

BASS RIVER GAZETTE

A newsletter from the Bass River Community Library History Committee and the Great John Mathis Foundation

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BASS RIVER'S ONE ROOM SCHOOLHOUSES

Part 1 - The Quaker Influence

by Peter H. Stemmer

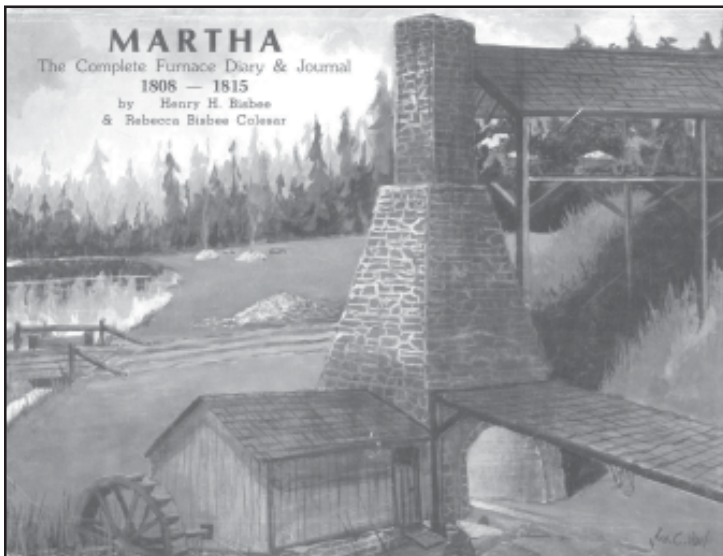
We tend to think that our surroundings have remained mostly unchanged throughout the years. History, however, tells us otherwise. One room schoolhouses, the backbone of our nations educational system throughout the 19th and into the early 20th century, are an interesting barometer that can tell us much about the past of our community.

Very little has been written about Bass River's one room schoolhouses. Little bits of information are gathered from a variety of unlikely sources including diaries, church and government minute books, old newspaper articles, etc. The bits are pieced together like a jig saw puzzle. The result is a somewhat incomplete but interesting picture.

Two things become quickly apparent as we sift through the pieces that will become our one room schoolhouse mosaic: (1) The early one room schoolhouses are tied to the Friends (Quakers) of Little Egg Harbor and (2) The population centers in Bass River have changed drastically over the last 200 years.

The Friends' Schoolhouse at Bass River Neck

The area that is now Bass River Township was a part of Little Egg Harbor (LEH) Township until 1864 when it was separated by an act of the New Jersey State Legislature. Since the Society of Friends dominated Little Egg Harbor government and society through the mid part of the 19th century (See *Gazette* Issue #8), it is not surprising that the Friends were responsible for the first schools in Bass River Township. They placed a great deal of importance on education and frequently used their Meeting Houses as schoolhouses long before township governments and the state became responsible for the education of our children. It is in the minutes of the Friends Meetings that we find documentation of the first "schoolhouse" built in Bass River Township in late 1802.



The "Martha Furnace Diary" provides documentation regarding the second oldest schoolhouse in the area comprising present day Bass River Township. Above is an artist's rendition of the iron furnace which appears on the 1976 edition's cover.



The old Quaker Meeting House-Schoolhouse at Bass River Neck stood somewhere between the old Cramer family cemetery (above) adjacent to Cramer's Auto Recycling on Hammonton Road and Hillside Cemetery. (June, 2002 photo by Peter H. Stemmer)

Brought up from the Preparative meeting of Eggharbor that the few friends at Bass River Requested Liberty to hold a meeting of first Days for three month to be held in a house built by the few friends there and some other friendly People for that Purpose and for a school house, and after this Meeting taking their request into weighty consideration Do appoint Jeremiah Willits Daniel Parker John Ridgway Eli Mathis Thomas Ballangee Job Ridgway of Barnegat John Willits & John Collings to take into consideration the Request of the friends at Bass River and the use and Propriety of holding a Meeting there & Report to the Next month Meeting. [13th Day, 1st Month, 1803]

It would be easy to assume that this first schoolhouse was built in the present town center of New Gretna. Such was not the case, however, as that area contained only a few large, scattered farms at that time. The Meeting House-Schoolhouse was built across the road from the Cramer family cemetery on today's Hammonton Road in a neighborhood known as Bass River Neck. This indicates that the area was the population center in the Bass River area in the first quarter of the 19th century as early schoolhouses were a good indication of population density. They were built by concentrations of families, as their location was limited by the distances students had to walk to and from school. Simply put, the schoolhouses were built where the most children lived.

The Friends Meeting moved to Bridgeport in 1825. Although not documented, it is likely that the building at Bass River Neck continued to serve as a schoolhouse until sometime after 1852 when the present Methodist church was built on Rt 9. The old Methodist Church at Hillside Cemetery became the area's "new" schoolhouse. The earliest attendance records found for this schoolhouse listed 106 students in 1867 supported by a school budget of \$315.82. An 1868 report shows the school opened 10 months that year with one male teacher earning a salary of \$40.00 per month.

The Schoolhouse at Martha Furnace

Documentation regarding the second oldest schoolhouse in Bass River is found in *Martha: The Complete Furnace Diary & Journal: 1808-1815* by Henry Bisbee and Rebecca Bisbee Colesar. The diary chronicles the events in Martha, an iron furnace town located down a sugar sand road off Rt. 679 just north of the present day Harrisville Lake dam.

(Continued on page 5)

THE LADIES GUILD COOKBOOK

by Phyllis Sharp Briggs

The Ladies Guild of the New Gretna First Presbyterian Church published a fund-raising cookbook, From Kitchen To Kitchen in New Gretna, circa 1964. This spiral bound, 52 page cookbook showcased our local cooks and their favorite recipes.

Chapter I was "Pickles and Relishes." Pauline Allen listed her easy Green Peppers Pickled. Her sister-in-law, Elaine Allen, offered Old Fashioned Tomato Relish. Both Allen gals grew their veggies and canned large quantities for the winter.

Chapter II featured "Salads." Ladies with delicious crisp salad recipes were Ann Mathis, Martha W. Sinnig, Marietta Maxwell, Alberta Cramer, Minnie Updike, Helen Cramer, Margaret Royal, Althea Salmon and Mrs. George Grunewald.

"Meat, Fish, Poultry" was a thick chapter. Seafood ruled our world in New Gretna. Clams were king in various recipes. Frances Brown contributed A Baymen's Dish "Clam Rag Around." Woodrow Allen was a wiz making Clam Hurrier. His wife, Dorothy Allen, was an expert concocting her Deviled Clam Casserole. Vera Cramer, Ida Mathis, and Wanda Parsons knew exactly how to mix Deviled Clams. Deviled Crab by Margaret Royal and Pauline Allen provided spicy seafood meals. Margaret Royal knew the secret to crispy Fried Shrimp. Polar Crab Casserole offered by Blanche L. Martin and Shrimp Creole given by Elizabeth Gerew proved easy to make. Hot Clam Chowder recipes were contributed by Lillian Cunningham and Viola Pepper. Other hearty dishes were Meat and Noodle Casserole from Jeanne Keefner, Meat Crust Pie by Elsa R. Hennig and Meat Loaf from F. Doughty. Mrs. Samuel Altscher and Doranna Maxwell were experts making Stuffed Cabbage. Bess Mathis was known for her Eggless Meat Loaf. Grandma's Italian Tomato Sauce was often found on Joanne Wunsch's dinner table.

The "Bread, Rolls and Cookies" Chapter presented Raisin Bread by Olga Bourguignon, White Bread and Coffee Cake from June Story and Banana Bread by Ilse Hansen. Pat Fallucca sent a tasty Cinnamon Raisin Nut Loaf. Dorothea W. Hill contributed Date and Nut Bread.

Sweet cookie recipes abounded. Contributors were Marian MacFarland, Mabel Mathis, Myrtle H. Newbauer, D. Maurer, Vera Cramer, Helen L. Hancock, Elsa M. Roe, Margaret Royal, Margaret McAnney, Elaine Allen, Carrie Green. Almira Steele's Toffee Bar recipe was the first one I tried in July 1965. I rated it Excellent.

Cake bakers were as numerous as the cookie ladies. Apple Cake by Anna Reeb, Banana Layer Cake from Betty Petzak. Black Joe Cake was an Alice Mathis favorite. Margaret McAnney often baked Blueberry Sally Lunn when local blueberries were in season. Grapefruit Cake from Millie Potter and Cheese Cake by Phyllis Briggs were mouth watering cakes. Hot Milk Cake and its cousin, Hot Milk Sponge Cake, were excellent cakes from the kitchens of Elizabeth Gerew and Georgine Bartlett. Margaret Roberts baked a great Nusstorte (Nut Cake) which used whipped cream, ground walnuts, and egg whites beaten stiff.

Mrs. Elizabeth Palmer, who knew all about cranberries, brought us a Prize Winning Cranberry Pie. Quick Cake from Greta Wunsch was as fast as its title proclaimed. Mom's French Coffee Cake from Betty West was a yeast dough winner. Other bakers included Sylvia Houck, Anne Cramer, Ilse Hansen, Martha W. Sinnig, Mrs. John J. Dougherty, Mabel M. Sooy, Lee Robbins, Claire Allen, Helen Kimsey, Marietta Maxwell, and Veo Willey.

Ladies who excelled with desserts gave their best recipes. Monica W. Kalm baked a mouth-watering Apple Pan Dowdy. Cranberry Sherbert from Mrs. Vincent Nairin and Cranberry Steamed Pudding from Elizabeth Palmer used our local cranberries.

Sweet tooth candy makers gave us tempting recipes. Naomi Maurer offered a Cocoa Fudge. Ruth Mathis was adept whipping up Chocolate Dipped Candy Balls. A healthy Mauna Loa Punch from Margaret Roberts was such a hit that Betty Jean Mathis Keufer served it at her July, 1966 party on South Maple Avenue.

The many advertisements in the cookbook contributed to its financial success. These local ads offer a glimpse of New Gretna 1964. Bass River Restaurant featured Italian-American food. Sears General Store, located on Rt. 542, was a faithful supporter. Luise Beauty Salon, Rt. 9, was still patronized by many New Gretnaites. Owner was Luise Smith. Bass River Diner, Rt. 9, was still serving a loyal clientele. Chip-N-Dale Inc. Camping & Trailer Grounds located on the Leektown Rd. was owned by the Monaghan family - Joe, Flo, Butch, Gerry. Ilse's Beauty Salon, West Greenbush Rd., was a popular spot. Owner was Ilse Wunsch Hansen. Allen's Dock, off New York Highway, supplied boat storage and docks, hardware, paint, marine supplies, bait and tackle. Everyone felt at home in Reuben A. McAnney's place. Eddie's Market, Rt. 9, sported a slogan,



The New Gretna Presbyterian Church Ladies Guild (circa 1960's) : Back Row (l-r) - Sylvia Houck, Peg McAnney, Blanche Martin, Vera Cramer, Myrtle Falkenburg & Mildred Kauflin. Front Row (l-r) - Betty West, Elaine Allen, Elsa Roe, Margaret Roberts & Thelma Cramer. (Photo courtesy of Myrtle Wiseman Falkenburg)

FROM KITCHEN TO KITCHEN in NEW GRETTA



LADIES GUILD
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
NEW GRETTA, N. J.

The Ladies Guild cookbook, published in the mid 1960's has been used to cook many a fine meal for over 40 years. (Photo courtesy of Elaine Weber Mathis)

OUR POP

by Myrtle and Renard Wiseman

Our Pop, John Wiseman, was born in Warren Grove on September 16, 1888. His parents were Joshua and Harriet Wiseman. As a young man he moved to West Creek where he worked for Mr. Fenimore gathering salt hay for five cents a day. He married Olive Cramer on August 21, 1909 and, together, they raised four children- Renard, Ethel, Catherine, and Myrtle. They lived on West Greenbush Road in Bass River Township.



The John Wiseman family outside the Knights of Pythias Hall, circa 1922, Old New York Road (Rt. 9), New Gretna. Left to right: Renard, Ethel, Olive, baby Myrtle, and John. (Photo courtesy of Myrtle Wiseman Falkinburg)

As long as any of us kids could remember, pop always had a team of horses. He helped build the road from Barnegat Light to Holgate out on Long Beach Island. The horses would go over on a barge, and the workers would ride the train. The road from Manahawkin to the island wasn't built at that time.

Pop was always looking for work wherever he could find it. In summer he would cut salt hay on the meadows and stack it on the bank of the river where it would be loaded on barges and taken to Brigantine. He would plow and harrow the ground for people's gardens throughout New Gretna. There weren't many gardens that Pop did not plow. He also dug many a cellar hole by dragging an iron scoop with his team of horses. That was before the days of the bull dozer and back hoe. He picked blueberries, often for Walter Cutts, and was a grave digger in town for many years. While doing all this work, he also had a large garden where he raised vegetables to sell to make money so that he could provide for his family.



John Wiseman going off to work on one of his many jobs with his familiar lunchbox. (Photo courtesy of Myrtle Wiseman Falkinburg)

In winter time he would go into the woods, cut down trees, bring the wood home by the wagon load where he sawed it into firewood which he would then sell to people in the town. He also picked pine cones, laurel, and cat tails which he sold to a man in Whiting. For many years, at deer season, he would guide men in the woods to hunt deer. The men in town made a snow plow of planks put together in a "V" shape. A group of men would stand on the snow plow to hold it down and two teams of horses would pull the plow. This is how the roads would be opened in a snow storm. The teams of horses belonged to Pop and Walter

Adams who lived at the end of Adams Avenue. Cliff Budd, Jack Budd, Talbert McAnney, Talbert Loveland, and Harry Allen are some of the men who would stand on the snow plow as it moved down the road. That was some sight!

The first real paying job that Pop had was during World War II as a watchman at the New Gretna State Forrest fire tower. He also worked for quite some time with Edward Brown in Pemberton casting prefab houses and with Talbert McAnney doing road work, patching pot holes, and plowing snow for Bass River Township. In 1952 Pop started working for the Burlington County Mosquito Commission with his son, Renard. They worked there for many years. When we had the encephalitis scare back a few years ago, they worked around the clock spraying for mosquitoes.

Looking back, Pop sure was a jack of all trades. He worked hard providing for his family, much like many of the old timers in town. We all loved him and appreciated all that he did for us.

LADIES GUILD COOKBOOK

(Continued from page 2)

"Where You Are Always Welcome". Eddie was Ed Bourguignon who always extended the welcome in his slogan to his many customers. Bass River Atlantic Service Station, Rt. 9, was a busy gas station owned by Bud Steele. Milton Kauflin Cedar Products had his business on South Maple Ave. Roberts Sunoco Station, Rt. 9 at Hammonton Rd., was operated by Walter and Margaret Roberts. The much coveted S & H Green Stamps were given with purchases. Bass River Marina, Rt. 9 at Bass River had slip rentals and storage - wet or dry, insurance consultants, marine hardware, ship store, bait, tackle, ice, boat sales and service. Chestnut Neck Boat Yard Co., Rt. 9 on Garden State Parkway Entrance and Exit #48, Port Republic sold many services; boat rentals, boat storage, marine travelift launching ramp, bait, tackle and snack bar. Stanley Cramer was proprietor. C. P. Leek and Sons Inc., Lower Bank, was the maker of Pacemaker all-weather sea skiff cruisers "since 1720 a family heritage of careful boat building." Mystic Islands, Tuckerton was advertising "Complete waterfront homes from \$5990.00 including waterfront lot."



An old postcard shows Eddie's Market, circa 1960's. Eddie placed an ad in the Ladies Guild Cookbook. (Photo courtesy of Howard Ware)

New Gretna 1964 was a different place. Many names, businesses, and the time era itself has disappeared. Isaac E. Frantz was the Bass River Township Mayor. The local telephone exchange was the uncomplicated AXTEL (296). New Gretna 2002 is keeping in step with the times. We have grown, matured and hope the best is yet to come.

If any of the recipes in Phyllis' article sounds appetizing to you, I'll send you a copy. Write me at The Bass River Gazette, P.O. Box 256, New Gretna, N.J. 08224. I'll be featuring some of these recipes in future Gazette articles. - Elaine Weber Mathis, Recipe Editor.

THE OUTFIT by Budd Wislon

When I told Steve Eichinger how much I liked Pete Dunn's article about "The Old Tuckerton Police Station" published in the September - December, 2001 edition of the "Bass River Gazette," Steve suggested that I write an article about my father, the older Budd Wilson. Like Pete Dunn, he was also a New Jersey State Trooper. Had my father remained a trooper, he would have retired about the time Pete Dunn's first tour of duty began. My father's badge number was #161. Pete came 931 troopers later and wore badge number #1092. I still have Dad's badge.

Growing up, my sister and I were told stories about our father's days as a trooper. He had friends and photographs from those days. He always referred to the state police as "The Outfit" and H. Norman Schwarzkopf as "The Colonel." Everyone knew whom he was talking about. He spoke with much pride about "The Outfit" and had much praise for The Colonel.

Dad wanted to be a mounted trooper as early as 1913 when he was a Boy Scout. Scouts from Pennsylvania and New Jersey attended the 50th reunion at Gettysburg, Pa. A Boy Scout was assigned to each of the soldiers who attended the reunion. The newly formed Pennsylvania mounted troopers were used to control the crowd. Dad already knew how to ride. He learned on his grandfather's farm at Wilson Station, now Lenola.

Dad tried to get into the first class of New Jersey State Troopers in 1921, but he did not make the cut. On March 18, 1922 he took his physical exam and passed. On April 1st his enlistment papers were signed by "The Colonel." His first tour of duty was as a mounted trooper. His first duty station was Chatsworth. Troop "A" headquarters were then on Old Egg Harbor Road, close to the center of Hammonton. He rode a horse named Dynamite, wore the brown trousers and shirt and the dark blue coat with a brown Stetson hat, and had a bandoleer for his arms. On his side was a 38 revolver; in a sling was a rifle. Below the saddle was a blanket. He rode alone through Hammonton, up Middle Road to Dutchtown, then Atsion. From Atsion, he followed the Jersey Central Railroad to Chatsworth. This was about as rural as a rural police force could get.

The people of Chatsworth knew he was coming. He had made arrangements to stay with a local family named Applegate. There, he would have a room, a stall for his horse and the use of the outhouse. He could take a bath, but there was no running water.

If he wanted running water, that is running hot water, he would have to ride to Hammonton. If he took a bath in Hammonton and then rode to Chatsworth, he would need another bath by the time he got there. The round trip from Chatsworth back to Chatsworth was 46 miles. Once on a return trip from Troop "A", headquarters, he got caught in a thunderstorm. He let the horse have the reins and leaned forward on the horse's mane as the horse took him to Chatsworth.

Communication in those days was a problem. There was a telephone line into Chatsworth. He could call the operator, who would put him through to headquarters; however, much of the time, the line was down and more than once it was intentionally cut. There were no radios to communicate directly with Troop "A".

It was the middle of Prohibition. From Chatsworth, there was a network of sand roads that led to cranberry bogs, coalings, swamps and to an occasional still. Dad was to be on the lookout for smoke, the smell of mash and curious containers on the railroad siding. He found at least one still. Other men made the raid.



Colonel H. Norman Schwarzkopf was responsible for the formation of the New Jersey State Troopers in 1921. His son, Norman, Jr., was to gain fame as the commander of Operation "Desert Storm" during the Presidency of George Bush. (Photo from "Jersey Troopers" by Leo J. Coakley)

Jacking deer was a way of life for the men of the pines. Dad knew who the men were who were hunting at night but was more interested in catching the "main" man. Instead of catching the men in town who were jacking deer, he caught the man from New York City with 100 deer. They were in a refrigerated car on a siding. Quite a big time operation! Dad often shot game for people who did not have any meat on the table. "In season," he said with a smile.

At night he would make out his reports, read and work in his Stetson hat. The hat had a wide brim that was hard as a rock. He kept the brim hard by making it damp and working brown sugar into it. When fighting in close quarters it could be used as a weapon. At one point, he picked up all of his belongings and moved to another house. He stayed with the Ritzendollars.

He patrolled most of the roads in Woodland, Washington and Bass River Townships. Fifty years ago there were several people who remembered him when he was a trooper. Today, I know of only one. The elder Steve Lee, now 91, was just a boy when 23 year old Trooper Wilson rode into Speedwell.

Chatsworth was Dad's only duty station as a mounted trooper. In 1924, he became a motorcycle patrolman on the White Horse Pike. It was the first time that he was stationed with other men. He lived with a family named Imhoff in Hammonton and in a former bar in DaCosta. He also was stationed in Haddon Heights and Magnolia. When he left the Outfit in 1926, he was acting sergeant in Magnolia. In July of 1926, he joined what became the Delaware River Port Authority. He married in September of that same year. He rose in rank until he became a captain.

Locally, he was known as "Cap" or "Budd." He hunted here most of his life. He rented a house from the Wharton Estate in Herman City. He and his wife Edna began researching the history of the area. Two of their major contacts were Alice Weber and Gladys Maxwell Wilson, my aunt. Alice Weber was the aunt of Steve Eichinger who encouraged me to write this story.



Budd Wilson, Sr. began his career as a N.J. State Trooper in the Chatsworth area in the early 1920's. (Photo courtesy of Budd Wilson, Jr.)

ONE ROOM SCHOOLHOUSES

(Continued from page 1)

Although the diary entries regarding the schoolhouse are brief, they tell us much about this early one room schoolhouse.

Teams hauling Timber for School House (1/17/1810) ... Owen took a load of Boards to School House (1/23/1810) ... J. Evans & King building Chimney in the School House (2/8/1810) ... J. Evans at work at the School House (2/10/1810) ... School began this day (2/12/1810) ... Mr. Evans making a desk for the School House (2/14/1810) ... Lannings Children expelled from school for fighting (2/28/1810) ... We had a very good Sermon Preached at the Schoolhouse Last evening (1/9/1811) ... M. Mick & Peter Cox went to meeting at the Schoolhouse (5/29/1811) ... A general sprinkling of men, women & children at the Schoolhouse (7/11/1811) ... Molders all gone to Meeting at the schoolhouse where Phiddles is to speak (8/8/1811) ... Mr. Budd deliver a divine oration at the Schoolhouse to a great concourse of people (11/14/1811) ... Meeting at the Schoolhouse in afternoon (3/19/1812) ... Meeting at School House where G. Hunter, John Luker & J. Howard attended in the afternoon (4/2/1812) ... Mr. Budd gave us a divine oration at the school house (5/14/1812) ... Meeting at Schoolhouse (7/9/1812) ... Baptist minister speaks this evening at the School House (9/8/1813) ... Meeting at the School House. Hands chiefly there, it being the day to make their quarterly payments (11/3/1813) ... We had meeting in the School House of Friends (1/20/1815) ... Patrick Hambletons team hauld one load wood to the School House. (1/25/1815)

The school was built by local labor and materials in a little over a month and was opened February 28, 1810. Its location is not mentioned. Jesse Evans, the foreman of the ironworks and husband of Lucy Ann Evans a notable Quaker minister in the Little Egg Harbor area, clearly was in charge of and took a personal interest in its construction. Martha was owned and operated by Quakers, so it is no surprise to find the 1/20/1815 entry which indicates that the school was run by Friends. This is consistent with the pattern in the Little Egg Harbor area where all the early schools were started and run by Friends. Documentation regarding the number of students attending the school does not exist, but we do know that the population of Martha was somewhat in excess of 400. The number of children is not known.

The schoolhouse also functioned as the community church and was used regularly for "Meeting", the term used by Friends for their service. The 9/8/1813 entry shows their tolerance of other religions



The 1849 Otley-Whiteford Map locates a schoolhouse on the road between the iron furnace town of Martha (circa 1793-1841) and the McCartyville paper mill town. McCartyville would become Harrisville in 1856. It is likely that this schoolhouse served both communities for a time as the schoolhouse sits strategically between the two towns.

as it is noted that the schoolhouse was also used by a Baptist minister.

The 1849 Otley-Whiteford map (below left) shows a schoolhouse on the road between Martha and McCartyville. There is no documentation as to when this schoolhouse was built, but it is likely to have been built well after the original Martha School of 1808 and probably was not operated by the Quakers. Its location suggests that it served both communities, so it is likely to have been built sometime in the 1830's when McCartyville was on the rise and Martha was on the decline. Early statistics for this building are not available, however, statistics for 1868, which likely apply to this building, show that 45 children attended the school. The building was classified as being in "poor" condition and valued at \$300.00. One female teacher earning \$30.00 per month was employed for the school year which lasted five months. The Martha Furnance school is listed on the Burlington County Superintendent of Schools annual reports through 1875. It disappeared from the Bass River Township school list in 1876, being replaced by the Harrisville school which will be discussed in the next issue of the Gazette.

The two earliest one room schoolhouses at Bass River Neck and Martha give testimony to the Quaker influence throughout the area. They also tell us that Bass River's population centers at the beginning of the 19th century were (1) between the Mullica and Wading rivers and today's Garden State Parkway and Hammonton Road, an area known by today's old timers as "Frogtown," and (2) the now forgotten town of Martha. Things do not always remain the same. Who knows, perhaps 200 years from now someone will be writing in a June, 2200 edition of the *Gazette* that the population center of Bass River Township was once in New Gretna.

STAGE ROAD

(Continued from page 7)

1950's when I was 16 years old. The pine trees, some of which are now over 5 inches in diameter, have since taken over, and it takes a well trained eye to follow the old road today.

As I walk the old Stage Road through the overgrown woods today, I can close my eyes and almost hear a team of horses pulling a stage coach over the rut filled, sugar sand surface of the old Stage Road. It is a far cry from the speeding automobiles that now travel through the Pine Barrens on today's modern asphalt roads.

[Note: A special thank you to Mike and Bernice McGourley for sharing an old deed in the Timberline Lake Campground area and for their help in identifying the location of the old stage roadway in that area.]

WHO WE ARE

The Bass River Community Library History Committee members are Harry DeVerter, Steve Eichinger, Jean & Murray Harris, Elaine Mathis, Almira Steele, and Pete 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 thank our guest columnists, John Allen, Budd Wilson, Phyllis Briggs, and Myrtle Falkenburg & Renard Wiseman, for their stories and hope that others are motivated to send a story to us. **Please note that publication of the "Bass River Gazette" will now be only in June & December.**

Gazette Subscriptions

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THE FRENCH CONNECTION

(Continued from page 8)

end of Lake Champlain on April 23, 1834. He subsequently traveled to Washington Township, Burlington County, New Jersey. His naturalization petition of October 30, 1849, was filed with the Circuit Court, County of Burlington, and further states that he had been in the United States, without leaving, for at least 5 years and in New Jersey one year. He stated an intention to work at Martha Furnace, renounced any allegiance to the Queen of England, made his mark after a hearing in open court, and became an U.S. citizen.

The 1850 Washington Township census includes the Godfrey "Jeru" family. Godfrey, who is identified as a sawyer, lives with his wife Louisa and four daughters. Joseph, Godfrey's brother, aged 32, also resides with the family.

The Godfrey "Garue" family first appears in the Bass River Township 1860 Census. The David Allen, David Adams and Godfrey Garue families are recorded sequentially. This is interesting in that Godfrey's daughter Marguerite married David Allen's son Edward; another daughter Sophia married David Adams' son David Russell. Another daughter, Louisa who married Carlisle Darby, also lived in Bass River, and had two children by the time of the 1860 Census.



Joseph Gerew (1820-1902), Godfrey's brother, also came from Canada to settle in the Bass River area. (Photo courtesy of Lucy Wood Lehneis)

and Jarvis B. (1867-1928). Joseph, Godfrey's brother, and his family are buried in the Hillside Cemetery, while Godfrey and his wife are buried in Miller Cemetery.

The location and similarities of the Gerew and Allen cemetery plots in Miller Cemetery have some interesting characteristics. Godfrey and Mary L. Gerew are buried immediately next to the plot of Edward and Margaret Allen (i.e. their daughter and her husband). Joseph, their son who was a sailor, is buried in the same plot with the elder Gerews. The Allens' son, Howard, who was a WWI veteran, is buried in their plot. This pattern repeats with the next generation nearby. Theodore (1910-1970), a WWII veteran, is in the same plot with his parents, Edward Keever and Melinda Allen. I don't know what, if any significance to attach to this observation.

The American Canadian Genealogical Society, 4 Elm Street, Manchester, New Hampshire (www.acgs.org) is a great re-

Edward (1844-1931) and Marguerite (1847-1933) Gerew Allen's children were William (1868-), Mary E. (1870-), Ella (1872-), Anna E. (1873-), Edward Keever (1875-1965), Winfield F. (1882-), M. Howard (1887-1965) and Phoebe Amanda (1888-).

D. Russell (1847-1891) and Sophia (1852-1896) Gerew Adams' children were Joseph Russell (1871-1957), Lillian (1874-1958), Bertha (1877-1946), Ernest (1879-1950), Paul Nathan (1882-), Margaret Estelle (1886-) and Rebecca Louise (1889-1978).

The 1870 Bass River census records the family of Joseph Gerew (1820-1902) and his wife, Sarah (1837-1899). They had three sons, Joseph L. (Lafayette) (1860-1928), John E. (5 at the time of census)



Sarah Sherman Gerew (1837-1899), wife of Joseph, was the daughter of John and Ann Howell Sherman. (Photo courtesy of Lucy Wood Lehneis)

source. It has extensive records and very enthusiastic volunteer researchers. Much of the ACGS documentation is in French. However, a good deal of information can be obtained with little or no knowledge of the French language. Additionally, the experiences of the French in North America have been studied extensively and some of that work has been translated and re-issued in English. After a couple of hours in the society's library, Godfrey Gerew's pedigree was traced back five generations in Canada and then back to France. A few books from a local library provided insight into the history and geography of these regions of France and Canada.

Two marriages reported in Marriages de Lapraire (N.-D.-de-la-Madeleine, 1670-1968) by Irene Jette and B. Pontbriand, 1970 are:

Godefroy Giroux, father of Godfrey Gerew and son of Pierre, married Marguerite Bisaillon, daughter of Francois and Josette Demers Bisaillon, June 11, 1805, at Lapraire.

Pierre Giroux, son of Joseph-Noel, married Marie Senecal, daughter of Antoine Senecal and Anne Bourdeau, February 25, 1754, at Lapraire.

Dictionnaire Genealogique des Familles du Quebec by Rene Jette, provides many of the pre-1750 details:

Joseph-Noel Giroux, son of Raphael, married Genevieve Cadieu, daughter of Jean-Charles Cadieu and Marie-Madeleine Neveu, June 23, 1711, at Beauport.



Joseph Lafayette Gerew (1860-1928), Joseph and Sarah's son, with his 2nd wife, Mathilda "May" Gaskill Gerew. Lafayette had 5 sons and a daughter with his first wife, Ellen Hickman. (Photo courtesy of Lucy Wood Lehneis)

Raphael Giroux, son of Toussaint, married Marie-Madeleine Vachon, daughter of Paul Vachon and Marguerite Langlois, November 26, 1681, at Beauport.

Toussaint Giroux married Marie Goddard on September 29, 1654 in Beauport, Quebec. Both were settlers in New France, the portion of Canada along the St. Lawrence between Quebec and Montreal. They had 12 children. By December 31, 1729, it is estimated that they had 320 descendants (NAISSANCE D'UNE POPULATION, Les Francais etablis au Canada au XXVIIe siecle published by Institut National d'Etudes Demographiques Presses de l'Universite de Montreal). The only additional information available regarding Marie is that she emigrated with a sister, Jeanne, but

there are no details of her parentage. Toussaint was born in 1633, in Mortagne au Perche, Orne, France, the son of Jean Giroust and Marguerite Quilleron. Like his father, he was a weaver ("tisserand" in French).

The Beginnings of New France 1525-1633 by Marcel Trudel describes Perche as a little province, squeezed between Normandy, Maine and Orleans, southwest of Paris. The province has no direct access to the sea and is away from main routes leading to the sea. Perche sent a large number of settlers to New France. This is represented as especially significant, considering its size and location.

There are still many more details to investigate before one knows the whole story. In this case, spelling, language and French cultural differences are added to the usual obstacles and challenges to genealogical research presented by the incomplete records. It is still very satisfying to uncover parts of a family history and share in the interesting heritage of Bass River.

THE STAGE ROAD

by Steve Eichinger

Originally the Stage Road was a nothing more than an Indian path used in their annual summer migrations from the Camden area through Burlington County to the Tuckerton area on the coast, particularly today's Osbourne Island. [Note: See *The Story of New Jersey's Civil Boundaries: 1606-1968* by John P. Snyder for information regarding early Indian trails in New Jersey.] As more and more white settlers began moving into the Little Egg Harbor area, the need for better roads became necessary as plantations and small hamlets emerged throughout the area. The Indian trail was gradually improved into a crude roadway used for wagon and stage travel, and the roadway became known as Stage Road. This article deals with the Stage Road as it runs through the present day Bass River Township.

The earliest documentation I have found concerning the development of Stage Road is found in the January 2, 1779 Little Egg Harbor minutes when they had to rebuild the bridge at Bodine's Tavern where the Stage Road crossed the Wading River. The roadway must have existed well before 1779 as this notation from the 1779 minutes refers to a "rebuilding" of the bridge.

At a town meeting held at the meeting house in said township [Little Egg Harbour] by an appointment according to law to raise the sum of money for rebuilding a bridge over the Wading [sic] River. The town by majority of votes allows Henry Woodward for rebuilding the bridge over Wading [sic] River the sum of one hundred and seven pounds ten shillings Procklamation [sic] money as money now goes.

Also, on March 3, 1779, the Little Egg Harbor minutes contains additional information about improving the recently laid out road.

Likewise was carried by vote that the following persons shall be a committee to examing [sic] the roade [Sic] witch [sic] hath been laide out from the Provence line to Attsion and make what alteration they shall think proper in our township & to cal the surveyors to lay it where they think best and to agree with Joseph Walker on the best terms they can to with draw the cavet of the township is to pay the expence [sic] the committee is att [sic] in altering the roade [sic] withdrawing the cavet & for laying the road out. Francis French, Jeremiah Willits, Jonathan Gifford, John Lochard, James Gaile [sic].

The Stage Road was formally laid out in 1789 when the Burlington County Court of Common Pleas authorized the Burlington County Surveyors of the Highways to survey and the Burlington County Overseers of the Highways "... to clear out fit for public use on or before the first day of October one thousand and seven hundred and ninty nine." The road was to run from the Providence or "Keith" Line, located at the entrance to the present day "Sea Pirate Campground" on Rt. 9 in West Creek, in a northwesterly direction through Tuckerton, Nugentown, Bass River at Pilgrim Lake and on to Bodine's Tavern on the banks of the Wading River at Bodine's Field, south of the old Harrisville ruins on Rt. 679. From there it went through Washington, the Mount, Quaker Bridge and on to Atsion.

The Stage Road has been improved, shifted, and straightened over the years. In the late 1930's the Civilian Conservation Corps, the CCC's, working out of the CCC Camp off West Greenbush Road in Bass River Township, straightened and gravelled the surface from the Ocean-Burlington County line in Giffordtown to Route 679 near the present Timberline Lake Campground. Today, there is still at least one person living in New Gretna who worked on improving the Stage Road during those CCC project days- Benny Allen. He and his father, Harry, walked daily from their home on Adams Lane to report at the CCC Camp where they worked on a variety of projects for a dollar a day.



Steve Eichinger pointing out six 200+ year old pilings from the old Stage Road bridge which was located a stone's throw from Bodine's Tavern on the Wading River. (Photo by Peter Stemmer)



Steve Eichinger standing by the present day monument (circled above), just south of the entrance to the *Sea Pirate Campground* in West Creek, that marks that point of the Keith Line that intersects Route 9. This was the beginning point of the old Stage Road laid out in 1789 by the Burlington County Overseers of Highways. Today the stone stands on the line that divides Eagleswood and Little Egg Harbor Townships.

Today, the only section of roadway that still carries the original name of "Stage Road" leads from Rt. 9 by the Acme shopping center in West Tuckerton westward through Nugentown, through the Bass River State Forrest, and ends in Bass River Township at the intersection of West Stage Road and Rt. 679 (Chatsworth Road). The next part of the original Stage Road is under that part of 679 which runs from the store at Timberline Lake north for approximately a mile. It then appears only as a depression in the woods as it slowly veers off to the west side of Rt. 679 and can only be clearly seen when it occasionally crosses a stream or another old road. When you get to Beaver Run on Rt. 679, the old road can be seen crossing the stream about 30 to 40 yards down stream. The old bulkheads are still visible.

John Pearce and I have walked this part of the old Stage Road from Beaver Run through Bodine's Field and to the old pilings which mark the sport where the road leaves Bass River Township as it crosses over the Wading River at Bodine's Tavern. The cellar hole of the old tavern can still be seen just before you get to the old bridge site. I had the opportunity of driving my old model A Ford on this old section of Stage Road from Beaver Run to Bodine's Field in the

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MY NEW GRETNA ANCESTORS AND THE FRENCH CONNECTION

by John E. Allen

I became interested in my family history and began my research in July of last year. While traveling from England to Scotland, crossing the Solway Firth, I was struck by the similarity of the salt marshes to those of the Mullica, near Chestnut Neck. I speculated that my ancestors must have come from that area. I then stopped at Gretna Green to inquire about the nearby town of Gretna. My theory was that Gretna was the source of the name New Gretna. The man at the tourist information office convinced me that I had to be in error, because Gretna only came into existence during World War I as a munitions factory town.

Later, I read in *Jersey Genesis*, by Henry Charlton Beck, that the name New Gretna was really a shortened form of New Gretna Green. I also read about the attempted quickie marriage scheme of the mid-nineteenth century. I then believed that my initial feeling of a connection between the two places was valid. I have no proof of this theory, but that information provided the inspiration to investigate my family history, specifically, the Allens of Bass River. To my surprise, I found a wealth of family history and New Gretna (Bass River) information readily available on the internet, with much of it originating from the Bass River Historical Society. After I verified or corrected my early findings due to some primary sources from various archives (NJ State Archives, Burlington Co. Library, American Canadian Genealogical Society, NH Archives, NH Historical Society, Burlington Co. Probate and Surrogate Records), I discovered a connection with certain prominent ancestors: (1) "Great John Mathis", of Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorgan, Wales; (2) Robert Allen, a Quaker of Shrewsbury, who may or may not be descended from George Allen of Somerset, England; and (3) Touissant Giroux of Revillion, near Mortagne, Perche, France.

I didn't grow up in New Gretna and only lived there for a short period, between the ages of one and three. At various times growing up I lived nearby, but still I did not have an appreciation for the history of the area or for the family connections. In the fall of 1958, I interviewed my grandmother to complete a family tree assignment for my seventh grade class at Pleasantville Junior High School. I still recall some of that conversation 40-plus years later. I specifically remember that

David Allen was the father of Captain Ed Allen, that Captain Ed Allen married a Gerew, and that her family came from Canada. These bits of information were very helpful in sorting out the lineage of my branch of the Allens of Bass River.

My genealogy source, Ientha "Phoebe" Mathis Allen (1900-1981), is also the connection to the "Great John Mathis" line, through his son, Job. Her father was Aaron Mathis (1856-1928). She was also a connection with Robert Allen, as her mother was Ida Allen Mathis (1864-1914). She was the youngest of four children, with three older brothers-



Ientha Phoebe Allen, John's grandmother, was a storehouse of knowledge about Bass River history and genealogy. (Photo courtesy of Claire & Alston Allen)

Roland, Austin and Merrill. The family resided on Greenbush Road according to the 1900, 1910 and 1920 census.

"Phoebe" married Les Allen (1900-1979) and they raised 6 children: Edward Earl (my father), Doris (1926-1998), Alston, Howard, Carl (Dude), and Gary. Les and Phoebe were life long residents of New Gretna and bought their Adams Avenue home from Jesse Loveland in 1936. They are buried together in Miller Cemetery along with many of their relatives.

I think of my grandmother as a verbal historian. She had a great deal of knowledge and information stored in her mind. I recall that she reeled off the genealogies without any reference to written documentation. Leah Mathis Blackman (*Early Bass River Families*, by Murray and Jean Harris, Bass River Gazette, Issue No. 2- October, 1998) wrote, "The Mathis family is remarkable ... for their aptness in learning." I think that my grandmother was another example of what is considered a traditional Welsh attribute, especially when related to genealogy.

Peter Stemmer previously wrote about the observation of two distinct branches of the Allen family in Bass River (*The Short and Tall Allens of Bass River*, Bass River Gazette, Issue No. 4- May, 1999). As he stated in that article, the "paper trail" is very thin regarding the David Allen line and that the two branches have not been connected conclusively to date. I feel confident that the connection is through Charles Allen, son of Edward Allen and grandson of Robert Allen. While I am still researching that connection, I think I can shed some light on the incorrect belief of some that David Allen came from Canada. While that is not the case, the parents of Marguerite (Maggie, Margaret) Gerew, the wife of David's son, Edward (Captain Ed) Allen did come from Canada, hence the French connection. I have found many documents to verify and to amplify this story, which was told to me by my grandmother. I want to share some of my findings here to illustrate the history of the Gerew family and their relationship to some other families in Bass River.

Godfrey Gerew (also Jerew, Garue, Jeru or Jereau, as well as Godefroy Giroux)

Godfrey "Gerew", the name on his tombstone, (1806-1879) was born April 5, 1806 in Quebec, Canada. He was the son of Godefroy and Marguerite Bisailon Giroux, who were married at Notre-Dame-de-la-Prairie-de-la-Madeleine, Lapraire, Quebec, on June 11, 1805. Godfrey married Marie-Louise LeClerc (1812-1893) daughter of Basile and Helene Oliver LeClerc, who were married in the parish of St. Cuthbert, Berthier County, Quebec on January 17, 1803. Both families lived in L'Acadie, St. Jean, Quebec, which is between Montreal and the United States border. Their nine children were Godfrey (1838-1848), Louisa (1840-1871), Ellen (1842-), Charlotte (1843-) Marguerite (1847-1933), Sophia (1852-1926), Joseph B. (1855-1926), Emma and William (1859-1936).



Young Godfrey Jerew's tombstone in the old Quaker Meeting House Cemetery on Leektown Road at Bridgeport. (Photo courtesy of Elaine Weber Mathis)

The following inscription from a grave stone (above) at Bridgeport Friends cemetery connects Godfrey to the Bass River area in the 1840's:

In memory of Godfrey, Son of Godfrey and Mary Louisa Jerew, who died May 28th 1848, aged 9 years, 9 months and 14 days. Death smote him, a kind and only son, who to his parents was their pride and joy.

Some of the family movements over the previous fifteen years are given in the naturalization petition of Godfrey "Jereau." On April 22, 1834, he left Montreal and arrived at Whitehall, New York, at the southern

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