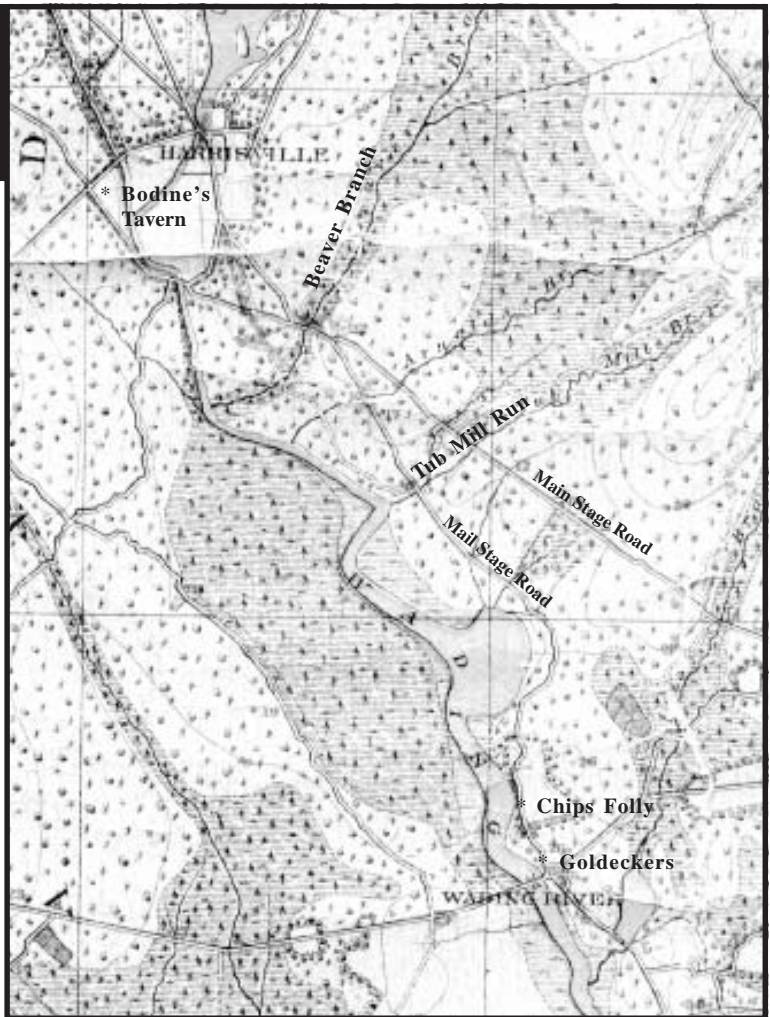
I caught the stage at Bridgeport, and headed north past "Goldeckers" (Oct. 1998 edition), just north of Bridgeport, and then traveled to the old Half Moon Tavern and Chips Folly (Jan. 1999 edition).

I now continue my journey by going over the Tub Mill Branch, also called Tub Mill Run, which starts between Arnold's Branch and Ives Branch and flows into the Wading River about a mile below Bodine's Field campground.

Tub Mill Run is named for the type of mill that was located on the stream prior to 1759. The mill was designed like a tub with a water wheel inside. The wheel laid on its side with the blades horizontal to the ground. The blades extended outward from the common shaft and the water was directed into the tub from the side, down through the fins, and through a discharge hole at the bottom. They did not need a large volume of water to operate this type of mill, but a good flow was essential. It was a small mill that was easy to set up and dismantle so that it could be moved to another stream. It was probably only used for grinding grain.

Tub Mill Run was also known as "Ashitama Run" on early deeds. Ashatama (Note: There are various spellings of the name such as Ashtama & Ashatamama.) was the last name of an Indian family in the area. An interesting note is that the Indians took their last name from the female side of the family. The last Ashtama family was Elisha Moses, his wife Margaret, and their daughter Ann. Some sources list Elisha's wife's name as Patty. Elisha's mother and sister were Nancy Ashatama. Elisha was a basket maker by trade who lived the latter part of his life on Flax Island in Little Egg Harbor. He drowned in the Mullica River at Graveling Point around 1834 and was buried in the Tuckerton Methodist Cemetery. I could find no stone bearing his name. His daughter Ann was the last full blooded Indian to live in Burlington County. I remember my Aunt Alice Weber mentioning Ann Ashatama to me when I was a small boy.

In the September, 1999 issue of the *Gazette*, I will complete my journey by crossing over the Beaver Branch just past the intersection of the Mail Stage



1889 topographic Map showing the Mail Stage Road journey from Wading River (Bridgeport) to Bodine's Tavern passing by Goldeckers, Chips Folly, and Tub Mill Run.

Road with the Main Stage Road, passing south of Harrisville, and ending at Bodine's Tavern.

To find out more about Tub Mill Run and Ashatama, stop by the Bass River Community Library to read Leah Blackman's "History of Little Egg Harbor Township" and Henry Bisbee's "Sign Posts-Place Names in History of Burlington County, N.J.", an update of his "Place Names in Burlington County."

NEWS FROM THE PAST (Continued from page 8)

TUCKERTON BEACON - January, 1891

Once more, in a most sad manner, has been illustrated the saying that trouble rarely comes singly.

Our whole community was shocked, a week ago, with that startling news that comes so frequently to the homes of a sea-faring community – a vessel struck, and lives lost!

This time it touched us more deeply, for two were taken, both from the same household- father and son.

As Capt. Burrows M. French was going down the beach, on the evening of Jan. 27th, his vessel was run into by a foreign steamer, about 15 miles off the Delaware capes, and sunk. All on board were saved excepting Winfield S. French, son of the Capt. who was carried down in the sinking vessel. The Capt. Himself was so seriously injured in the accident that he survived only two days, passing away in the Pennsylvania hospital in Phila. His body was buried from his home in New Gretna on Sunday last. Capt. French was widely known throughout this community, having lived both in Tom's River and Barnegat as well as in New Gretna, and especially among sea-faring men.

Born in 1837 on his father's farm on the Bass River, he was early given a liking

for the water by the fact that his father was a ship-carpenter as well as a farmer, and as each of his oldest sons became of age, secured for them the charge of one of the vessels of his own building. Capt. French, took command of the last vessel that his father built. He started his sea-faring life at the age of 19, and has followed the water ever since, having acquired much experience, and being esteemed by all ship owners as one of the ablest Captains in the coast trade.



A portion of the Burrows M. French family stone in Miller Cemetery memorializing Winfield who was lost at sea. (Photo by Elaine Weber Mathis)

He was married about 33 years ago to Miss. Mary Cavileer, who survived him, and has had three children; one, Winfield, was carried down in the sinking vessel at the time his father received his fatal injuries; the other two, a son and a daughter, are both married. At the time of his death arrangements were being made for the marriage of Winfield which was to have occurred in about two months. He had left home to make his first trip with his father only the Friday before, joined the vessel in New York on Saturday and on Tuesday evening he met his death.

ISAAC CRAMER - REVOLUTIONARY WAR VETERAN

by John Milton Adams, great-great-great grandson of Isaac Cramer

In a little family burying ground on the edge of New Gretna, Burlington County in New Jersey lies the body of Revolutionary War veteran Isaac Cramer. He is now almost forgotten, as there is nothing on his stone to denote his service to his country at its birth.

I came across his war record when looking up and tracing my family tree. A deed made reference to him, and a note along with it stated that he had served in the Burlington County militia during the Revolution. A letter to the State of New Jersey brought proof. Their Department of Defense records showed two Isaac Cramers, both having served in the Burlington County Militia in the period of 1775 to 1783. I received certified copies of both records. A further inquiry to the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution brought to light they had only one Isaac Cramer registered in their records. This was the uncle of the younger Isaac, the nephew was not as yet in their list of veterans. Hence this short article, that he too may have his proper place and burial spot recorded and in the years to come make it easier for his descendants to trace their origin.



Professor John Sangree in the living room of the Isaac Cramer house in 1958. (Photo courtesy of John Milton Adams)

Department of Defense that documents Isaac as receiving Certificate # 192, for the sum of No Pounds, Sixteen Shillings & Eight Pence, signed by James Fenimore and dated May 1, 1784. His Uncle Isaac also received the same under Certificate # 167. To mark the difference in two soldiers with identical names, one Certificate was made out as Isaac Cramer Jr. This was in error because his father's name was Caleb, and the uncle was the only other Isaac of this period.

Isaac married Dorcas Adams, daughter of Hezekiah Adams, Sr. of Bass River, N.J. Dorcas was born on July 23, 1766 and died on August 8, 1848. The Adams and Cramers at this junction began a series of marriages that was the reason why so many descendants have a double set of ancestors on both sides. As his father and grandfather before him, young Isaac was a large land owner in his own right and in time had his own business of farming, teams and drivers, sailing ships and scows that hauled the products of the once famous Martha Furnace in nearby Washington Township. The Martha Furnace Diary, kept by the clerk Caleb Earle from 1808 to 1815, makes many references to Isaac Cramer's teams and ships. Isaac purchased a mill at the Ives branch of the Wading River in 1823 and deeded it to Charles in 1825. The mill's account book makes mention of many of the old names and places in this area. It was kept in the Cramer family for many years and is now housed in the library at Batsto.



Isaac Cramer's grave in the Cramer Cemetery, Hammonton Road, bears no evidence of his Revolutionary War service. (Photo by Elaine Weber Mathis)

Stephen Cramer and his wife Sarah were the first of this branch of the family to settle at Bass River. They came from Staten Island, N.Y. in 1739. Among their children were two sons, Caleb and Isaac. When grown Isaac moved to Burlington City where he at one time kept the jail. His brother Caleb continued at Bass River where, during his life, he was married three times. Caleb had young Isaac, the subject of this article, by his first wife Sara. He was their only child.

Isaac was born September 1, 1756, so was about nineteen when the fighting started. He was a private in the Burlington County Militia. What his active service consisted of I do not know. The Little Egg Harbor area was a remote section of New Jersey and no doubt as regular troops were scarce, the militia must have borne the brunt of fighting at the battle of Chestnut Neck and the Tuckerton massacre in 1778. They held the line against the numerous raids of the British regulars, Loyalist troops and the notorious Pine Refugees that occurred through this area. I have a certified copy from the New Jersey



John Milton Adams and his wife, Maud, examine bottles in the cellar of the Isaac Cramer house in 1958. Ancient oak beams still show the rough marks of the adz. (Photo courtesy of John Milton Adams)

Isaac's old home at Merrygold Bridge is still standing and for its years is in an excellent state of preservation. I am sorry to say it passed out of the family before I was born. The house stands on the lower road from New Gretna to Wading River (old Bridgeport) where the road crosses Merrygold Branch. It is presently owned by George and Nancy McCarten. Nancy is the daughter of Professor John Sangree who graciously gave me a tour of the house in 1958.

Isaac and Dorcas Cramer had eight children, Charles, George, Bethiah, Mary, Uriah, Isaac, Hope and Lucy Ann. Around July 12, 1839 Isaac Cramer made his will and on July 27, same year, added a codicil of particular interest to Cramer genealogy students. Isaac died on November 17, 1839, age eighty-two years old. He was buried at what was known as the Isaac Cramer burying ground located about a mile from his home towards New Gretna on land which he owned and willed to his son Isaac. His wife and children are buried here also. Across from the burying ground once stood the Friends Meeting House now long since removed. Isaac and Dorcas both have stones, but there is nothing on Isaac's to tell of his Revolutionary War service. Today the cemetery remains in the Cramer family and abuts the Cramer Auto Recycling yard owned by Judy and Thomas Cramer.

As one of Isaac Cramer's many descendants, I realize the price that he and his fellow veterans paid that we of this day can enjoy liberty and independence that we sometimes take for granted. With the Memorial Day holiday approaching, I hope that you will say a prayer of thanks to Isaac and the many other veterans in our Bass River cemeteries. Remember them as you drive past Isaac's last resting place in the old Cramer family cemetery on Hammonton Road.

[Anyone wishing to trace their Cramer roots are encouraged to visit the Bass River Community Library and view Jean & Murray Harris' book "The Descendants of William Cranmer of Elizabethtown, N.J.]

NEWS FROM THE PAST

by Harry DeVerter

The following newspaper articles present a series of events in the life of Capt. Burrows M. French who gave up the adventurous life of a sea captain to become a store keeper. After keeping shop for about three years he decided to return to the sea. The outcome of that decision is one that befell many local men who chose to make their living from the sea. Several accounts are provided of the tragic incident that ended the life of Capt. French and his son. Each varies slightly in their description.

MOUNT HOLLY HERALD

September 8, 1883

Francis French has sold out his store to his brother Capt. Burrows M. French. The latter was tired of the hard and wearing life of a mariner and proposes to do "shore duty" for the rest of his days.

[Note: Photo at right is of Francis French III who sold the French store to his brother Burrows. (Photo courtesy of Sandra Johnson)]



MOUNT HOLLY HERALD

May 29, 1886

Capt. Burrows M. French has sold his store at New Gretna to R. Ashley and Howard Mathis. Capt. French prefers a seafaring life, and is now running a vessel between New York and Virginia. 5/29/86

MT. HOLLY HERALD

January 31, 1891



Capt. Burrows M. French (Photo courtesy of Arnold Cramer)

While off the Delaware capes on Tuesday evening the Macedonia, under a full headway, collided with the schooner Minnie and Gussie, completely splitting her in halves, killing Second Mate Winfield S. French and seriously injuring Captain French. Three other members of the crew were barely rescued from the waves. Captain French had both legs badly cut, one arm broken, and internal injuries. He had been taken to the hospital, and it is believed that he will recover.

The Minnie and Gussie laden with 300 tons of phosphate sailed from New York Sunday night last bound to Norfolk, and met with favorable weather all along the coast. About 6:30 Tuesday night Cape Henlopen, bearing north northwest, fifteen miles while the schooner was on the port tack heading west southwest, the steamer coming directly upon her was sighted.

Abiding strictly to the law governing such cases, Captain French held his course throughout, but it is evident that those on board the steamer did not see the schooner.

As the steamer approached, her name could nearly be distinguished by the forward lookout. Suddenly those on board the steamship sighted the schooner, and hove the helm down hard aport in effort to throw the ship's head inshore and clear of the craft.

The vessels were in too close proximity and before the huge tramp felt her port helm she crashed into the Minnie and Gussie's port quarter and severed it completely from the other portion of the vessel. Huge planks and beams were smashed into splinters for hundreds of feet around. Efforts on the part of the schooner's crew to launch the lifeboats proved futile as their vessel was fast going under them. As a last resort they took to the rigging and climbed aloft, keeping pace with the water as the vessel went from beneath them. Captain French, who was nearly unconscious from injuries received hauled himself aloft, although almost covered with blood.

When the schooner struck bottom, leaving a portion of the topmast heads above water, this saved the crew. On the rigging they perched themselves and were rescued after much difficulty by the steamer's boat.

At the time of the accident Second Mate French hurried down into the cabin to save some valuables. While down here he must have been pinioned to death by the crushed beams or caught so that it was impossible for him to escape. He was thirty years of age and the captain's son. On reaching the Delaware Breakwater medical assistance was sent for, and Dr. Orr came off and dressed the wounds on Captain French . . .

. . . Winfield S. French was in Mount Holly on Saturday calling on a number of friends, and left in the afternoon for New York to go on board the ill-fated vessel. He was a man of genial manners, and his death called forth many expressions of regret.

MT. HOLLY HERALD

February, 1891

Never in the existence of this town was such startling news received as the reports which the daily papers of Thursday, January 29th brought to us. "The schooner Minnie and Gussie run down by the steamer Macedonia - Winfield S. French lost in the collision and Capt. B. M. French badly hurt."

Tears trickled down the cheeks of their neighbors as they read the sad news, and the person's heart in this community that did not have a feeling of sorrow would be hard to find, and as could see groups of friends standing around and conversing over the sad, sad report, it was an easy matter to tell how heart broken every one was, while the death of Winfield was a severe blow and the shock the people had received, had scarcely passed over when a telegram, announcing the death of Capt. B.M. French was received, you can scarcely imagine the feelings of this community.

Capt. B. M. French leaves a wife and one son, Capt. Walter French, and one daughter, Mrs. J. W. Harris. The day Capt. French died, his wife and daughter were in Philadelphia, and within one block of where the Captain expired, wholly unaware of the accident which had befallen him. Mrs. French and daughter arrived at New Gretna at about 9 o'clock, that evening, and at their home received the sad news. Mrs. French's grief cannot be explained on paper, and while the rest of the family are heartbroken over the affair, they on account of Mrs. French, are required to put the best appearance forward, she requiring their almost united attention.

Capt. French's body was brought home on Friday. The funeral took place at his residence on Sunday, at 12 M. Six nephews acted as pall bearers, viz Clinton French, Jesse French, S. M. French, Francis French, Earnest Bodine and E. Russell Cramer. A large number of relatives and acquaintances from all along the shore, also from New York, were present.

Capt. French was a very large man, his weight being 310 pounds, and had followed the sea all of his life. He was a good neighbor and a man with a big heart and would accommodate his fellow man when an opportunity offered itself to do so. The family have the sympathy of the entire community in their great trial.

Winfield S. French was a single young man, about 30 years of age, and had served in the Board of Freeholders for two years, 1888-89. He had followed the sea but little, having mostly staid (sic) at home taking charge there. On Friday morning, January 23d. he left New Gretna for New York to make a trip or two with his father. On Tuesday evening, January 27th, at about 6.30 P.M. when 15 miles off Cape Henlopen, Winfield was at the helm, the steamer Macedonia collided with the Minnie and Gussie, tearing a big hole in her side, from which she soon filled with water and went to the bottom in some sixty feet of water. There were seven men on board, five of which made their escape to the steamer. - Capt. French, with a broken arm and limbs badly cut and bruised, managed to climb up the rigging and was taken off. - The schooner was some seven minutes in sinking. Winfield was on her deck and for four or five minutes walking around apparently unconcerned. The others called to him and tried to persuade him to make an effort to save his life, but received no response from him; suddenly he made a rush for the cabin and was seen no more. No doubt the poor fellow had lost all presence of mind. Winfield was kind and courteous to all. Everybody liked him an many a tear has been dropped on account of his sad end. No boy was ever better then he was to his mother; always, up to the few days before his death, being at home and ever willing and ready to assist her. Winfield was a model young man. - Arrangements have been made to get the body. This will be a comfort to his mother, relatives and friends, and it is the desire of all that it may be accomplished. - Mrs. French and the relatives have the sympathy of all the community and may the good Saviour, who has seen best to afflict, may he also comfort and protect them.



Mary Cavileer French, wife of Capt. Burrows M. French (Photo courtesy of Arnold Cramer)

(continued on page 6)