

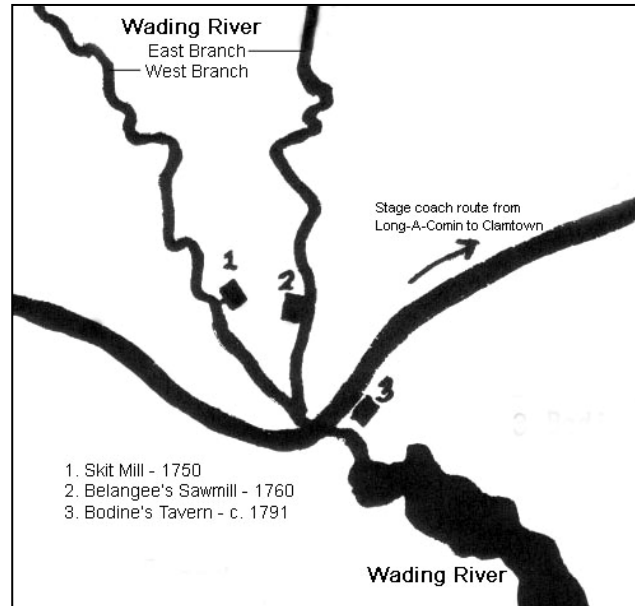
Early Life on the Wading River: Part One

by W. J. Hawthorne

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This article is concerned with the life and industry of one particular area of the Wading River and that is the area that is known today as Harrisville. Harrisville is located in Washington Township which is part of Burlington County, New Jersey. If you drive through Harrisville today the only things that will be visible to you from the highway are the crumbling walls of the front of the paper mill and the lake with its new dam which signals the end of a scenic but arduous canoe trip from Oswego Lake down past Martha Furnace on the East Branch of the Wading River.

One of the earliest settlers in the area was Evi Belangee who dammed the Wading River in order to power the sawmill that he erected near the river around 1760. Not too far from Belangee's sawmill was what was known as "The Skit Mill." Who built it and where they came from I really don't know but it was built around 1750. In the summer of 1973 the old bridge dam was removed and the manmade lake was drained so that the East Branch of the Wading River went back to its natural course. I was at the Harrisville site that summer and in my exploration I discovered two old wooden dams which quite possibly could have been used by Evi Belangee Jr. in conjunction with his sawmill.



I believe the aforementioned Evi Belangee was really the son of the Evi Belangee who arrived in the Egg Harbor area around 1714. Evi Sr. was primarily a farmer but he also found time to erect a fulling mill at the head of Belangee's creek which became known in later years as Mathistown Creek. Evi Sr. married Mary Ridgway and they had five children: James, Samuel, Evi or Ives Jr., Elizabeth and Christian. Evi Sr. was at one time a French Huguenot. He and his wife were eventually to become Quakers. Both Evi and Mary Belangee are buried in the Friends' Graveyard in Tuckerton. Evi or Ives Jr. married outside of the immediate Egg Harbor area and right after his marriage he and his wife left his native place. It is this last information that makes me believe that it was Evi or Ives Jr. who constructed the sawmill at the Wading River. His father would have been too old for such a strenuous venture.

Another pioneer of the Wading River area was John Bodine. John had been born in Cranbury, Middlesex County, New Jersey in 1746. He, like Evi Belangee Sr, was a French Huguenot. His father Francis Bodine had surveyed some land near the Wading River as early as 1775. The following information is a partial break down of the origin and development of the Bodine family:

1st Generation--Jean Bodine¹ of the Cambray family, is said to have removed to Medis, in the province of Saintonage, France, where his son Jean was born in 1645. He was doubtless a Huguenot, and left the country of his nativity to find asylum in other lands, and it is thought that he made a short stay in Holland, as well as in England, before his coming to New York, where he was residing as early as November 3, 1677. He settled on Staten Island, New York, at which place he had a survey of land April 1, 1686, and where he died during the latter part of 1694. Nothing is known of his wife or of the children other than the son given below.

2nd Generation--Jean Bodine² (Jean¹) was, according to a tradition universal in the family, born at Medis, France, May 9, 1645, and naturalized at London England, March 21, 1682 with his second wife, Esther, her parents, Francis and Jane Susan Bridon and Francis Bridon their son. for a short period he resided at Rye, in Sussex, where at least two of his children were born, after which he emigrated to the New World, possibly joining his father on Staten Island, where he was living at the time of his father's death. He purchased eighty acres of land in Middlesex County New Jersey on May 12, 1701.

Jean Bodine's first wife was----- Crocheron, whose father, John Crocheron, was among the emigres to Staten Island. Children of Jean and Esther (Bridon) Bodine; the first two born at Rye in Sussex, England:

1. Marianna Bodine³ born, March 5, 1680.
2. John Bodine³, born January 23, 1681.
3. Eleazer Bodine³, mentioned in his brother's will of 1707.
4. Esther Bodine³, living in January 1707.
5. Francis Bodine³, married Maria Dey.

3rd Generation--Francis Bodine³ (Jean², Jean¹), born probably in England, was sometime a resident of Staten Island, certainly until 1726. His name disappeared from the record of Richmond county after March 1736, when doubtless he removed to Cranbury, Middlesex County, New Jersey. He married Maria Dey, daughter of James Dey by his first wife, Mary Mulliner. The issue of this marriage is somewhat uncertain, and there were probably other children than those given below:

Children of Francis³ and Maria (Dey) Bodine:

1. Francis Bodine⁴, married (1)-----; (2) Rachel Wilson.
2. John Bodiine⁴, died in March 1779; married Dorcas----.
3. Vincent Bodine⁴, died in March 1790; married Ann Dey.

4th generation--Francis Bodine⁴ (Francis³, Jean², Jean¹) was born doubtless on Staten Island, and crossed from there into New Jersey, settling at Cranbury, on the borders of Middlesex County before 1745. On November 1, 1775, Francis Bodine had some thirty acres of land surveyed in Tranquility Swamp on the Wading River, in Little Egg Harbor Township, Burlington County, which was in possession of his sons, Francis and John Bodine and Charles Newbold, March 16, 1820. Mr. Bodine was a farmer by occupation, an Episcopalian by religious conviction, and the founder of the Bodine families of Philadelphia and southern New Jersey. The name of his first wife is not know; he married (2) January 29, 1756, Rachel Wilson.

Children of Francis⁴ and Rachel (Wilson) Bodine: (all probably born at Cranbury)

1. Joel Bodine⁵, born 1742, died in May 1819; married Mary Corlies. From 1790 until his death this Joel Bodine lived at Long-a-coming (now Berlin), New Jersey. It was at his house in Long-a-Coming between 1800 and 1807 that elections for Council and Assembly were frequently held. There is now in Berlin a house which is known as the "Joel Bodine" house.
2. Francis Bodine⁵, born 1744, died September 27, 1822, married Mary Rose.
3. John Bodine⁵, born 1746; died March 26, 1826; married (1) Roundtree; (2) Ann Taylor.

5th Generation -John Bodine⁵ (Francis⁴, Francis³, Jean², Jean¹) was born at Cranbury Middlesex County in 1746. Early in life he removed to Burlington County, and lived at Wading River, in Little Egg Harbor Township, being proprietor of the inn at that place for forty years. He was also a prosperous farmer and a considerable land-holder. One of his tracts of land, acquired by purchase October 5, 1791, lay along the road leadin from Clam Town* to Wading River Bridge. He was an ardent patriot during the

Revolutionary struggle, served through the entire war, and was advanced from a soldier in the ranks to a captaincy.** He married (1) about 1773, Mary Roundtree,



This picture shows the cellar pit of the Bodine Tavern and a tree which has grown up around the last vestiges of an ironstone foundation. [Note- This photo has been substituted for the one presented by Hawthorne due to quality reasons.]

and (2) September 16, 1790, Ann Taylor, born in Hillsborough District, Orange County, North Carolina, in 1756, and died in Nottingham Township, Burlington County, March 26, 1831.

*Clam Town is now Tuckerton, and "the road leading from Clam Town to Wading River Bridge", is a portion of the old Tuckerton stagecoach road originally leading from Vine Street Ferry, Camden to Clam Town, or Tuckerton.

**The Bodine Record as recorded by Louis Bodine states that John Bodine "served all through the Revolutionary War, visiting his family but once during the seven years he was in the Continental Army. He entered the Army as a private and ended as a captain, though his commission was not received until after the close of the War."

Children of Captain John⁵ and Mary (Roundtree) Bodine born at Wading River:

1. Charles Bodine⁶, born in 1775, died in 1860, married Margaret Wright.
2. Rev. John Bodine⁶, born January 17, 1776, died May 2, 1848
3. Francis Bodine⁶, born 1778, died Dec. 6, 1862, married (1) about 1803, Elizabeth Throp; (2) about 1825, Margaret Amos.
4. Susan Bodine⁶, born March 27, 1781; died April 15, 1876; married Barzillai Wright.
5. Rev. Stacy Bodine⁶, born October 21, 1783; died June 26, 1867; buried in Methodist Cemetery at Pemberton, NJ; married September 20, 1805, Elizabeth Budd.

Children of Captain John⁵ and Ann (Taylor) Bodine all born at Wading River:

6. Mary Bodine⁶, born about 1791, died August 21, 1859; buried at Bordentown, NJ; married John Moncrief, born 1790, died Nov. 4, 1871.
7. Joel Bodine⁶, born December 1794, died at Camden NJ, May 22, 1879; married (1) November 12, 1815, Sarah Gale of Bridgeport, New Jersey, born Feb. 1, 1797, died August 15, 1819; (2) February 19, 1821, Phebe, daughter of John Forman of New Brunswick and Tuckerton, born March 21, 1799, died September 11, 1854, (3) January 17 1855, Leah Mathis, born February 21, 1809; died May 2, 1879.
8. Sarah Bodine⁶, born June 17, 1797, died April 6, 1866; married Joseph Allen.
9. Abigail Bodine⁶, married, February 22, 1817, Henry Hudson.
10. Budd Sterling Bodine⁶, born in September 1801, died October 20 1855, married June 28, 1830, Jane A. Newell.
11. Jesse Bodine⁶ born 1804, died February 25, 1879, married June 1825, Grace, daughter of Benjamin Mathis.
12. Lucy Ann Bodine⁶, married Jos. Fisher
13. Wilson Bodine⁶, died July 20, 1856, married Rebecca Barnard who died Nov 5, 1850, aged fifty years.
14. Samuel Tucker Bodine⁶, born July 1819, died November 26, 1879, married (1) Dec. 19, 1833, Isabel Sheppard Nixon; (2) November 25, 1851, Louis, daughter of Wylie Milliken.*

*One of the children of Samuel Tucker Bodine⁶ and Louise (Milliken) Bodine was Samuel Taylor Bodine⁷ born August 23, 1854; died August 19, 1932, married November 15, 1833. Eleanor Gray Warden who died Jan 18, 1927.

Children:

1. Eleanor Gray Bodine⁸ married William Graves Perry.

2. Louise Warden Bodine⁸ married Dr. Harold W. How
3. William Warden Bodine⁸.

It was Captain John Bodine's⁵ son Joel⁶ who left the Wading River area around 1839 and acquired an interest in the Williamstown Glass Works. He transferred his interest in the glass works to his three sons (John Forman⁷, William Henry⁷, and Joel Alfred⁷) in 1855. Joel⁶ had acquired several thousand acres of woodland in the vicinity of Williamstown and in the early days of glass-making wood from these woodlands was used extensively as fuel.

It had already been established that Captain John Bodine⁵ was an innkeeper at Wading River for some forty years. His inn was not just a tavern, however. It was also the local court, polling place, and the headquarter for the local militia which included a great many men from nearby Martha Furnace.

Following are some excerpts from the Martha Furnace Diary which pertain to the Bodine Family:

June 10, 1808. "Training at Bodine's was very fully attended from ye works. Most of the hands about the bank ret'd. orderly."

July 16, 1808. "David Vann hurt his leg. Israel Mick drove his teams. Luker moved Ore Raisers. John Bodine hauled 1 ton pig iron to landing." [Author's note: This John Bodine who worked as a driver for Martha Furnace was probably the son of Capt. John Bodine the innkeeper.]

August 1, 1808. "This day the 2d Company Court of Appeals was held at Bodines."

October 11, 1808. "Election at Bodines"

Sep. 2, 1809. "Sol. Reeve idle. Went to Bodines & got drunk and let Bodine whip him. D. Phillips drink."

June 12, 1811. "Joel Bodine plowed the peach nursery. Teams carting iron & moulding sand." [Author's note: Joel Bodine⁶ was also a son of Captain John Bodine⁵.]

Today there are in New Jersey primarily two branches of the Bodine family. one branch can be located in the Princeton area while the other branch of the family is located in Absecon in Atlantic County.

Recently I journeyed to Bodine field and found it overrun with campers and canoeists. As I explored the underbrush near the bend in the river at Bodine field I discovered the remains of the cellar pit of what was once the Bodine tavern. I sat down on a stump next to the pit and I looked out at the crowded open field and I wondered to myself if any of these people realized that not too long ago the militia drilled here to the tune of the fife while friends watched from the tavern with pints in their hands. Gone but not forgotten.

Ed. Note: W.T. Hawthorne is an art teacher with the Mullica Twp. Schools in Atlantic County. He is a native of South Jersey and records his love of the area with historical research and pen and ink sketches.

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