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Board of Commissioners



234 MAIN STREET

RIDGEFIELD PARK, N. J. 07660

201 — 641-4950

March 27, 1985

Dear Resident:

Through the efforts of the many townspeople who have volunteered their time we present to you a detailed history of our Village. This committee of dedicated individuals has worked on this special limited edition journal for quite some time. Much of the material in this book came from residents of our Village. However, we have heard from some former residents who have graciously supplied us with some outstanding memorabilia of Ridgefield Park.

The celebration of our Tercentennial during 1985 is a community effort. Such a joint effort is not uncommon in our Village. Citizens joining together to accomplish a goal is commonplace in Ridgefield Park. This is why we have a unique community, a community of people who care.

To the long-time residents of our Village this book is a reflection of their years in Ridgefield Park. To those new residents, you are given a rare opportunity to learn about our Village and understand why lifelong residents claim with pride that they were born and raised in this fine community. It is the responsibility of all residents to keep up the fine traditions Ridgefield Park has had for the past 300 years.

Sincerely,

Fred J. Criscuolo
Mayor

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300 Years Ago



If you close your eyes and imagine a virgin forest surrounded on three sides by crystal clear waters, you will have an idea of the land which the Indians called "Hacki Sak" or "good ground." It is said that this name arose from the fact that Indians traveling up the Hackensack River saw nothing but swamps and unusable marsh land until they reached Ridgefield Park. Here was the first "good ground" north of the Meadowlands.

The Lenni Lenapes who settled here were called the "Hackisak" tribe, after the land they inhabited. Their leader at the time Europeans first arrived was a man named Oratam.

After Henry Hudson discovered the

river bearing his name in 1609, the Dutch began to settle the southern tip of Manhattan Island. One of these early Dutch settlers was Hendrick Brinkerhoff, who came with his family to the "New World" in 1635 at the age of eight.

In 1664 the Dutch lost control of their New World colony to the English. King Charles II of England gave his brother James, Duke of York, all the land between the Connecticut and Delaware Rivers. James sold the portion west of the Hudson to John, Lord Berkeley and Sir George Carteret. Carteret named the land New Jersey and appointed his cousin, Philip Carteret, Governor.

On June 24, 1669, Governor Carteret

confirmed a land claim of Sarah Roelofs Kiersted to the territory lying between the Hackensack River and Overpeck Creek. Legend has it that Mrs. Kiersted acted as interpreter for Chief Oratam in his dealings with the Dutch. In the final months of his life, Oratam gave her more than 2,000 acres of prime Bergen County land to thank her for her work. It is estimated that this grant encompassed all of present Ridgefield Park, Bogota, and Teaneck as far north as Fort Lee Road.

Mrs. Kiersted, the wife of a surgeon in the employ of the Dutch West India Company, lived in New York and never settled on her New Jersey land. Around 1685 she assigned most of her land



Epke Jacobsen Banta who divided it up into smaller parcels fit for individual settlement.

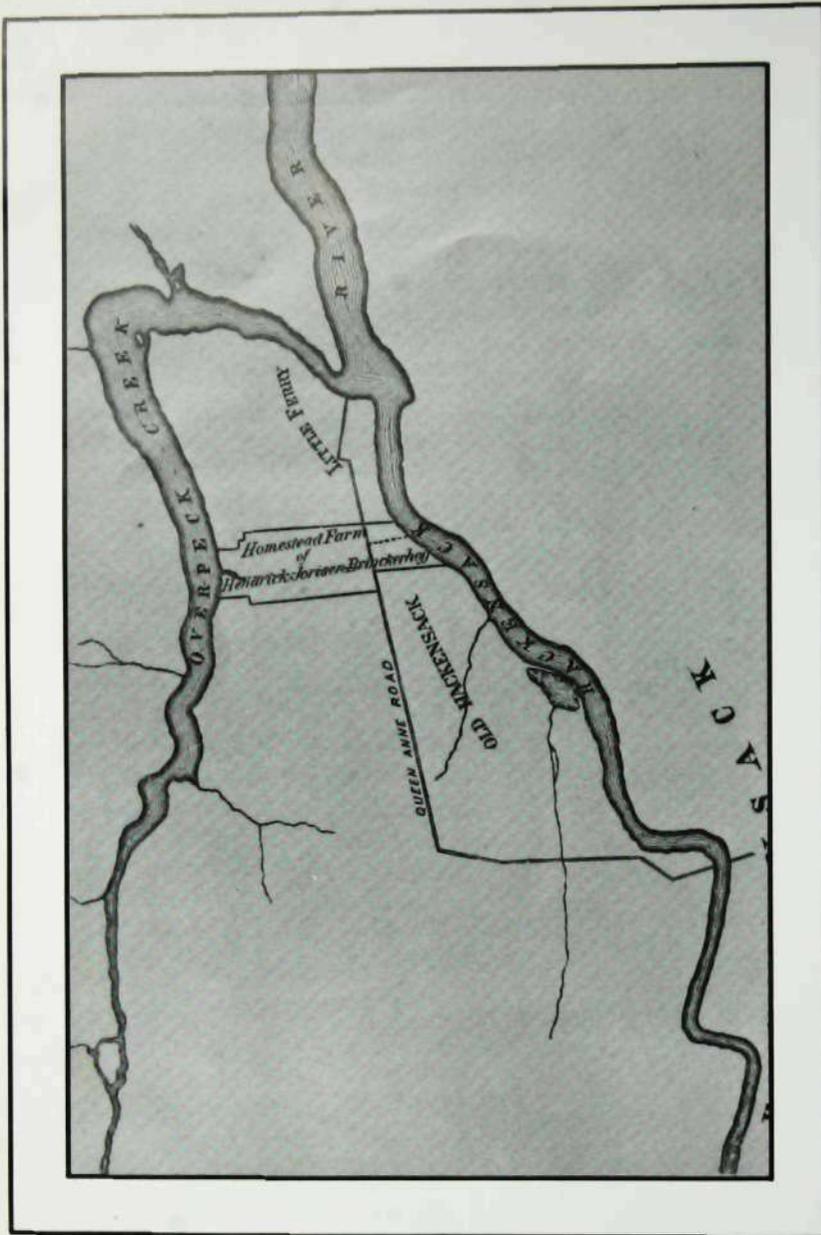
On June 17, 1685, Hendrick Brinkerhoff bought land on the Hackensack River from Epke Banta. The land purchased by Brinkerhoff extended from the Hackensack River on the west to the Overpeck Creek on the east. The exact northern and southern boundaries are unknown, but judging from later settlement and land sales, we think the Brinkerhoff land extended from today's Hobart Street up to an area near Preston Street. By this purchase 300 years ago, Brinkerhoff became the first non-Indian to live in Ridgefield Park and the settlement

of the Village began.

When Brinkerhoff settled here, Bergen County was just three years old and encompassed all the land between the Hackensack and Hudson Rivers. The first road in the area was the Queen Anne Road, probably built before Brinkerhoff died in 1710.

It is interesting to speculate on what Hendrick Brinkerhoff might have found when he settled here 300 years ago. He built his home along the Hackensack River Bank in an area that today is immediately to the west of the Elks Club. There was a small cove at that location on the river, which Brinkerhoff must have found attractive. This area provided the

first suitable land for farming as one sailed north from Newark Bay. We find a virgin forest, evidence of transient Indian settlements, fruits and berries in abundance, wild game and fish. Is it any wonder that Brinkerhoff chose this site. If we could transport ourselves back 300 years, think of what we would find as we sailed up the river in a canoe—silence—only the sounds of nature—there was no noise—no factories, no bridges, no railroads—just nature, in an essentially undisturbed state. Natural springs emptying into the



Homestead of Hendrick Jorisch Brinkerhoff at Old Hackensack, now Ridgefield Park

clear waters of the river and creek, fertile ground, clear air.

Brinkerhoff built his home, raised his family and maintained his deep religious convictions. The Brinkerhoff family held a reunion here in Ridgefield Park 100 years ago and in 1887 the family published a history which contains this information about the early Brinkerhoffs:

"The first two names on the church records of the Dutch Church at Hackensack (Ed. Note—Today referred to as the "Church on the Green"—opposite the Court House) were Hendrick Jorise and Claussie Corneleise,

which really meant Hendrick, son of George Brinkerhoff, and Claussie, daughter of Cornelius Boomgeart, his wife..." continuing, "in the first published records of Justices, commencing in 1715, the name of Cornelius Brinkerhoff, son of Hendrick, appears. So, also, in 1717, the name of Jacobus Brinkerhoff, another son of Hendrick, appears as Justice of the Peace. The name Cornelius appears as late as 1731, and Jacobus in 1748. In 1761, the name of Hartman Brinkerhoff, son of Cornelius, appears as a Justice. In 1765, the names Hendrick and George Brinkerhoff appear as

Freeholders."

The best source of information about our first settler, Hendrick Jorisen Brinkerhoff, is found in the Brinkerhoff family history, published in 1887. Here, in its entirety, is the story of Hendrick Brinkerhoff, as told at that time:

The old Homestead farm of our ancestor, Hendrick Jorisen Brinkerhoff, at what is now known as Ridgefield Park, in the County of Bergen, and State of New Jersey, was purchased by him by deed dated June 17, 1685, from Epke Jacobsen Banta, the first of the Banta family who came to this country. It was part of a large neck or tract of land for which one Mrs. Sarah Kirstead, of New York, had a patent given by an old Indian Sachem in recompense for interpreting the Indian language into Dutch as there was occasion, and which was conveyed by Mrs. Kirstead to Banta.

It is known that the boundaries of the homestead tract were the Hackensack River on the west, and the Overpeck Creek on the east, but is not known what were its northern and southern boundaries, or what was its area. When it finally passed out of the hands of the family in 1861, it contained only ninety-three acres, but after the death of Hendrick Jorisen Brinkerhoff there was probably a partition of the original tract between his sons Derick and Jacobus, and giving them each an equal share, the whole area would have been about two hundred acres.

The selection of the tract was a most natural and judicious one. Here was the first high land on the Hackensack River on either side, sailing up the stream. The luxuriance of vegetable growth that has always characterized this locality must have well attested the superior fertility of the soil; and the general formation of the land was, very plainly, unusually well adapted for building or cultivation. These advantages, with its location on two navigable streams and its nearness to the seaboard, was quite sufficient to justify the choice.

Local tradition says what when Hendrick first came to prepare for settlement on his new purchase, he came, accompanied by his two sons, in canoes, by way of the Hackensack River. After landing he went a little distance from the shore and began to cut down some trees, intending to put up a block house and then return to New York for his family and goods. But while engaged in felling trees a fatal arrow shot by an Indian pierced and killed his son by his side. The old man took up his son on his back, and with his other son fled to his boat and hastened back to New York. The loss of his son was so discouraging that he concluded to return to Holland. His

friends, however, prevailed on him to remain, and, accompanied by a guard of friends and soldiers, he returned, effected a compromise with the natives, and was afterwards unmolested.

The killing of one of the sons is well attested in other ways, but the scene is generally laid in Staten Island. It is, however, somewhat difficult to understand how the local tradition could be so wrong in so important a matter of family history, with so little lapse of time for forgetfulness, and with men so peculiarly constituted as these early Dutchmen were, to remember all about such facts, and to recount it minutely and conscientiously.

Undoubtedly Hendrick must have been the first white settler in that immediate locality, thereafter known as Old Hackensack, and Paulisons were his earliest and nearest neighbors.

The first public road laid out through this tract, now known as the Old Hackensack Road, was originally known as the Queen Anne Road, indicating that it was laid out sometime between the years 1702 and 1714, when that sovereign reigned.

The first house built by Hendrick was, of course, the rude block or log house of all early settlers in such regions. What other house was next built, its shape, size, or appearance, or through what architectural changes it passed, or when, we do not know, but the Homestead, its location and surroundings, when occupied by the last Brinkerhoff owner, although the buildings and improvements have been clean gone for years, are well remembered by many now living, who lived or visited there.

There is a tradition that these were at one time two separate houses, one on the site where the homestead last stood, and one, an older one (perhaps the original block house) in front to the south on a gentle slope to the river; one occupied by the father and the other by the son.

The main part of the old homestead as it last existed, and as shown by the accompanying illustration, was erected in 1802. It stood facing south at the head of a gentle slope, the shore to the south receding quite abruptly about seventy-five feet, so that while the river banks about twenty-five feet distant westerly from the house were nearly perpendicular and about ten or twelve feet in height, southerly the ground sloped easily to the water's edge. The main part of the house was about twenty-eight by thirty-two feet, a story and a half high, with a hip roof, and a stoop with rail and baluster. The first story was of common brown stone, the gable being finished with wooden siding. On the west was an old fashioned extension of one story with attic, a ceiling of naked beams, an old fashioned fire-place, and a shed in

front extending over a rude pavement. This extension was probably the original homestead. The southern slope in front was utilized as a garden, and enclosed with a fence, and a fence also enclosed the whole yard about the house and smaller buildings, except on one westerly river front. A little to the east was a slight depression, through which ran a streamlet, emptying into the river. Right by this brook and about one hundred feet from the house, was an excellent spring with a small house over it. The barn stood farther back on higher ground.

Such was the character of the Homestead buildings, when in 1861, Jacob A. Brinkerhoff, the great-great-grandson of Hendrick Jonsen Brinkerhoff sold and surrendered the farm to strangers who knew not Hendrick.

After this, their history is a brief one. In the year 1870, the New Jersey Midland (now the New York Susquehanna and Western) Railway Company located its route partly on the site of the old homestead and partly to the east of it, and soon after began running its trains. The proximity of the track necessitated the removal of one corner of the house and, very naturally, led the next year to setting its roof on fire by a spark from a passing engine, and then all was gone (the barn and other buildings had gone before), all except the old spring whose destruction was delayed until the building of the New York, West Shore and Buffalo Railroad in 1882,

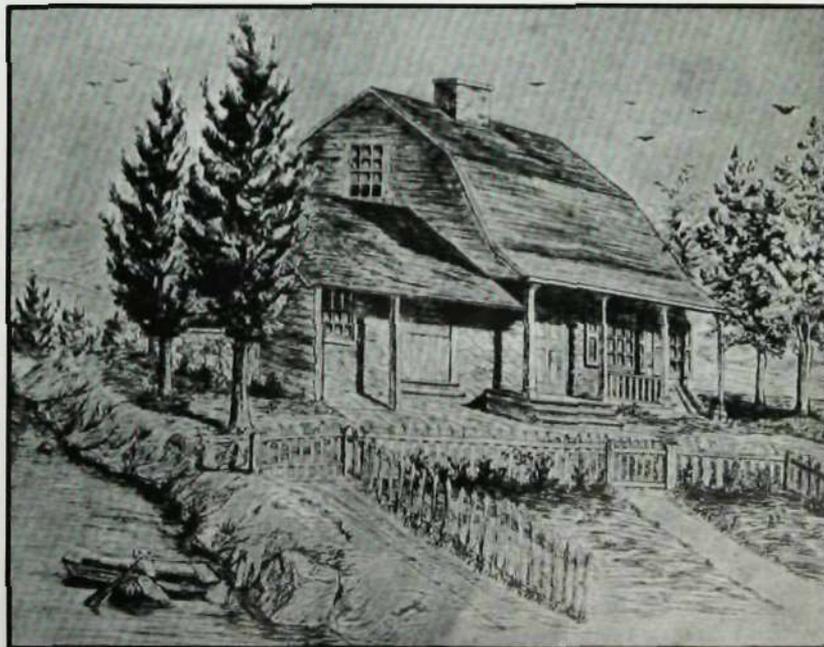
on the east side of the Midland road, and then that too was swallowed up and disappeared. And now, where for nearly two hundred years our worthy old Dutch ancestors lived their exemplary lives in happy rural retirement, the thunder of more than half a hundred daily trains wakes the echoes of the hills and mocks the drowsy memories of the past.

The little we know about the successive owners of the Old Homestead is as follows:

What we know about Hendrick is well told by General Brinkerhoff in his re-union address. It is probably, however, that Hendrick had a larger family than he has generally been credited with. It now seems that he had at least ten children, although they may not all have lived with him at Old Hackensack.

Hendrick died about 1710, as near as is known. After his death by a deed the date of which is lost, Cornelius, his eldest son and heir at law, and his widow Classie, conveyed all the Old Hackensack property to his other two sons, Derrick and Jacobus. The two sons probably divided the premises between them by parol partition, Jacobus taking the old homestead portion and Derrick the northerly portion.

Jacobus Brinkerhoff, the son of Hendrick, seems to have inherited a good share of his father's enterprise and religious spirit. The date or place of his birth is not known, but it is quite probable, as he was one of the youngest



Original Brinkerhoff homestead behind Elks Club.

of the children, that he was born at the old homestead. On April 17, 1708, he married Angenitje Banta, daughter of Hendrick Banta, from whose father he had bought the old homestead tract, and on January 2, 1709, he and his wife joined the church at Hackensack. From the church records we learn that when the Rev. Reinhart Erricksen came over from Holland and became the pastor of the church at Hackensack, Schraalenburgh and Passaic, the note given at Amsterdam for the fare of the passage (twenty pounds and extra charges) was paid by Jacobus Brinkerhoff and Martin Powles (Paulson), as if by a previous agreement. Captain Payton's receipt for the payment is still preserved among the papers of the church.

That Jacobus was a man of thrift and enterprise is indicated by his various investments in real estate, not only in his own neighborhood, but at points quite remote for those days. For instance, we find that by a deed dated July 23, 1735, he and his brother, Cornelius, bought of Jacob Arents, a "physician" of Newark, for fifty pounds and "divers good causes," a tract of two hundred acres at Pompton, New Jersey, apparently a tract containing an iron mine. We also find that he purchased a tract at Closter, which he devised to his son George. Among his other purchases, was a tract of sixty-three acres at Quacksack, a place on the opposite side of the Hackensack River. This tract he purchased jointly with Jacob Banta, July 13, 1744.

He was several times elected to the office of chosen freeholder in the County of Bergen, and the presumption is fair that he took an active and influential part in public affairs.

He had five children: a Hendrick who died in infancy. Hendrick, George, the ancestor of the Pennsylvania and Ohio Brinkerhoffs, Jacob, and Maria, who married Jacob Housman.

He died in 1769 or 1770, and left a will devising the old homestead farm to his son Jacob.

The manner in which he begins his will, in conformity with the pious formality of those days and in striking contrast with the business brevity of more modern times, is as follows:

"I, Jacobus Brinkerhoff, of the County of Bergen, Precinct of Hackensack, Yeoman, being sometimes weak of body, but now of sound and perfect mind and memory, thanks be given to God therefor, calling to mind the mortality of my body, and knowing that it is appointed to all men to die, do make this my last will and testament. That is to day principally and first of all, I give and recommend my soul into the hands of God that first gave it, and for my body I recommend

it to the earth, to be buried in a Christian-like and decent manner and at the discretion of my executors, but at the general resurrection I hope to receive the same by the mighty Power of God and through the merits of our Savior Jesus Christ, and as touching such worldly estate whereof it has pleased God to bless me in this life, etc."

The clause by which he gives the Old Homestead to his son Jacob is as follows:

"It is my will, and I do bequeath to my son Jacob Brinkerhoff the plantation where I now dwell on, called Old Hackensack, on the east side of the Hackensack River, with all the appurtenances belonging."

The witnesses to the will were Dirck Brinkerhoff and Rynier V. Giesin.

The date of the will is January 17, 1769.

Jacob Brinkerhoff, son of Jacobus, was born at the Old Homestead November 19, 1721. There is little to be told of him from what the writer has been able to learn. He married Antje Voorhese, but the date is not known. On February 28, 1745, he joined the church at Hackensack, and on November 23, 1749, his wife followed his example. He died in his prime in the year 1771, very shortly after his father. He had seven children: Agnetie, who married Daniel Haring, of Schraalenburgh; Lucas, who, during the War of Independence was taken prisoner by the British and was confined in the famous Sugar House prison at New York, Annatje (a notice of whom is elsewhere given), who married John Christie, afterwards a fellow-prisoner of the British with his brother-in-law Lucas; Jacobus, Hendrick, who became insane and died a bachelor, and Albert, who got the Old Homestead; and George.

From the tenor of his will he was probably suffering from serious illness when it was written. It is much the manner of his father's, and begins as follows:

"I, Jacob Brinkerhoff, of Old Hackensack, in the County of Bergen, and Province of East New Jersey, Yeoman—being much disordered and in affliction of body, but of sound and disposing mind and memory, do make, constitute, and ordain this my last will and testament, in manner and form following. If it shall please God to remove me hence by my present indisposition, I recommend my soul to God who gave it formerly, relying on Him for the pardon of all my sins, through Jesus Christ, His only son; and my body to be decently interred at the discretion of my executors."

He gives sixty pounds to his wife in lieu of dower, and devises his real

estate as follows:

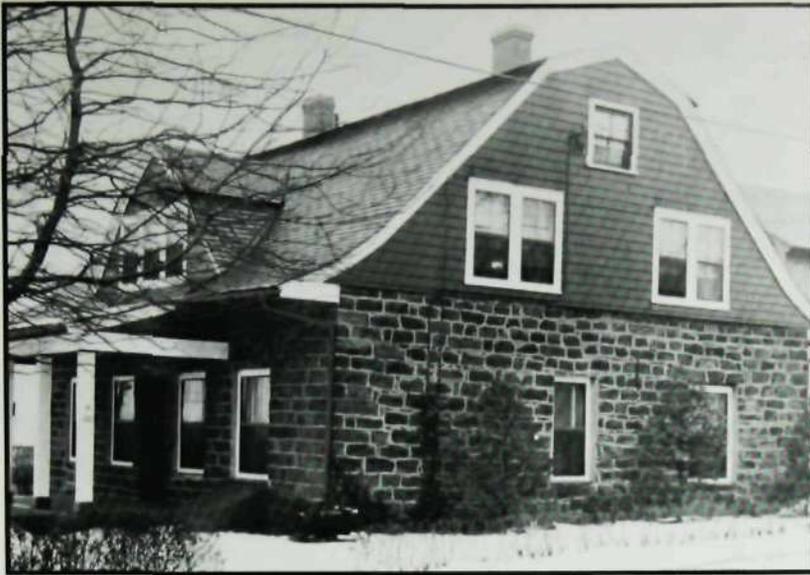
"I give all my real estate bequeathed to me by the last will of my father Jacobus Brinkerhoff deceased, and also a piece of meadow which I purchased myself, to my five sons, Lucas, James, Hendrick, Albert, George, their heirs and assigns forever, to be equally divided, or to have the value thereof as the majority of my executors shall see fit, or the majority of my surviving executors shall deem proper."

He was evidently determined to have his estate well administered, as he appointed no less than six executors: Antje, his wife, his brother, George; his nephews Nicholas and George; his brother-in-law Hendrick Van Voorhise; and his cousin Albert Banta. The witnesses were John Vanderhoof, Dav. Archibold and John Powlse.

Albert Brinkerhoff, one of the five sons to whom Jacob devised his real estate, in the final settlement thereof by the executors, got the Old Homestead farm at Old Hackensack. He was born at the Old Homestead, March 21, 1763. In 1796 he married Keziah Voorhis. Like his ancestors he early connected himself with the church at Hackensack, and took an active and earnest part in its affairs. In the split which took place in the church on the coetus and conferentie question, he was always, as were his father and grandfather, on the coetus side. When the secession took place, which resulted in the organization known as the True Reformed Dutch Church, he was among its leaders. In the new body he was one of the first elders of the churches at Hackensack and Schraalenburgh, and was a member with the Rev. Dr. Froeligh of the first classes which convened in extra-session at Danube, New York, July 15, 1823. That he and his ancestors were fairly liberal church members is shown by their recorded contributions to the rebuilding of the church at Hackensack in 1790. In the War of Independence he and his brothers were ardent patriots, and the Old Homestead must have been the scene of many an interesting event in those troublous times. And the good old Dutch wrouws as well stood nobly by the cause if they did not even surpass the men in courage and spirit.

He died at the Old Homestead, December 8, 1844, leaving three children: Anna, who married David Christie; Albert and Jacob, to whom he devised the Old Homestead, describing it in his will as "My Old Hackensack Farm."

Jacob A. Brinkerhoff, son of Albert, was the last owner of the Old Homestead in the Brinkerhoff line. He was born there August 6, 1802, and continued to reside there until April 1,



Paulison-Christie House

1861, when he sold the whole tract containing eighty-three acres to John A. Parsons, of Hackensack, for the sum of \$17,534.00, and removed with his family to Hackensack where he spent the remainder of his days.

He was a person of tall and manly build, of a strong and intelligent mind (a 'smart Dutchman' as his pastor the Rev. C. T. Demarest once characterized him), and of a most rigid and uncompromising disposition in all matters of principle, holding most firmly to the creed of his fathers in both religion and politics. That is to say he was a Calvinist of the straightest sect, and a Democrat of the Jacksonian type. He was well qualified by intelligence and character to fill high official position, but was too severe and unconciliatory or too unambitious to attain such honors. He never followed any other business than that of a farmer. He married Elizabeth Van Saun, and had by her five children. Catherine, who married William Williams; Albert; Isaac; Keziah, who married William Westervelt; and Hester Ann, who married Garret Oldis.

From this sketch it will be seen that the Old Homestead continued uninterruptedly in the possession and ownership of Hendrick Joris Brinkerhoff and his lineal descendants from June 17, 1685, to April 1, 1861, a period of nearly one hundred and seventy-six years."

By 1775, Hendrick Brinkerhoff's great-grandson Albert was living on the Brinkerhoff land. The area had become part of the newly-created Hackensack Township in 1693. Other families had settled in the area. There were the Bantas, the Bogerts and the Paulisons.

Around this time, John Paulison built a house on his property, adjacent to the Brinkerhoff land. This house, which still stands at 8 Homestead Place, is also referred to as the Christie house, after the family which bought it in 1844 and has kept it until 1984, when the house was sold to the Herman Family.

One of the problems in researching the early history of Ridgefield Park has been the lack of verifiable data. In those days, records were often informal and sometimes just not kept. In March of 1984, Reginald McMahon, of the Bergen County Historical Society, prepared a detailed report on the origin of Christie house. We are indebted to Mr. McMahon for the information which we reprint here in its entirety:

History of the
PAULISON-CHRISTIE HOUSE
Ridgefield Park, N. J.
by Reginald McMahon

Recent architectural assessments of this historic house have revealed the structure to be of a later date than previous speculation has often attributed to it.¹ Architecture, however, can only offer clues to its age in a broad range of years and, in this case, the latter part of the eighteenth century sometime between 1775 and 1800. Subsequently, the farmhouse has seen additions, subtractions, renovations and remodeling.

John Paulison was owner of the land at the time the house was built, probably circa 1775. The property in Ridgefield Park was then part of the Township of Hackensack and often referred to as "Old Hackensack", a

name not to be confused with the present City of Hackensack on the west bank of the river.

According to the tax ratables of 1778, John was assessed for 150 improved acres of land within the township which probably consisted of several individual tracts and not necessarily contiguous to the homestead lot. He also was assessed for four horses, four head of cattle as well as ownership of one slave.² This was during the Revolutionary War and it is said that British soldiers raided the farm and stole his horses.³

John Paulison was baptized as "Jan" on December 7, 1746 at the Reformed Dutch Church of Hackensack, situated on the present site of today's Church on the Green near the Bergen County Courthouse. He was the youngest son of Paulus Martense (Paulison), a resident of the township, and Rachel Jacobse Demarest. John's grandfather was Martin Pouwelse (Paulison) who may have been the first of the family to settle in the area, perhaps in the late 1600's. The great-grandfather, known as Paulus Pieterse, was born in Holland and emigrated to New Netherland, now New York, when it was still under Dutch rule.⁴

There is no document on record that states when and from whom the Paulisons purchased their property in Ridgefield Park but it may have been from earlier settlers such as the Brinkerhoffs, Bantas or Bogerts. However, such a transfer of real estate was made before the house concerned in this study was built.

John Paulison, like his father and grandfather, was active in the Church on the Green and was an Elder of the Consistory.⁵ In 1791 he contributed to the building of the new church structure which still stands today; his name was inscribed on a sandstone block at the front of the building as one of the subscribers.⁶

By 1797 John was taxed for 90 acres of improved land and 40 acres that were unimproved. Unimproved usually meant acreage that was not built upon or cultivated and often was meadow or woodland. By this time he owned two slaves, six horses and twelve head of cattle.⁷ John and wife Gertrude "Geertje" Terhune and three known children, Paul, Richard, and Catherine.⁸ By 1802 Paul, the eldest, was sharing the tax burden with his father.⁹

John Paulison died in May of 1826 at the age of eighty years. Wife Geertje followed him to the grave a year later and both were buried in the cemetery of the old Church on the Green.¹⁰

An inventory of John's personal estate, made shortly after his death, amounted to \$3578.64 $\frac{1}{2}$ with much

of it invested in bonds and notes. He also held shares in the Bergen Turnpike, the toll road that ran through the southern tip of Ridgefield Park. It is of interest to note that he owned a weaver's loom and quilting frame among other possessions, including his Negro slave named Caesar who was valued at \$75.00¹¹

Paulison's will was probated May 29, 1826 in which he left an equal share of his personal estate to his three children.¹² He devised "all my Old Hackensack lands" to sons Paul and Richard which were already "held by them according to the division made . . . by themselves theretofore." Paul stayed on the house tract while brother Richard made his home further north which also included a 27 acre lot purchased by the father from Necausie Brinkerhoff. The northern branch of the family, on and near Brinkerhoff holdings, has often overshadowed the original Paulison homestead further south and has led to latter day confusion about their individual histories.

At any rate, a provision in father John's will forbade the sons to sell their inheritance and ordered that the properties should be passed along to their own children.

Paul Paulison, inheritor of the homestead, was born in 1770 and he and wife Mary became parents of many children. He is said to have been a graduate of Princeton College¹³ (University) in 1794 when he was about the age of twenty-four. For a time, he may have lived across the Hackensack River in the Township of New Barbadoes.

Paul did not survive his father for many years and died January 6, 1832 at the age of sixty-two. He was buried near his father at the Church on the Green.¹⁴ In his last will and testament he directed "that all my real estate be equally divided among my four sons" but that the "division shall be made twelve years after my death".¹⁵ The latter stipulation was made because heirs were not yet of age.

All the children shared in his personal estate which amounted to \$943.75. An inventory included the usual farming utensils, livestock and crops in storage but it is of interest that he also owned "chain and compass", the equipment of the surveyor.¹⁶ If he practiced this profession, he never surveyed his own property, or at least a survey that has survived.

According to one of his sons, soon after the father's death the family moved to New York.¹⁷ Although they would later return, they chose not to keep the old homestead. It is possible that for a time the premises was either rented or remained vacant.

In 1844 and twelve years after his

death, the Bergen County Orphans Court appointed Commissioners "to make partition of the land and real estate of Paul Paulison, deceased". As the heirs did not wish to retain the homestead, the commissioners sold it on November 6, 1844. Several parcels of land were involved including the 47½ acre "Homestead Farm of the said Paul Paulison".¹⁸

The farm, which included the house, was not surveyed but the deed recited that it was bounded on the north by Albert Brinkerhoff who was a descendant of one of Ridgefield Park's earliest families. To the south were several families who were in possession of the early Bogert lands which later became known as the Brewster property. The west boundary was the Hackensack River. To the east the line was "a small creek in the meadows" which appears to have been a tributary of Overpeck Creek. A separate parcel worth noting was the "gravel pit" situated near the southern tip of Ridgefield Park. There were also lots of meadowland bordering the Overpeck as well as woodland situated on the Palisades "mountain" and in Moonachie.

David Christie was the man who purchased the former Paulison estate. He was a Bergen County resident who "removed to New York City where he made a fortune as a stone cutter". In about 1835 "he retired from business" and settled north of the Village of Ridgefield Park in the present Borough of Ridgefield then known as English Neighborhood. In 1814 he married Anna Brinkerhoff, the daughter of Albert Brinkerhoff who had been the immediate neighbor to the north of the Paulison lands.¹⁹ Christie, therefore, was obviously knowledgeable about the property and its proposed sale.

A month after Christie purchased the land, his father-in-law died and although he devised no real estate to daughter Anna, he did bequeath her the sum of \$1500 and a share of the household furniture. In addition, he left to his grandson and namesake, Albert B. Christie, the sum of \$30 "to be expended in the purchase of a bible and a watch".²⁰

David Christie did not make the purchase of the Paulison property for himself but for son Albert B. Christie. Father David died in 1848 leaving no will and it was not until 1858 that Albert gained legal title to the premises he occupied. Interestingly enough, his deed of that date still described the place as "the late Homestead Farm of Paul Paulison".²¹

Albert Brinkerhoff Christie was born in 1816 and married to Lydia Ann Christie, a distant relative. They had seven children: four sons—David A., James H., Jacob B. and Cornelius;

also three daughters—Anna, Rachel and Sarah.²²

According to the 1850 Federal Census for the Township of Hackensack, Christie was a farmer by occupation with real estate valued at \$6000. The household employed a 19 year old Irish girl, Eliza Mullen, as a servant and two male laborers: Joseph Samson, a 45 year old black and John Thoms Neuly, 22, born in England.²³

An 1861 map labels the house as "A. B. Christie".²⁴ The nearest neighbor to the north was "J. (John) Parsons" who had purchased the Brinkerhoff lands the same year the map was made.²⁵ To the south was "J. Brewster" who had acquired the former Bogert property.²⁶ John Brewster and his wife Harriet were born in England²⁷ and they and their family would long be associated with this area of Ridgefield Park.

In 1871 the Christie farm came under the jurisdiction of the newly organized Township of Ridgefield which had been formed from old Hackensack Township.²⁸ A map of the new township, published in 1876 (see attached copy), depicts the "A. B. Christie" house and a small brook which once passed near the south facade of the dwelling. The former Brinkerhoff lands to the north were now laid out in a grid of streets labeled "Ridgefield Park", the name that in later years would be adopted for the entire present village. Development of the area was likely due to the creation of the railroad which ran between the Hackensack River and the Christie house. In 1876 it was known as the New Jersey and Midland Railroad.²⁹

The 1880 census notes Albert, wife Lydia who was "keeping house", and six of their children: James H., twenty-six, and Jacob B., twenty-three, were listed as farmers. The youngest children were "at school". Grouped as a separate household, perhaps in the former frame wing, were the family of the oldest son, David A. Christie—wife Sarah and their two small children. David was a "builder" by occupation.³⁰

In 1885 Brinkerhoff descendants held a family reunion on their former property which now was owned by Peter Mehrhof where a large tent was erected. Nearby was the "antique dwelling house and outhouses of Albert B. Christie" which he "sur-rendered" for the "accommodation and entertainment of the numerous guests". For instance his large barn, 26 x 48 feet in size, was "transformed into a convenient dining salon". Albert, whose mother had been a Brinkerhoff, generously loaned the premises since he was a descendant of that family as well.



Today, nearly one hundred years since the reunion, there has been an occasional misunderstanding that the Paulison-Christie House was a Brinkerhoff dwelling since it had become part of the festivities. It should be emphasized that a report of the reunion, published as a book in 1887, clearly states that the Paulisons were the Brinkerhoff's "earliest and nearest neighbors".³²

Albert B. Christie died December 16, 1887 at the age of seventy-one. According to his obituary, he "went out to his barn Saturday night, and was attacked with a dizziness in the head". He was taken "into the house and died a few hours afterward of apoplexy" (stroke).³³

An inventory of his personal estate amounted to \$4153.12. Various items were listed in different parts of the house including the "extension", a frame wing that once was attached on the north side of the house and which included a bedroom, a second floor and a cellar. Out-buildings were also noted: main barn, west barn, carriage house, granary, shed and woodshed.³⁴

A map drawn a few years later in 1890, depicts the layout of the "residence" with the north extension as well as a small frame addition to the northeast corner of the stone house. Two unidentified outbuildings, now gone, are shown immediately north of the home.³⁵ However, the front porch and dormer on the facade are reminders of later renovations.

The aforementioned 1890 map labels "Homestead Place" as running along the east side of the house. Nearby was "North" and "South" Streets,

whose names were changed later to Christie and Brinkerhoff Streets.

In his last will and testament, Albert B. Christie devised all personal and real estate to wife Lydia Ann and his brother Cornelius Christie, who were also appointed as executors of the estate. They were empowered to sell, rent and invest monies derived from his holdings³⁶ which for many years was known as the "Albert B. Christie Estate".

Wife Lydia Ann "died at her home" March 30, 1896, at the age of seventy-one. She appointed her four sons—David, James, Jacob and Cornelius—as executors of her will with "full power to manage and control, and to sell" the estate.³⁷

By 1938, one son, James H. Christie, became sole legal owner of the premises³⁸ although he no longer resided here. Apparently the home, or part of it, was sometimes rented to tenants.

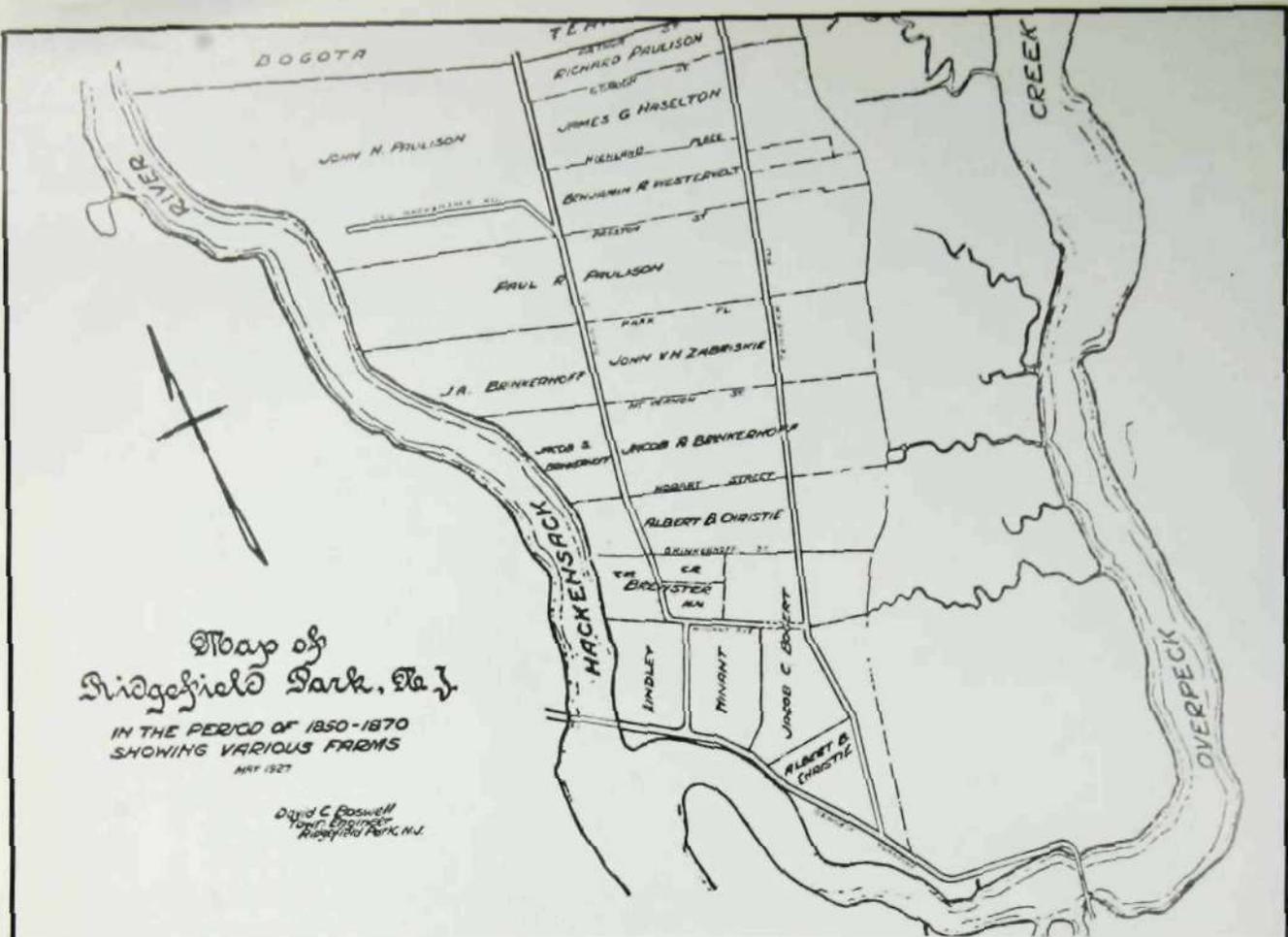
James was married to Martha Lydia Robinson, "a member of the household of Judge Albert H. Bogert, whose farm adjoined... the Christie farm on the southeast." Martha predeceased her husband who died on May 8, 1940, at the age of eighty-seven. His obituary noted him as "Ridgefield Park's oldest living native-born son and last surviving child of Albert B. Christie and Lydia Ann Christie." James had "by inheritance and purchase... acquired a large tract extending from the Hackensack River to Overpeck Creek." This was worked as a farm until later years when he developed portions of the property into home sites.³⁹

James' and Martha's son, Albert

Brinkerhoff Christie (II), acquired the premises which was occupied by his widow Gene Frances Christie, who passed away February, 1985. The old Paulison-Christie House was entered into the National Register of Historic Places on January 10, 1983.

FOOTNOTES

1. For instance, the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS-NJ-160) often has used hearsay in dating a building such as this. While they provided valuable architectural drawings, local historians frequently have found their history to be erroneous.
2. Tax Ratables (microfilm), Bergen County Historical Society Collection at Johnson Library, Hackensack. Hereafter cited as Tax Records.
3. Related by son Richard Paulison and noted in the latter's obituary of 1873 when he died at the age of 99. Bergen County Historical Society Miscellaneous Collections, "Paulison Family" envelope.
4. First Reformed Church Records, p. 49, 91, 196. Hereafter cited as Hackensack Church Records. Cornelius B. Harvey, "Genealogical History of Hudson and Bergen Counties" (New York, 1900), p. 175. Hereafter cited as Harvey.
5. Hackensack Church Records, p. 292, 293, 294, 296, 306, 312.
6. W. W. Clayton and W. Nelson, "History of Bergen and Passaic Counties" (Phila., 1881), p. 294. Hereafter cited as Clayton.
7. Tax Records.
8. John Paulison will proved May 29, 1826. Will Book C, p. 145, Bergen County Courthouse.
9. Tax Records.
10. Church Cemetery. Some early transcriptions of his tombstone note the year of John's death as 1820 rather than 1826; this is probably due to the erosion of the inscription.
11. Inventory Book C, p. 385, Bergen County Courthouse.
12. Will Book C, p. 145.
13. Clayton, p. 293.
14. Tombstone.
15. Will Book D, p. 206, Bergen County Courthouse.
16. Inventory Book D, p. 224, Bergen County Courthouse.
17. Clayton, p. 294.
18. Deed Book G4, p. 342, Bergen County Courthouse.
19. Harvey, p. 107, 295.
20. Albert Brinkerhoff will, Book F, p. 197, Bergen County Courthouse.
21. Deed Book F5, p. 438. See also F5, p. 441; J5, p. 270. Christie also mortgaged his lands numerous times.
22. Harvey, p. 295, 1887 death notice in newspaper, "Bergen County Democrat"; Will Book R, p. 39.
23. Federal Census (microfilm), Johnson Library, Hackensack. Hereafter cited as Census Records.



Map shows approximate boundary lines of 19th century farms.

24 G. M. Hopkins, "Map of the Counties of Bergen and Passaic" (Phila., 1861).

25 Deed Book Q5, p. 644.

26 Deed Book L4, p. 607. (1848).

27 Census Records (1850).

28 John P. Snyder, "The Story of New Jersey's Civil Boundaries" (Trenton, 1969), p. 84.

29 A. H. Walker, "Atlas of Bergen County" (Reading, Pa., 1876).

30 Census Records.

31 "The Family of Joris Dirksen Brinkerhoff" (N.Y., 1887), p. 119, 124, 126.

32 Ibid, p. 107.

33 Surrogate Docket 4, p. 76, Bergen County Courthouse, obituary in newspaper, "Bergen County Democrat", December 23, 1887.

34 Inventory Book Q, p. 519, Bergen County Courthouse.

35 "Map (No. 3) of the Property of the Estate of Albert B. Christie October 1890", map #482, Map Room, Bergen County Courthouse. An old photograph which shows the two frame additions appears in George L. Albig, "Ridgefield Park" (Ridgefield Park, 1927), p. 13. It should be noted, however, that the text of this work thoroughly confuses the genealogy of the Paulison family thereby erroneously attributing the Christie place with Brinkerhoff ownership.

36 Will Book R, p. 39, Bergen County Courthouse.

37 Obituary, "Bergen County Democrat", April 3, 1896; Surrogate Docket 5, p. 9, Will Book Z, p. 15, Bergen County Courthouse.

38 Deed Book 2117, p. 136, Bergen County Courthouse.

39 Obituary, "Bergen Evening Record", May 9, 1940, Surrogate Docket 26, p. 88.

40 Reginald McMahon, "The Achter Col Colony on the Hackensack" in "New Jersey History", Winter, 1971.

41 Ibid, p. 349.

42 Book One of Patents, p. 4-6, Department of State, Albany, N.Y.

43 East Jersey Deeds, Liber I, p. 58, Trenton, N.J.

44 The New York Genealogical & Biographical Record, July 1925, p. 210-11.

45 Unrecorded deed and notes courtesy of Cornelius V. R. Bogert III.

Reginald McMahon
River Edge, N.J.
March, 1984

In the American Revolution, little activity is recorded in the area now encompassed by our Village. During the evacuation of Ft. Lee in November, 1776, the Colonial Troops marched west on Ft. Lee Road to what we could call today Grand Avenue (Leonia), north to Palisade Avenue (Englewood), west on Palisade Avenue to Forest Avenue, continuing to the area near the present Teaneck Fire Headquarters. Washington's men then traveled north on Teaneck Road, turning west again in the area of the present Armory and continuing west on New Bridge Road, crossing at the new bridge in New Milford into Hackensack. When the last American crossed the bridge, the bridge was burned to delay the British, under General Cornwallis, who were pursuing the Americans. We do know that Washington ordered all boats removed from the east banks of the Hackensack River, so we can assume that scouting parties came through our area to carry out that order. We also know that when the main body of men turned north on Grand Avenue, a scouting party went south and crossed the Hackensack River south of the Overpeck Creek, preparing an alternate means of escape should it be required. During the War, various accounts mention that British Troops from time to time would raid farms in the area seeking cattle and food stuffs.

The residents of Bergen County during the American Revolution were predominantly Tories, no doubt due to the close proximity of New York City, which remained firmly under British control for the entire war. Indeed, the last British Troops were finally evacuated from the City in 1783. Previously, mention has been made that Hendrick Brinckerhoff's grandson, Lucas, was taken prisoner by the British and held in the infamous Sugarloaf Prison in New York, along with John Christie whose family would purchase the Paulison House in 1844. Adrian Leiby, in his book, "The Revolutionary War in the Hackensack Valley," reports that among others, Derick Brinckerhoff and John Paulison swore allegiance to George III and sold cattle to the British. Leiby also notes that on July 11, 1777, the New Jersey Committee of Public Safety drew up a list of 48 men against whom patriots had filed complaints for aiding the British cause. Among those named was John Paulison of Old Hackensack, who was judged guilty and held under guard at Morristown. Paulison was later part of a group of Tories who were exchanged for American prisoners held by the British. Exactly when Paulison returned to his home and what his family did in his absence is not known, but we do know that the Paulison

family was back in the homestead in the late 1780's.

From the end of the Revolution through the Civil War to the 1870's, little changed in our community. Our Village was part of Hackensack Township and the population remained less than 100, consisting entirely of farmers, their families and employees, including Blacks, who were classified in the Census as slaves. We know that the Brinckerhoffs and probably some of our other residents invested in the building of the Bergen Turnpike, a private road chartered by the Legislature in 1803. Toll booths were erected at the bridges over the Overpeck Creek and the Hackensack River, and the road was well traveled between Jersey City and Paterson. The Bergen Turnpike remained a private road for over 100 years, but by the twentieth century the roadway was in a serious state of disrepair. In 1903, the Public Service Company took over the Bergen Turnpike primarily to build a trolley line, which was the only trolley line in the town. In November, 1915, the County Freeholders took over the Turnpike from Public Service and maintained it through today as a County road. The Bergen Turnpike was one of the early roads in our community, the first known road being Queen Anne Road. Over the years, the Queen Anne Road or parts of it have been referred to as Old Hackensack Road, Westfield Avenue, and Main Street. What today we call Hackensack Avenue was also called Old Hackensack Road. Teaneck Road also dates from the eighteenth century, while Ridgefield Avenue dates from the 1850's as a connecting road from the Bergen Turnpike to Old Hackensack Road. Indeed, when Ridgefield Avenue was later paved in 1884, it was the first paved road in the community and was the area of the first commercial development. Where Ridgefield Avenue joined Old Hackensack Road, there was a small street known as Winant Avenue. Winant Avenue is still Winant Avenue, but most people today know it as Route 46.

At the Volk Funeral Home in Teaneck opposite Holy Name Hospital, there is a large map of Bergen and Passaic Counties, which dates from 1861. This map provides the names of the families who lived in this area at that time. At the south side of the intersection of the Bergen Turnpike and Teaneck Road, we note "Washington Hall," a hotel/restaurant owned by M. Carling. This, of course, is the site of what later would become known as Wahrmann's and still later Eucker's Steak House, which burned down in July, 1965. No doubt Washington Hall was a stop for travellers using the Bergen Turnpike.

In 1927, George L. Albig prepared a volume to mark the opening of the railroad station at the foot of Mount Vernon Street. From his volume we obtained the following information about our community in the nineteenth century. (Keep in mind that the following was written in 1927):

GETTING ITS NAME

Up to now, Ridgefield Park was farm and woodland with a few landed estates. Sunday excursionists who were using the Northern Railroad of New Jersey, upon alighting from the train at Ridgefield would be solicited by omnibus and hack owners for drives to "The Park," so named because of its woods and rolling greens to the water's edge, Hackensack River.

City folks also began coming to Ridgefield Park to spend the summer. In 1870, the Ridgefield Park Hotel, a structure 200 feet long was built by Abraham Bronson of Hackensack at a cost of \$70,000.00 on a plot of ground that today is bounded by Main, Mt. Vernon, and Park Streets, and extended west to the Hackensack River. The hostelry faced Mt. Vernon Street, was midway between Main Street and Lincoln Avenue, and open in the summer time only. The plot between Lincoln and Paulison Avenues was thickly wooded and used by guests as a park. The hotel was destroyed by fire in 1883.

FROM FARMS TO LOTS

Edward K. Alburts, who had been buying land in Ridgefield Park during the sixties, formed in 1867 with his brother Clement, the Ridgefield Land and Building Company, and in 1870 began advertising Ridgefield Park as a suburban development, only one hour from the City Hall in New York, although at that time Ridgefield Park had no railroad, it being necessary to use the Northern Railroad of New Jersey to Ridgefield, and to take transportation from that station to the Park. The map showed a railroad connection, the New Jersey Midland, coming from Ridgefield to Ridgefield Park, but that road was never built. The New Jersey Midland Railroad did, however, come through Ridgefield Park in 1872, but it came from Jersey City much the same way as does today the New York Susquehanna and Western, better known as the Erie.

The Ridgefield Land and Building Company planned to make its development a residential park with restrictions. Its holdings comprised practically the entire center section of Ridgefield Park. The southern boundary was a line 100 feet south of Sixth (Hobart) Street, and extended from the Hackensack River to the meadows. Its northern boundary on the east side of the Hackensack Road (Main Street) extended about 250 feet beyond First (Preston) Street, touching the line of

lowing that directly east to the meadows. On the west side of Hackensack Road and then westerly to Hackensack and Paulison Avenues, or as it was called, River Avenue. River Avenue was the western boundary ending at Fourth or Mt. Vernon Street which was the northern line of E. R. Alburts estate, the land that later was acquired by R. A. Robertson, only to pass into the possession of Peter Mehrhof in 1885.

When Paul Paulison died in 1832, he willed that twelve years after his death his property should be divided among his four sons, John P., Chas. M., Henry F., and Richard. This was done by three commissioners for the township who sold his property at public auction so as to make an equal division of the estate. It was at this sale that David Christie of English Neighbourhood, bought for his son, Albert Brinckerhoff Christie, a tract which included the stone house known today as the Old Christie Homestead.

In 1853, nine years after Albert B. Christie established himself in Ridgefield Park, John Brewster bought a farm in Ridgefield Park which was bounded on the north by Brinckerhoff Street; on the south by Winant Avenue; on the east by Euclid Avenue; and on the west by the Hackensack River. This farm was afterward divided among his three sons, H. N., C. R., and T. M. Brewster, who had come from Fairview, New Jersey, to Ridgefield Park with their father. Thomas M. Brewster, the father of Morton T. Brewster, later purchased the Lindley Farm directly to the south of him.

THE FARMS AND LANDS OF 1850 TO 1870

Taking the farm and other land holdings existent shortly before and after the Brewster purchase, Ridgefield Park was divided among the following: Lindley, Winant, Brewster, Christie, Zabriskie, Bogert, Jacob S. Brinckerhoff, Jacob A. Brinckerhoff, Paul R. Paulison, John R. Paulison, Westervelt and Cumming (later Haselton).

The Jacob S. Brinckerhoff tract lying directly to the south of that owned by Jacob A. Brinckerhoff, bounded on the west by the Hackensack River, on the east by the Hackensack Road (Main Street), on the south by a line of 100 feet south of Hobart Street, and on the north by what today is Mt. Vernon Street, was bought in 1852 for \$2,450.00 by John Alburts, a Minister of the Gospel, of New York City.

The Lindley Farm was bounded by what today is Winant Avenue, Ridgefield Avenue, Overpeck Creek, and the Hackensack River.

The Winant Farm was within the area bounded by Bergen Pike, to a line close to Chestnut Street, Winant Avenue, east to Laurel Street, and

Ridgefield Avenue, on the West.

The Bogert Farm was bounded on the north by Brinckerhoff Street, on the south by Chestnut Street, and on the west by Laurel Street, extending east to the meadows.

The Brewster Farm was bounded on the west by the Hackensack River, on the east Euclid Avenue, on the south Winant Avenue, and on the north by a line 100 feet south of Brinckerhoff Street.

The Christie Farm took in the territory from the Hackensack River between a line 100 feet south of Brinckerhoff Street and Hobart Street on the north, extending east beyond Teaneck Road to the meadows.

The Jacob A. Brinckerhoff tract lay west of the Hackensack Road between Mt. Vernon and Park Streets, and extended to the Hackensack River.

North of the Christie Farm, and east of Hackensack Road, was the Zabriskie Farm, extending to Park Street, which was the southern boundary line of Paul R. Paulison's farm. Paul R. Paulison's land touched the Hackensack River on the west and the meadows on the east, with Hackensack Avenue and Union Place as its northern line.

The other Christie plot, known as the sand lot, lay south of Chestnut Street, extending from Bergen Pike and Chestnut Street east to the meadows.

To the north of Hackensack Avenue, extending to Bogota (North Avenue) and from Queen Anne Road (Main Street) west to the Hackensack River was the West View Farm of John R. Paulison, while Richard Paulison owned from Queen Anne Road (Main Street) to the meadows with Gordon Street as the southern line and Arthur Street as the northern boundary.

East of Queen Anne Road (Main Street) from Union Place to Highland Place and directly east to the meadows was the Westervelt Farm, while the Cumming plot which in 1863 was acquired by James G. Haselton was bounded on the south by Westervelt's lands (Highland Place), on the north by Gordon Street, on the west by Queen Anne Road (Main Street) and on the east by Teaneck Road.

In 1859 Edward K. Alburts of New York City purchased for \$5,000.00 that same tract of land which John Alburts, the Minister of the Gospel, had bought of Jacob S. Brinckerhoff seven years before. Retaining this tract for his own use he set out to straighten the northern line of his land by buying in 1859 a small piece of land from Jacob A. Brinckerhoff who owned the land to the north of him, and then and there, unconsciously or otherwise, made a straight road of what today is known as Mt. Vernon Street. When in 1860 Edward K. Alburts acquired about ninety acres from Paul R. Paulison, paying \$300.00 per acre for

upland, and \$50.00 per acre for woodland, he, undoubtedly, had in mind making Ridgefield Park a suburban community as he continued to add his holdings by making further purchases from Paul R. Paulison and others in 1861, '62, '64, and '66. These lands were surveyed and a map of streets and plots by W. Williams, an engineer of Hackensack.

Plots were 50 x 200 feet in blocks of 400 x 400 feet. The company built two model houses, showing that Ridgefield Park had its model houses half a century before many of the older towns in this vicinity. These two model houses still stand. Both are on Bergen Avenue and Park Street, occupying the north-east and southeast corners (Editor's Note: When Albright wrote this article in 1927, both buildings still stood. Today, only one still stands and this is the present Temple Emanuel.)

While many plots were sold by the Ridgefield Land and Building Company at what were considered exorbitant prices, \$500.00 per plot, building did not immediately set in, due, undoubtedly, to lack of transportation facilities, and because most of the land was bought as a speculation.

Many of the plots on the east side were in the hands of individuals when the panic of 1873 hit Ridgefield Park, along with the rest of the country. Considerable holdings of the Ridgefield Land and Building Company were sold at auction. The house occupied at present by the Hebrew Association, together with one-fourth of a block, was sold for \$1,200.00, while the house opposite and the present residence of Dr. David Corn (Editor's Note: In 1927 occupied by Dr. Corn — now the site of St. Francis Gymnasium) was sold, also with a fourth of a block, for \$2,400.00. Much land came back to Mrs. Burt through foreclosing the mortgages held.

It was in 1870 that R. A. Robertson acquired considerable of the land, particularly that on the west side of Hackensack Road, owned by the Ridgefield Land and Building Company.

THE ROBERTSON CASTLE AND MEHRHOF MANSION

Edward K. Alburts occupied a stone house where stood the Mehrhof Mansion now supplanted by the Elks Club House. It was on a plot of ground bounded by Mt. Vernon, Hobart, and Main Streets, extending west to the railroad tracks and river. Robertson acquired this along with land to the north of this plot and proceeded to make an estate out of it. He drew a sketch of a house he thought would fit his station, gave it to an architect and went on a three-month trip to California. When he returned, the stone house formerly occupied by E. K.

made their home the social center for the new settlement of commuters. Most of the concerts, lectures, dance parties, etc., were held in the Mehrhof Mansion, a house of many and large rooms. In 1905, the Mehrhof estate was mapped into lots and sold as the Mehrhof Park division by William J. Morrison as trustee.

FROM HACKENSACK TO RIDGEFIELD TOWNSHIP

By an act of legislature in 1871 the territory on the east bank of the Hackensack River which embraced what is today Fairview, Ridgefield, Palisade Park, Leonia, Nordoff, Shady Side, Edgewater, Fort Lee, Taylorsville, Coytesville, Ridgefield Park, Bogota, and part of Teaneck, ceased to be Hackensack Township and became the Township of Ridgefield. The Northern Railroad of New Jersey was already running through Ridgefield to Englewood, having commenced operations in 1859. Hackensack had no railroad connections then and did not until 1872, when the New Jersey Midland Railroad to Paterson was induced by prominent citizens subscribing to \$100,000.00 worth of stock, to come through Hackensack.

In 1872, the New Jersey Midland Railroad ran its tracks through Ridgefield Park, but as there was no station it was not a railroad stop. The two earliest commuters, Mortimer Smith, who lived on what is now known as the Barnes Estate on Teaneck Road, and Peter Kenney, who lived in a house he built, now called the "Bishop Manor," Bergen Avenue and Mt. Vernon Street (Editor's Note: In 1985 now the site of Park Royal Towers, an apartment house—65 Bergen Avenue), came to Ridgefield Park about 1870 and trekked daily to the Leonia station of the Northern Railroad of New Jersey, a distance of three miles. This showed that Ridgefield Park lured on the commuter at about the same time that some of its lands were first sold in plots. The three mile walk became too much

for Mortimer Smith, so he set out to collect \$200.00 to build the first station at Ridgefield Park on the New Jersey Midland, later the Susquehanna or Erie Railroad.

\$45.00 PER LOT

This station was responsible for opening a new road in Ridgefield Park, Fourth or Mt. Vernon Street. Heretofore, there had only been Bergen Pike, Hackensack Road, Teaneck Road and Winant Avenue. R. A. Robertson named two other streets, Preston and Austin, after his two sons, and when Daniel B. Taylor acquired some of the land in this vicinity in 1883, formerly held by Robertson, he organized with F. C. McCready the Ridgefield Park Lot and Building Association with an office at 79 Nassau Street, New York City and proceeded to cut the former 50 x 200 feet plots into lots, 20 and 25 feet wide, and of varying depths, selling them for as low as \$45.00 per lot, on installment terms of \$5.00 per month. After Taylor sold the Park Street to Hackensack Avenue and Main Street west section, he bought the Winant farm and proceeded to sell that off in small lots, too. This was about 1887.

THE PIONEER SUBURBANITES

With the completion of the West Shore Railroad in the summer of 1883, which came through Ridgefield Park, the "influx" of New Yorkers began in earnest with William J. Morrison, Stephen H. Tukey, William Stevens, and Francis McCready coming in 1886; Albert Ravekes, John W. O'Brien, Conrad W. Mergler and Amos B. Abbott in 1887; and Charles W. Calloway, Andrew Gaul, Frank C. Lowe, J. A. Crandall, and John H. Ficken in 1889.

These pioneer suburbanites built their homes on lands that practically can be called virgin territory. There were but a few roads while most streets existed on paper only. No water, sewer, gas,

streets, or sidewalks; not even a school. Not until 1886 did Ridgefield Park build a school after first establishing one in a room over John Shiels' general store at the southeast corner of Lincoln Avenue and Park Street. This cradle of the school system was a one-room structure built at a cost of less than \$5,000.00 at the corner of Sixth Street (Hobart Street) and Central Avenue (Euclid Avenue) by the first three school trustees, Peter Mehrhof, David A. Christie, and William J. Morrison, elected for School District No. 63.

SCHOOL OPENS WITH 20 PUPILS

What a sparsely settled community it was at that date is attested by the fact that the school was opened with twenty pupils and one teacher. The second year the school opened, an additional teacher at \$300.00 per year was engaged, while at the school election in the spring of 1888, Conrad W. Mergler was elected in place of Peter Mehrhof and T. M. Brewster was appointed to the Board, by the County Superintendent of Schools, taking the place of William J. Morrison, who had resigned.

Three years later, in July, 1889, a special school meeting was held to consider the question of putting another story on the school building. This proposal was voted down, and in its place was substituted a plan to erect an addition to the rear of the original school, one to be large enough to contain four rooms. While the original one story, one room school house on the corner of Euclid and Hobart Street was torn down to make room for the present Washington Irving School, the "addition" is still standing today and is used as part of the Washington Irving School. (Editor's Note: Washington Irving School torn down in 1971. Now the site of Fellowship Park.)

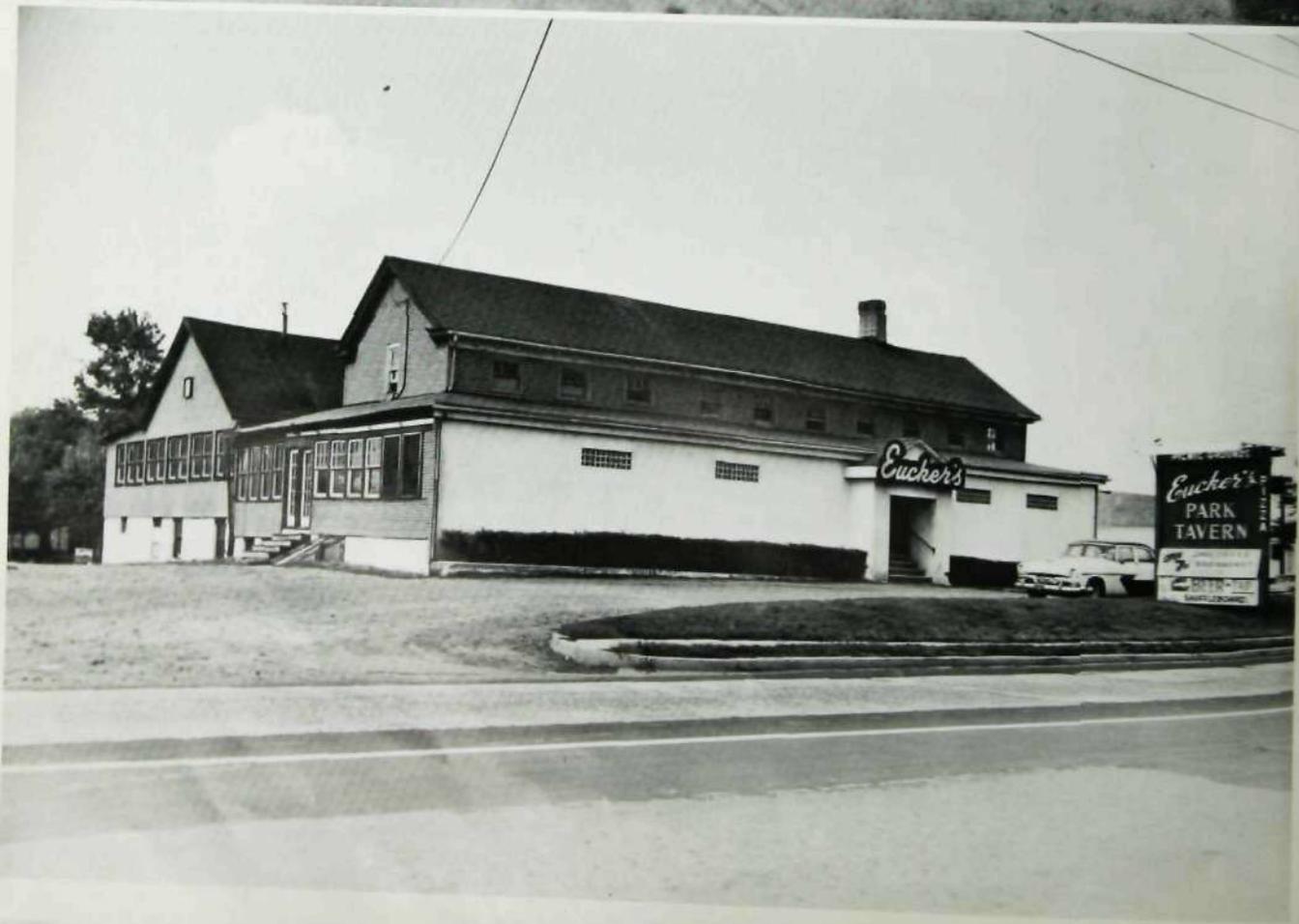


SHEILS STORE

JOHN SHEILS WAS ONE OF THE PIONEER MERCHANTS OF THE VILLAGE OF RIDGEFIELD PARK. HE OPENED HIS GENERAL STORE ON THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF PARK STREET AND LINCOLN AVENUE IN A BUILDING WHICH STILL STANDS TODAY (1985). HIS SON ROBERT LATER BECAME HIS BUSINESS ASSOCIATE.

THE SECOND FLOOR OF SHEILS STORE WAS USED FOR RIDGEFIELD PARK'S FIRST PUBLIC SCHOOL CLASSES AND THE FIRST FLOOR FOR CHURCH SERVICES, BOTH CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT. THE HALL ON THE SECOND FLOOR WAS ALSO RENTED TO POLITICAL CLUBS AND WAS USED FOR SATURDAY NIGHT DANCES. IN THE VERY EARLY DAYS, IT HAS BEEN SAID, THE HALL HAD UNFINISHED WALLS AND NO HEAT UNTIL IT WAS RENOVATED BY THE REPUBLICAN CLUB.

JOHN SHEILS IS THE BEARDED MAN IN THE DOORWAY. HIS SON, BOB, IS THE MAN SEATED IN THE CARRIAGE.



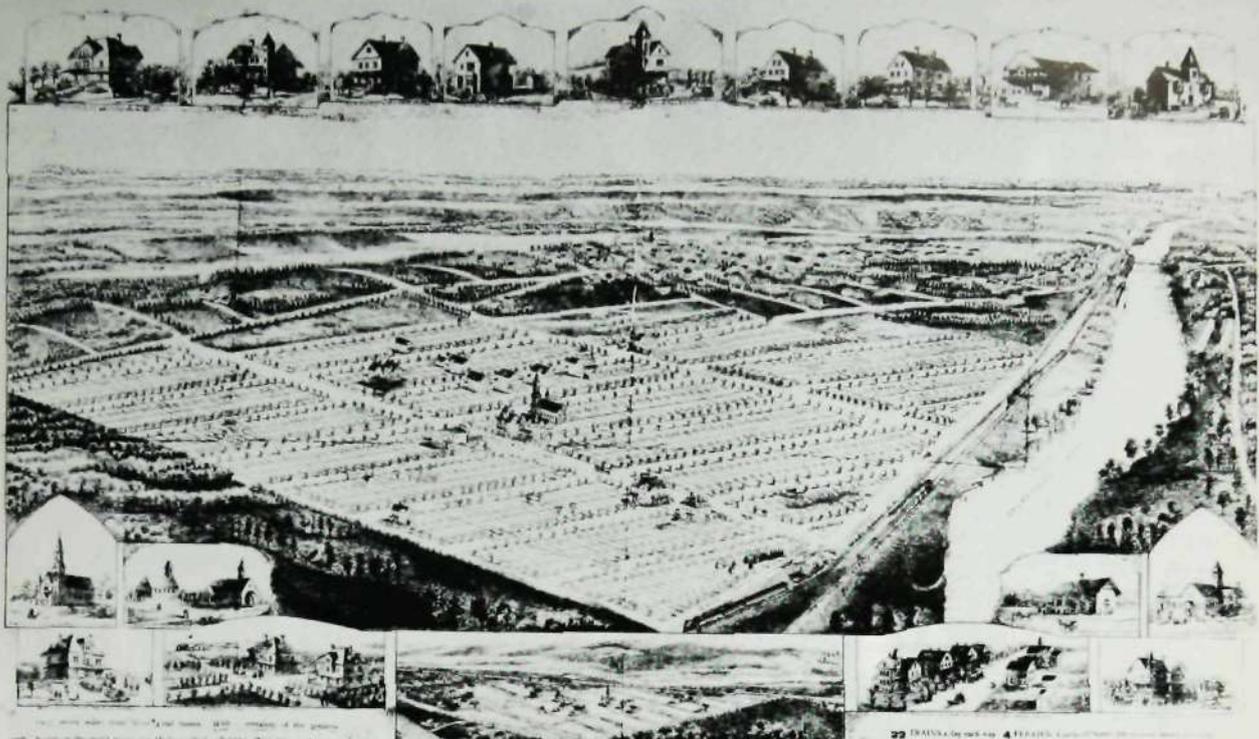


Opposite - upper left is a photo of Wahrman's Overpeck Park taken in the early 1900's. Originally built in the mid 19th Century as a stagecoach stop on the Bergen Turnpike, Wahrman's was earlier known as the Washington House and was owned by a Mr. Carling. Wahrman's was the site of many picnics as the facility provided both boating and swimming on the Overpeck Creek. For many years the New York City Fire Department held its annual outing at Wahrman's where they were joined by members of the local Fire Department. The Eucker Family and the Wahrman Family were related and the business became known as Eucker's in the 1930's when it was operated by Louis Eucker and William Eucker. Eucker's was famous throughout the area for its steaks. On Monday, July 5, 1965, Eucker's burned down, ending nearly a century of Wahrman-Eucker Family hospitality to area residents. The fire began during the Annual Independence Day Parade and the local Volunteers, under Chief Thomas Spinelly, spent the entire day extinguishing the blaze. The site is now occupied by a co-op apartment building, shown above.



RESIDENCE OF JOHN R. PAULISON AS SHOWN IN WALKER'S 1876 ATLAS. TODAY THIS WOULD BE THE AREA OF HACKENSACK AND RAILROAD AVENUES. NOTE THE NEW JERSEY MIDLAND RAILROAD AND HACKENSACK RIVER BEHIND THE HOUSE. FRESH WATER STREAMS FLOWED INTO THE RIVER THROUGH THIS AREA. THE PAULISON FAMILY WOULD SOON YIELD TO THE PRESSURES OF DEVELOPMENT AND THE FARM WOULD BE SOLD TO DEVELOPERS WHO WOULD DIVIDE THE AREA INTO STREETS AND LOTS. IN 1876, THE ORIGINAL BRINKERHOFF FARM HAD ALREADY BEEN SOLD AND PLOTTED INTO LOTS AND STREETS.

1894
 WESTVIEW PARK (WESTVIEW SECTION)



THE CITY OF HOPES, OR NEW YORK'S NEAREST SUBURB.

WESTVIEW

NEW JERSEY
 THE CITY OF HOPES, OR NEW YORK'S NEAREST SUBURB.

22 DRAINAGE SYSTEMS... 4 TERRACE...
 Street and Main Street...
 water and sewerage...
 accessible and well-lighted...
 1894

For maps and particulars apply to FRANK M. STRATTON, Central Building, New York, Or P. H. McNamee, 55 Broadway
 Carl Hallberg, 190 W. 42nd St. New York.

THE WESTVIEW SECTION AS IT WAS DEPICTED AND PROMOTED IN THE 1890'S. CARL HALLBERG ACTIVELY PROMOTED THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WESTVIEW SECTION, AS WELL AS LATER PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HAZELTON HEIGHTS SECTION. HALLBERG LOCATED HIS OFFICE ON PAULISON AVENUE, NEAR THE RAILROAD STATION, NOW THE SITE OF COMMUNITY CHEVROLET. THE WESTVIEW SECTION WAS SETTLED PREDOMINANTLY BY RESIDENTS OF SCANDANAVIAN DESCENT. NOTE THE SCANDANAVIAN LUTHERAN CHURCH ON FIFTH STREET.



INSIDE MERGLER'S STORE.

THE WANAMAKER OF RIDGEFIELD PARK

When Conrad W. Mergler came to Ridgefield Park in 1887, just forty years ago, its population was all of sixty people with 75% of the adult male population commuting to New York. He lived in Ridgefield Park only a year when he opened a grocery store in his home on Preston Street, and a year later moved it to the corner of Hackensack Road (Main Street) and Mt. Vernon, the present location of Smith's Real Estate Office. (Editor's Note: Now

the insurance office occupied by former Mayor Gilbert Gibbs.) Here he opened a general store carrying everything from a lamp wick to a baby carriage. He was known as the "Wanamaker of Ridgefield Park." This store was continued by him until 1919, when he retired, becoming shortly after the president of the Ridgefield Park Trust Company, and is at present the chairman of its Board of Directors.

COMMUTERS' DAILY DOZEN

With the opening of a general store and a school with five rooms, Ridgefield Park was now on its way to becoming a community, although its chief convenience was a town pump at the corner of Brinkerhoff Street and Euclid Avenue, where commuters living in that district, such as Edwin S. Ferris, who came to Ridgefield Park in 1890, did their "daily dozen" by performing the task of drawing enough water for the day and carrying it to their

homes before they went to work.

One of the first visible improvements was the laying of wooden sidewalks in 1890 on Mt. Vernon Street and Hackensack Road (Main Street). These "improvements" and the attractive prices at which Daniel B. Taylor was selling lots on the west side of Main Street between Mt. Vernon and Preston Streets, land he had acquired through purchase and tax sales, brought additional homemakers to Ridgefield Park.

By 1892, the 668 residents of Ridgefield Township residing in the area we now call Ridgefield Park were ready to establish their own Government. Since 1871, the residents of "The Park" had been part of Ridgefield Township and prior to that part of Hackensack Township all the way back to the arrival of Brinkerhoff in 1685. Tiring of control of politicians from Fort Lee, who then were the dominant force in Ridgefield Township, the local citizens organized a referendum

for self-Government. On June 6, 1892, by a vote of 83-60, a referendum to establish self-Government was approved and this was followed by official confirmation of the referendum by the State of New Jersey on June 15, 1892. On June 11, 1892, following the referendum to provide for the incorporation of Ridgefield Park as a Village, the first Trustees met at the home of Thomas Brewster. These first Trustees were: Andrew Gaul, Dr. Adolph Dexheimer, Thomas Brewster, John W.

O'Brien, and John Crandall. The Trustees elected Andrew Gaul as First President and Adolph Dexheimer as First Treasurer. Joseph Behan was appointed as Village Clerk and James Stratton as Superintendent of Public Works. An \$800.00 tax levy was voted to provide for operations of the first year. Among the improvements voted were "lighting up the town," by putting oil lamps on several of the main thoroughfares. Although the Village was incorporated in 1892, res-

idents did not get control of the School System until 1896 when the Legislature passed an act making Ridgefield Park the Township of Overpeck School District.

Conrad W. Mergler, who had previously served 4 terms at Fort Lee representing Ridgefield Park School District, was elected First President of the Overpeck Township Board of Education. Legally, the name Township of Overpeck remained until June 1, 1938, when the name Village of Ridgefield Park was officially incorporated and approved by the State Legislature.

Seven months prior to the referendum of June, 1892, the Ridgefield Park Fire Department was begun with the establishment of Hose Company No. 1 on Mt. Vernon Street. The burning of the Ridgefield Park Hotel in 1883 had stirred some interest in providing local fire protection but only after 3 houses had been destroyed in a disasterous fire on Preston Street on December 5, 1891, did the movement for a Fire Department get underway. Neighbors had attempted to extinguish a fire in the home of John Henderson, but were unsuccessful and the flames spread and consumed the houses of Charles Enders and Charles Reinhardt. On December 9, 1891, Hose Company No. 1 was organized with Charles W. Calloway First President and

H.R. Carpenter Secretary. 50 citizens were enrolled but it was not until February 10, 1892, that the incorporation papers were signed and the Company legally started. A few days later, on February 22nd, residents in the southern part of the community formed a Friendship Hook & Ladder Company, with headquarters on Euclid Avenue. This Company was officially incorporated April 5, 1892. Rapid growth of the Village continued and many community activities were begun which continue until today.

Until the 1800's, residents of this area attended religious services by traveling to Hackensack or Ridgefield. In 1884, Mrs. Barnes began teaching Sunday School in her home and in the late 1880's, a Union Sunday School Class met in a room over John Shiels' store at what is now Lincoln Avenue and Park Street. This building still stands on the Southeast corner and, also, was the site of the first Public School classes in the early 1880's. On November 27, 1889, the cornerstone for the original St. Francis Church was laid at Euclid Avenue and Mt. Vernon Street. This building was dedicated July 27, 1890. Also in 1890, the Union Church was organized by the parents of the Sunday School group and in 1891 the Union Church was built at Euclid Avenue and Park Street. This building, after several renovations

and additions, is now the Civic Center. The pipes of the old Pipe Organ can still be seen.

In 1894, a library was begun by the Union Church, in cooperation with the Reading Club, Women's Bazaar Committee, and other private subscribers, including Mrs. E.M. Barnes, who was a driving force in this undertaking. The Women's Bazaar Committee was the predecessor of the present day Woman's Club of Ridgefield Park, which was organized in 1894. The first library was located at 24 Mt. Vernon Street, an area which is now a car dealer parking lot and a drive-in bank. Mortimer Smith owned the 24 Mt. Vernon Street building and he provided the library use of his building, rent-free, for 15 years. Around 1909, a fire damaged the structure and destroyed many of the books. The library moved to temporary quarters until 1911, when it found a home in the new Municipal and Fire Alarm Building at Main and Park Streets. The Library continued to be privately funded until 1920 when the Village took control and established the Library Board of Trustees. Over the years, funding for library activities has been enhanced by revenues from the Brewster Trust Fund, established by the Brewster Family and dedicated to the Public Library.

In 1891, the John Paulison farm, which extended from Hackensack Avenue to North Avenue, and from Main Street to the railroad, was sold to W.D. Stratton, who also purchased the Paul Paulison farm, which extended from Hackensack Avenue south to Summit Street, and from Paulison Avenue to the railroad. The entire area was mapped out into lots averaging 25 x 120 feet which were advertised at \$300 per lot. This "Westview" area became the home for many residents of Scandinavian extraction and in 1897, the Scandinavian Lutheran Church was erected on Fifth Street. This Church was converted into a private residence in 1969, (244 Fifth Street.) For many years, the Westview section of the Village had its own Railroad Station served by the West Shore Railroad. This station was demolished with the building of the Rt. 80 bridge over the railroads and Hackensack River.

Also in the 1890's, the Northeast (Hazelton Heights) section of the Village was losing its rural characteristics. The Haselton-Farm—(Ed. Note: all early references spell Haselton with an "s". Today we spell Hazelton with a "z". Just when and why the change was made is not known at present.)—occupied the area bounded by Highland Place and Gordon Street, Main Street to Teaneck Road. North of the Haselton Farm was the Richard Paulison Farm, which extended to today's Arthur Street. When Mary Haselton, widow of James G. Haselton, died in the early 1890's, she willed the farm to her daughter, Mamie Kelly, who lived in Stockton, California. Mamie and her husband had the farm mapped into streets and lots and offered lots in the "Haselton Heights" development at prices from \$200 to \$300 each.

In the meantime, Carl Halberg, a realtor who was involved in the promo-

tion and sale of Westview properties, purchased the Richard Paulison Farm, laid out lots, and named two streets after his sons, Edwin and Arthur.

The last remaining large tract of land was purchased in 1907 by Charles Enders, who was owner and editor of "The Bulletin," the local paper established in Ridgefield Park in February, 1900. Enders purchased from Peter Van Iderstine, son-in-law of Richard Westervelt, the Westervelt Farm, which encompassed all the land from Union Place north to Highland Place, from Main Street to Teaneck Road. This large farm, which had been owned by the Westervelt Family since the early 1700's, was sold to Enders for \$30,000. Enders followed the pattern of all previous developers, laid out lots and streets, and sold off parcels at varying prices depending on location and size.



Ridgefield Park Hose Co. #1, Mt. Vernon Street Firehouse. Note alarm bell on tower behind building. This bell is now Firemen's Memorial at Euclid Avenue and Cedar Street. Present Firehouse, built in 1939, is on this same site.

The twenty year period from 1892 to 1912, when the Village was governed by the Board of Trustees, was not only a period of dramatic change, but also a time of local political turmoil. Area newspapers delighted in reporting the proceedings of the local governing body, which were marked by many sharp factional conflicts. Factions centered around personalities and issues and often the factions would overlap. The building of a sanitary sewer system was accomplished only after considerable effort. Public opposition to this project was fierce. Older residents recall the conflict over the building of the present Municipal Building. Prior to 1911, Village Offices were maintained over a store at Main and Grove Streets. Repeated efforts by the Trustees to get voter approval for a Municipal Building were defeated. While the Trustees were pursuing the Municipal Building project, the Fire Department

came forward with a request for a modern alarm system.

By 1911, six Volunteer Fire Companies had been organized, with one Fire Company in each section of the Village. Reporting a fire and alerting all the volunteers was a serious problem. The principal signal was a bell, mounted on a tower, next to Hose Company #1 on Mt. Vernon Street. At various locations around town were "hoop," old railroad rails, bent into circles, which were struck with a hammer to sound the alarm. As the Village experienced its rapid growth, this system proved very unreliable and when the Fire Department asked the Trustees for a new system, the Trustees thought they found a solution to the alarm problem as well as the need for a municipal building. The Trustees proposed to erect a building, large enough to house all municipal offices, a building which would also feature a modern fire

horn on top—a horn which could be heard all over the community.

When presented to the voters as a "Municipal and Fire Alarm Building," the issue was approved, the Trustees got the building they wanted and the firemen got the alarm system. Today, the Municipal Building still stands and the "Bull Horn" still sounds to alert the volunteer firemen. The original alarm bell which stood next to Hose 1, is mounted now in the Firemen's Monument on Euclid Avenue, just north of Cedar Street. This bell is officially tolled each year on Memorial Day to honor all Village firemen who have died during the previous year. When you enter the Municipal Building today, from Main Street, immediately to the right of the front door, note the dedication plaque for the "Municipal and Fire Alarm Building."

Municipal Building,
Ridgefield Park, N. J.



ABOUT 75 YEARS AGO . . .

NORTHWEST CORNER, MAIN AND PARK STREETS



SOUTHEAST CORNER, MAIN AND PARK STREETS
HOMESTEAD OF PAUL R. PAULISON, LATER THE RESIDENCE OF ARCHIBALD D. LEES



The intersection of Mt. Vernon Street and Old Hackensack Road (now Main Street). The view is westward down Mt. Vernon Street toward the river.

The houses visible are those of Mr. and Mrs. Abram V. Smith, one of Ridgefield Park's finest citizen couples; Mr. Edward Foote, also an honored citizen; Mr. John J. Meginnis, a man and family of value and importance in many of our early institutions; Mr. William F. Stevens, a pioneer real estate man; Mr. Cyrus Lozier, one of the Village's earlier builders and merchants; and, seen in the background, the home of James and Mary Doolan.

There were no buildings on the south side of Mt. Vernon Street. The open fields and pear orchard were part of the homestead of Mr. Peter Mehrhof, a brick manufacturer. He conducted business under the name of Mehrhof Brothers in Little Ferry.

It is said that many brick houses in the State of Maine, as well as other New England states, were built with Mehrhof Brothers bricks, which had been carried to these distant parts in sturdy schooners known as "The Peter Mehrhof" and "The Philip Mehrhof." These ships, manned by our neighbors, braved and mastered the tortuous mudflats of our river, the heavy waters from Point Judith around Cape Cod, and on up to Halifax and St. John's Oakum.

Perspiration and kerosene, with perhaps a retained whiff of the sea's brine, compounded to create an essence that cannot be easily forgotten and, being recalled, revives the memories of stirred impulses to sail the Seven Seas, and even yet gives zest to any story of the sea. That's a long way to travel from the intersection here depicted, but, after all, the world is only a series of such intersections all bound together in a compact little sphere. (Courtesy of Mrs. Lillian Mergler)



On Main Street, looking north to Mt. Vernon Street intersection, Circa 1903

Buildings on right: Mergler's store and residence; residence of Mr. George Lowe; Post Office; Abbotts' store and resident (sold dressware and notions); Lozier Building; stores and Bulletin Office; residence of Mr. Henry Hober, residence of Frank A. Lloyd.

MT. VERNON STREET - 1903

If this looks like a quiet country lane, that's just what it was. This is Mt. Vernon Street looking east (up the hill) from Spruce Avenue. A little of the A.V. Smith residence (now the bank) can be seen on the left and a bit of Merglers Corner and the top of another building on the right. It appears that the sidewalks on the left are the wooden sidewalks which were laid in this area in 1890. The Peter Merhof property would be on the right.



HACKENSACK ROAD - 1912

This is Hackensack Road (now Main Street) looking south from Park Street. Hidden on the right is a building under construction which now is the home of "House of Flowers", Edward Reinhardt, proprietor. Reinhardt's father, Charles Reinhardt, owned the hotel on Paulison Avenue. Visible on the right is the steeple of the old town hall, southwest corner of Main and Grove Streets. The first building on the left is A.D. Lees Market, next a stationery store, then a barber shop which is still there. The frame building next to the barber shop was a bowling alley and pool parlor known as the "Casino." This is now the site of Lloyd's Pharmacy. Just beyond the real estate office (and to the rear) was a lumber yard, and beyond is Merglers Corner. The man in shirtsleeves, starting to cross the road, is the barber, Mike Mirabelle, and the boy watching the construction is Harry P. (Hip) Murphy.

Conrad W. Mergler

Conrad Mergler was born in New York City on February 5, 1861. He came to Ridgfield Park in 1887 and started his general store with a fifty dollar loan, two barrels and a board in the front room of his home on First Street. He made his deliveries in a wheelbarrow. Much of the credit for his success was due to his wife, Louise, who bore her full share of the burden. The business prospered and he opened a store on the southeast corner of Main and Mt. Vernon Streets.

It was the sort of general store where one could buy almost anything. The local newspaper referred to the store as the "Wanamakers of Ridgfield Park." His advertisement implored "Go to Mergler's Corner for anything the other stores don't stock, or are just out of. We'll treat you with courtesy and consideration. Also you may save time and trouble by coming here first."

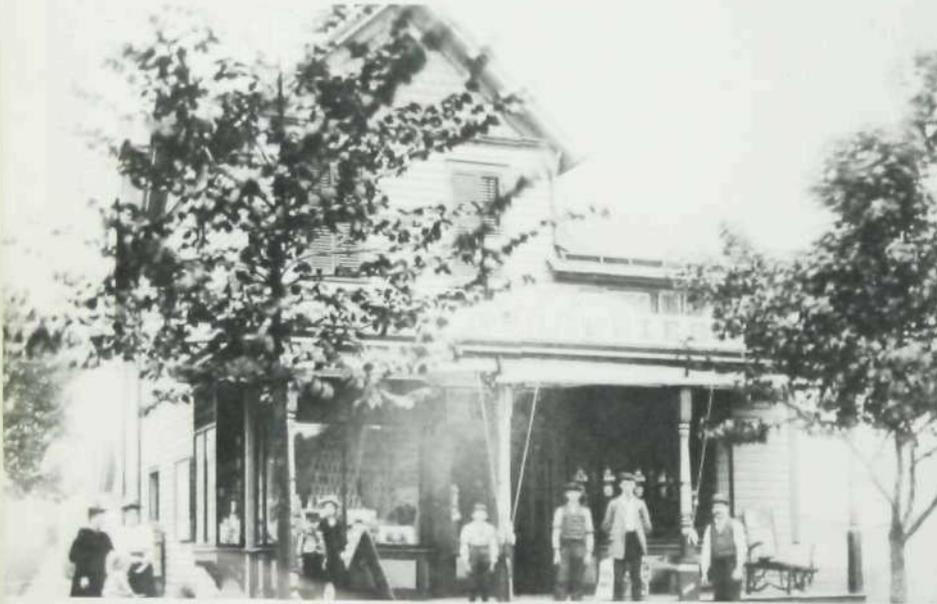
Conrad Mergler was known by his customers as the "Poet Merchant" and was one of the Village's esteemed pioneers and one of its most valued and useful citizens. He was a co-founder of the Volunteer Fire Department, the First National Bank, and of the Park Building and Loan Association, which he served as its President for forty years. He served as President of the Board of Trade and was the Village Postmaster.

Mr. Mergler operated his general store in the same location until 1919. He died on Easter Sunday in 1939 at the age of 78.



MASCHKES MOVING PICTURE THEATRE

Main Street, corner of Park Street, 1910. Later known as *The Strand*. In later years it became *Overpeck Delicatessen*. It is now *Buy Rite Liquors*.



MERGLERS CORNER 1889 - 1919

This picture was taken in 1895. The Corner was known as "the gathering place." Mr. Mergler is at the far right. Standing next to him is Abe Hascup, Daniel Mergler, and George Tuken. The children are unidentified. Over to the left is Mrs. Strohmeyer and her sister.



EARLY HOME OF THE BREWSTER FAMILY AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF MAIN STREET AND WINANT AVENUE.

Partisan politics dominated the Village during the period of the trustee government. Following the election in the spring of 1894, for example, when only three or four votes separated the winning and losing candidates for trustees, four persons were indicted for alleged illegal voting. The case, however, was subsequently dropped for lack of evidence. Leaders of the two warring factions for many years were Thomas Brewster and John O'Brien. Under the trustees many improvements were initiated which still serve the Village. In 1900 a sewer system was installed. Mr. David Christie served as the Sewer Inspector and it is reported that before the sewers were put into operation Mr. Christie traveled through the system on a skateboard, lying down to inspect all the connections to insure that the sewers would operate properly.

The Village grew rapidly during the period between 1892 and 1912. In 1892 the recorded population was 688. By 1900 this had grown to approximately 3,000 people, and by 1910 the population had reached 4,500. Until 1910, with the exception of Ridgefield Avenue, which was our first business district, all streets in Ridgefield Park were dirt. In 1910 a street-paving program was begun starting with Central Avenue, which today is called Euclid Avenue, and old Hackensack Road, which today we know as Main Street. The street-paving program continued until about 1928 when all streets in the Village were fully paved.

Although these and other improvements were a credit to the trustee form of government, the factionalism, political turmoil, and infighting among the trustees created

real uncertainty in local government. The trustee system itself made it difficult to get things done. On page 29 is a ballot which shows that each item in the Village budget had to have voter approval before anything could be done and this approval was not always forthcoming. Many residents, including some of the trustees, saw the need for change. For example, one of the problems encountered was the raising of funds necessary to pay the debt which was incurred by the trustees who had authorized various Village improvements. Until 1909 no provision had been made to meet these obligations. After considerable criticism, Village Board President Cyril DeWyrall appointed a Sinking-Fund Commission to supervise the payment of the Village debt. This Commission was in existence until after World War II.

Progressivism was a force in American politics shortly after the turn of the century and this movement had its effect here in Ridgefield Park. Across the land citizens were tiring of political squabbling and partisan strife and they were looking for government to improve its efficiency and be more responsive to the needs of the people. Following a disastrous flood in Galveston, Texas, in 1906, the idea of commission form of government took hold as a progressive idea. On April 2, 1912, residents of Ridgefield Park voted to change from the trustee system of government to a commission form of government, which was provided for in the Walsh Act. The commission form of government, which is still in effect here in Ridgefield Park, provided for non-partisan elections and for economical and efficient government operations. Each commissioner is responsible for a particular area of local government and the voters retain the right of initiative, referendum and recall. Following the approval to change to a commission form of government, an election was held in May 1912 and Harry F. Ayres, Adolph Dexheimer and Ernest Webbon were elected to the newly-formed commission. In the commission form, even today, the elected commissioners choose one of their number to be mayor, and the honor in 1912, to be the first mayor under the commission form, went to Ernest Webbon. The voters must have been pleased with the performance of the first three commissioners since Ayres and Dexheimer were reelected in 1916 along with William Hunter, who was put on the ticket to replace Mayor Webbon who had been elected to the County Board of Freeholders. Following the 1916 election, the commissioners chose Adolph Dexheimer as mayor. In the 1920 election Harry Ayres was elected for a third term, William Hunter for a second term, and Hugh McGowan was elected for his first term, replacing Mayor Dexheimer, who chose not to stand for reelection. In the 1920 election the elected commissioners chose William Hunter to be the mayor.

In the 1900's, through the Teens and into the Twenties, Ridgefield Park was being promoted as a suburban community. Most of the residents traveled by train to New York City for employment. A 1909 *American Journal of Commerce* article describing the Village reports as follows:

"As a suburban homesite, Ridgefield Park is one of the

most charmingly attractive locations in the vicinity of the metropolis. And its development as a residential location for business and professional men in the great city is the natural result of a commanding natural advantage of situation and surroundings. Ridgefield Park is located at the junction of the Hackensack River and Overpeck Creek. It is below Hackensack and on the opposite side of the river. The name Ridgefield Park is appropriate and well chosen and suggests natural topography. The ground is high, rising from river to creek at a slope which gives good natural drainage and adds to the healthiness of the situation and surroundings. Only a half hour from New York by train, Ridgefield Park has all the charm of the country with easy access to all the privileges of the City."

And what were some of the things that made Ridgefield Park such an attractive place to live? Certainly the community was developing great civic pride. Back in 1894 the Fourth of July celebration began and a member of that early committee was Milton Votee, who later moved to Teaneck, where he became mayor. Early Fourth of July celebrations took place on the UA Field which was located at Euclid Avenue and Poplar Street, the site of the present Presbyterian Church. It was at the UA Field that the parades began, that the fireworks were displayed and the Fire Department held its annual inspection.

One of the major July Fourth activities was a bicycle race. These bicycle races attracted teams from all over the area, including the Hackensack Wheelmen and the Overpeck Wheelmen. One of the men responsible for these races was Emil Fraysee, who started visiting Ridgefield Park as a vacation spot in the 1890's and moved to Ridgefield Park in 1911. Mr. Fraysee was selected for the 1912 Olympic cycling team along with another Village resident, Julius Schmidt. However, Mr. Schmidt's boss would not let him off work so Mr. Schmidt was replaced with Carl Shultee, who placed third in the Olympics. It is interesting to note that in competition with Julius Schmidt here in the United States, Carl Shultee never beat Julius Schmidt. Emil Fraysee later served as Olympic coach of the 1928 and 1932 Olympic cycling teams, and the Fraysee family has

maintained its interest in cycling and the Olympics over the years, operating the Park Cycle Shop on Main Street today.

The woods, fields and farms which characterized early Ridgefield Park were fast fading in the years before World War I. The principal area of business activity was shifting from Ridgefield Avenue up to what is now modern-day Main Street. The first movie theater, the Opera House, opened at the corner of Park and Main Streets across from the Municipal Building. In addition, there was an open-air theater which operated in summertime on the west side of Main Street in the block between Mt. Vernon and Cedar Streets, the area now occupied by Fraysee's Bicycle Shop. The Crescent Arcade movie theater was located downtown, at Bergen Pike and Ridgefield Avenue. Another open-air theater was located on the Bergen Pike. We had not only movie theaters, but also moving picture studios long before Hollywood, California, was ever heard of. James W. Gunby, who lived at 34 Central Avenue, was a pioneer in moving picture experiments and developments. He built a laboratory and studio at 53 Second Street in 1912. In 1916 he leased it for five years to Benjamin Chapin, whose characterization on the screen of Abraham Lincoln brought him national reputation. "The Son of Democracy" was a fifteen-reel picture of the life of Abraham Lincoln and was filmed in Ridgefield Park. Interior shots were all taken in the Gunby studio, which became known as the Benjamin Chapin studio. Outside scenes for this movie were taken in the Westview section, with local residents acting as extras. Other movies had scenes taken along the railroad tracks and along the Hackensack River. Ben Chapin died June 2, 1918 before his lease of the Gunby studio expired. He was buried from the Gunby home on Second Street, which he also had leased. His studio was destroyed by a spectacular fire on January 7, 1926. Twenty tons of old film, which were being salvaged, were consumed by the fire, which made it one of the most spectacular blazes that ever occurred in Ridgefield Park.

Another film maker, Mack Sennett of Keystone Kop fame, used to shoot scenes at the Ridgefield Park railroad station at the foot of Mt. Vernon Street, although his studio was in Fort Lee.

That was a time long gone in Ridgefield Park when there were woods, sand banks on the Hackensack River, and clear streams for boating, swimming and fishing. Some folks say it was a time that was a paradise just made for boys and young men who had visions and dreams.

George Barbier was another famous actor who lived in Ridgefield Park nearly sixty years ago. His home was at the corner of Third Street and North Avenue. When Barbier died, he provided that his estate should underwrite two scholarships to be given each year to graduating seniors of Ridgefield Park High School.

Of course, the most famous entertainer to come from our Village was Ozzie Nelson, who was a local football star as well as band leader. Further details on Ozzie Nelson are found elsewhere in this book.

Prior to 1904 students from the Village who attended high school went to Hackensack High School. From 1904 until 1912 high school classes were conducted on the top floor of Washington Irving School; and from 1912 to 1917 the high school classes were conducted at the school at the corner of Hackensack Avenue and Eighth Street, across the street from the present Lincoln School. In September 1917 the doors opened to Ridgefield Park High School, then officially known as Washington High School, at the corner of Bergen Avenue and Hobart Street. After Hackensack High School, Ridgefield Park High School is one of the oldest high schools in the County.

The opening of the High School coincided with the entrance of the United States into World War I. The Village responded strongly in support

of the war effort. A public roster was maintained at the foot of Mt. Vernon Street, near the railroad station, listing all Village residents serving in the war effort. The Armistice, November 1918, was greeted with great joy here in the Village. As the men came home from war, celebrations were held throughout the community. Five hundred two men from Ridgefield Park served in the Armed Forces in World War I.

The Post Office

To go to the Post Office in the very early days of Ridgefield Park meant going over to Little Ferry for mail. Later, when the railroad came through, Mr. Ed Carr was named Postmaster of Ridgefield Park at the railroad station at the foot of Mt. Vernon Street. In 1888 Conrad Mergler was named Postmaster by the Postmaster General, John Wanamaker. He served during the four years of the term of President



Pre 1910—Euclid Avenue, looking south from the third floor of Washington Irving School at Hobart Street. Christie Street crosses at about center. Large building to right rear is corner of Brinkerhoff Street. This building originally housed the Christie-Roem Grocery Store and was also a doctor's office. Now owned by George Damiano, the building houses Mr. Damiano's Shoe Repair Shop, Wayne's Euclid Sweet Shop and a Hair Style Shop, as well as several apartments. As far as can be determined, all buildings shown in the photo are still standing.



The First Uniformed Police in Ridgfield Park - July, 1907

*Standing: H. Cole - Fred Larson - J. Britten - Wm. Glassow - John Ritter - H. VanDenhlen, Seated: Chief Louis A. Eucker
Captain Wm. Malia*

Harrison. Mr. Mergler handled the Post Office in his general store. Next came Mr. Schwint, who had the Post Office in his barber shop in the middle of the block on Main Street between Mt. Vernon and Cedar Streets. Later Mr. George Lowe had the Post Office for quite a while at his residence at the northeast corner of Main and Mt. Vernon Streets. In 1902 free mail delivery was started in Ridgfield Park. The Post Office continued for many years on the northeast corner of Main and Mt. Vernon Streets until 1935 when the present structure was erected at Main and Cedar Streets. The present Postmaster is Francis Kasse, who replaced Victor Heineman 22 years ago.

Over a half century ago a directory was published in Ridgfield Park listing the names of all of the inhabitants as well as many of the businesses. Thumbing through this directory and reading the advertisements gives a feeling of the vitality of that period. We learn that Thomas E. Williams & Sons of 182 Main Street were electrical contractors and they were advertising for the installation of electrical wiring and electrical fixtures

to replace gas fixtures in homes and businesses. Genuine Ford parts could be obtained from Park Auto Supply at 169 Main Street. Louis Zeigler would install gas ranges from his business at 72 Hazelton Street. Queen Quality Shoes could be obtained from the Model Shoe Shop at 208 Main Street. B. Goodman offered men's clothing from 15 Ridgfield Avenue, which was next door to Frank Pagliaro's barber shop. Carl Hallberg Insurance at 9 Paulison Avenue had been in business since 1891. The Babich Bakery was at 29 Ridgfield Avenue and the Busy Corner Garage was located at Teaneck Road and Bergen Pike. C. Fred Brewster Company, Plumbing and Heating Contractors, were specializing in mazda lamps. Their business was located at Main Street opposite Grove Street. John Baldwin of No. 1 Mt. Vernon Street was selling real estate and insurance and Otto Hasig had a French Dry Cleaning and Dyeing establishment at 129 Main Street. The Ridgfield Park Trust Company offered checking accounts and special interest accounts for idle funds. Conrad Mergler had retired and in 1921 Merglers Corner was known as

Weinbergs Corner. In addition to a restaurant and picnic area at Wahrman's, one could also bowl and dance. Charlie's Oyster and Chubb House operated at 52 Bergen Pike, while Healthstern's Pharmacy was located at 68 Euclid Avenue. Ridgfield Park's oldest and largest paint and hardware store, H. H. Ludwig, was at 205 Main Street. Across the street was the 5-10-25 & Up. Conrad Mergler and Morton Brewster were President and Treasurer respectively of the Park Building and Loan Association. Secretary of this Association was John Appler, who would later be Principal of Roosevelt School for many years. Sidney Block operated the Favorite Meat Market on Ridgfield Avenue at the corner of College Place. Oellerman's Delicatessen was at 192 Main Street. Park Lumber and Supply was located at 205 Main Street and the Ridgfield Park Bulletin was at 201 Main Street. Gells Brothers offered fancy and staple groceries from their headquarters at 63 Winant Avenue. Anderson and Sandine offered high-grade tailoring at reasonable prices from their store at 206 Main Street. Down at 16 Mt. Vernon Street Alfred

Rhodes offered real estate and insurance. Breslow's of 218 Main Street was a full-line stationery store. And the old Opera House at Main and Park Streets was now known as the Strand Theater. Albert C. Wrede and Gary F. Koop operated the famous Wrede and Koop's Ice Cream and Confectionary Parlor at 216 Main Street. A. Solheim of 55 Ridgefield Avenue offered choice meats. And Gordon Smith of 8 Mt. Vernon Street operated a day and night taxi service. H. C. Renner, the butcher, had a store at 88 Euclid Avenue and Andrew Wright, the printer, was located at 34 College Place.

In 1921 there were eight men on the Ridgefield Park Police Department.

John McElroy was Chief of Police and Fred Larson was Sergeant. Many old-time residents remember Fred Larson, who later became Chief. His favorite expression before he began any statement was "Yumping Yiminee." William Sands was the dog warden and no history of Ridgefield Park could be complete without a comment about Mr. Sands. He had one leg and he lived in the house at the junction of the Overpeck Creek and Bergen Turnpike. To get about town, he rode a bicycle, and when he went out to pick up stray dogs he would tie the dogs to his bicycle and then, with only one leg, peddle back to the pound which was located at his house. It is reported that some of the Village

youngsters would hide and wait for Mr. Sands and then jump out and cut the strings that held the dogs. We also understand that Mr. Sands' house was hit several times by automobiles attempting to negotiate the sharp turn onto the Overpeck Creek Bridge into Ridgefield. Nevertheless, he is held in fond memory by old time Village residents and he did his job well.

The only police officer to die in the line of duty in Ridgefield Park was John "Doc" Ritter. In 1920 Ritter was called to quell a disturbance of some local youths, who turned out to be under the influence of alcohol. Ritter knew the culprits and when they would not cooperate he started to bring them into headquarters. One of the young



FRANK WHITE PARK

Shortly after Ridgefield Park became a township, as well as a village, the Mt. Vernon Association was formed on April 27, 1897, to fill in the swampland at the foot of Mt. Vernon Street and the West Shore Railroad tracks. Passengers getting off on the east side of the tracks were often compelled to step into a bog. Just to fill it in was not enough, so the Mt. Vernon Association decided to make a park. After considerable negotiations, twelve lots were purchased for \$1,518. The West Shore Railroad sent several carloads of dirt and sand, while T. M. Brewster, P. H. Smith, William Strohmeier and H. C. Cruthers used their teams to do the carting. The local residents supplied the labor. It was decided that in honor of the President of the Mt. Vernon Association, Frank White, the park be named for him.



*Reinhardt's Hotel - Paulison Avenue - 1910
Building destroyed by fire in 1929*

men grabbed Ritter's gun and Ritter was fatally shot.

In the 1920's there were eleven churches in operation in Ridgefield Park and they had a strong influence on the community. Although there were many sports teams and athletic teams in the Village, no games could be played on Sunday. All Sunday games were played at Martin's Oval in Teaneck, just north of Arthur Street.

In 1921 the members of the Board of Education were George Ley, David Garrison, George Nelson, George Lennox, James Wilson, Claude Meredith, John Petrie, Mrs. Charles Sidman and Edwin Mangels. The Library was located in the Municipal Building and was open from 2:30 to 5:30 every afternoon, and from 7:30 to 9:00 on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday evenings, and from 10:00 to 12:00 on Saturday mornings. The Librarian in 1921 was Miss Muriel Kern. Conrad Mergler was President of the Library Board of Trustees and other members included Mrs. Charles Sidman, Mortimer Brewster, William Marsh and George Nelson. George Nelson was also President of the Chamber of Commerce. In March of 1921 the population of Ridgefield Park

was 9,251.

There were many fraternal societies and organizations for Village residents to join. These included the American Legion Post No. 40; Daughters of America-Pride of Overpeck Council; Daughters of Scotia; The Masonic Lodge; The Junior Order of United American Mechanics; The Liberty Dames; The Modern Woodmen of America; The Phil Sheridan Council of the Knights of Columbus; The Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic; The Order of Scottish Clans; The Royal Arcanum; The Ridgefield Park Mannechor; The Sons and Daughters of Liberty; The Veterans of Foreign Wars; The Young Women's Patriotic League; The Bergen Athletic Club; The Ladies Village Improvement Association; The Pasttime Athletic Club; The Thursday Afternoon Pinochle Club; The Seneca Club; The Womens Club. All of these activities, in addition to the six companies of the Volunteer Fire Department, all of which had waiting lists for men wanting to serve the community. And, of course, all of the groups associated with each of the religious groups.

The 1920's are well known in history as the "Roaring Twenties." It

was the time of prohibition and Ridgefield Park certainly had its exciting moments. The rules of prohibition permitted each household to make 200 gallons of wine per year for home consumption. Home-brewed beer was also permitted and a number of people had stills. It seems that anyone who wanted to imbibe did not have too much difficulty. Indeed there were a number of speak-easies located throughout the community. These could be found at Bergen Turnpike and Teaneck Road, along Ridgefield Avenue, along Mt. Vernon Street and along Main Street. Every now and then a raid would be conducted to make everything look right. The route of the prohibition agents coming down from the Ramapo Mountains went along the Bergen Turnpike and with the right connections one could pick up barrels of beer or bottles of liquor at the railroad crossing at the Bergen Turnpike. Keep in mind that the railroad gates which cross the Bergen Turnpike were manually operated, so one contacted the operator in the gatehouse which was a two-story structure located just next to the railroad tracks, and the operator would lower the gates to stop the prohibition

agents. The prohibition agents were told what was required, and they would drop off whatever was needed; then the gates would be raised and the prohibition agents would continue on with their convoy down to the Hudson River.

The dedication of *Roosevelt School* in 1921 brought to the surface a latent religious animosity which, unfortunately, characterized some of America in the 1920's. *Roosevelt School* was a very advanced building for its day, and included an indoor pool. Both the school and the pool still serve our community. The local Masonic Lodge participated in the laying of the cornerstone for this building, and Masons from all over the area came to march in the parade that accompanied the dedication. Members of other fraternal groups felt left out of these ceremonies and a certain amount of bitterness was engendered. Harry Morrison of the Masonic Lodge and Joe Cerina of the Knights of Columbus commuted together on the West Shore Railroad. They agreed that it would be a good idea to try to bring the members of the Knights of Columbus and the Masonic Lodge together for an annual fellowship gathering and to help promote good will in the community. Out of their discussions on the train was started the annual Masons-K of C softball game which traditionally always ends in a tie, followed by a fellowship dinner. Over the years this spirit has come to dominate *Ridgefield Park*.

In 1923 the *Rialto Theater* was built at the corner of Main and Cedar Streets, and this soon became the only movie theater in *Ridgefield Park*.

For those familiar with the old high school at *Bergen Avenue* and *Hobart Street*, all athletic activities took place in the gymnasium on the *Hobart Street* side of the building; this would be later known as the *Girls' Gym*. This gym proved to be inadequate and with the growing school population an addition was needed for the high school. In 1926 the auditorium on *Hobart Street* was opened with classrooms and science laboratories on the third floor; at the same time the *Boys' Gym* was opened on the *Bergen Avenue* side of the building. Now, indeed, *Ridgefield Park* boasted of the most modern high school in the county. One cannot underestimate the particular effect that *Ridgefield Park High School* had on the entire community. The school was a real source of pride for all residents and the athletic teams provided excitement and helped promote community unity and spirit. Elsewhere in this book the exploits of *Ridgefield*

Park's athletic teams, particularly those of the 1920's and 30's, are recorded. One should note that on the day before the Saturday football games, *Main Street* was a beehive of activity with people gathering to discuss the following day's game and perhaps even to place wagers. *Wrede* and *Koop's Ice Cream Parlor* was a favorite gathering place.

1927 saw the opening of the railroad station at the foot of *Mt. Vernon Street*. By that time *Ridgefield Park* was the second largest commuting station on the *New York Central Railroad*. Records show that 3,269 residents boarded trains to *New York City* every day — a number exceeded only by *White Plains, New York*. The new railroad station replaced an old, wooden structure and came about only after a prolonged battle with the railroad. At one point the railroad attempted to satisfy residents by placing an old freight car to act as the station. The wooden structure, which preceded the present station, was moved south and became the *Little Ferry* station; it burned down in the early 1970's.

Another major accomplishment which occurred during the 1920's was the building of *Veterans Park*. The land was purchased in 1920 for a little less than \$15,000 at the suggestion of *Dr. John D. Morrison*, who recognized the possibilities of the area. Work was begun on the park in 1924 and it was officially opened on July 4, 1926, in observance of the sesquicentennial celebration of the signing of the *Declaration of Independence*. In the 1924 Commissioners election *Edwin Ferris, Arthur Kneerim* and *Hugh McGowan* had been elected, with the commissioners selecting *Mr. McGowan* to serve as Mayor. It was *Mayor McGowan* who obtained the cinders from *Copper's Coke* which were used by the townspeople for building the quarter-mile track in *Veterans Park*. This track was built by the townspeople. At the time *Veterans Park* opened it was acclaimed as a 10-½ acre track with a concrete stadium seating 4,000 people, an athletic field, tennis courts and various other recreational facilities. During the 1920's the high school football team continued to use *Roosevelt School* field for both their games and practices. The practices continued at *Roosevelt School* field until after *World War II*, although the games were played at *Veterans Park*.

By January, 1927, the population of our *Village* had reached 12,300. We were about at the maximum. Of that number there were 2,004 one-family

houses; 259 two-family houses; eleven three-family houses, eight four-family houses, one six-family house; and one eight-family house. It was in 1927 that the first apartment house construction began. A three-story apartment house, then costing \$68,000, for nineteen families (the first of its kind in *Ridgefield Park*) was erected at *Teaneck Road* and *Poplar Street*. At the same time a four-story apartment house, costing \$75,000, to house twenty-one families, was started at *Bergen Avenue* and *Poplar Street*.

In addition to school activities there were a number of activities for young people in *Ridgefield Park*. These would include the *Boy Rangers of America*, which met at the *Neighborhood Reformed Church*, and a number of *Boy Scout Troops*, including *Boy Scout Troop #1* of the *Baptist Church*, which is one of the oldest *Boy Scout Troops* in the *United States*. *Troop #2* met at the *Knights of Columbus Hall* in 1927; *Troop #3* at the *Neighborhood Reformed Church*; *Troop #4* at the *Episcopal Church*; *Troop #6* at the *Methodist Church*; and *Troop #7* at the *Presbyterian Church*. There were four groups of *Campfire Girls*, two of which met at the *Union Church* and two of which met at the *Methodist Church*.

All of the *PTA* organizations in town were organized in the early 1920's as was the *Ridgefield Park Rotary Club*. The *Ridgefield Park Garden Club* was organized in 1925 and by 1927 it had 110 members. The *Women's Democratic Club of Ridgefield Park* and the *Women's Republican Club of Ridgefield Park* were organized in 1923 and 1924, respectively. On June 20, 1925, *Elks Lodge No. 1506* was organized with 100 members. The *Elks Club* purchased the old *Peter Mehrhof Mansion*, located at *Spruce Avenue* and *Cedar Street*.

At one time the *Mehrhof* property extended from *Mt. Vernon Street* south to *Hobart Street*, and from *Main Street* west to the river. The intersection of *Main* and *Mt. Vernon Streets*, where the *Mehrhof* property was located, was the site of a number of tent meetings and religious revivals in the *Teens* and in the *Twenties*. *Peter Mehrhof* was a very genial gentleman and opened his grounds to residents on any number of occasions for carnivals and fairs, as well as lectures and religious meetings. For a number of years prior to the sale of the property, the *Fire Department* sponsored a "monster" carnival and fair. These fairs were major community activities and lasted for three or four days. The firemen operated the various



Masonic Hall, Main and Hobart Streets, 1910. The hall still stands and is still used as the Masonic Hall, but the commercial stores on the first floor are gone.



Northeast corner, Main and Mr. Vernon Streets. At one time this building housed the post office. This is now the site of the Schiff Philatelic Auctioneers (formerly Central Bergen Savings and Loan Association.)

games and amusements and all the proceeds went to maintain the various fire houses, which were owned then as they are today by the men themselves. The fairs were often scheduled to be held in September so that the local political candidates for county and state office would attend. The program of the 1916 carnival includes advertisements for the Bouse Back Brothers Ridgefield Park Hotel; the College of Music, operated by Professor Otto Hubenriser at 68 College Place. Beer, wines and soda delivered by the Ridgefield Park Bottling Company of Hackensack Avenue; the Hazelton Meat Market of 72 Hazelton Street; Martin Baer, high class bakery and confectionary of 185 Hackensack Road; Frank L. Forchinger, Tinsmith and Roofer of 161 Hackensack Road; Reinhardt's Hotel; Charles Nelson, Tin and Coopersmith, between Cutter and Gibson Streets (Gibson now known as Roosevelt Avenue); Thomas Chaterdon, painter and decorator of 16 Edison Street; Cincotta's Wholesale Fruit Dealer of 179 Hackensack Road; Herman Kramer Paint Store, 215 Hackensack Road; Best Tin Roofer in Ridgefield Park — Joseph Landy of 203 Hackensack Road; Crescent Arcade Theater opposite the Little Ferry Station on Ridgefield Avenue. And an advertisement for the Hudson Super Six, \$1,475.00, FOB Detroit, Michigan, for sale by the Neihaus Motor Car Company of Teaneck Road and the Bergen Turnpike.

By the end of the 1920's Ridgefield Park had indeed developed as Bergen County's most modern suburban community. Any further growth would

be limited. At the close of that decade the school system was in place and would remain unchanged for many years; all of the churches had been built and were in operation. Indeed, the Congregational Church, at the corner of Euclid Avenue and Cedar Street had lost membership to the point where it could no longer operate; that building would become the Public Library. Commission form of government was firmly established. The DPW Garage had been erected on Industrial Avenue in 1926 and was in full operation along with the Sewage Disposal Plant, which was a local responsibility. The full-time Police Department was in operation out of headquarters in the Municipal Building, and the six Volunteer Fire Companies each had their quarters in various sections of the Village. Most residents commuted on the railroad, but some bus service was available for those who preferred it. A trolley operated in Ridgefield Park along the Bergen Turnpike. This trolley line terminated at Fricke's Restaurant because the railroad would not give permission for the trolley tracks to cross the railroad tracks. Thus, the trolley came up from Weehawken and Jersey City, stopped at Fricke's Restaurant, and for those who wished to continue on the trolley, they disembarked, crossed the railroad tracks and got on another trolley on the west side of the tracks. That trolley would then continue across the Bergen Turnpike, past Tracey's Nine-Mile House, and on to Hackensack, Paterson, or wherever their destination might be.

Wahrman's Overpeck Park, at the Bergen Pike and Teaneck Road, was a

very popular picnic grove and restaurant. During the 1920's members of the New York City Fire Department would conduct their annual outing at Wahrman's. One of the traditions would be that at a certain time in the afternoon the New York Fire Chief would go out and pull Box 15 for Bergen Pike and Teaneck Road. Members of the Ridgefield Park Fire Department would then join their brother firemen from New York City for the annual picnic, boating, swimming and refreshment.

Swimming was very popular along the Overpeck Creek, but it was a "swim at your own risk" proposition. The drowning of young Ed Schipper did put a damper on a lot of swimming activities on the creek and the river. But in later years, with the growth in population, the river and creek became polluted, making many of the waterfront activities no longer possible. The Ridgefield Park Boat Club and the Hackensack Boat Club were out of existence by the late 20's, and only the Overpeck Boat Club remained. George Schlum, the furrier of Bergen Pike and Edison Street, held the mortgage for the Overpeck Boat Club. As the boat club was unable to generate enough support to keep going, the mortgage was taken over by Vic and Carl Kruger who held that mortgage through the late 30's and through World War II. After World War II the Overpeck Boat Club became the home of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, which had originally met in the Junior Order Hall on Winant Avenue.

The shores of the Overpeck Creek and the Hackensack River were,



THREE GENERATIONS IN JULY FOURTH PARADE

Mildred Lenox (Lowe) - first prize 1916; Nancy Lowe (Alderton) - first prize 1945; Jennifer and Douglas Alderton - fifth prize 1976

known for their sandy beaches. Indeed, the present Brewster Park and Main Street ByPass were at one time known as the "sand banks."

In the late 1920's Emil Fraysee began a community orchestra. In 1928 this was taken over by Mr. Henry Cross, a music teacher in the Ridgefield Park School System. Mr. Cross later started a brass band and was responsible for arranging several John Philip Sousa concerts in the old high school auditorium. Several residents have advised us that John Philip Sousa's last public concert was given in Ridgefield Park High School in either 1930 or 1931.

The community orchestra did not last too long into the thirties, and was disbanded because members could not afford instruments necessary to keep the band going. We had entered the period of the Depression.

The team of McGowan, Ferris and Kneerim, was reelected for a second term in 1928. In the 1932 election Ferris and Kneerim were reelected. McGowan was unsuccessful and was replaced by Herbert Lowe. Arthur Kneerim, was reelected for a second Mayor. The 1932 election was particularly bitter, and 72% of the voters participated—a record for a local election here in Ridgefield Park.

Newspapers in Ridgefield Park

William J. Morrison, who had a printing establishment in New York City, had come to Ridgefield Park in 1886. When the Village was incorporated in 1892, Morrison felt the

need for a community newspaper so he issued the "Gazette" on June 1. This paper was a four-page weekly, 4" x 7" in size and in it Morrison printed the complete Village Act with an editorial comment in which he gave the Village politicians to understand that there was something more to running a Village than the process of holding office and title. Morrison followed this issue of the "Gazette" with a paper called the "Kicker," which did not have any regular publication date but was published whenever Morrison felt the need to bring to the attention of the people of the community items of interest. The latter part of 1894 John Race edited and published a paper called the "Era" which he continued for a year and a half, but not without getting company in a weekly newspaper called the "Bergen County Advertiser," published by William Morrison and edited by William Down, who was connected with Harper Brothers in New York. The first issue of the "Bergen County Advertiser" was published October 26, 1895, and continued long after the "Era" gave up the ghost. In fact, the "Advertiser" did not cease publication until a few years after the "Bulletin" was established. On February 27, 1900, the first issue of the "Ridgefield Park Bulletin" came out. Previous to that time it was published as the "Bulletin" at Pompton Plains, N.J., by H. G. Wells & Sons, who sold the franchise to John Hoey, DeLos Service, Cylis Wilcox, William Schwab, William Wilcox and others. An office was established for the "Bulletin" at 201 Main Street. For

several years the "Bulletin" was published every Saturday and delivered by boys. When Charles Enders, Jr., took over the paper in 1906, he enlarged it to seven columns to the page and it was delivered by postmen. In 1926 the "Bulletin" office was erected on Railroad Avenue, where the paper was printed. The first telephone installed in Ridgefield Park was in the "Bulletin" office. Around 1912 another paper, "The Review", and a printing plant was started in Ridgefield Park by a stock company of local men. This printing plant and paper was sold in March 1927 to a group of residents who elected A. Wolk of Englewood as President; John Lusitana of Ridgefield Park as Vice President; E. J. Murwey, Treasurer; and L. Wolk of Englewood, Secretary. The editor of "The Review" was Paul Heffernan of Ridgefield Park. Only the "Bulletin" survived the Depressions, with David Sadler serving for many years as editor. In the early 1950's the "Bulletin" was sold to an interest controlled by the Teaneck Sunday Sun.

For many years the two papers published companion issues, with the "Sun Bulletin" being delivered on Thursday and the "Sunday Sun" on Sunday. Control of the "Bulletin" returned to Ridgefield Park interest when in 1963 Carl Tenney, owner of the Ridgefield Park Press on Mt. Vernon Street, purchased the "Sun Bulletin." Tenney operated, published and edited the paper for many years until it was sold in 1973 to interests controlled by the "Bergen News," who presently print and distribute the "Sun-

Bulletin" along with the "Bergen News." These two local papers are now delivered as free distribution papers throughout the community.

The great Depression of the 1930's did have an impact on Ridgefield Park, but the impact was minimized by the nature of the community. We had already been built up, and the people of the community were generally very conservative and hard-working. The Village itself, through Mrs. Pool, the Welfare Officer, saw to it that no family went without food or coal, although Mrs. Pool did insist that the recipients of welfare perform community service and work if this were possible. People receiving assistance were paid at the rate of \$3.00 per day. Other residents note that the Overpeck Building and Loan Association extended every effort to make sure that no resident would lose his home because of inability to pay the mortgage, and extended terms and revised payment arrangements were common.

A number of WPA projects were conducted within the community. The WPA (Works Progress Administration) was a federal public works program. These projects would include further improvements to Veterans Park, with the building of steps from the park to the Poplar Street entrance, as well as the placement of a number of macadam paths on the hillside in the park. A Civilian Conservation Corps Camp was located at the foot of Union Place on the hill to what now leads to the present Ridgefield Park High School. Members of the Civilian Conservation Corps worked in the Overpeck Meadows, digging drainage ditches to the creek. Another WPA project was the building of a new firehouse for Hose Company #1 on Mt. Vernon Street. Other WPA projects included the publication of a history of the Ridgefield Park Fire Department in 1939 as part of a federal writer's project. The WPA sponsored the painting of a mural on the south lobby wall of the Ridgefield Park Post Office. This mural depicts George Washington Bridge, and is listed in a national register of historic art works. Today work is being undertaken to restore this mural to its original condition.

The building of Route 6, now Route 46, along Winant Avenue in the early 1930's brought further changes to the community. The completion of the Route 6 bridge across the Hackensack River led to the eventual demise of the Bergen Turnpike Bridge, which was about a quarter of a mile to the south

Twelve candidates participated in the 1936 Board of Commissioner's election with over 63% of the voters casting votes. The successful candidates were Herbert Lowe, Henry Ludwig and George Malley, with Herbert Lowe being elected by the commissioners as mayor. Shortly after the election Henry Ludwig passed away, and he was replaced by George F. Wagner, who had been a candidate in the 1936 voting.

Community interest in Ridgefield Park High School remained high in the depression years. High school athletic teams in all sports continued to dominate. George Bate was principal of the high school and was well respected in the community. But the man everyone knew was Carl Biggs, who coached all sports at Ridgefield Park. Coach Biggs taught his players how to be champions, both on the field and off. When he died at a young age in 1940, a plaque in his memory was dedicated at Veterans Park. This plaque can be seen today at the base of the flagpole.

Many of the teachers in Ridgefield Park High School had begun their careers in the 1920's. These careers lasted into the 1950's and 1960's, and some students were taught by the same teachers who taught their parents—and in a few cases even their grandparents! It would be a mistake to try and list some of these imposing figures for, inevitably, some would be missed. But some of the principals can be mentioned, for their tenure covered decades. A. Ray Palmer was "supervising principal." His career began in Ridgefield Park in 1913 and lasted 42 years. High school principal George Bate, for whom the Bate Student Loan Fund is named, died in 1935 and was succeeded by Frederic K. Shield, who served for 18 years.

John Appler, after serving first as principal of Washington Irving, was principal of Roosevelt School until 1953. One of the few women administrators was Theresa Huber, principal of Lincoln School, who retired following World War II after many years of service. Merrill Burnham was principal of both Washington Irving and Grant Schools, alternating with his secretary, Anna DeWyrall, part of the day in each school. Miss DeWyrall's father, Cyril, had been a Village trustee.

Not mentioning any teachers may be a disservice to one whose name is mentioned in every discussion of the "old" Ridgefield Park High School. Vira Puritan Jepson had a profound impact on all her students, who still recall her stern discipline and excellent teaching. The Library of the new high school is named in her honor.

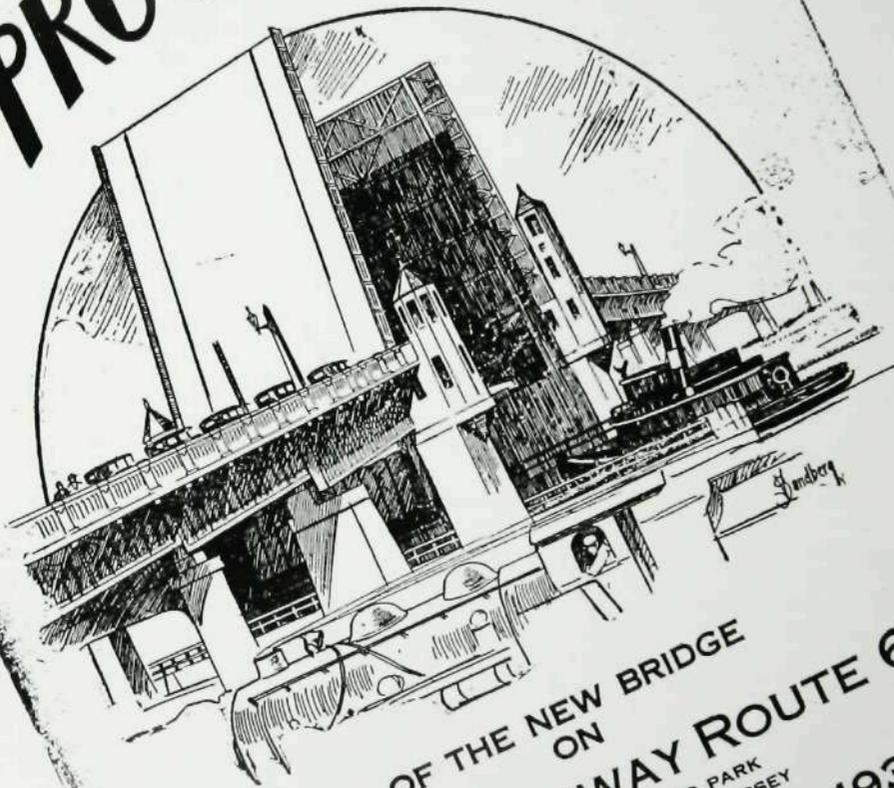
Although the Depression lingered through the 1930's, at the close of the decade attention was focused on events in Europe as the world moved into a second World War. Here in Ridgefield Park, as it was across the United States, opinion was divided as to what course of action the United States should follow. Some favored intervention to help our allies, while others were America "firsters" and felt that the United States should not participate in European affairs.

The Commissioner's election of 1940 saw six candidates vying for the three seats. Elected were Ernest G. Alberque, Jr., George F. Wagner and Herbert I. Lowe. Herbert Lowe continued to serve as mayor following this election. This same team of Alberque, Wagner and Lowe was reelected in the 1944 election during World War II. There was no opposition in the 1944 election.



Looking north on Ridgefield Avenue—Crescent Arcade Theater on right

OFFICIAL OPENING PROGRAM



OF THE NEW BRIDGE
ON
STATE HIGHWAY ROUTE 6
BETWEEN RIDGEFIELD PARK
AND LITTLEFERRY, NEW JERSEY
SATURDAY, SEPT. 22, 1934

PRICE TEN CENTS

With the completion of the Route 6 Bridge across the Hackensack River in 1934, the Village entered the era of the modern highway. Winant Avenue was no longer a local street, but became one segment of a direct route from West Jersey to the George Washington Bridge.

BRIDGE OPENING COMMITTEE
ROUTE No. 6
RIDGEFIELD PARK, N. J.
John G. Schipper, Chairman
Frank L. Chapman, Vice-Chairman
Edward Lord, Secretary
Frank E. Smith, History
David C. Boswell, Maps

Route 6 would later become U.S. Route 46, and today it is commonly referred to as "46", although many residents still use the Winant Avenue designation. David Winant was one of our early residents and his home, dating from the 1840's still stands at 12 Orchard Street.

PERSONNEL OF DEPARTMENTS
MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT
of the
RIDGEFIELD PARK

Mayor, ARTHUR W. KNEERIM
Commissioner of Finance, HERBERT I. LOWE
Commissioner of Highways, EDWIN S. FERRIS
Commissioner of Public Works, EDWARD HOEVERMAN
Superintendent of Building, DAVID C. BOSWELL, Engineer

Police Department
SIDNEY V. STOLDT, Recorder
JOHN C. TAYLOR, Lieutenant
ELWOOD G. HOYT
MISS HEDWIG BRUNN, Ass't. Clerk

Board of Assessors
A. O. DIXON
F. L. CHAPMAN, Clerk
S. KATZ
ALLAN MacNEILL
R. BLAKSLEE
C. R. JUDGE

Sinking Fund Commission
E. G. ALBERQUE, Sr.
E. G. HOYT, Secretary
H. I. LOWE

Adjustment and Zoning Commission
E. E. FRAYSSE
W. STOHR
F. H. PRUSCHEN, Clerk

Board of Health
C. KNOX, M.D., Inspector
NELLIE SCHELLBERG
A. F. FLEISHMAN

Board of the Free Public Library
H. E. MILLER
MRS. C. A. SIDMAN
MRS. M. KERN, Librarian

Fire Department
JAMES E. KERR, Chief
E. G. ALBERQUE, Jr., 2nd Ass't. Chief

WILLIAM HOPPE, Building Inspector
FRED LARSON, Chief
JOHN C. TAYLOR, Lieutenant
ELWOOD G. HOYT
MISS HEDWIG BRUNN, Ass't. Clerk

WILLIAM M. HUNTER, Ass't. Clerk
MORRISON, LLOYD & MORRISON
A. O. DIXON
F. L. CHAPMAN, Clerk
S. KATZ
ALLAN MacNEILL
R. BLAKSLEE
C. R. JUDGE

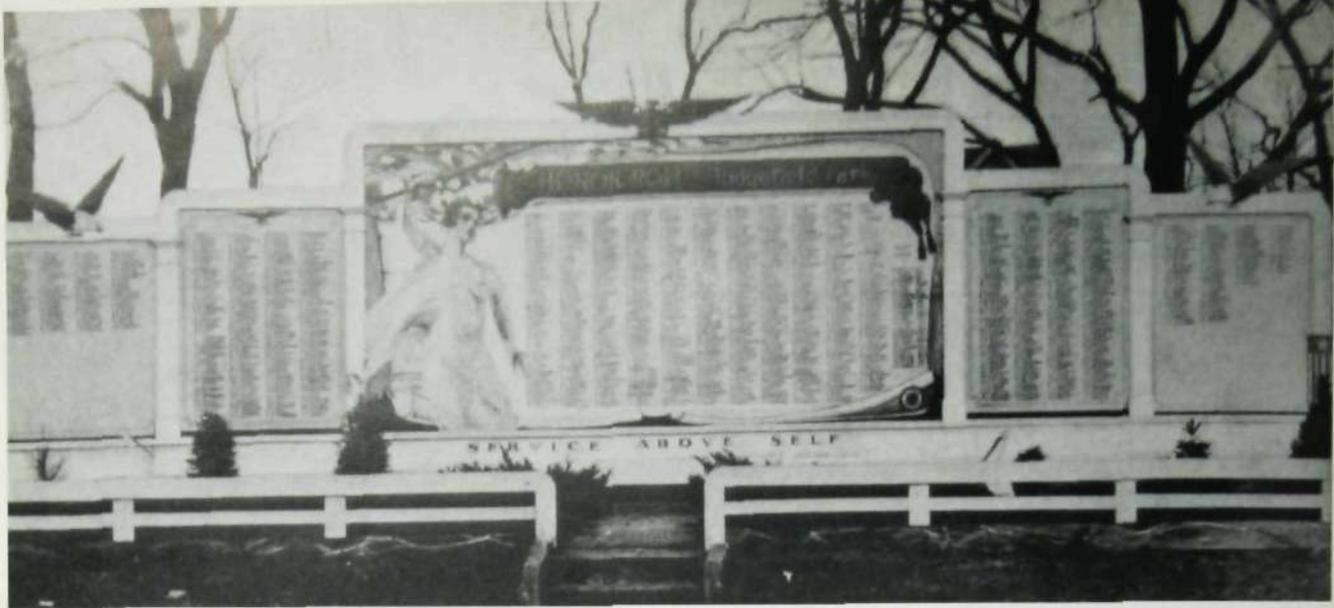
J. A. CERINA
J. G. HIGGINS
W. CARRON, Jr.
A. W. KNEERIM, Mayor
E. G. HOYT, Secretary
H. I. LOWE

C. W. MERGLER
E. J. BENSON
R. FETTERLY
W. G. WILKINSON
D. CORN, M.D.
W. F. REYNOLDS, Inspector
MRS. J. R. REINHART

C. W. MERGLER
E. J. ABBOTT
E. G. ALBERQUE, Jr.
L. LATZKO, 1st Ass't. Chief

Frank, A. Morrison, History
Frederic C. Weidling, History
Kenneth Wallace, History
George F. Malley, Parade Marshal
Major Wm. B. Love, Parade Marshal

*Fred L. Notton



WORLD WAR II HONOR ROLL Located at the northeast corner of Park and Main Streets, now the site of a gas station, this Honor Roll was erected by the local Rotary Club and contained the names of more than 1,300 men and women in the Armed Forces of the United States. This was more than 11% of the total population of the Village at that time.

THE WORLD WAR II YEARS — 1940-1945

The decade of the 1930's ended with the sobering preparations for another World War. Truly pertinent today were efforts to fingerprint all Village school children. These efforts started as early as 1937. Copies of the fingerprints were stored in the Municipal Building and at the Bureau of Identification in Washington, D.C. The purpose of this exercise was to identify children who may be displaced in time of national emergency.

Records had to be kept to allow police and Civil Defense officials to identify the children at a later date. Grant School was the first in the Village to report 100% participation in finger-printing of its students.

Wednesday, October 16, 1940, dawned as Draft Registration Day. The Village school system cooperated in the registration by declaring a school holiday so that teachers could assist in the registration. All men between the ages of 21 to 35 had to register for the draft. The registration occurred at the regular polling places around the Village. This was the first peace time draft in United States history. All 1,392 Village residents of the specified ages registered for the draft on that day.

Ridgefield Park, Ridgefield and Bogota were under the authority of Selective Service Board 12. On October 23, 1940, serial numbers of all the registrants were posted in the Municipal Building. The draft started in December, 1940, with 14 men from Selective Service Board 12 being called

every two weeks. Men who were drafted reported to draft board headquarters on Mt. Vernon Street at 6:30 a.m. Once at headquarters, they were sent by bus to the 113th Infantry Armory in Newark, N.J. for induction. If any draftees were rejected, they would be replaced by the next person on the list. By July 4, 1941, there had been 15 groups of men drafted. All men in uniform at the time were invited to march in the 1941 Fourth of July Parade.

Many other units were gearing up to do their part in the upcoming war. Civil Defense teams were organized. The American Legion registered all of their 1,078,119 members on February 22, 1941, the 209th anniversary of the birth of George Washington. The Legionnaires were asked to fill out registration forms so that the organization could take inventory of its assets in manpower experience and special training, to be made available to the government if needed in the defense of the nation.

Of course, any war the nation may undertake has to be financed. U. S. Defense Savings Bonds and Stamps were placed on sale at the Post Office on May 1, 1941. A defense bond could be purchased for \$18.75 and in ten years it would be worth \$25.00.

The closing weeks of July brought the Village its first aluminum drive. Local Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Mariners canvassed the Village collecting 3,714 pieces of aluminum for the local defense board. The last week of July was declared by Mayor

Lowe as "Battle of the Atlantic Week" to depict to the Village citizenry the threat of invasion faced by our nation.

The Local Defense Council swung into full gear on November 5, 1941, by distributing a questionnaire to all residents. The questionnaire had been broken down into several sections dealing with work best suited for each person. As with the aforementioned American Legion registration, it enabled the Local Defense Council to appraise the manpower of the Village. Once the forms were assembled, each resident was notified of his placement by the director.

As we all know, the war came on December 7, 1941. On December 10 Ridgefield Park had its first Air Raid Warning. Children were all sent home from school and all citizens were advised to seek shelter. A mistake was made by aircraft spotters by misidentifying U. S. Naval Aircraft flying out of Mitchell Field, Long Island. This was not the last of such mistakes.

On December 19, the Local Defense Council recommended the following rules in the event of an Air Raid Warning:

1. Remain calm
2. Seek shelter in central portions of the nearest building
3. Motorists should park their cars as quickly as possible and go to the nearest building
4. Avoid the use of telephones but keep the radio on for instructions
5. Put out all lights and pull down shades
6. If bombs should fall, turn off gas and electric and lie down.

January, 1942, marked the issuance of the plans drawn up in the event of an Air Raid. Basically, the village was broken up into four precincts, with a precinct warden overseeing each quadrant and answering to the Village Air Raid Defense Director, Richard Mahon.

In this month it was also decided that in the event of an air raid Village school children would continue to be evacuated from the schools. The reasons for this evacuation were due to fears regarding the concentration of children in any one area, and the probability that parents would rush to the schools at the first sign of an air raid and possibly cause a panic. The decision to evacuate children was unanimously agreed upon by the mayor, the Local Defense Council, the Board of Education and the Commissioners.

February 16, 1942, marked the registration day for the expanded draft. Requirements for registration were increased to aircraft which turned out to be a U. S. Army Bomber. It was the first air raid warning to be conducted in Ridgefield Park under blackout conditions.

The Local Defense Council had also purchased 30 cots and mattresses and 12 stretchers for an emergency hospital (just in case). Placed on order were tools and equipment for Demolition, Clearance and Road Repair Committees. A Civilian Defense Control Center was set up and staffed on a 24-hour basis by volunteers.

The year 1943 brought about adjustments which had to be made by all, including the homemaker who had to make do with wartime rationing. In response to this need, the War Service Council organized Consumer and Nutrition courses. Representatives of The Woman's Club, Girl Scouts, St. Francis Canteen, Junior Woman's Club and the Home and Arts Department of the public schools were represented.

Classes were held on a weekly basis with an afternoon and evening session. The course was to give practical training in the conservation of food values and in the selection and preparation of foods which meet the nutritional needs of the individual and the family. Twenty-three women attended the first class.

The practice air raid of February 9, 1943 brought about a dramatic change in procedure. At the end of the blackout, air raid wardens did not use their whistles to signal the all clear. It was explained that the warden's whistle is used mostly to call attention to lights not extinguished and to get people off the streets. If the whistle is to remain effective for those purposes,

it must not be permitted to be used for other functions as it may become confusing.

In early 1943, air raid warning signals were standardized throughout the State of New Jersey, thus Ridgefield Park abandoned the 2-2-2 signal which it had been using. The new signals were as follows:

CONDITION BLUE: A steady two-minute blast on sirens. All lights in homes, offices and businesses must be extinguished. Street lights and traffic lights remain on. Pedestrians and traffic may continue to move.

CONDITION RED: (Air Raid) A two-minute warbling or fluctuating blast on sirens. All lights turned off. Pedestrians and motorists seek shelter.

ALL CLEAR: A ten-second blast on sirens. All lights may be relighted.

Apparently if a Condition Red was sounded, the status would once again be changed to Condition Blue before the All Clear could be sounded.

Ridgefield Park distinguished itself during 1943 with blood drives and Red Cross contributions. In March, 1943, contributions to the Red Cross were \$1,121.57 over the Village's quota of \$6,360.

In May, 1943, the Local Defense Council announced the purchase of 600 helmets for its members. The problem was there were 998 men and women on the council. The issue was quickly decided by distributing the helmets on a first-come, first-served basis.

During the last week of May, 1943, the U. S. Army asked our Village to be prepared to receive, shelter and feed 1,128 men, women and children who might be evacuated into this area. By way of explanation, it was offered that Ridgefield Park is not and will not be a military target; however, if enemy bombers come in this direction they will be hitting New York City and possibly the great Wright Aircraft plant in Paterson.

A response to the Army's request was prepared by the Rev. Robert Megaw, director of the Division of Emergency Food and Housing. It leaves nothing to chance, pegging evacuees down to where they will be housed and how they will be fed. Local residents were listed, along with how many evacuees they can handle. It was all on paper!

1943 also marked a shortage of seed and fertilizer due to the planting of victory gardens. Block leaders surveyed Ridgefield Park, noting the number of gardens, average size and

any new gardens. This information was made available to seed and fertilizer companies so that shortages could be avoided in 1944.

As the war started to turn dark for Germany, there loomed the question of how desperate the enemy would become. In an age before the atomic bomb, the most devastating weapon was gas warfare. Alert to the possibility of this type of attack, the defense council decided to have a gas course. The course would be designed so that more people would be trained in detecting and combatting various types of war gasses. The use of gas masks would also be demonstrated. Speakers for the course were provided by the office of the State Gas Consultant. The course ended on October 31 with a gas test conducted at the field house in Veterans Park. All Air Raid Wardens, First Aiders, Decontamination Squad Members and Firemen attended the test where the field house was filled with tear gas and all participants entered the building. The test was successful.

The end of 1943 was marked with warnings of over-confidence. It was feared that German high command, in an effort to bolster morale, may launch a strike against the U. S. mainland. The Ridgefield Park Bulletin exhorted as follows:

"The Axis is hurtling to defeat. That's as sure as Friday follows Thursday. But don't be complacent about it, for there's going to be savage fighting in Europe before the job's done. As the shadow of defeat darkens, the Axis will grow desperate. They haven't been squeamish in the past and the spectre of defeat isn't likely to refine their technique of war. The desperate march of events may be the spring that will hurl them into a last desperate gamble. Twice Churchill has warned Germany of retaliation if gas is used in England. A Germany desperate enough to ignore Churchill's warning would be a Germany desperate to the point of madness, and such a desperation could well strike at part of the United States."

Preparedness continued as usual. November 26, 1943, saw the opening of a U.S.O. center at 223 Main Street. The center was opened by the local U.S.O. committee with hosts and hostesses ready to welcome servicemen and women between the hours of 2 to 5 p.m. daily. The primary purpose of



Young ladies from Ridgefield Park who went to Halloran Hospital to entertain the servicemen during World War II.

the center was to give Service people a chance to register so that the U.S.O. may alert families that they are at home on leave.

There was also a responsibility felt toward local men and women serving in the armed forces. A news bulletin called "News from Home" was published to keep service people apprised of what was happening on the homefront. The news bulletin was edited by Singleton McKay. In early 1944 American Legion Post 40 underwrote the cost of the bulletin.

War bonds sold briskly in Ridgefield Park. On February 11, 1944, a war bond rally was held at Ridgefield Park High School. The highlight of the evening was the singing of war songs written by the school children.

The war was rapidly coming to an end with the defeat of Germany in North Africa and the fall of Italy. Once again editorials warned of overconfidence but the facts remained: there were less air raid drills and everyone was breathing easier.

The newspapers of March, 1944, carried articles concerning compilations of servicemen's names and plans for a soldiers' memorial to be built after the war. The salvage drive of May, 1944, resulted in the following collection:

Waste paper	111,727 lbs.
Tin cans	7,080 lbs.
Scrap metal	11,870 lbs.
Rags	3,152 lbs.
Household fats	2,935 lbs.

Ridgefield Park was well above its

quota on fats and paper. Many housewives spent a lot of time to save every scrap of fat, straining it and clarifying it as the government requested.

While war bond drives and war loan programs continued, the war in Ridgefield Park was winding down. In June, 1944, while the Normandy invasion was underway, air raid wardens were given service ribbons and certificates for their contribution to the war effort.

A new alarm went up in August, 1944, when Germany unleashed their rockets against Great Britain. It was feared that rockets would soon be unleashed against America's East Coast. Evacuation and Emergency Plans were examined and new plans were made to put the plans into action on short notice. The war, even on the Village front, was not over yet.

The Rotary Club provided a unique service to servicemen on leave or furlough in Ridgefield Park. As an entire generation has been off fighting a foreign war, many servicemen returning home wanted news of friends serving in other branches of the service or in different theaters of war. The Rotary Club provided a Furlough Register at the police department. Thus, a returning serviceman could see who else was home on leave at the same time.

As the war in Europe ended, Bergen County Sheriff Tipping asked all mayors to issue a proclamation

requesting that the sale of alcohol at a bar or in containers be suspended from the hour of the victory announcement and remain suspended until the legal hour for opening the following day. It is not recorded whether or not Ridgefield Park complied with his request.

While the war in Europe ended, the Pacific war continued. The Civilian Defense Organization announced that certain phases of their work would be eliminated. The organization would be continued as an executive committee of five and a council of 15 members.

While writing this narrative of the war years in Ridgefield Park, the author purposely avoided naming local servicemen and the decorations which they received (there were many). The reason for the author's aversion was so that no one would be slighted if a decoration was missed. There is a section in this book giving tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of their country.

There is, however, one other who, by circumstances, is worthy of note. That person is Captain Robert (Bud) Lewis who was born in the Village and was a product of the Ridgefield Park School System. Almost forty years ago to the day, Bud Lewis distinguished himself as the co-pilot of the "Enola Gay", the aircraft which dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, in August 1945. This action ended the war in the Pacific and started a new era in the history of mankind.

CAPTAIN ROBERT LEWIS

On August 6, 1945, the United States Air Force B-29, nicknamed "The Enola Gay," dropped the first atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. Colonel Paul Tibbets, Commander of the Enola Gay, is quite well known in history books, but not so the co-pilot of the bomber, Captain Robert "Bud" Lewis.

"Oh, my God," was all young Captain Lewis could say as he witnessed the most awesome event of our time. This quote has not come down to us quite so memorably as some have. The June 1970 edition of the *American Heritage Magazine* said this in part about quotations: "Once it was possible to get into the quotation books by winning a small battle and announcing, 'We have met the enemy and they are ours.'" As quotes go, it is a very good one and has survived these past two hundred years. But could anything like it, or anything at all, be equal to what happened on that fateful morning in 1945.

Just as this quote is almost forgotten, so is the man who uttered those words. Bob Lewis was born in Ridgefield Park. He received his education in its school system, and was graduated from Ridgefield Park High School. In an interview in the July 12, 1981 edition of *The Sunday Star Ledger*, Jack Elliott called Bob Lewis "the forgotten half of the Enola Gay team." Lewis, himself, would rather remember the fact that he played on the town's championship football team in 1937.

One of the highlights of Bob Lewis' flying career occurred when he met his boyhood hero, Charles Lindbergh, which Lewis described as "the thrill of his life." He was having dinner in the Officers Club, Egland Field, Florida, one day during the war when Lindbergh came in with some of his staff people. A little while later he walked over to Lewis' table and asked if Lewis would take him up on one of his test flights. The next morning they went on a gunnery mission over the Gulf of Mexico. Lindbergh asked Lewis all kinds of questions and then took over the controls of the B-29.

After the war, Bob Lewis became a Project Engineer for the Estee Company, a leading candy manufacturer in Parsippany, New Jersey. He died in 1984, but will be remembered as a brave man who answered his country's call to duty, as had many other millions who served in World War II.



Bob Lewis (left) with Charles Lindbergh, when Lewis took Lindbergh up in a B-29 Superfortress at Egland Field in Florida, 1943.



Captain Lewis standing with the crew of the Enola Gay before one of their practice missions. On August 6, 1945, with Lewis as co-pilot, this crew and this plane, ushered in the Atomic Age with the dropping of the "A" bomb on Hiroshima, leading to the end of World War II.

Following World War II veterans returned home to a community that had been well established for at least twenty to twenty-five years. Many of these men and women sought new horizons and moved up the line to communities that were changing from farmlands to suburban communities. The growth that characterized Ridgfield Park in the Teens and the Twenties characterized communities in the northern and western parts of the county. Because Ridgfield Park was fully developed, there were only limited opportunities for new homes. Some veterans' houses were erected on portions of the old Mehrhof Estate, just east of the railroad station. But by and large Ridgfield Park did not have any large-scale development.

Other changes took place following World War II. Where once the railroad had been the principal means of transportation, buses and automobiles took its place. Where Ridgfield Park had once been a vacation spot for others, now residents of Ridgfield Park left the community to take their vacations elsewhere. No longer were boating, swimming or fishing practical or even possible along the Hackensack River and Overpeck Creek. Waters were polluted to the point that all of these activities were considered unsafe.

New problems faced the Village after World War II. The sewer system was approaching 50 years old, and was no longer suitable for the Village's needs. The fact that it was a combination storm and sewer system further added to the problem.

Washington Irving School, which had been erected in 1904, was no longer adequate and students used high school facilities for physical education, assembly, and other school activities. The third floor of Washington Irving School, where the original high school classes were held, was condemned and could no longer be used for academic purposes. Other schools were in need of repair and there was some talk in the community of making improvements to the high school.

Eight candidates participated in the 1948 Commissioners election, the first local election held after the war. The successful candidates were Ross Vogt, Herbert Lowe and George Wagner.

Shortly after he took office in 1948, Mayor Vogt was approached by L. Freeland Felgraff to discuss the idea of purchasing the Union Church on Park Street to be used as a Civic Center. The Union Church had fallen into a period of disuse and was occupied by its minister, Reverend Gnagey. The trustees of the church were unable to generate enough support for regular church services. Mayor Vogt and Mr. Felgraff approached the trustees of the church and they agreed on a price of \$25,000 for the building. This sum was raised in a civic campaign in the Village. Upon receipt of the \$25,000, the trustees of the church paid half to the minister and returned half to the Village to be used to buy equipment for the Civic Center building. One of first television sets in Ridgfield Park was put in the Civic Center which today remains the meeting place for

many clubs and organizations in the community. In the 1970's, an addition was put on the Civic Center to serve as a Senior Citizen meeting area and nutrition center.

Not all politics in Ridgfield Park dealt with local issues. The United Nations had been formed in 1945 and following World War II an "Iron Curtain" had drawn down across Europe. Feelings about the United Nations were intense. Some saw the world organization as the best hope for mankind, while others thought it posed a real threat to United States freedom. Samuel Barden, a local pharmacist, under the auspices of the Rotary Club organized an information program on the United Nations and a luncheon. Chaired by noted columnist Jim Bishop, it drew an audience of nearly 300 people. Following the luncheon, sharp debate appeared in the local papers. David Boswell was a strong United Nations foe, while Mrs. Florence Griffith, wife of the local Methodist minister, wrote strongly in favor of the world organization.

United Nations or not, in June, 1950, the country found itself back at war in Korea. Once again, the youth of the community were called to fight in a distant land. This time a new enemy - Communism. Villagers generally favored prosecution of the war effort and supported the formation of the NATO alliance. Residents served in Korea. On the home front, air raid sirens sounded again, civil defense reorganized, and the Village prepared for a conflict.

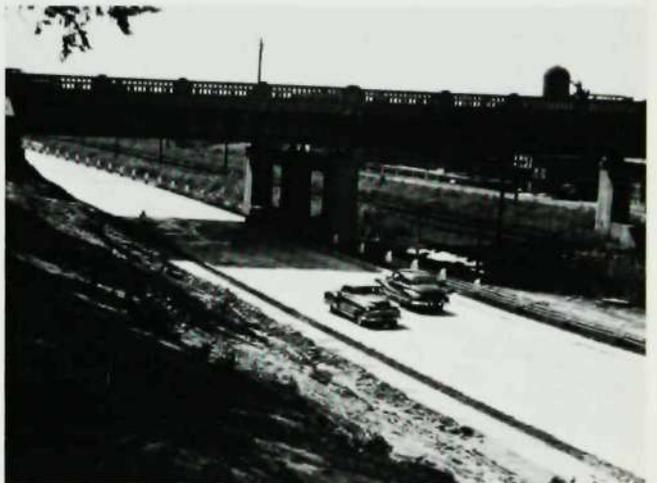
Here's the Story on . . .

- **YOUR CIVIC CENTRE CAMPAIGN**
for the purchase of the Union Community Church property on Park Street, between Euclid and Hudson Avenues.
- *Starts July 6, 1948 - Goal \$ 13,500.00 (worth lots more)*
- *To Provide a civic center for your children's, and your, and your organization's second home.*
- *To Be Operated by you through your Village Government.*
- *Your neighbor will call for your contribution.*

GIVE GENEROUSLY - IT'S FOR YOU AND YOURS

Contributed by:
AUSTIN DEVINE
LLOYD'S PRESCRIPTIONS
SCHMIDT'S MARKET

Ridgfield Park Civic Centre Association
Herbert I. Lowe, Honorary Chairman
L. Freeland Felgraff, Chairman
John E. Davis, Secretary and Treasurer
E. Alden Ferris, Campaign Manager



Main Street Bypass, completed in 1954 under the administration of Mayor Ross Vogt. Completion of the by-pass ended severe traffic congestion at Main Street and Winant Avenue. (Route 46) Top Left: The "Sand Banks" (Brewster Park) looking north from the Route 46 bridge. Wood structure at right was first Rescue Squad Headquarters. Top Right: Looking south from the "46" Bridge as construction of the Bypass is under way. Bottom Right: Bypass is nearing completion, looking North from South Main Street. Bottom Left: Bypass is completed, as seen from Brewster Park.

In the late 40's and early 50's, the Village also had to contend with the State of New Jersey, which had ambitious plans to build highways which would take much of the Village land. One of these plans called for a Route 100 to be built. This plan was soon abandoned in favor of what would become the New Jersey Turnpike, which would terminate in Ridgefield Park at Route 46. Originally the Turnpike Commission planned to build a bridge across the Overpeck Creek, but at the urging of Village Engineer David Boswell, plans for a bridge were scrapped in favor of building a dam. These flood gates meant that the waters of the Overpeck Creek could be isolated and eventually a recreation park built in the Overpeck Creek valley.

In the early 50's, the Little League was established in Ridgefield Park, beginning the trend to organized

athletic activity. Early Little League games were played in Brewster Park, then known as the "sand banks." Under the leadership of the Lions Club, funds were accumulated to build the Little League Field south of Veterans Park.

As automobile traffic continued to increase, getting from the north side of Route 46 to the south side on Main Street was a real problem. One suggestion was made to continue Railroad Avenue south, past the railroad station to connect with Main Street. Another suggestion was to build a bypass from Main Street to Brinkerhoff Street, through the sand banks, and down to connect with Main Street at College Place. The Railroad Avenue proposal was considered too costly. The State eventually approved the building of the Main Street bypass.

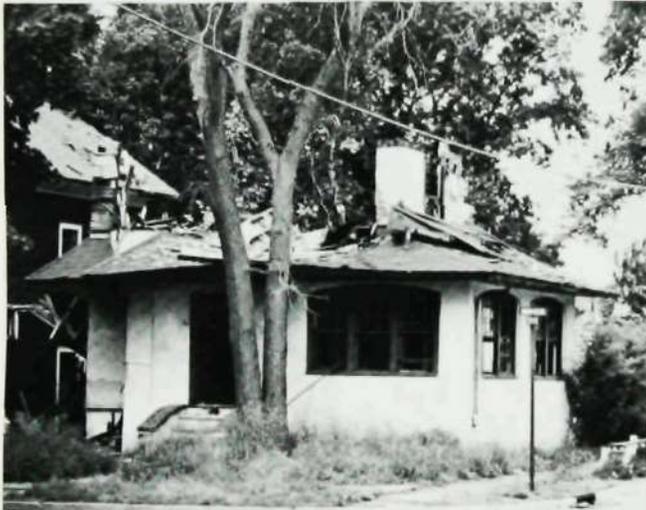
Throughout the 50's, as it had for many years, the Village maintained its

own garbage dump in the Overpeck meadow to the east of Hobart Street. The idea was for this dump to serve as a land-fill for the eventual development of a recreation area. The State, however, continued to press the Village for improvements and the maintenance of the dump. Concern for the environment was just beginning.

The voters appeared to be well satisfied with the team of Vogt, Lowe and Wagner who were elected in 1948, because in the 1952 election there was no opposition and this same team returned to office. Following the election, the commissioners selected George Wagner to be the mayor. Wagner served for about a year, but died in office. Following his death, George Alberque was appointed to the commission and Ross Vogt returned as mayor. Death prevented Alberque from completing his term, and Edward Eucker was selected in his place.

THE COMING OF ROUTE 80

One of the biggest issues to face the community in the 50's occurred in 1954 when plans were announced to build the Bergen-Passaic Expressway. Today, of course, we recognize the Bergen-Passaic Expressway as Route 80. However, when the plans were first announced, the road was promoted as the Bergen-Passaic Expressway. As originally proposed, the expressway would enter Ridgfield Park at about Arthur Street, travel in a westerly direction and remove most of the northern section of the community. As you can imagine, there were many, many protests over the selection of this route. Eventually, the road took shape as it is known today, but Ridgfield Park did lose 67 parcels of land, mostly in the northwest section. It was several years before the various negotiations and route selections were completed, but by the end of 1958 the state had moved in and began to demolish homes for the eventual building of the road, which was completed in the mid 1960's. Some homes were purchased and moved to vacant lots in town.



June 14, 1959 - North Avenue & Fourth Street. Expressway demolition has begun.



Not all homes were destroyed in the path of the Expressway. Some were moved to vacant lots in the area. This home is being moved down North Avenue. (May 21, 1959)



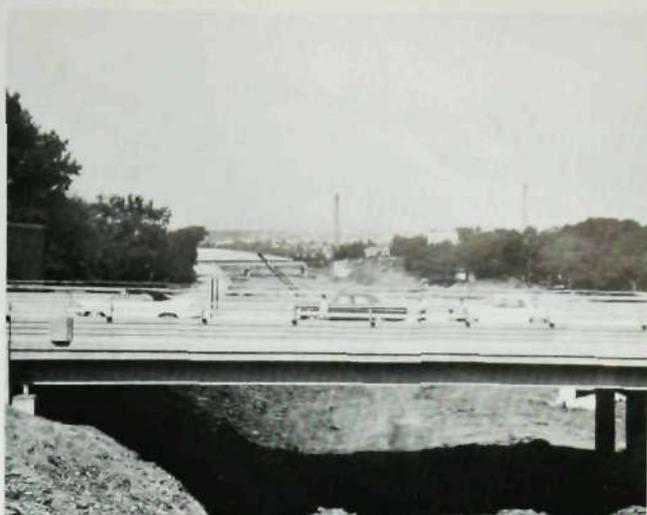
North Avenue and Second Street as work progresses on the Roadway. The path of old North Avenue can still be seen. This same site today would be the westbound entrance ramp to Route 80 from Palisade Avenue in Bogota.



March, 1963. This will become the Queen Anne Road Bridge over Route 80. Looking south into Ridgfield Park



Looking west across Railroad Avenue at what will be the Hackensack River Bridge.



August, 1963. The Queen Anne Road Bridge has been completed and to the west, we can see that the Palisade Avenue-Second Street Bridge is in the final stages of construction.

All these Route 80 construction photos are courtesy of Ray Humphrey, 21 Fourth Street, who also furnished the photos of the Main Street Bypass construction.

As has been noted earlier, for all intents and purposes Ridgefield Park was now fully developed, and in the 50's there was some pressure to allow development in a vertical direction. Should or should not apartment house structures on any large scale be permitted? The issue divided those who wished to maintain the character of the Village against those who saw apartment houses as a source of much needed revenue to maintain Village services. Would apartment houses contribute more to the tax base than they would cost? This was the question that divided many residents at that time. Developing a comprehensive master plan was greeted with some skepticism, and it wasn't until the early 60's that a Planning Board was appointed.

In the 1956 Commissioners election, the voters returned to office Ross Vogt, Edward Eucker and elected Daniel Collins, who was a member of their ticket. Ross Vogt was again selected by the Commissioners to be mayor.

Ridgefield Park had earlier donated the Overpeck meadows to Bergen County, to be used as a county park. The failure of the county to act on parkland proposals led some to seek the return of this land to the Village. A referendum on this matter in 1957, seeking return of the land, resulted in a "no" vote of 1,707, and a "yes" vote of 1,664. Though the county retained the property, pressure was on

for the county to develop park land.

In 1959, the Village of Ridgefield Park, along with four of its citizens, initiated a lawsuit which would lead to a revision of the property tax structure throughout the State of New Jersey. Principal source of revenue for all communities in New Jersey was the property tax, and how this tax was levied proved to be a real problem. The Village took the position that the property tax should be assessed on the basis of 100% evaluation. Other communities were using different evaluations with a result that the tax structure was unequal. Some communities were paying a higher portion of county taxes than they felt was proper and Ridgefield Park was one of these communities. In 1959, Ridgefield Park sued, demanding 100% assessment and withheld payment of the county taxes. The county, in turn, countersued. The matter was argued through the Superior Courts and dragged on for a number of years, but eventually Ridgefield Park won the suit in the State Supreme Court, thus establishing the base for the 100% assessment.

Some residents felt that it was a mistake for Ridgefield Park to seek 100% assessment, as they thought that this would prove to be more costly to the taxpayers. There was also the question of apartment house development and some further charged that the Village had not done enough to resist the development of Route 80.

Other residents thought we had lost an opportunity to be the home for the Public Service electric generating plant now located in Ridgefield, even though Public Service never expressed any real interest in locating in Ridgefield Park. These issues led to what has been characterized as one of the most hard-fought and liveliest commissioners elections in Ridgefield Park's history.

The 1960 election pitted incumbent Mayor Ross Vogt with running mates Walter Hespe and Joseph Floyd against another ticket headed by Gerald Monaghan, with Lawrence Musella and William Wagner. Giles Brent was an independent candidate in this election. The election was hard fought. Flyers circulated the community and it seemed that everyone was involved. In 1960, there were 6,284 registered voters. 4,326 cast a vote in this election, a 68.8% participation, which was exceeded only by the 72% who had participated in the 1932 election. The 1960 election resulted in Monaghan, Wagner and Musella being put into office by the voters by a narrow margin. The new commissioners selected Gerald Monaghan to serve as mayor. Mayor Monaghan served for two years, resigning and being replaced as mayor by Lawrence Musella. Musella and Wagner chose Robert Alberque as the third commissioner.

The 1960 election was close as well as being hard fought, and the issues that divided the people did not go away. Intense feelings remained



The Driver Estate, on the east side of Main Street, occupying the full block between Christie and Hobart Streets. The property was "T" shaped and the rear center section of the property extended to the middle of the block. Mr. William Driver was also an active Elk and during the depression he was instrumental in saving the Elks Club property from foreclosure. The Driver Estate is now the site of a Garden Apartment complex, built during the Wagner Administration.

following that election, and the supporters of former Mayor Vogt and his ticket formed a group known as the Villagers which closely monitored all the actions of the newly-elected team. In 1963 a split developed between Mayor Musella and Commissioner Wagner which would serve as a prelude to the 1964 Commissioners election.

While the commissioners were dealing with their problems, in the 1960's the Board of Education was wrestling with a number of problems in the school system. Principal among these was what to do with Ridgefield Park High School. Beginning in September, 1953, Ridgefield Park High School served as a receiving school for Little Ferry high school students. School population continued to grow and by the 1960's Ridgefield Park High School was overcrowded. Some felt that the solution to this problem was to have the Little Ferry students moved, but this was not approved by the State. Others felt that with or without Little Ferry, the school building itself was inadequate. The coal-burning heating system was antiquated and some considered it dangerous. The building, though structurally sound, had many shortcomings. The original gas lamps had been replaced many years earlier with electric, but the electrical system in itself was now unable to

support the "load." Modern times brought many changes in curriculum and the school building did not have proper facilities to offer some of the new courses which were necessary. Some thought that the best course of action was to expand the school at its site on Bergen Avenue and Hobart Street. Others felt that a new structure should be erected at another place in the community. The most frequently mentioned site was Dexheimer Park, to the north of Veterans Park. Various agencies in the Village took part in the discussion of the high school question. Initially the Board of Commissioners opposed the land swap which would give the Board of Education title to the Dexheimer Park site in return for giving to the Board of Commissioners title to the site of the old high school and Washington Irving School. Eventually a land swap was agreed to and the Board of Education was given the go ahead to develop plans for a new high school. Such a structure would have to be approved by the voters.

As in 1960, the 1964 Commissioners election was bitter and hard fought. Thirteen candidates entered the fray. Efram Brauer, an independent candidate, was the top vote getter. William Wagner and Louis Windecker, members of one ticket, were elected also. Wagner was chosen

to serve as mayor.

The Wagner administration proved to be controversial, so much so that one year after the election a special recall election was held seeking the removal of Mayor Wagner and Commissioner Windecker from office. This was the only recall election in the history of Ridgefield Park. Interestingly enough, on the section of the ballot which provided for the recall, William Wagner was recalled as was Louis Windecker. However, in the section of the ballot which provided for the replacement election, Wagner and Windecker were the successful candidates in a field of three. Thus, we had the situation of recalling two Commissioners from office and then reelecting both of them.

By 1965, the Board of Education was ready to present its plans for a new high school to the voters. The State of New Jersey had come in and condemned certain sections of the old high school. Earlier, Washington Irving School had been shut down on state orders. Indeed, the local high school was closed for a period of three weeks in 1965 during the school year while emergency repairs were made in order to gain temporary state approval to continue operations. Portable classrooms were set up in Washington Irving School yard, and students also attended classes in the Public Library

and the First Baptist Church. An initial high school building proposal, at a cost of \$3,855,000 was turned down by the voters. Later scaled down by approximately \$600,000, the proposal to build a high school in Dexheimer Park was approved. The last graduating class from the old high school at Bergen Avenue and Hobart Street left in June, 1967. Fifty years of education came to a close and beginning in September, 1967, all high school students entered the building in Dexheimer Park.

Commissioner Brauer did not choose to seek reelection in 1968, while Mayor Wagner headed one ticket and Commissioner Windecker headed another. There was a third ticket in the race, the ticket of Gilbert Gibbs, Eugene McIntyre and Benito DeLuca. The ticket of Gibbs, McIntyre and DeLuca was elected by a better than two to one margin, with McIntyre and DeLuca selecting Gibbs to serve as mayor. The Gibbs Administration brought about the end of any further significant apartment house development in the community.

In 1969, the commissioners approved a proposal to increase the number on the commission from three to five, and in a special election held in 1969, John Davis and Thomas Johnson were elected as the fourth and fifth commissioners.

Some consideration was given to converting the old high school into a municipal complex. However, this proved to be a very costly renovation so it was decided that the old building should be torn down. The building was demolished in 1971. The site is now Fellowship Park.

In February, 1971, teachers in the Ridgfield Park Public Schools conducted a one-day strike in a dispute

with the Board of Education over salary. The strike was settled when the Education Association accepted a 6 3/4% salary increase. This was the first strike in the history of the Ridgfield Park School System.

During the Gibbs Administration, other improvements were made including the erection of the Ambulance Corps and Special Police Headquarters in Brewster Park. With the closing of Palisade Amusement Park in 1971, the Village obtained several of the lights which were installed in Veterans Park to permit the use of the park in the evening.

The 1972 Commissioners election saw eleven candidates vying for the five seats. 45% of the voters went to the polls and returned Gibbs, McIntyre, Perna, DeLuca and Johnson to office. Louis Perna had earlier replaced John Davis who had resigned. After the election Ben DeLuca moved from Ridgfield Park and his place was taken by Leroy Schrupf.

The man who had been largely responsible for the building of the new high school in Ridgfield Park, Superintendent Erwin Arbo, who began his career in Ridgfield Park as high school principal in 1959 and would later become superintendent, resigned in 1972 to accept a position in South Jersey. The principal of the high school, Fred Scherer, was appointed as acting superintendent. George Kane, the vice-principal of the high school, was named principal.

America's entry into the conflict in Vietnam began on a small scale in the early 1960's. By Lyndon Johnson's term as President in the mid 60's, the conflict had grown and once again young men from Ridgfield Park answered the call. And yet, this time it was different. There were no mass

marches and patriotic celebrations. In the end, it seemed the conflict did not satisfy much. Eight young men from our Village gave their lives for the country. Again, Ridgfield Park had contributed. Again, our young men died for America.

In November, 1972, contracts totalling over \$149,000 were granted to provide renovations and additions to the Municipal Building, the first real changes to take place since it was first erected in 1910. Also in 1972, the age for entry into the Ridgfield Park Volunteer Fire Department was dropped from 21 to 18 in an effort to attract more volunteers. In 1974 plans were announced for the development of a Municipal Swimming Pool and over 400 membership deposits were received. Also in 1974, women were admitted to the Dr. Knox Volunteer Ambulance Corps. for the first time in the history. In 1975 the Village dump was closed and all refuse had to be transported to the county dump site. Over the objections of many residents, a new traffic code was adopted in 1975 which provided for many one-way streets and established certain parking regulations. Fellowship Park was dedicated in 1975, on the site of the old high school, and was named Fellowship Park in honor of the Masons/Knights of Columbus annual softball game which had begun in 1925. One of the Village's most famous residents, Ozzie Nelson, passed away in 1975.

Residents of Ridgfield Park participated actively in the Bicentennial celebration in 1976. Among the Bicentennial activities was an unveiling of a series of pictures of Ridgfield Park from the early 1900's. These pictures are located in the Palisade Savings and Loan Association building



November, 1958. Within a year, commuter service on the "West Shore" will be gone. The two center tracks for express and through trains have been torn up. Now a single track runs along the old West Shore route and a single track also serves the Susquehanna. (Ray Humphrey photo)



Two of our older citizens who attended the Fifty Plus reception at the Elks Lodge on July 28. On the right is Tecla Jensen Bayer who lives at 65 Bergen Avenue, and her sister Josephine Jensen Koch of 138 Cedar Street. Village residents for over 80 years.

on Main Street.

In 1976 the Village ended a seven year dispute with the State of New Jersey regarding ownership of the marshland property adjacent to the Overpeck Creek. The Village retained title to the property and benefited financially. This area is now the site of the present Hartz Mountain development. The traffic ordinance referred to earlier had generated a great deal of opposition from Village residents. A petition was presented to the Board of Commissioners asking that the matter be put on the ballot. In November 1977 the traffic ordinance question in an advisory fashion was voted upon by the people. The people indicated the desire for revisions. Although the one-way streets were not changed, there were a number of revisions made to the ordinance to meet some of the objections which had been raised. The proposal by the Board of Commissioners to develop more park land in the northeast section of the Village, a thirteen acre tract commonly called "The Woods," was met by opposition by those residents who wished to see the area preserved as a nature preserve and by other residents who felt the area ought to be left alone.

The 1980 Commissioners election saw a record breaking number of candidates enter the field. A total of 17 vied for the spots. The voters chose from a number of different tickets and an independent to serve. 48% of the voters chose Edward Alberque, Fred Criscuolo, John Davis, Louis Perna and John Anlian. Alberque was a member of one ticket, Criscuolo, Davis and Perna another ticket, and Anlian was an Independent. After the

election, the five commissioners chose Fred Criscuolo to be the mayor. A principal activity of this new board of commissioners was the negotiation of the development of the Overpeck meadow property with Hartz Mountain Industries. In November 1983, members of the Ridgefield Park Education Association conducted a strike. This was the longest and costliest strike in the history of the Village school system. At its conclusion, a two-year contract was agreed upon.

The voters seemed satisfied with the administration elected in 1980. The 1984 election saw four of the incumbent commissioners joined together to form a ticket to seek reelection. Mayor Criscuolo, Commissioners Anlian, Alberque and Davis were joined by George Fosdick and this five man group was a successful ticket in a field of seven candidates.

Of necessity, this history of Ridgefield Park has been limited in scope. What started out to be an ambitious research project has turned into a general overview of the community. It simply would not be possible, within the confines of this book, to provide a detailed history of each of the organizations, events and activities that have taken place. For example, former Fire Chief Louis Schuler, in compiling just a history of one of the fire companies, Hook and Ladder 1, has already prepared over 300 pages of history. We have wanted this book to include an overview as well as many of the pictures because, as they say, pictures are worth a thousand words. Much of the research that went into the preparation of this book can be found in the Public

Library.

What we celebrate in the year 1985 is more than the observance of Joris Brinkerhoff's building the first home in Ridgefield Park, although this is the particular event which gives rise to celebration. We celebrate a community and we celebrate its people. There is something about Ridgefield Park which makes us just a little bit different from other communities. Men like the late Frank Morrison and the late Hip Murphy, whose efforts made possible much of the information that goes into this book. Without Morrison and without Murphy, this book would have been impossible, but there is more. A number of interviews were conducted with long term Village residents. Analyzing these different interviews, one comes up with the same conclusion, because each of the interviews brought forth the same comments and the same spirit. Ridgefield Park was and is a friendly town. Ridgefield Park was and is a close-knit town. Ridgefield Park was and is a community that recognizes and attempts to deal with its problems. Ridgefield Park was and is a community that is proud of its heritage. Mayor Gibbs tells the story about the Bar Mitzvah for the son of Rabbi Mendelowitz. Rabbi Mendelowitz approached Father Coyle, Pastor of St. Francis Church, and asked if St. Francis Gymnasium could be used for the Bar Mitzvah. At that particular time, St. Francis was holding its annual play, and the gym was unavailable. However, Father Coyle made one phone call and the K of C Hall was made available to Rabbi Mendelowitz for the Bar Mitzvah of his son. This kind of thing happens over and over again, in many different ways. The people of Ridgefield Park have always extended themselves to be of service and help to their neighbors. In comparison to other communities in Bergen County, Ridgefield Park is an old town, but it still remains young in spirit and young in hope. Older residents have passed on or moved away, but in its place younger residents have come and with them they have brought the hope for the future.

The 1927 Book commemorating the opening of the new Railroad Station, "RIDGEFIELD PARK - BERGEN COUNTY'S MOST MODERN COMMUNITY" by George L. Albig, contains a directory of all clubs and organizations active in the community at that time. Many of these groups are still active, while others have passed out of existence. There were many activities available to Ridgefield Park residents in 1927.

BERGEN COUNTY'S MOST MODERN COMMUNITY

ORGANIZATION DIRECTORY

LOCATION OF MEETING HALLS

B. P. O. ELKS, *Spruce Ave. and Cedar St.*
JUNIOR ORDER CLUB, *Winant and Ridgefield Aves.*
KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS, *Bergen Ave. and Park St.*
MASONIC TEMPLE, *Main and Hobart Sts.*
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, *Main and Park Sts.*
VASA HALL, *Central Ave. and Sixth St.*
HOSE CO. No. 1, *Mt. Vernon St. near Main St.*
OVERPECK FIRE HOUSE (HOSE CO. No. 2), *Euclid Ave. and Brinckerhoff St.*
WEST VIEW FIRE HOUSE (HOSE CO. No. 3), *Hackensack Ave. bet. Lincoln and Paulson Aves.*
HAZELTON FIRE HOUSE (H. & L. No. 2), *Hazelton St. near Roosevelt Ave.*
BAPTIST CHURCH, *Euclid Ave. and Hobart St.*
METHODIST CHURCH, *60 Cedar, near Main St.*
NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCH, *Arthur near Main St.*
PARISH HALL, EPISCOPAL CHURCH, *Preston St., bet. Euclid and Hudson Aves.*
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, *Euclid Ave. and Poplar St.*
ST. FRANCIS CHURCH, *Bergen Ave. and Mt. Vernon St.*
UNION COMMUNITY CHURCH, *Euclid Ave. and Park St.*

AMERICAN LEGION

Ridgefield Park Post No. 40.
Organized in 1919 with 40 members.
Members 1927—45
Meets First and Third Tuesdays, 8 P. M.
93 Summit Street
Officers: Commander, Walter M. Schirra, Sr.; Vice-Commander, William H. Hunter, Jr.; Finance Officer, Russell A. Meixell; Secretary, Samuel R. Esler, 28 Summit Street.

THE ASSOCIATION OF EXEMPT FIREMEN OF RIDGEFIELD PARK

Organized April 16, 1907, with 16 members
Number of members 1927—134
Meet First Monday of each month, 8 15 P. M. No definite hall. All fire houses and Municipal Building used
Officers: President, Louis A. Eucker; Vice-president, Frank Hammell; Treasurer, Charles E. Thiel; Finance Secretary, Jerome Fisher; Recording Secretary, George J. Smith, 114 Union Place

BOY RANGERS OF AMERICA

Lodge No. 325
Organized Aug. 11, 1925, with 11 members.
Members, 1927—29
Meet Every Friday Afternoon, 4:30 P. M. Neighborhood Reform Church
Officers: Guide, Rev. Theodore Brinckerhoff; Asst. Guide, John Pink; Ass't Guide, William Tozer; Sachem, Robert Rogge; Treasurer, Ernest Sandri; Secretary, Henry Moody, 86 Sixth Street.

Lodge No. 485

Organized Oct. 1, 1926, with 11 members.
Members, 1927—29
Meet Every Friday, 7 15 P. M. Neighborhood Reform Church.

Officers: Guide, Rev. Theodore Brinckerhoff; Ass't Guide, Henry Moody; Ass't Guide, Ernest Sandri; Sachem, Kenneth Fisher; Treasurer, Ernest Sandri; Secretary, Henry Moody, 86 Sixth St.

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

Ridgefield Park Troop No. 1

Organized September, 1909, with 20 members.
Members, 1927—45
Meet Every Friday, 8:00 P. M. First Baptist Church.
Officers: Scoutmaster and Deputy Scout Commissioner, Neil P. Munroe; Ass't Scoutmasters, Wm. E. Mehnert, Jos. C. Watson, Jr., Douglas Murray, Kenneth L. Daubert; Treasurer, Douglas Murray; Scout Scribe, Joseph C. Watson, Jr.

Ridgefield Park Troop No. 2

Organized August, 1915, with 1 member.
Members, 1927—26
Meet Every Friday, 7:30 P. M. Knights of Columbus Hall
Officers: Scoutmaster, Ernest G. Alberque, Jr.; Ass't Scoutmasters, Frank X. Murray, Jr., John Ott, Thomas L. Walsh; Troop Committee, Frank A. Morrison, Dr. John D. Morrison, Frank X. Murray, Sr.; Scout Scribe, Joseph Dwyer, 52 Third Street.

Ridgefield Park Troop No. 3

Organized May, 1926, with 15 members.
Members, 1927—20
Meet Every Friday, 8 P. M. Neighborhood Reform Church
Officers: Scoutmaster, W. Pierson Sohr; Ass't Scoutmaster, L. H. Tallman; Chairman, Troop Committee, C. M. Chapman, 80 North Avenue, Bogota.

"RIDGEFIELD PARK-BERGEN COUNTY'S MOST MODERN COMMUNITY"

George L. Albig, 1927

RIDGEFIELD PARK

Ridgefield Park Troop No. 4

Organized 1916 with 10 members.
Members, 1927—20.
Meet Every Friday, 8 P. M. Parish Hall,
Episcopal Church.

Officers: Scoutmaster, William H. Zain;
Ass't Scoutmasters, George Mahon, Wes-
ley Lowe; Scout Scribe, Jack Perry, 186
Overpeck Ave.

Ridgefield Park Troop No. 6

Organized 1916 with 12 members.
Members, 1927—25.
Meet Every Friday 7.45 P. M. Methodist
Church.

Officers: Scoutmaster, John D. Easterlin;
Ass't Scoutmasters, William C. Schlag,
Harold A. McElroy, William Henning,
Ralph Jones; Secretary, William C.
Schlag, 55 Grove Street.

Ridgefield Park Troop No. 7

Organized November 1916.
Members, 1927—20.
Meet Every Friday, 7.45 P. M. Presby-
terian Church.

Officers: Scoutmaster, D. M. Woesche;
Ass't Scoutmasters, H. E. Ewing, D. F.
Schelberg, Scout Scribe, D. F. Schelberg,
16 Roosevelt Avenue.

B P O. ELKS

Ridgefield Park Lodge No. 1506

Organized June 20, 1925, with 100 mem-
bers.

Members, 1927—425.

Meet First and Third Wednesdays, 8.30 P.
M. Vasa Hall until new home is finished.

Officers: Exalted Ruler, William H. Driver;
Esteemed Leading Knight, Louis E. La
Tour; Esteemed Loyal Knight, Clifton A.
Orcutt; Treasurer, Charles W. Carlson;
Secretary, J. E. Williams, 71 Park Street.

CAMP FIRE GIRLS

Okiyuskin Group.

Organized December 1924 with 7 members.
Members, 1927—10.

Meet Every Friday, 4 P. M. Union Com-
munity Church

Officers: Guardian, M. Erb; President,
Margret Biller; Vice-president, Evelyn
Williams; Treasurer, Viola Henschel; Sec-
retary, Eleanor Miller, 165 Teaneck Rd.

Elunota Group.

Organized December 1925 with 7 members.
Members, 1927—21.

Meet Every Wednesday, 4 P. M. Union
Community Church

Officers: Guardian, M. Erb; President,
Alice Jane; Vice-president, Evelyn Rich;
Treasurer, Doris Walker; Secretary,
Evelyn Randall, 50 Chestnut St.



Wm. F. Pennell, Architect

MASONIC TEMPLE
Main and Hobart Sts.

Edward J. Alquist, Builder

"RIDGEFIELD PARK-BERGEN COUNTY'S MOST MODERN COMMUNITY"
George L. Albig, 1927

BERGEN COUNTY'S MOST MODERN COMMUNITY



Wm. F. Pennell and Louis J. Lutzko, Associate Architects

Edward J. Alquist, Builder

ELKS LODGE AND CLUB HOUSE
Spruce Ave. and Cedar St.

Minowe Group.

Organized 1923 with 20 members.

Members, 1927—10.

Meet Every Wednesday, 3.30 P. M. Methodist Church.

Officers: Guardian, Beatrice Fox; President, Mildred Harwell; Treasurer, Ida Deyo; Secretary, Geneva Arvidson, 37 Third Street.

Helomala Group.

Organized May, 1926, with 6 members.

Members, 1927—20

Meet every Tuesday, 3.45 P. M., Methodist Church.

Officers: Guardian, Gertrude A. Outwater; Ass't Guardian, Ruth W. Pearce; Treasurer, Esther Olson; Secretary, Eunice Spillane, 64 Overpeck Ave.

COMMUNITY LEAGUE FOR WOMEN.

Organized June 24, 1918, with 35 members.

Members 1927—130.

Meet third Monday of each month, 8.15 P. M., at the homes of members of the Board of Directors.

Officers: President, Miss Hortense Hanks; Vice-President, Mrs. E. B. Lane; Treasurer, Miss Elizabeth Marshall; Secretary, Mrs. L. C. MacNutt, 71 Grand Ave.

DAUGHTERS OF AMERICA.

Pride of Overpeck Council No. 3.

Organized 1918, with 28 members.

Members, 1927—126.

Meet second and fourth Tuesdays, 8 P. M., Junior Order Club.

Officers: Councilor, Florence E. Woolsey; Ass't Councilor, Alice G. Steigler; Vice-Councilor, Doris Mather; Treasurer, George van DeMark; Recording Secretary, Carolyn A. Haring, 205 Preston St.

DAUGHTERS OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

Dover Patrol Chapter.

Organized April 4, 1922, with 10 members.

Members, 1927—16.

Meet third Monday each month, 2.30 P. M., members homes.

Officers: Regent, Annie L. Chalmers; Vice-Regent, Ada A. Wyss; Treasurer, Jean Handling; Secretary, Agnes M. Moody, 86 Sixth Street.

DAUGHTERS OF SCOTIA.

Lady Douglas Lodge No. 83.

Organized August 16, 1918, with 28 members.

Members, 1927—34.

Meet second and third Thursdays, 8.00 P. M., Hall, Ridgfield Reformed Church, Ridgfield.

Officers: Chief Daughter, Elizabeth Arneil; Sub-Chief Daughter, Mary Graf; Treasurer, Jessie Tetley; Secretary, Anne F. Campbell, 128 Edwin St.

"RIDGEFIELD PARK-BERGEN COUNTY'S MOST MODERN COMMUNITY"
George L. Albig, 1927

RIDGEFIELD PARK

DEGREE OF POCAHONTAS.

Massapequa Council No. 130.

Organized 1925, with 96 members.
Members, 1927—105.

Meet second and fourth Mondays, 8.00 P. M., Junior Order Hall.

Officers: Pocahontas, Carolyn Huels, Wenonah, Mae Steinberg; Prophetess, Mary Clements; Powhatan, Henrietta Mavus; Keeper of Wampum, Belle Henry; Keeper of Records, Helen Huels, 338 Teaneck Road.

FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS.

Mosaic Lodge No. 194.

Organized June, 1910, with 26 members.
Members, 1927—384.

Meet first and third Thursdays, 8.00 P. M., Masonic Temple.

Officers: Master, Frederick Schwenck; Senior Warden, Edward O. Dixon; Junior Warden, Alfred T. Flach; Treasurer, William B. Barnett; Secretary, Robert A. Stuke, P. O. Box 205, River Edge, N. J.

HOLY NAME SOCIETY.

St. Francis Church.

Organized 1902, with 12 members.
Members, 1927—400.

Meet first Monday after second Sunday of each month, 8.15 P. M., in the church auditorium.

Officers: President, William J. Morrison, Jr.; Treasurer, Joseph Collins; Marshal, Robert Crumm; Secretary, Roswell Fricette, 104 Arthur St.

JUNIOR ORDER UNITED AMERICAN MECHANICS.

Overpeck Council No. 314.

Organized 1913, with 63 members.
Members, 1927—400.

Meet second and fourth Thursdays, 8.00 P. M., Junior Order Club.

Officers: Councilor, Harry Chatterton; Vice-Councilor, E. R. Stephens; Junior Past Councilor, E. R. Marsilio; Treasurer, George S. Van DeMark; Secretary, John E. McLeester, 64 Grand Ave., North Hackensack, N. J.

JUNIOR ORDER CLUB OF RIDGEFIELD PARK.

Organized 1923, with 176 members.
Members, 1927—392.

Meet third Friday of each month, 8.15 P. M., Junior Order Club.

Officers: President, F. W. Roberts; Vice-President, William Belitz; Treasurer, George S. Van DeMark; Secretary, C. L. George, 50 Hille Place.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS.

Phil Sheridan Council No. 2229.

Organized 1921, with 98 members.
Members, 1927—300.

Meet first and third Tuesdays, 8.30 P. M., Knights of Columbus Building.

Officers: Grand Knight, Joseph A. Cerina; Deputy Grand Knight, Edward T. Fineran; Treasurer, Harry Compa; Recorder, Walter McHugh, 73 Central Ave.



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS HALL
Bergen Ave. and Park St.

"RIDGEFIELD PARK-BERGEN COUNTY'S MOST MODERN COMMUNITY"
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BERGEN COUNTY'S MOST MODERN COMMUNITY



JUNIOR ORDER CLUB HOUSE
 Winant and Ridgefield Aves.

LADIES OF THE G. A. R.

Col. Theo. Roosevelt Circle No. 50.
 Organized June 15, 1920, with 15 members.
 Members, 1927—21.
 Meet second and fourth Fridays, 8 00 P. M. Overpeck Firehouse.
Officers: President, Anna Schaefer, Sr. Vice-President, Elizabeth Sullivan, Jr. Vice-President, Kate Aiken; Treasurer, Louise Watson; Secretary, Hattie Ferry, 64 Park St.

LADY FORESTERS OF AMERICA.

Star of Unity No. 41.
 Organized April 20, 1924, with 57 members.
 Members, 1927—114.
 Meet second and fourth Wednesdays, 8 30 P. M., Overpeck Firehouse
Officers: Deputy, Mrs. E. Muller; Commander, Mrs. E. Solheim; Sub-Commander, Mrs. L. Ward; Treasurer, Mrs. S. Orth; Financial Secretary, Mrs. L. Chatterton, 16 Edison St.

LADIES VILLAGE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION.

Organized August 28, 1900, with 45 members.
 Members, 1927—60.
 Meet second Wednesday each month, 2 30 P. M., Municipal Building.
Officers: President, Mrs. John Porter; Vice-President, Mrs. Wm. Schelberg; Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. Carl Fleisch-

man; Recording Secretary, Mrs. N. H. Jocelyn, 119 Brinkerhoff St.

MASONIC CLUB OF RIDGEFIELD PARK.

Organized 1910, with 30 members.
 Members, 1927—250.
 Meet second and fourth Fridays, 8 15 P. M., Masonic Temple.
Officers: President, Alfred F. Fleischmann; Vice-President, C. Graham Young; Treasurer, Charles L. Pearce; Secretary, L. Roy Blakeslee, 38 Roosevelt Ave.

MODERN WOODMEN OF AMERICA.

Ridgefield Park Camp No. 12,498.
 Organized March, 1907, with 17 members.
 Members, 1927—106.
 Meet second Wednesday of each month, 8 P. M., Junior Order Club.
Officers: Venerable Consul, Wm. Getz; Advisor, Alfred Olsen; Banker, H. J. Dexter; Clerk, Frank P. Bell, 62 Hazelton St.

ORDER OF THE DE MOLAY.

Nathan Hale Chapter.
 Organized April 18, 1927, with 62 members.
 Members, 1927—62.
 Meet first and third Mondays, 8 P. M., Masonic Temple.
Officers: Advisor or Dad, Horace W. Yarrington; Master Councilor, Calvin G. R. Ohlsen; Senior Councilor, William Kern; Junior Councilor, A. I. Mehrhof; Treasurer, Kenneth Lloyd; Scribe, Howard Watt, 37 Eighth St.

"RIDGEFIELD PARK-BERGEN COUNTY'S MOST MODERN COMMUNITY"
George L. Albig, 1927

RIDGEFIELD PARK

ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR.

Naomi Chapter No. 28.
Organized 1905, with 21 members.
Members, 1927—351.
Meet first and third Tuesdays, 7.30 P. M.,
Masonic Temple.
Officers: Worthy Matron, Mac F. Young;
Worthy Patron, David Hardie; Asso-
ciate Matron, Margaret Hardie; Treas-
urer, Margaret Jursch; Secretary, Ida J.
Stoerzer, 44 Union Place.

ORDER OF SCOTTISH CLANS.

Clan Douglas No. 243.
Organized March 4, 1918, with 27 mem-
bers.
Members, 1927—46.
Meet first and third Wednesdays, 8.15,
Junior Order Club.
Officers: Chief, Douglas Murray; Past
Chief, Robert Arneil; Tanist, Robert
Watt; Treasurer, Walton Carron; Sec-
retary, Alex. Kerr, 13 Oak St.

ORDER OF VASA.

Lodge Orn No. 284.
Organized 1914, with 17 members.
Members, 1927—170.
Meet second and fourth Wednesdays, 8.00
P. M., Vasa Hall.
Officers: District Master, Ingemar Ander-
son; President, Algot Anderson; Vice-
President, Chas. Nelson; Treasurer, A. T.
Sandin; Recording Secretary, Chas. John-
son, 82 North Ave., Bogota.

OVERPECK BOAT CLUB.

Organized August 25, 1910, with 8 mem-
bers.
Members, 1927—61.
Meet second Wednesday of each month,
8.30 P. M., Overpeck Boat Club.
Officers: Commodore, Benjamin Ander-
son; Vice-Commodore, Michael Nealon;
Treasurer, Fred Effler; Recording Sec-
retary, Thomas E. A. Connolly, Over-
peck Boat Club, Bergen Pike.

PARENT-TEACHERS ASSOCIATION.

Grant Unit.
Organized April 22, 1921, with 71 mem-
bers.
Members, 1927—110.
Meet second Thursday of each month,
8.15, Grant School.
Officers: President, Sadie Rich; Vice-Presi-
dent, John Robertson; Treasurer, Miss L.
Mergler; Secretary, Carrie Orth, 17
Main St.

High School Unit

Organized April 21, 1921, no record of
charter members.
Members, 1927—153.
Meet third Monday of each month, 8.15
P. M., High School.
Officers: President, Myra Hargraves;
Treasurer, Miss Ruth Scribner; Sec-
retary, Mrs. R. Cromis, 114 Edwin St.



VASA HALL
Central Ave. and Sixth St.

"RIDGEFIELD PARK-BERGEN COUNTY'S MOST MODERN COMMUNITY"

George L. Albig, 1927

BERGEN COUNTY'S MOST MODERN COMMUNITY

Lincoln Unit.

Organized 1921, with 200 members.
Members, 1927—230.
Meet second Monday of each month, 8.15 P. M., Lincoln School.
Officers: President, Helen S. Wright; Vice-President, Theresa M. Huber; Treasurer, Homer J. Staley; Secretary, Bernice Stoops, 245 Main St.

Roosevelt Unit.

Organized September, 1922. No record of charter members.
Members, 1927—420.
Meet fourth Monday of each month, 8.15 P. M., Roosevelt School.
Officers: President, Mrs. F. P. Dart; Vice-President, J. O. Appler; Treasurer, Edna James; Secretary, Frances U. Place, 48 Gordon St.

Washington-Irving Unit.

Organized in 1922. No record of charter members.
Members, 1927—225.
Meet first Monday of each month, 8 P. M., High School.
Officers: President, P. E. Katz; Treasurer, Mrs. Eayre; Secretary, Miss Powellson, Washington-Irving School.

PHIL SHERIDAN K. OF C. BUILDING ASSOCIATION AUXILIARY

Organized 1923, with 25 members.
Members, 1927—75.
Meet first and third Mondays, 8.30 P. M., Knights of Columbus Hall.
Officers: President, Mrs. Thos. J. Hitchman; Vice-President, Miss A. Marcus; Treasurer, Mrs. J. Higgins; Recording Secretary, Mrs. R. Frasca, 121 Gordon Street.

PINE TENNIS CLUB

Organized 1908, with 12 members.
Members, 1927—102.
Meet second Tuesday of each month, 8.00 P. M., Pine Tennis Club.
Officers: President, F. E. Browne; Vice-President, E. G. Higgins; Treasurer, Wm. H. Zaun; Captain, George W. Schoepps; Secretary, Paul Helfernan, 25 Seventh St.

RIDGEFIELD PARK FIREMEN'S RELIEF ASSOCIATION

Organized 1902
Members, 1927—all active firemen of all companies (about 150).
Meet quarterly, March, June, September, December, Municipal Building.
Officers: President, Thos. W. Cashman; Vice-President, George L. Howe; Treasurer, George J. Smith; Secretary, Jerome Fisher, 384 Main St.

RIDGEFIELD PARK GARDEN CLUB.

Organized 1925, with 15 members.
Members, 1927—110.

Meet second Wednesday of each month, 8.30 P. M., Municipal Building.
Officers: President, Mrs. C. L. Northrop; Vice-President, Wm. Windecker; Treasurer, C. J. Fleischman; Secretary, Mrs. N. H. Jocelyn, 119 Brinkerhoff St.

RIDGEFIELD PARK HEBREW ASS'N.

Organized 1919, with 30 members.
Members, 1927—40.
Meet first and third Thursdays, 9.00 P. M., Ridgefield Park Hebrew Association Building.
Officers: President, Ben Corn; Vice-President, Henry Cohen; Treasurer, L. Breslow; Secretary, J. L. Sanders, 440 Teaneck Road.

RIDGEFIELD PARK KIWANIS CLUB.

Organized 1923, with 30 members.
Members, 1927—22.
Meet every Thursday 12.15 noon, Warrman's Restaurant.
Officers: President, Jesse T. Ewing; Vice-President, H. DeBaun; District Trustee, Fred J. Stork; Treasurer, Emil Gehm; Secretary, Edward Herzog, 65 Park St.

RIDGEFIELD PARK MAENNERCHOR.

Organized June 14, 1899, with 11 members.
Members, 1927—60.
Meet every Tuesday, 8.30 P. M., Armstrong's Hotel.
Officers: President, Henry Foerster; Vice-President, Fred Dusterberger; Treasurer, John Erdmann; Corresponding Secretary, Charles Seiler, Fairview Ave., Bogota.

RIDGEFIELD PARK ROTARY CLUB.

Organized April, 1921, with 15 members.
Members, 1927—35.
Meet every Tuesday, 12 o'clock noon, Blue Bird Inn, Teaneck.
Officers: President, George A. Wall; Vice-President, J. O. Appler; Treasurer, Sidney R. Stern; Secretary, Edward Greer, Bogota National Bank, Bogota.

SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF LIBERTY.

Ridgefield Park Council No. 123.
Organized March 28, 1898, with 21 members.
Members, 1927—124.
Meet first and third Thursdays, 8.00 P. M., Junior Order Hall.
Officers: Councilor, Ruth Craig; Vice-Councilor, Madeline Dulmage; Associate Councilor, Gussie Schrumf; Treasurer, Ellen M. Weher; Secretary, Cora May, 200 Cedar St.

Nathan Hale Council No. 229.

Organized March 29, 1921, with 28 members.
Members, 1927—100.
Meet first and third Mondays, 8.00 P. M., Junior Order Hall.
Officers: Councilor, Mamie Phelan; Vice-Councilor, Emma Henrich; Associate Councilor, Christina Jahn; Treasurer,

"RIDGEFIELD PARK-BERGEN COUNTY'S MOST MODERN COMMUNITY"
George L. Albig, 1927

RIDGEFIELD PARK

Gertrude Jahn, Secretary, M. L. Hervieux, 40 Orchard St.

STEBEN SOCIETY OF AMERICA.

Ridgefield Park Unit No. 779.

Organized October, 1923, with 30 members. Members, 1927—several hundred.

Meet first and third Thursday, 8.15 P. M., Overpeck Firehouse.

Officers: Magistrate, Victor Houst, Councilor, M. A. Rosseck; Treasurer, John Erdmann; Secretary, Fred Kirschner, 105 Laurel St.

THE MEN'S CLUB OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF RIDGEFIELD PARK.

Organized 1911, with 21 members. Members, 1927—120.

Meet first Friday of each month, 8.30 P. M., Presbyterian Church.

Officers: President, Conrad W. Mergler; Vice-President, Alfred F. Fleischmann; Treasurer, Franklin Felter, Jr.; Secretary, Gerard L. Bory, 201 Park St.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

Philip J. Ford Post No. 277.

Organized November 21, 1920, with 50 members.

Members, 1927—126.

Meet first and third Fridays, 8.30 P. M., Municipal Building.

Officers: Commander, Major Charles A. Sidman; Sr. Vice-Commander, Edward Booth; Jr. Vice-Commander, Anthony Wegis; Quartermaster, Harry W. Stroh-meyer; Adjutant (Sec.), P. F. Cunningham, 40 Orchard St.

WIMODASIS CLUB.

Organized April 6, 1924, with 23 members.

Members, 1927—86.

Meet first Friday of each month, 8.30 P. M., Masonic Temple.

Officers: President, Lorena F. Stieh; Vice-President, A. E. Caldwell; Treasurer, Victoria H. Behringer; Secretary, Truella Stimmel, 88 Central Ave.

THE WOMAN'S CLUB OF RIDGEFIELD PARK.

Organized 1894—no record of charter members.

Members, 1927—98.

Meet first Wednesday of each month, 2.30 P. M., Municipal Building.

Officers: President, Mrs. J. G. Dooley; Vice-President, Mrs. Charles A. Sidman; Treasurer, Mrs. C. B. Thompson; Secretary, Mrs. O. H. Steinberg, 388 Main Street.

WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB OF RIDGEFIELD PARK.

Organized September, 1923, with 13 members.

Members, 1927—51.

Meet second Monday of each month, 2.00 P. M., Municipal Building.

Officers: President, Mrs. A. F. Moran; Vice-President, Mrs. Lynch; Treasurer, Mrs. Higgins; Secretary, Mrs. J. Williams, 119 Edwin St.

WOMEN'S REPUBLICAN CLUB OF RIDGEFIELD PARK.

Organized February 1, 1924, with 12 members.

Members, 1927—40.

Meet first Friday of each month, 2.30 P. M., Municipal Building.

Officers: President, Mrs. Jerome Fisher; Vice-President, Mrs. T. M. Cook; Treasurer, Mrs. Hattie Ferry; Secretary, Mrs. Anna Henning, 4 Fourth St.



THE RIDGEFIELD PARK HOTEL WAS ONE OF BERGEN COUNTY'S FINEST VACATION ESTABLISHMENTS. THE HOTEL STOOD ON MT. VERNON STREET, FROM MAIN STREET TO THE RAILROAD. THE HOTEL BURNED DOWN IN 1883

THE RIDGEFIELD PARK HOTEL

There was a time when Bergen County was a "vacation land," an era that stretched from the Civil War to the "Gay 90's." There were advertisements for summer guests to spend time in the county, and railroad lines advertised special one-day or weekend/overnight excursions. There was much pride in Bergen County, as evidenced by the following advertisement in *The Bergen Democrat*:

"What little sense is manifested by rushing to Saratoga, Newport, or Long Branch where cannot be realized a particle of enjoyment.

"How much more agreeable is the quiet of the Ridgefield Park Hotel, or the Palisades Mountain House in Englewood or the Highwood Hotel in Tenafly."

These plush hotels were set on quiet, tree-shaded lawns with picnic grounds. There were bandstands, carriage driveways and sheds, horse and livery stables, even private boats and launches to take passengers into this wonderland of pleasure. Chandeliers blazed into the night air, sparkling over the clear water,

and elegant carriages filled the driveways. It was a time of galas, annual club dances, and political rallies when pleasure was not a spectator sport.

In this elegant surrounding stood the Ridgefield Park Hotel on Mt. Vernon Street from Old Hackensack Road (Main Street) west to the Hackensack River. It was built by Abraham Bronson in 1870 at a cost of \$70,000. It was 260 feet long and six stories high. There were entrances on Mt. Vernon Street, Old Hackensack Road, and Park Street (there was no Grove Street then).

Mr. Bronson described his hotel in an advertisement as follows:

"The new and elegant hotel opened on May 15, 1870, for the reception of boarders. It is situated in Ridgefield Park on the Midland Railroad, about ten miles from New York.

"Ridgefield Park is one of the finest suburban locations in the neighborhood of New York, possessing all the requisites for a pleasant residence during the summer months. The building is new, and was built expressly for a summer hotel. It contains all the modern improvements—billiard rooms, bath rooms, gas, splendid

wide piazza, large croquet grounds, magnificent grove, bathing and boating in the Hackensack River."

As many hotels of that era, the Ridgefield Park Hotel was an American Plan Hotel, hence the price of food was not listed but the wines were. Old Bourbon whiskey was \$2 a quart and East India Pale Ale was forty cents a quart.

Some time after 1875 the elegant hotel fell upon bad times and was sold to a Mrs. Bulman for \$23,000. As it was being remodeled in August 1883, it caught fire and was totally demolished. The fire equipment and manpower in that day were such that the volunteer firemen could only stand and watch the building burn.

The great hotels of that era are long gone, and with them a way of life, for to a great many people they were more than places of pleasure and travel. For some they were all they had in the way of home and family life. How nice it must have been to be a part of Ridgefield Park in those golden days before the turn of the century, the likes of which will never be seen again.



THE TOLL GATE AT RIDGEFIELD, BEFORE CROSSING THE OVERPECK CREEK INTO SOUTHERN RIDGEFIELD PARK. NOW THE SITE OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND A TWO LANE VEHICULAR BRIDGE.

THE BERGEN TURNPIKE

During the 19th Century, America was a quieter and a more complacent place to live. The time from 1865 until 1900 has often been referred to as the "Age of Innocence." Here in Ridgefield Park, however, sometimes tempers flared over things which are taken for granted today. There was anger and there were protests. One source for anger was the collecting of tolls on the Bergen Turnpike.

This road was established in 1660 as a free road coming from Communipaw in Jersey City. It was extended in 1718 to Weehawken and became part of the Bergen Turnpike in 1802. In that year the Bergen Turnpike Company was established. The purpose was to construct a road from Hackensack to Hoboken. At

their meeting, the Commissioners, Aaron Kitchel, John N. Cuming and William Colfax, decided that said road shall strike the Overpeck where it empties into the Hackensack River. This road shall be 4 rods wide (66½ feet). There shall be four tollgates as follows:

One at Fairview (Dan Kelly's Hotel); the second at Ridgefield (the bridge across the Overpeck); the third at the bridge to Little Ferry; and the fourth in Hackensack opposite the New York City Cemetery.

The toll rates to be established were: one-horse drawn wagon \$.05; one cart \$.05; one carriage \$.05; two-horse drawn cart \$.10; two-horse drawn carriage \$.10.

The Bergen Turnpike Company continued to charge farmers and others who

used this road through the years. Eventually people started to resent paying these fees, even though they knew the turnpike was a private road. At a meeting of the Bergen County Freeholders in 1898, A. J. Rodman, a Freeholder from Overpeck (Ridgefield Park), finally raised his voice in anger over the tolls collected on the Bergen Turnpike. He was opposed to paying said tolls. The minutes of the meeting show he called the turnpike a relic of barbarism and an incubus of oppression! He urged that the County take it over and put an end to this toll system. Many people agreed with Mr. Rodman, but the turnpike still had a few more years to go. The County, however, did take the road over in 1912 and abolished the toll system in 1915.

THE UNWRITTEN HISTORY OF RIDGEFIELD PARK (NOW WRITTEN BY HERB WATSON)

Long before our historians, Morrison, Murphy, and Fosdick took their quills in hand, there was a trail blazed across the south end of Ridgefield Park along the Overpeck Creek. The Ho-bo-ken Indians and the Hack-en-sack Tribe used the trail to swap their fish and corn. When the white man came, he saw great possibilities in the trail. He said, "we will make it a good road and charge people to use it. We will put poles across and call them pikes, and they shall be turned for passing when the toll is paid." Thus was born our first turnpike. We now had a man-made southern border. Later, trolley cars clanged along it and boat clubs were built on the river banks. Then the railroad decided to lay track on the west side, not one, but two. They really doubled with their spades. Now our western border was man-made.

Nothing happened for a long while until the Trentonians took a look at our little peninsula and said, "It is good, we can build bridges and put Route 6 through there and cut off the bottom of their town." Later, a good mayor had part of it sewed back on by getting the Trentonians to build a by-pass under Route 6 (46). This did not stop them so they decided that the new Turnpike (remember how it started) should stop somewhere. So why not on Route 46 in beautiful downtown Ridgefield Park. Three more bridges did the job at that time (but don't try to count them now).

Then Public Service decided to build a power plant. They said, "You look good to us, but you are not big enough for us, so we will hide away in a corner of your neighbor's yard where they won't see us and you folks can have the *pleasure of our company.*" The good mayor said, "Too bad, but if you do, give us your front side to look at and not your backside. "O.K.", they agree "and we will light up your beautiful creek with our power."

The Trentonians never took their eyes off good old Ridgefield Park. "Why not," they said, "build Route 80 across the north end of Ridgefield Park. We will put in a big hole and

they may never see it." The good mayor said, "Nay, give us not all of Route 80, put some in someone else's yard." So Bogota and Teaneck share in this "holesome" venture. Now our northern border was man-made, with some of Bogota in Ridgefield Park and part of Ridgefield Park in Bogota, and the Grand Canyon of Bergen County in all three towns.

The natives looked over what was left of their little village, surrounded and cut up by rivers, roads and railroads and they said, "What next? haven't we had enough?" "No," they agreed, "we must have one more mile of highway." our east side is still partly open to the creek, Can't Trenton see that?" So for ten years, they cried for one more mile. The good mayor was no longer in office and they waited and waited.

The Trentonians were confused. They said, "We don't know which way to head. Shall we build it with our left hand or our right hand." They could not decide, so they did not hem us in, they just hawed.

Then on the 4th of July, they saw happy Ridgefield Park natives enjoying fireworks. "Aha," they whispered in fiendish glee, "We will build the missing mile right past the park so they can't have fireworks anymore, and maybe we can mess up their High School site, too."

So now, folks, you know why you can't leave town without going over or under a bridge. You have about 10 choices, or you may swim, sail, or fly. But, be careful if you fly - our friendly skies are united with the wings of man as we live under Teterboro Airport. Now, we have 2 rivers that we do not use for boating, swimming, or fishing. We have 2 railroads that we cannot ride, unless we hop a freight. And we have many acres of concrete that can be used very little for local traffic. Now Bird Seed City is using our eastern shore and many of our natives are concerned about the traffic that will be going from there to here and back again. So, happy motoring - but keep your nose, eyes, and ears closed. Pollution and decibels are part of our lives.

When this article was written, Mrs. Hildegard Tucker Cleveland was unaware that the Village would be celebrating its Tercentennial. With permission of both the author and Tower Press, we reprint the article in its entirety as it appeared in the February, 1985 issue of "Good Old Days."

I REMEMBER R.P., N.J. & OZZIE NELSON

by Hildegard Tucker Cleveland

R. P. is Ridgefield Park — a beautiful little town in Northern New Jersey, close in commuting distance to New York City. The town fits its name, being a peninsular-like ridge, bordered by a wide swamp, the Overpeck Creek on one side and the Hackensack River on the other.

Our father bought our newly built house in the upper end of the town at 98 Edwin Street in 1910, when I was three years old and my brother, LeRoy (we called him Roy), was ten. It was said that Edwin Street was one of the first streets to be electrified — in that town, that is. Our chandeliers were a combination of gas and electric, both in the event that if the electricity failed, one could always depend on the gas.

Daddy graduated with three degrees — medical, dental and pharmacological. However, he never did open an office or practice in our town. Mamma said that after buying the house he didn't have enough money to risk trying to open a practice again in a strange place. We were always told that Daddy wanted to get Roy and me off the "city streets" and it was enough that he was able to bring us to live in this lovely place where grass was green and we didn't have to be taken to the park for fresh air. So, instead of going into practice again, he took a job with Parke Davis & Co., lecturing at medical colleges on the uses of their new drugs. The big, gold plaster tooth which had hung over the door of his New York office now lay forgotten and dust covered in the attic.

When my baby teeth were ready

to come out, he would sit me on the front porch with the dental pliers in his hand, showing the neighborhood children

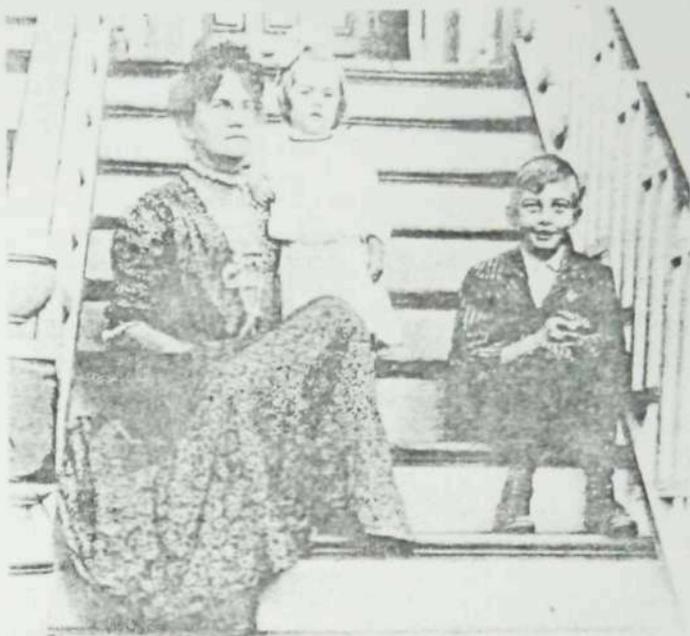
how brave I was while he yanked the offending member. For this act of bravery, I and any other child with a loose tooth and willing to submit to the ordeal were given a peppermint patty. Whether or not the Nelson boys were present, I do not know. That was just too many light years ago.

My father was a failure in the eyes of his more affluent family. True, he was a dreamer, but he was a happy man and we loved him dearly. He was also frustrated in many other things, as an artist, world

traveler, poet, playwright, and stage director. He even manufactured cold creams and other concoctions in our basement. Once, he used some depilatory

mess on one forearm and part of his chest. Believe it or not, the hair never did grow back. Daddy was going to make us a fortune on that deal, but sadly and typical of Daddy, he forgot the formula. Edward James Tucker, M.D. was loved and admired by many, ridiculed by a few.

Among his admirers was the father of Ozzie and David Nelson, who lived around the corner. I guess Mr. Nelson was also a frustrated something or other. I don't recall what his business in life was, but I surely can remember he and Daddy putting together their combined efforts of showmanship. There were the "Christy Minstrels", a la Nelson and Tucker with Ozzie and David and my brother Roy as black-faced end men and Mr. Nelson handling the role of "Mr. Interlocutor", black faced also. Little Ozzie plunked away on his



Mamma, Roy and me.
We moved to Ridgefield Park in 1910.



Mamma, on her way
to be "Liberty".

soon-to-be-famous banjo. David and my brother clacked their ebony "bones". Mamma and Mrs. Nelson were sure to be in the cast somewhere, but I can't recall where.

Then came the countless performances of Gilbert & Sullivan's operettas which the two men produced and directed and I despise to this day. I can still see Daddy on the floor of the firehouse, painting his backdrops for the performance of H.M.S. Pinafore on yards and yards of white canvas. I can still hear the taunts of some local brats singsonging with their heads through the open window, "Hilda's father is a nut." But I didn't care. I can still see little Mrs. Nelson tripping across the stage, singing, "I'm called little Buttercup, dear little Buttercup . . ." As I remember Mrs. Nelson in those faraway days, I seem to be reminded of Ozzie's wife, Harriet Hilliard.

Some of the other projects my father and Mr. Nelson worked on together for the "edification" of the little town were the tennis court and club. Together they dug, raked, rolled and taped the ground to set up the court. I also seem to recall something about the starting of a boat club, but since we never did have anything closer to a boat than Roy's canoe, I can't remember much about that project.

I'm sorry I don't have any Nelson pictures, but who could predict the Hollywood and TV fame of a local high school football hero back in the early '20's?

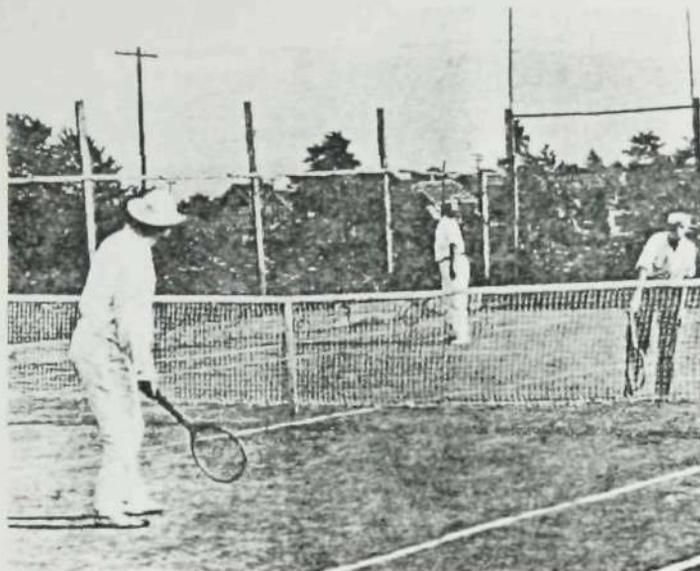
And then there were the Fourth of July parades. Every organization made a float. Daddy always set one up for the Sons and Daughters of Liberty, or America. He always insisted that Mamma be the "statue". That was because he hired the hay wagon and team of horses himself and draped the wagon in his own bunting. Naturally, there was jealousy among

the women, but he said that if someone else wanted to be "Liberty", let their husbands do the work. And so, once again would be my lovely mother, with a white sheet draped over her shoulders, a paper crown on her head, and in her hand, the fake torch. An embarrassed smile played across her face, but Daddy's pipe was clenched in his teeth as he doggedly drove the team. Ashes spilled heedlessly over his white duck pants but a triumphant grin was on his face, for once again he was showing his beautiful, blonde young wife to the uncaring town. My father was twenty-five years older than Mamma and he resented with fury when she was mistaken for his daughter, yet he surely did love to show her off.

Daddy changed his theme for the 1917 war parade. This time Mamma was a Red Cross nurse, bending over a badly wounded soldier. The soldier was Roy. Roy was about 17 in war time and wanted so badly to go "over there", but he was ailing even then and Daddy wouldn't let him go, so he had to content himself by donning his old and outgrown Scout suit and lying down on a cot in the wagon bed, swathed in ketchup-splashed bandages.

These early recollections are sometimes vague, but very clear in certain recall is the thrill when Ozzie selected me to ride on the bar of his bike! Not the handle bar, mind you, but the bar itself where, uncomfortable as it was or not, you got to sit up close, cuddled somewhat in one arm as you flew screaming down the hill, no brakes!

Somehow, I always liked David better than Ozzie. In fact, when I was older, I had a real but useless crush on him. He was far more the attractive of the two boys, yet somehow Ozzie had that certain, inexplicable charisma which drew people to him like steel filings to a magnet. He was more gregarious, hence more popular and sought after. David was old-



Daddy, in the foreground, with Mr. Nelson on their new tennis court.



Roy, on his way to be the "wounded" soldier.

er, more reserved and quiet. Another big thrill of a lifetime came when Ozzie selected you to tear down the hill with, on his or your sled. In the winter, Barnes Estate opened a frozen field which ran down the long ridge over the frozen swamp below. You held your Flexible Flyer up close to your chest and stomach, and with Ozzie's arms around you from behind, you both ran and then dropped to the sled for a belly whopper, you below and Ozzie on top. Crashing into the frozen cattails of the marsh below, you were the envy of any girl waiting. You were the one Ozzie chose. Also, you considered you had it made if he selected you to smash his sled into on the way down if he were sledging alone.

Roy had a big-six seater with footrests on each side. It was seldom that we squirts got to ride on that.

Later on in high school, Ozzie Nelson became the football hero, Captain of our team. I can still hear our screeches of "Yeah! Ozzie!" as he came frothing out onto the field.

The forerunner of his Hotel New Yorker Band in the Big Band era was our own R. P. High School Band. It was a really good one, headed up by you know who, plunking away on his old banjo. It was at about this time, I guess, that he used to come over to our house quite a bit, mostly to teach Roy to play his new tenor banjo.

It was shortly after this that we moved away from the town. Roy died. He was just twenty-three and I, fifteen. Roy's ailment had finally developed into tuberculosis. It was fatal in those days. Among his many friends who offered their blood to save him, I

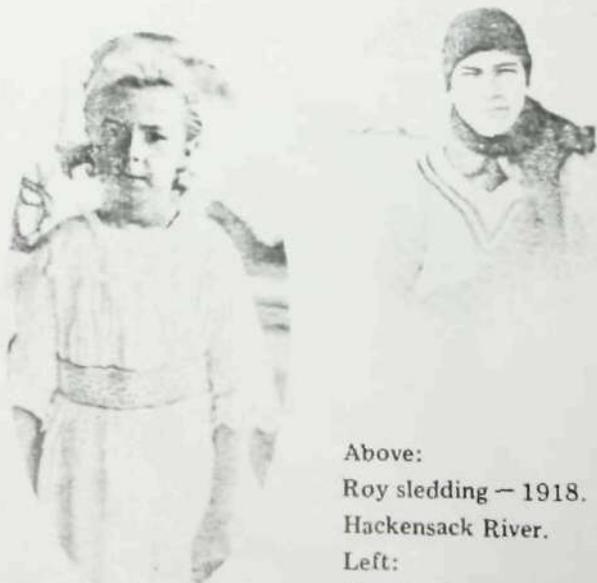
can only recall the one who did, John Lusitana. Perhaps his was the only one whose blood was the same matched type. Mamma couldn't stand the memories in the town after we buried Roy and so we left.

I didn't see Ozzie again for many years, and by that time he was well on his way to fame. His band was playing at the Hotel New Yorker and Harriet Hilliard was his girl singer. A group of us had gone over to the hotel for dining and dancing. Despite the Depression and fears of the early thirties, we did have fun times. I sent a note to Ozzie, asking him that if he remembered me, to join us at our table. He came over and introduced Harriet. They were planning to leave for Hollywood shortly. I never heard of them again until I saw the Ozzie and Harriet TV show, with their boys, Ricky and David.

I have often thought that I would like to take a trip back to the town someday, but now in these twilight years of living in Summerfield, Florida, Ridgefield Park is really many moons away. ■



On a camping trip — Roy, me, Mamma, and Daddy.



Above:
Roy sledding — 1918.
Hackensack River.
Left:
Myself,
on Edwin Street.

RIDGEFIELD PARK AS IT WAS FIFTY YEARS AGO—WARREN H. ABBOTT

Looking back over the years I recall it was on October 1st, 1884, that I saw Ridgefield Park for the first time. The town in those days did not resemble that of today in any way except in one particular, that being the two railroads and stations which were located on the same sites now occupied by the present buildings.

In those days Ridgefield Park was a farming section with a population of less than 100 persons. There were no improved streets. No sidewalks or street lights. It was a favorite pastime for the small boys, during the winter months, to meet their returning fathers at the railroad stations after sundown and guide them home by lantern light.

Trains of the West Shore Railroad, then known as the New York West Shore and Buffalo, made no stops at either of the stations. Person wishing to use this line would travel as far as Little Ferry Junction by the Susquehanna and there transfer for points on the other railroad.

Before the days of rural free delivery and having no post office in town it was necessary to use the Little Ferry office, which was the nearest, then located in the building since known as the Seven Mile House (this building burned last month) just across the bridge and then used as a general store.

There was no public school and the children of school age attended the district school in Teaneck then situated on the Fort Lee Road just east of Teaneck Road.

When the urge for a local school became so great about a year later a meeting of citizens was called for the purpose of planning for what has since become the school system. The only room in town large enough to hold such a gathering was the waiting room in the Ridgefield Park railroad station. Plans were made there to erect a new school district and establish a public school.

Voters were few and the political division was then the Township of Ridgefield. The casting of ballots on election days was done at times either in Fort Lee, Ridgefield or Fairview. For transportation of voters to and from the polling places was furnished by farmers who used their large market wagons.

Prior to 1884 Ridgefield Park was a summer resort frequented by well-to-do New Yorkers. A large hotel stood at what is now the corner of Main and Mt. Vernon streets. The grounds were laid out as a beautiful park and extended west to the railroads. On Paulson avenue at the foot of Grove street, were located the service buildings for the hotel. These buildings included a very large barn and carriage

house, ice house and pumping station which supplied the hotel with water from a large natural spring situated on the west side of the avenue.

The hotel burned late in the fall of 1883 and was never rebuilt.

A few years before my first acquaintance with the town a man of far vision saw the future of Ridgefield Park and built some very fine houses at large expense. Among these was the property later owned by the Mehrhof family. The house was located on the present site of the Elks' Club. It was reported at that time that this house cost \$45,000.00 to build, while the barn and carriage house represented an expenditure of \$12,000.00.

Two other houses constructed at the same time are those now occupied by Dr. Corn and the Jewish Synagogue, at the corner of Bergen avenue and Park street.

As we started up Mt. Vernon St. on that day fifty years ago to take up our residence in the old Colonial house on Hackensack Road (now Main street) and Park street, the sight to greet us was one long to be remembered. On the right was the great Manor House with its spacious grounds extending south of the station from the river to the Hackensack Road, while on the left the beautiful hotel park with its stately elms and charming walks still unmarred by the oncoming home seekers.

For the benefit of those who have come to the town in recent years I will draw a word picture as it was in those early days.

Arriving at the top of the hill and turning right at Hackensack Road to walk south we first came to the Christie farm which extended all the way from the Hackensack River to the Overpeck Creek. The homestead (still standing) built of red sandstone and dating before the war for independence stood back from the road on our left. Adjoining the Christie property was the Brewster farm. Mr. T. M. Brewster had just completed and moved into a large new home. While directly back under the great spreading red beech tree stood the old Brewster homestead and occupied by the Chas. R. Brewster family. Across the street on the left at the bend of the road Horatio N. Brewster made his home in a quaint old house. Down Ridgefield avenue were four or five small houses occupied by Brewster farmhands.

At the corner of Winant and Ridgefield avenues, where it still stands, was the Winant home. Proceeding along Winant avenue, to Teaneck Road, we came to the home of Judge Voorhees, the town's first Justice of the Peace. Across the road the Thos. R. Lindley family lived. This family

Warren Abbott was one of our early settlers, arriving here in 1884. This recollection was printed in the "Bulletin" in 1934. Lillian Mergler kept a copy of the article which is now in the Library, and is reprinted here in its entirety.

was the largest in the town then or since—sixteen children.

Our route now takes us north on Teaneck Road about an eighth of a mile to the David Christie home. Continuing on, at Park street, there stood, as now, the home of Thomas Marshall and his family. Beyond on the right a few hundred feet the burned ruins of an earlier settler. The Clausen truck farm came next at the end of Preston street. To the left at the intersection of Teaneck Road and Grand avenue, lived the Van Iderstine family, who framed that part of the town. Across the road was the home of the Melias' who then farmed the Hazelton property. This was one of the largest farms in the whole town. It covered an area from Overpeck Creek to Queen Anne Road. On the west side of the road there remained the ruins of the old Hazelton home.

At the extreme north end of Teaneck Road within the town limits were on either side the homes of Edwin M. Barnes and his father-in-law, Mortimer Smith.

Crossing through the fields of the Hazelton property to the Queen Anne Road we came to the Paulson farm occupying the entire northwestern section of the town. Under the hill on the river bank was the homestead then possessed by the Augustus Duane family who worked the farm.

Traveling south on Queen Anne Road at the head of Austin street, stood a large house in which P. H. Smith and his father-in-law, John Marshall, made their home. Across the street on the northwest corner of Preston street stood as it does now, the home of Samuel Breakey. The house holds the distinction of being the first built in the new development of Ridgefield Park. About a block below on the corner of Lincoln avenue and Austin street, nearing completion, was a house owned by John Faulkner. This home was destroyed by a fire within a month after the family moved into it.

Continuing down Hackensack Road to Park street, one arrived at the old house a portion of which dated back before the Revolution, where we made our home for the first year in town. The property was owned by Thomas Howe. Next and on the corner of Mt. Vernon street and Hackensack Road on the site of the Overpeck Trust Company building, was a small

house owned by a family named Shay. On the south-east corner of Mt. Vernon street and Bergen avenue was the fine large home of Peter Kenny, while just a block north were the houses at Bergen avenue and Park street, earlier referred to.

This in 1884 was Ridgefield Park, a town of less than thirty homes.

A far-seeing real estate developer named Daniel Taylor, had shortly before bought one of the Paulison farms, which comprised all of the property bounded by the

Hackensack Road on the east and north, 100 feet south of Webster street and west by the river. He cut the streets thru and subdivided into building lots, which it may be interesting to note in passing, were offered for sale at that time for \$65.00 and \$75.00 per lot, according to location.

From this start Taylor and others bought farms and other available plots for subdivision until Ridgefield Park soon ceased to be a farming section and became a fast growing suburban town.

O Ridgefield Park upon the meadows,
That towers o'er the "Hackie" still,
You are our quaint little village
From which our children draw their fill.
You give them hope and education
And help to make their dreams come true.
O Ridgefield Park upon the meadows
We surely do love you.

Congratulations are in order.
For three hundred years the world has seen
What once was but a lonely outpost
Turned into the American dream.
So once again we'll raise our voices
And let the church bells ring
O Ridgefield Park upon the meadows
It's to you "Of Thee We Sing"

Though we may be small in stature
And our numbers may be few,
We'll stand against all Bergen County
When it comes to the Red, White and Blue,
So let's all stand among the counted
And shout out good and loud
"O Ridgefield Park upon the meadows
You really make us proud."

To Ridgefield Park we will be faithful
For Ridgefield Park we'll do or die
We'll send the message to all others
That we walk with our heads held high.
No matter what may be the future
Hand in hand we'll see it through.
O Ridgefield Park upon the meadows
"Happy Birthday and God Bless You."

Original -January 24, 1985

Thomas Trevelise
Copyrite: Public Service Bus #12
Thomas Trevelise
28-Brewster Ave

SARA KIERSTED'S BEADED POUCH

For years a local legend has persisted that on the banks of the Hackensack River the children of Chief Oratam presented a beaded pouch to Sarah Kiersted, then 17, a prominent New Amsterdam figure who received from Oratam 2,260 acres of land in the Ridgefield Park-Bogota-Teaneck area for her services as an interpreter.

Who was Sarah Kiersted, who merited such consideration from Oratam and his people, and what of the pouch?

Sarah arrived in America at the age of 6 and was brought up at Beverwyck, near Fort Orange, the foremost fur trading center of the Dutch. Her father, Roelaf Jans, had come as a superintendent for Patroon Van Rensselaer's spreading manor lands. Here Sarah had ample opportunity to learn the ways and language of the Indians.

At 13 she was sufficiently skilled to appear publicly as an Indian interpreter. In later years she served as interpreter for Dutch Governor Peter Stuyvesant during his famous treaty making with the Five Nations. She also taught the Indian language in New Amsterdam. Annetje Jans, Sarah's mother, moved to New Amsterdam after her husband died. There she remarried. Her second husband was Dominie Bogardus, the first settled minister in New Amsterdam.

It was Sarah, then in her teens, accompanied by her stepfather, Dominie Bogardus, who was interpreter at the negotiations that made possible the 1641 settlement of whites

on the land of the Hackensack in what is today Bergen County. This settlement lay close to the first fort in the county, on the west side of the Hackensack River just south of the mouth of the Overpeck Creek.

At 18 Sarah married Dr. Hans Kiersted, the best physician of his day. Family traditions say that she frequently visited the Indian villages along the Hackensack, teaching Dutch crafts to Indian women as she sat in the center of their circle.

One legend tells of her rescuing the youngest child of Oratam from a fire and of her saving his life by smearing his burns with white man's ointment.

So much for Sarah, but what about the pouch? Nothing more is heard about it in Bergen County until 1941, 16 years after the Paul Hanway family had moved from Philadelphia to Ridgefield Park. The Hanways' are descendants of Sarah Kiersted. One day Mrs. Hanway, while reading a local history, discovered that she was living on the very site that had been deeded to Sarah.

Meanwhile, back in Philadelphia, Mrs. Wilmer Hanway, Paul's mother, received a telephone call asking her to come to Long Island to accept from an aged woman a valuable family heirloom. Mrs. Hanway had never seen this woman, although as members of the Kiersted family, they had corresponded through the years.

Mrs. Hanway went to Long Island to receive the heirloom, which turned out to be Sarah

Kiersted's pouch. With the pouch Mrs. Hanway received instructions, in turn, to pass it on to a descendant. This she did before her death by giving the pouch to her son Paul, who has it today.

The pouch is flat and is made of red cloth. Each side has a distinctly different design in grass-strung beads, from its wide top to the finger-like divisions of the bottom. Such pouches were the Indians' pockets, used on journeys to carry parched corn or gunshot. Ceremonial pouches, such as the Hanways, were used to carry precious or sacred articles.

The late Frank Morrison of Ridgefield Park, an Indian scholar, had no doubt the Hanway pouch is the one which passed from the children of Oratam to Sarah Kiersted.

Thomas Dorsey, better known by his Indian name of Tom Two Arrows, examined the pouch in 1958 and said: "Yes, the flower design is definitely Lenape, and these small beads preceded the larger trading beads in this area. It looks to me like the work of our Seventeenth Century Lenape Indians.

Dr. Lewis Haggerty, well known Indian scholar living in Hackensack in 1959, also firmly believes in the pouch's authenticity. He was a collector of Indian artifacts.

Though the tongues which might answer all our questions have been silent for a long time, it well can remind us of our inheritance from a primitive people who gave better than they received.

THE LENNI LENAPE INDIANS . . .

During the course of time, the landscape as well as the biological existence of most any area, are subjected to gradual change. In the midst of the continual industrial and residential development of Northern New Jersey, little of the terrain remains in its natural state.

Many high areas have been leveled and swamps filled in. Much of the area has been sealed, in the construction of highways and parking lots.

Preserving the area's known historical facts therefore becomes important. It is difficult to visualize a scattering of Indian Villages, and a wilderness of virgin forests, as ever having existed here.

However, based upon the records of early missionaries, as well as upon the artifacts left behind by our aboriginal predecessors, these conditions did exist, when early explorers arrived. In earlier times, when farming was the major industry here, almost any plowed field might yield its treasures, to those whose eyes were trained to recognize stones that had been flaked or ground by the Indians.

Historians and archaeologists generally agree, that the Indians were members of the ancient Mongol Race. It is believed that they migrated from Asia across the Bering Sea to North America sometime after the last ice age, which occurred some 17,000 years ago.

The Indians who inhabited what is now the State of New Jersey called themselves "Lenni-Lenape", meaning "Original People." They have been classified as Eastern Forest Indians. They lived in log houses and bark covered wigwams. In addition to being skilled hunters and fishermen, they also cultivated fields, and raised crops such as corn, squash and beans.

The rivers were the gateway through which they initially entered our state. The infant mortality rate was extremely high, and it is believed that there were never more than several thousand Indians inhabiting the state at any one time.

To the northern portion of New Jersey, the valley of the Hackensack River had positive indications of occupation by these aboriginal people. From the river's confluence with Kill van Kull, and extending northward into Rockland County, New York, were once located low hills and banks of sand. Numerous relics had been found at all of these sites, which were inhabited by the Hackensacks

and Kindreds. Nearness to the river and its tributaries, which were the source of much of their food supply, made these locations ideal. The lightness of the soil made it easy to till, in addition to providing good drainage.

The largest Indian Campsite in the Bergen County area existed in Ridgefield Park. It extended from the junction of Overpeck Creek and the Hackensack River, northward along the east bank of the river, for a distance of nearly a mile. Its northern boundary extended eastward across Teaneck Road to *Overpeck Creek*. This conclusion is based upon the great number of relics of permanent camp life which were found in the area.

Most of the relics found in Bergen County were made of stone or clay. Few metal objects were found. Those made from perishable materials such as wood, bone, shell or hide have long turned to dust.

One notable exception was a dugout canoe, constructed from a white oak log. It had been found in 1868 by the late Judge Garrett G. Ackerson, when he was constructing a house in Hackensack, just southeast of the Bergen County Court House. It was later presented to the "Bergen County Historical Society" by the Judge's grandson and namesake.

At times young men of the tribe would travel considerable distances to natural outcroppings of the desired types of rocks. There they would break off fragments to a workable size and bring them back to the village. There more skilled craftsmen would undertake the final refinement by chipping and flaking. Needless to say, the chipping and flaking of stone implements is now a lost art!

The local tribes were quite adept in the art of making pottery. They made cooking and storage pots, as well as clay smoking pipes. Fragments found along the Hackensack River, which were carefully examined, were found to contain pieces of shell, mica, as well as meadow hay. These substances were used for tempering, and contributed to the baking process. There was little or no decoration on local pottery, except a herringbone pattern on the necks. The maker's fingerprints were also often preserved on the pots. At a later date the white man utilized the clay from these deposits to make brick, in the vicinity of Little Ferry. Indian place names still exist in our area. When the Indians named an area, the

name was usually based upon some physical aspect, which was of significance to them.

For example, the rock was of great importance to them. It often marked their boundaries. They also had their "Council Rock", which was a meeting place for important events, as well as for religious festivals.

OVERPECK was "The Stream Behind The Rock". The rock was probably the Palisades, which overlook the winding Overpeck Creek in the valley below.

QUOCKSOC referred to what is now the Borough of Little Ferry. It meant "The Place Of The Turtle."

Here, on the west bank of the Hackensack River, on September 17, 1643, Indians staged a massacre and totally destroyed a trading post by fire.

MOONACHIE was "The Place Where We Dig." Here they dug clay for pottery and pipe making.

KINDERKAMACK applied to portions of Oradell and Emerson. It meant "The Dancing or Festive Place."

TAPPAN meant "The Low Place." The domain of the Tappans extended from Sparkill southward and westward through Closter, Cresskill, Harrington Park, Haworth, Norwood, Old Tappan and westerly through Oradell, to the Hackensack River. Then from the New Bridge area on the south and northward to the land of the Munsees. The Munsees occupied the higher lands extending into Rockland County, New York.

PASCAK is derived from the Lenape word "Passikachen," and meant to "Make Boards."

PARAMUS is the word for "Little Meadow."

MAHWAH - its literary meaning is "The Field."

CAMPGAW - derived from the words "Kaaka", the grouse, and "Gaw", the woodchuck.

RAMAPO - "All Rock."

HO-HO-KUS - "Ho" was an exclamation of joy and "Hokes", bark of a tree. The probably meaning was "a place where trees with a bark which had some special medicinal or ceremonial use grow."

PASSAIC - "The Valley." The Passaic River Valley also had numerous camp sites, as evidenced by the many types of artifacts of permanent camp life, which were found there.

ACQUACANOK - "The place of the

OUR ABORIGINAL PREDECESSORS

bush net." This referred to a place in the Passaic River where a weir of stones, brought to a point, had been constructed. The weir was built from each shore, at down stream angles, with a pile of brush at an opening near the middle. This constituted a primitive but effective fish trap.

SECAUCUS - From the Indian word "Siskakes." "The place of small stones."

HOBOKEN - From the Indian word "Hopocan" meaning "The Pipe Place." The name would have a perfect application there now, with the tunnel extending under the Hudson River to Manhattan. However, it probably referred to stone smoking pipes. The material for these came from Serpentine Rock. This rock is firmer than red shale, and softer than the rock of the Palisades Ridge.

WEEHAWKEN was "The Winter Place." This name applied to the flat plain 10 to 15 feet above the level of the Hudson River. It had a grass covering and numerous trees. In addition, there were several spring fed brooks. It was a pleasant sun pocketed place, sheltered on the north and west from stormy winter winds, by the high rock cliffs. It faced a river which was too salty to freeze over. It had an abundance of salt water fish, as well as those usually found in fresh water. There was a natural protection from attacks by more warlike tribes to the north, since the upper reaches of the Hudson River do freeze over.

The "Old Hackensack Area" consisted of what is now Ridgefield Park, Bogota, and that portion of Teaneck lying south of Cedar Lane. Teaneck is not an Indian Name. It was the Dutch words "Tiene Nek," meaning "Little Neck." This name distinguished it from the larger neck of land to the east - the Palisade Ridge.

While the Indians travelled the area's waterways quite extensively with their canoes, there were a number of trails as well. There was one trail which led down Dan Kelly's Hill in Fairview, through Ridgefield along Grand Avenue, Palisades Park, Leonia, Englewood, Tenafly and Sparkill, New York. It led to the village site of the Tappans and Nyacks.

Another trail crossed the Overpeck Creek between Ridgefield and Ridgefield Park, at approximately the same location as the existing Bergen Turnpike Bridge.

An Indian Trail also made a crossing of the Hackensack River in the vicinity of

the VonSteuben House in River Edge.

Kinderkamack Road was once an Indian Trail, which led up as far north as the present city of Albany, New York.

In order to protect themselves from the swarms of mosquitoes, the Indians rubbed the exposed portions of their bodies with rendered bear grease, as well as maintaining smokey, smoldering fires.

During the hot, humid weather, many of the local Indians would paddle their dugout canoes along the Hackensack to Staten Island. There they would spend the summer, enjoying the cooling sea breezes. The northeasterly portion of the island was the summer domain of the Hackensacks. Relics of their occupation had at one time abounded there.

Any story about local Indians would be incomplete without making mention of their famed sachem, Chief Oratam, who was born in Teaneck in 1577. His people justly called him "Wowoatam" - "The Wise, Experienced and Skillful One." The records indicate that he was a realist. Being cognizant of the fact that his people were outnumbered and outgunned, he strove to co-exist with the white settlers. His displayed understanding and psychology at least equal to those who came to conquer and destroy. The evils resulting from the consumption of alcohol, introduced by the settlers, was the chief cause of most of the Indian squabbles. They simply could not handle firewater! The Dutch attempted to suppress the liquor traffic, but without much success. Ultimately they turned to Oratam, and appointed him as America's first prohibition agent. He was authorized to confiscate any firewater found among his people. However, no stipulation was made as to its disposition.

Oratam had led his people wisely for a generation. He died in Teaneck in 1667 at the age of 90. It is believed that he is buried in Staten Island, said to be the burial ground for the honored dead.

As a fitting conclusion to this story, it is well to point out that while the settlers looked down upon the Indians as inferior, in reality they had founded a culture long before the arrival of the pale face. They worshipped "The Great Spirit In The Sky." They interpreted his lightning and thunder as displeasure with some earthly matters. Their bountiful food supply was looked upon as his blessings, for which they gave thanks. These blessings were something which was not to be wasted.

They never killed wantonly, nor caught more fish than they could consume. In reality, they were our first conservationists! They were a resourceful, rugged, yet kindly race. Initially they bore gifts and greeted the settlers peacefully. Unfortunately for them, their weapons and implements of the Stone Age were no match for gunpowder and steel. Hence they came out second best in their struggle for survival.

However, they certainly merit an honorable place in history! I have been interested in Indian Artifacts since October 12, 1924, at which time I made my first find in a wooded area of Little Ferry.

In the spring of 1925 I began working on the Clausen Farm in Little Ferry after school hours and during the summer months. It was here that I found the bulk of my collection.

I am a member of the North Jersey Archaeological Society. It was my good fortune to have known the late Mr. Frank A. Morrison, a former Ridgefield Park Attorney. He had been Vice-President of the Bergen County Historic Society and Chairman of its Archaeological Committee.

He was an amateur archaeologist, whose chief hobby was not merely finding numerous Indian Artifacts. He also did considerable research on the history of the Lenni Lenape Indians. It was from the records of early missionaries that he learned about the language, customs and beliefs of the Red Men.

Translating local Indian place names which still survive was not an easy task, since there were several Lenape dialects. In addition, racial origin of the missionaries also varied. There were Dutch, French, Swedish and English Missionaries, all of whom would receive varied phonic impressions from Indian words. Therefore, none of his opinions were intended to be final, nor to deny any other opinion held by anyone else.

Mr. Morrison very generously shared his knowledge and opinions with anyone who displayed interest in his hobby.

Until someone is able to disprove his translations, I will view them as authentic!

Jerry W. Komarek
Little Ferry, New Jersey



TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY CLASS ROOM.

SCHOOLS

Ridgefield Park's first public school classes were held in a room over a general store in Sheils' Hall, located on Lincoln Avenue and Park Street. This building is now a three-family apartment house. Prior to that time, children from the Village attended classes in a building on Fort Lee Road, just east of Teaneck Road. In 1886 the first school building was erected on the corner of Hobart Street and Euclid Avenue (then called Sixth Street and Central Street, respectively). This was a one-room structure that had an enrollment of twenty pupils with one teacher. This building only lasted six years, then was demolished and a new four-room school was erected on the site. The four-room building served as the kindergarten room of Washington Irving School for many years.

In 1904 Washington Irving was built at a cost of \$30,000. The building was made of brick, with slate stairs leading to the second floor. The main entrance was on Euclid Avenue with a door for boys on the north side and one for girls on the south side of the building. The third floor of this school was used for high school classes until another school was built in



SCHOOL #2
- EIGHTH STREET AND HACKENSACK AVENUE

the West View section, along 8th Street. Washington Irving School was Public School #1 and remained standing until 1971, when it was torn down. The area once occupied by Washington Irving is now the site of Fellowship Park.

As the Village continued to grow, the need for an additional school was apparent. A two-story wooden frame building was built in 1897 at the intersection of Lincoln Avenue and Eighth Street, the northwest corner, opposite the present Lincoln School. This school had dormers and a large bell in the center of the roof. Though this school started as an elementary school (Public School #2), it became the first building to house the high school in 1912 and remained in use until 1917 when a high school was opened on Bergen Avenue and Hobart Street. (Prior to 1912, Village students attended Hackensack High School.) After World War I (1918), School #2 was purchased by the Ridgefield Park American Legion Post. At the time the Legion Post was one of the first in the country to have its own meeting hall. This site is today occupied by two 2-family houses.

Ridgefield Park was growing steadily, especially in the West View section. On land that originally belonged to the Paulison Estate, another school was built. In 1896 Lincoln School was built facing Lincoln Avenue between Hackensack Avenue and Summit Street. It opened in September of 1897 with a festive corner celebration. Lincoln School was just a short distance from School #2. This two-story brick and concrete building, complete with shop, kitchen, auditorium, slate stairs, and modern plumbing, was a welcome addition to the school system. The students had a shorter walk than going to Washington Irving. In 1924 an eight-room addition with a gymnasium was added to the north end of the school. Miss Theresa Huber, who started her career as teacher in school #2 teaching Grades 1, 2, and 3, became the principal of Lincoln School. She was the first and only woman to this date to serve as principal in the Village of Ridgefield Park. She held that position until she retired.

Ridgefield Park soon needed another building in the southern part of town. The Board of Education was authorized to issue bonds for \$50,000. to purchase a site and to erect Public School #3. Known as Grant School, it was built on Henry Street and Teaneck Road in 1908. Everyone in the community was very excited about the opening and large crowds attended the ground breaking and laying of the cornerstone. This building was made of brick with limestone trimmings on the entrances and windows, had a slate roof and copper gutters. It was con-



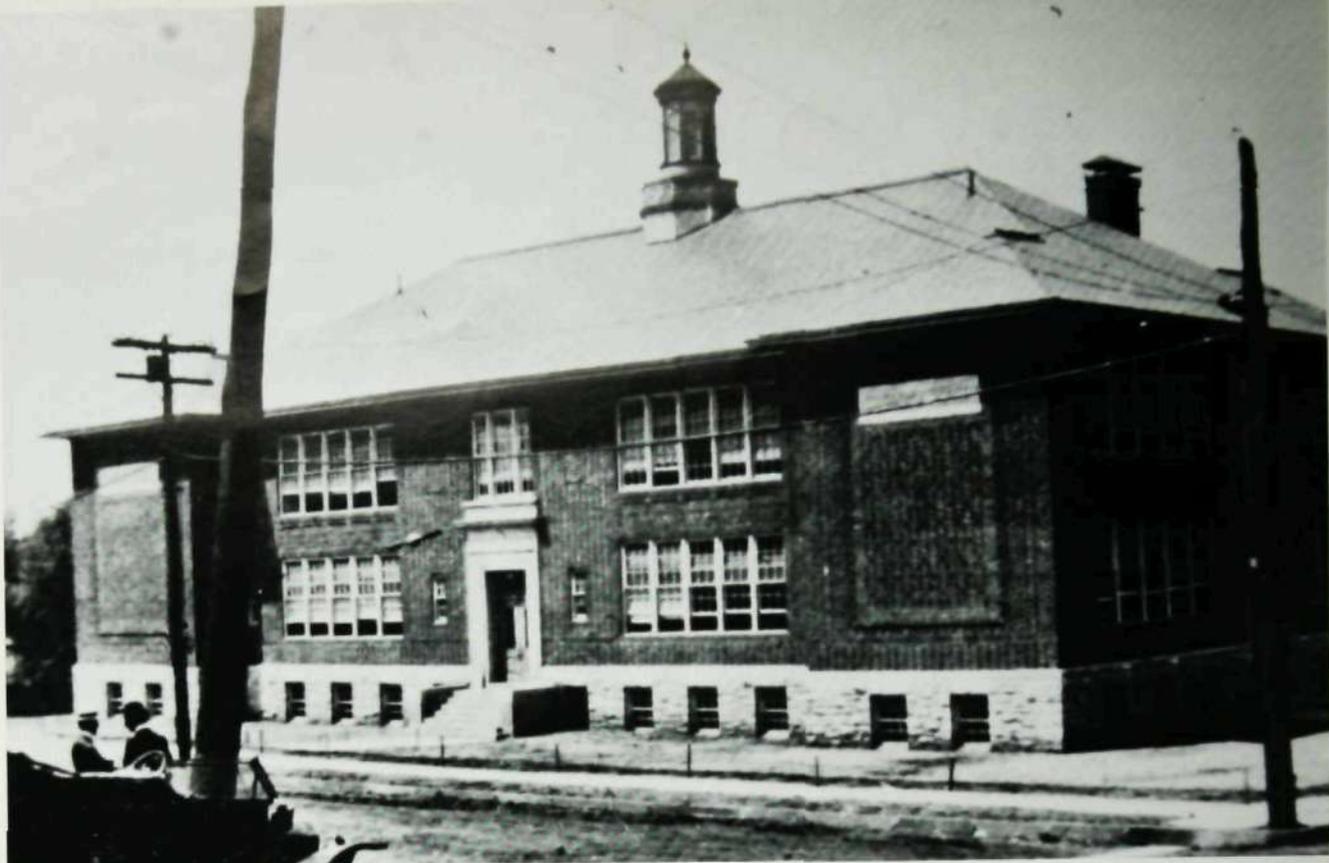
SCHOOL #1 - WASHINGTON IRVING SCHOOL



SCHOOL #3 - GRANT SCHOOL



ST. FRANCIS PAROCHIAL SCHOOL



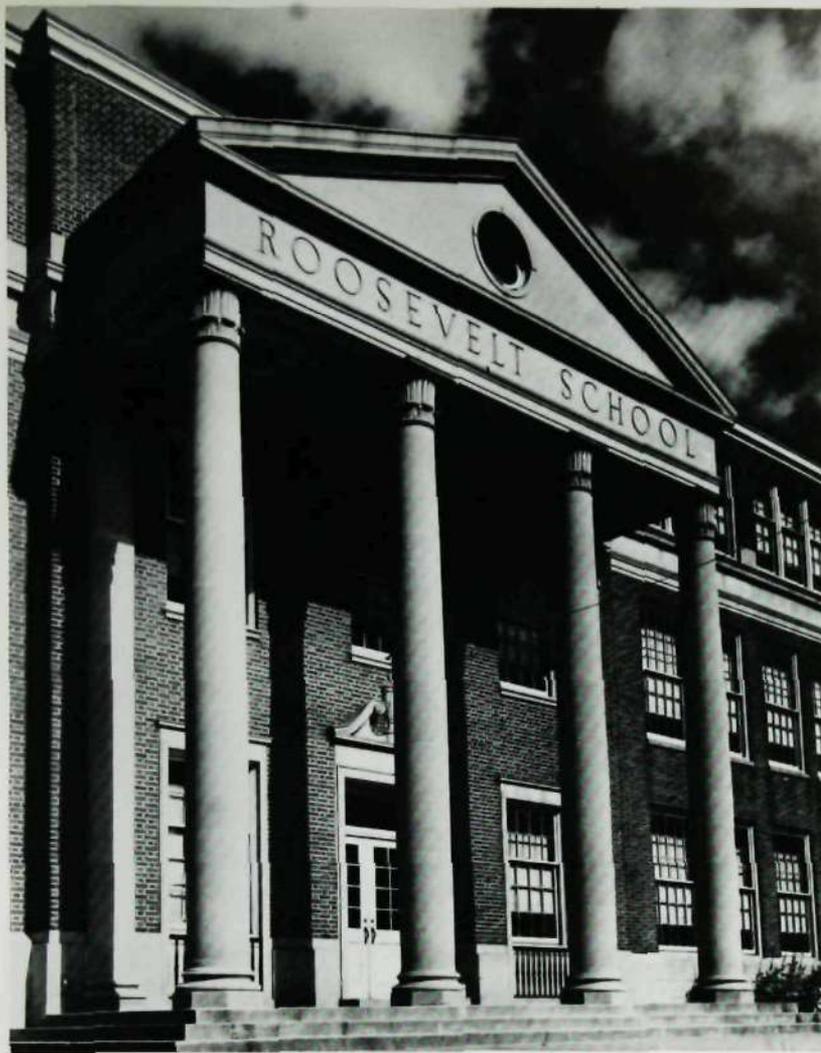
SCHOOL #4 - LINCOLN SCHOOL

sidered to be very modern for the time with eight classrooms, one kindergarten room, a large gymnasium, locker rooms, an auditorium, and offices. The bell on this two-story school weighed 520 pounds. In 1962 a multi-purpose room was added and called Burnham Hall, after Merrill Burnham, who served as principal of this school and also of Washington Irving for many years.

Ground was broken on February 10, 1915 for a church building and a Parochial School on the northwest corner of Bergen Avenue and Mt. Vernon Street. The building was of the Tudor Gothic style and built at a cost of approximately \$32,000. St. Francis School opened in September, 1915, with a staff of four from the Sisters of Charity. There were 170 pupils. The Sisters lived in the building. Because of the growth of the student body, a Convent was secured on Hudson Avenue (a home currently occupied by the Keane family) and a new church building was erected on the corner of Mt. Vernon Street and Euclid Avenue. Both the church and the school are in use today with the addition of an auditorium and classrooms to the building in 1960. The present gymnasium of St. Francis was erected on the site of the



RIDGEFIELD PARK HIGH SCHOOL



ROOSEVELT SCHOOL

residence of Dr. David Corn. Dr. Corn's home was built in 1870 by the Ridgefield Land and Development Company as one of two model homes erected to attract residents to the area.

In 1917 the high school was erected at a cost of \$275,000. It accommodated 400 pupils. The building was officially known as Washington High School, but more affectionately known as R.P.H.S. Architect Silbey designed this classic building with its semi-circular portico, forming the main entrance on Hobart Street and Bergen Avenue. The entrance to this red brick, stone, and terra cotta building led to an octagonal lobby that gave access to all parts of the school. Near the entrance, a stairway connected the basement, first, second, and third floors, and the attic. Some of the many features of the high school were on the first floor: Board of Education rooms, of-

fices, waiting rooms, teachers' rooms, Commercial Department, Bookkeeping and Typing rooms, lockers, and the auditorium. The second floor contained the auditorium balcony with a motion-picture booth, study halls, classrooms, locker rooms, and the library. The third floor housed the Chemistry, Physics, and Biological Laboratories, a darkroom, science lecture room with tiered seats and a drawing room with a northern light. The basement housed the gymnasium with a spectators' gallery, lockers and showers, Domestic Science, Manual Training Room, lunchroom, and heating and ventilating rooms.

In 1927 a new auditorium was added between the high school and Washington Irving. The auditorium was a special place where many programs, shows, musicals, dance recitals, civic meetings, heated debates, PTA programs and

graduations took place. Once a week students marched into the room with piano music or a stirring march being played on a phonograph, for an assembly program or pep rally, with the balcony being reserved for the upper classmen. The floor of the auditorium and balcony was pitched to assure perfect sight with a seating capacity of 600. The large floor-to-ceiling windows were covered with deep red velvet drapes, the same color being used for the stage curtains. The stage was equipped with lighting panels and dressing rooms on each side. The room was lighted with six 12-light chandeliers, hung from the vaulted ceiling. A brass rail went across the front of the balcony; this rail is now in Hook and Ladder Co. #1.

Also, in 1927 a new gymnasium was added to the north end of the building on Bergen Avenue. Many athletic events, proms, band concerts, and meetings were held in this addition. The gymnasium in the original became known as the "Girls' Gym" and the 1927 gymnasium as the "Boys' Gym."

Years of budget cuts and lack of repairs took their toll and in 1965 the school was overcrowded, had electrical problems, and the coal-fired boilers were beyond repair. The insurance was cancelled and accreditation was threatened. The high school was closed during the school year in 1965 and temporary repairs were made. Classes were held in portable classrooms located in the Washington Irving schoolyard, in nearby churches, and in the public library. A new high school had been proposed by the Board of Education along with other plans offered by the public. The first referendum for a new building was defeated, but with some cuts and a smaller design, a \$3,255,000 modern school building program was approved. The Commissioners exchanged the property they owned in Dexheimer Park for the old high school and Washington Irving School. The new Ridgefield Park High School opened in 1967. In 1971 Washington Irving School and Washington High School (RPHS) were demolished by the Board of Commissioners and this site is now Fellowship Park.

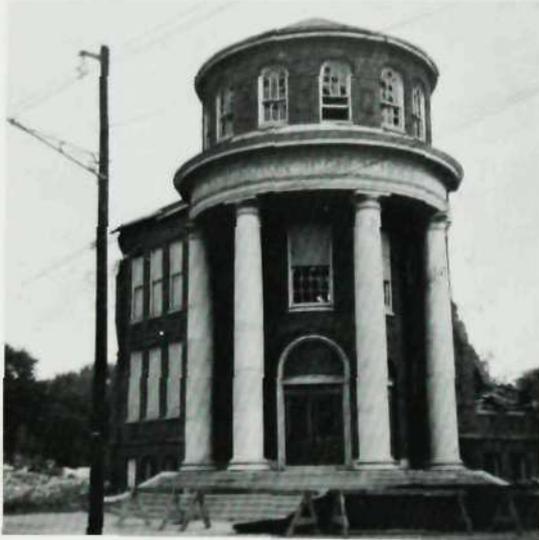
The Ridgefield Park High School is now located on East Grand Avenue in what was one time called the Meadow and later Dexheimer Park. This very modern building is built of steel and brick. The two-story academic wing has some 5-sided classrooms, 53 teaching stations, a 21,000 volume library that seats 150 students, plus audio-visual centers and a workroom area. The academic wing encloses a courtyard in the center. The

center of the building is a student commons, cafeteria, offices and teachers' rooms. Another section is a two-story structure which has a large gymnasium with two auxiliary gymnasiums, and an auditorium with stage and modern lighting and projection equipment. Sections of the auditorium can be used for lecture halls. In this area of the building are also the art rooms, music rooms, industrial art room (shop), auto repair room, and janitorial rooms. There is also an elevator for handicapped students. The high school has an enrollment of approximately 1,000 students of the total of 1,607 students in Ridgefield Park Public

Schools. Ridgefield Park High School began accepting Little Ferry High School students in 1953 and it is still in effect today.

To help serve the expanding growth of the north section of the town, Roosevelt School was constructed on Teaneck Road between Highland Place and Hazelton Street in 1921. This was the most modern looking of all the schools at that time. Large columns were impressive at the front door of this two-story early Charles Bullfinch design of limestone and red brick. The second floor housed the auditorium with a seating of 700 and classrooms for the older children. All of

the 8th grades were taught in this school. Along with the 11 lower grades served in this building, there was a shop, kitchen, sewing room, gymnasium. A special feature was an indoor swimming pool, one of the very few ever built in a grammar school at this time. Many of the Village children learned to swim here and enjoyed the recreation offered in the summer for a 10 cent admission. The Roosevelt Schoolyard, until 1931, served as the home field for the high school football games and practice. Since, the high school has made Biggs Stadium in Veterans Park its home football field.



THE OLD HIGH SCHOOL BEING DEMOLISHED-1971



RIDGEFIELD PARK HIGH SCHOOL



OLD RIDGEFIELD PARK HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

R.I.P. FOR R.P.H.S.

Quiet.

It's very quiet, isn't it, Quincy?

No shouts. No shuffles.

No more students packing the halls.

Look around.

You're the last to leave, aren't you, Quincy?

It seems so very lonely, doesn't it?

Don't leave yet; look around.

Look around and remember.

Over there, Quincy, look there.

The auditorium. The study hall.

Do you remember sitting in the rear

And hearing the band through the vents in the wall?

You called it "The Study Hall Concert."

You do remember, Quincy.

As a senior, you remember the balcony, don't you?

The frantic pep rallies?

Screaming and singing and laughing and clapping.

The balcony.

Do you remember sitting there,

Watching the chandeliers shake and sway,

As students passed from classes?

They shook.

And you remember, Quincy.

Do you remember this school?

The trailers in the courtyard?

The "annex."

And do you remember playing ball on the gym floor?

And tripping on a warped or loose board?

And sweating in the locker room?

You're smiling, Quincy. It was fun, wasn't it?

Stay, Quincy. Stay a moment longer.

Stay, and remember.

Remember how confused you were

When you climbed the stairs as a Freshman,

Looking for floor three?

And it wasn't there?

Do you remember how you laughed

When first you heard of the "main rotunda?"

Such a majestic name!

And you laughed all the more

When you walked through the door

And saw the "majestic rotunda."

But you grew to love it, Quincy

You grew to love it.

"Students are not permitted to smoke on school grounds."

But ten feet from the building,

The "smoking fence."

Do you remember?

Do you remember walking the tower stairs

To the senior locker room?

And you couldn't see the lockers for the seniors.

And you do remember taking a wrong turn,

And walking into the boiler room

Where the immense furnaces were fed with coal?

And you do remember that extra half hour

Every Wednesday

Reserved for a club. Activities.

You remember, don't you?

One more minute, Quincy, stay.

Remember how crowded these halls were?

The pushing, the shoving, the closeness.

You're smiling again, Quincy, you do remember.

One last look, Quincy, take one last look,

And remember.

Is there something in your eye, Quincy?

—Mike Gable Class of '67

SPORTS

Sports have been a major part of our community throughout the years. The progress in sports has surpassed most towns; we started with back lot ball games and had some semi-pro teams that played in the village. We go back to football and baseball in Martin's Oval, just north of Ridgefield Park – the Phil Sheridan Basketball Team – boxing matches held in the K of C hall – tennis at the Pines Tennis Club in the '20s and '30s that attracted many residents – boating on the Hackensack River – swimming in the river and later in Roosevelt School Pool.

In the beginning high school sports were just football, basketball and baseball for the boys. In later years sports programs were expanded to include girls. Wrestling, track, volleyball, softball and fencing were introduced as part of the school program.

In 1950 we sent a local girl, Amelia (Babe) Wershoven, to the Olympics to compete in Javelin Throwing. The village had champion fencers (girls), and many girls and boys went on to star in college athletics as well as professional ball.

Our town was fortunate to have many excellent coaches through the years, and we would be remiss if we did not mention two of the earliest – Carl Erickson and Carl Biggs. The football stadium is named after Coach Biggs. When football was a major sport, before TV, there were often over 2,000 spectators in the stands for a game. In 1970 then-Mayor Gilbert Gibbs arranged to purchase stadium lights for Veterans Park from Palisades Amusement Park, which was closing. Their installation provided the opportunity for the playing of night games.

In addition to school sports, the townspeople have created and sponsored Little League and expanded to Connie Mack, Farm teams, Babe Ruth, Midget Football and Soccer teams. 1955 saw the organization of Pony Tail League for the girls, with the help of the Board of Recreation.

Bergen County
Champions, 1925 - 1926
- 1927. Left to right:
Joe Cerina, Coach and
Mgr. Lou Costello, Tony
Calland, Jim Higgins,
Spike McGuillan, Spike
Walters and Nat Hickey.



1922 BERGEN INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE FOOTBALL - SEATED IN CENTER JIM DIGNEY &
MASCOT ERICKSON - L TO R HOWARD SCHLUMS, BARON BRACHT, DONALD SMITH - GORDON
ADAMS - BUD RHODES - SAM ZIMMERMAN - MARTY COTTRELL, KENNY - COACH ERICKSON -
GEORGE SUMNER - DICK ROBINSON - OZZIE NELSON - TED STEVENS - BUD PORTER - CLIFF
HASSLINGER - SID STOLDT



FOOTBALL BACK IN 1918-1919 IN RIDGEFIELD PARK — The team seen left was the last Ridgefield Park High team to play without a full time coach. Shown are Sherman Mallory, Herb Gneiding, star quarterback, Oscar Higbee, Mr. Randall, teacher and coach, Ralph Lowe, Mr. Bell, Ray Lindley, Everett Beech, Ralph Terhune, Jim Maher, Dr. Al Nelson, brother of Ozzie, who was to become a star player a few years later, Hadley Case, Capt. Hershfield, Tom Bell, brother of Frank Bell, retired director of Athletics at the High School, and Ernie Beamish.

1918 AN EARLY TEAM THAT PLAYED IN THE UNION CHURCH ATHLETIC FIELD ON HUDSON AVE.



1921 THE EMERALDS A BERGEN COUNTY SEMI-PRO TEAM THAT PLAYED IN RIDGEFIELD PARK



MAJOR LEAGUE BALLPLAYERS FROM RIDGEFIELD PARK WERE THE GASTON BROTHERS PITCHER MILT GASTON WON 97 GAMES IN 11 SEASONS WITH THE YANKEES, BROWNS, SENATORS, RED SOX AND WHITE SOX, WHILE HIS BROTHER ALEX CAUGHT FOR THE GIANTS AND RED SOX FROM 1920 TO 1929

JOE CERINO & LOU COSTELLO. COSTELLO LATER BECAME HALF OF THE FAMOUS ABBOTT AND COSTELLO COMEDY TEAM.



1925-A GIRLS BASKETBALL TEAM FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL



*1927 Basketball Team State Champs
L to R C Thiel - Julee Friedman - Milt Gallinant - Henry Ollerman - Frank Bell - Frank Preston - Ace Isolde Top Row Rod Summer Mgr, Charles Redding - O - Bill Moffett - Coach Biggs - Gordon Bell This team competed in the National High School Tournament held in Chicago Ill. that year.*



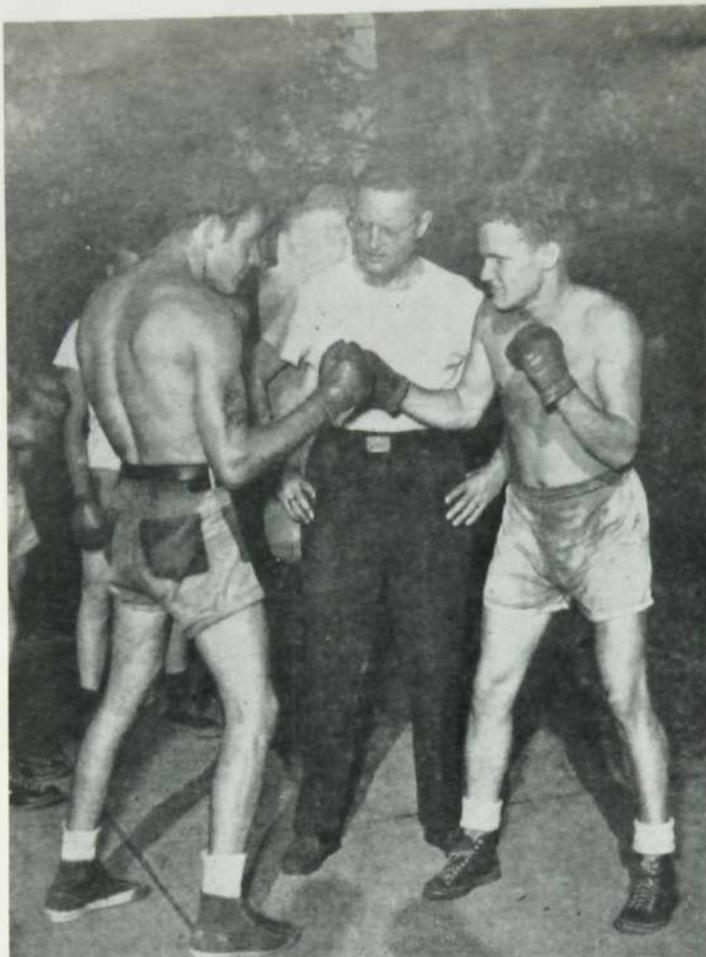
1928 One of the most outstanding Football teams in our sports history. They scored 341 points to their opponents 0. They led the state in the number of points scored and were one of the two school football teams in the state to keep the goal line uncrossed. Capt. Schlums went on to gain a tie as the highest scorer in Bergen County. Among those in the are L Schlems - Harry Merz - Even Shaw - Frank Cavagnaro - Chandler Fullagar - Francis Schlag - Frank Manning - William Crowl - John Barrett - Remo Lusitana - Frederick Wever - Henry Bergkamp - Ralph Anderson - Louis Kortum - Raymond Merz, Manager - Joe Zanghi and Coach Carl Biggs.



1929 FOOTBALL TEAM — AN OUTSTANDING TEAM FIRST ROW: W. CROWL, CAPTAIN ANDERSON, BERGCAMP, BARRETT, CASEY, ZANGHI, LOBOVES SECOND ROW: SPERDUTO, MANNING, F. KIELB, J. KIELB, MERZ, WEBER. ONE OF THE PLAYERS, RUDY LOBOVES, IS THE ONLY LIVING THREE-TIME ALL-COUNTY FOOTBALL CHAMPION.



1934 BASKETBALL TEAM N N J AND STATE CHAMPIONS GROUP III. HANK WELKER - HOWIE FACKIENER - CHARLES ECKLIN - TOMMY DELLA TORRE - ERNIE RIES - BACK ROW - CARL BIGGS, ART DRES - ROBERT ROGGE - SAM MIHANOVICH - LEN COHEN



Herb Boecherer, trainer of the Park amateur boxing team, showing some of the finer points of boxing to Al Walsh and Carl Boecherer at the local training camp established in Veterans Park
 Training Camp Opens for Local Boxers at Veterans Park

Realizing the importance of the art of self-defense, a call was issued for local boxers to participate in a training program in order to represent Ridgefield Park in the Bergen County Boxing Tournament. The only requirements for fighters in the tourney were that they must be at least sixteen years of age and they must be residents of Bergen County. According to the Ridgefield Park Police, all fighters were amateurs; professionals were not eligible. Patrolman Herbert Boecherer headed the program and supplied entry blanks for those fighters who were willing to participate. Local boys who signed up for the tournament went into training at Veterans Park. Among those were Wesley Schmidt, Al Walsh, Carl Mellilo, Buddy Greene, and Carl Boecherer.

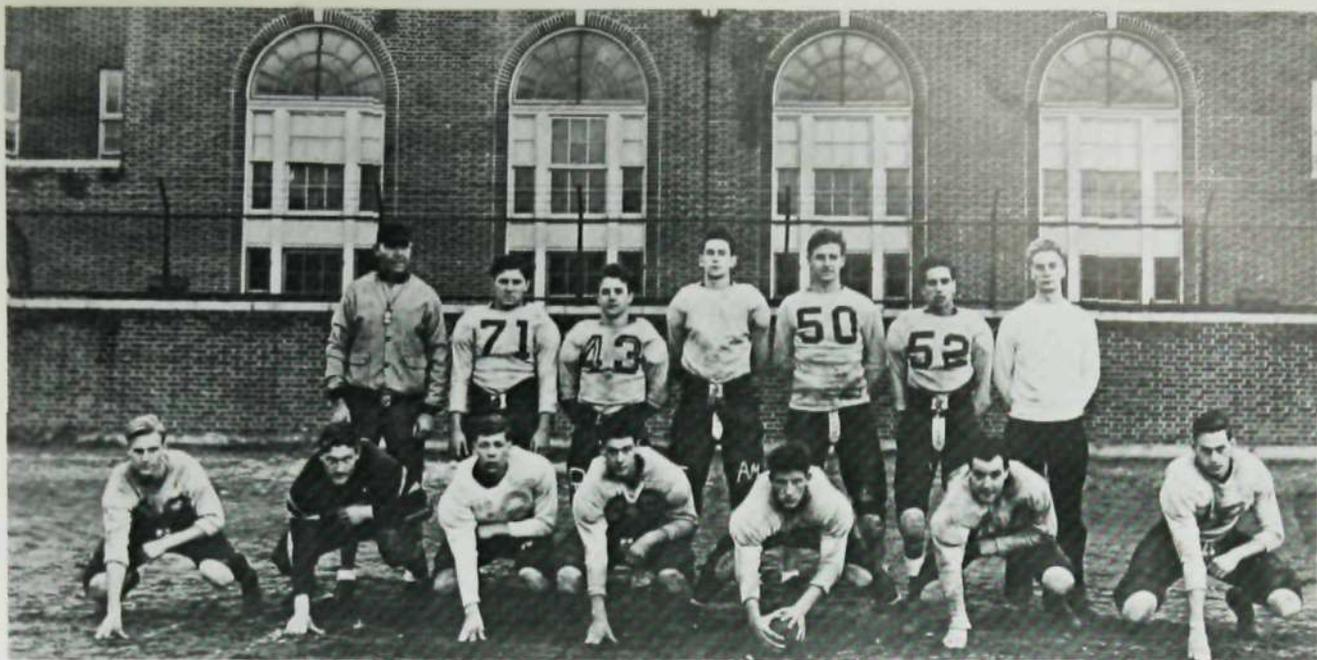
Boxing was a sport that attracted many participants circa 1926. Professional boxing matches were held in the Knights of Columbus Hall in Ridgefield Park. Jimmy Braddock and Gus Lesnovitch were just two of the many good boxers on the programs.

In 1936 local boxers fought in a "Smoker" held in St. Francis Church Auditorium. Among these boxers was Stanley Yotka, 160 pound class, who fought Roy Frisco of New York. Stanley was the 1934 County champion. Walter Yotka, 135 pound class, fought Johnny Walker. Walker was the 1936 County champion. Other fighters who fought at the "Smoker" were George Welker and Johnny Sands.

In the 1940's Herb Boecherer, supra, a well-known promoter from Ridgefield Park, was in charge of the coaching of the win or lose sponsored team that fought in the *Bergen Evening Record's* A. A. Diamond Gloves.

SIX ROUND BOUTS

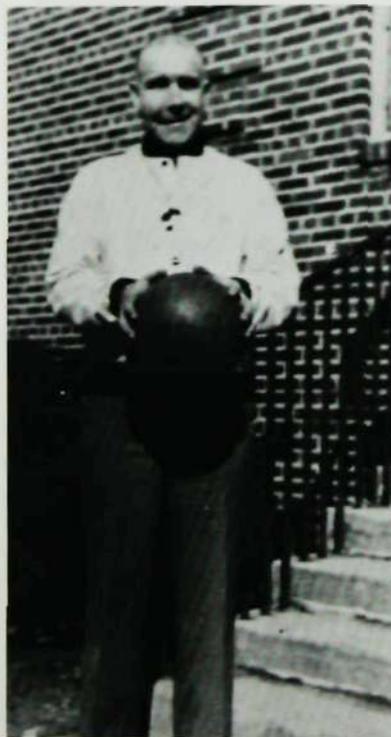
JACK SHORTELL North Bergen K. O. King	vs.	YOUNG ODIN Passaic
JOHNNY MARTIN Passaic	vs.	JOHNNY DARCEY Bayonne
GEORGIE DESCHNER Union City	vs.	JIMMY BRADDOCK Formerly Amateur Champ of N. J.
JOHNNY SHUPACK Paterson	vs.	BENNY BLOCK Jewish Flash
ARTIE REED Englewood	vs.	CHARLES NEIMAN Union City



1939 Group III State Champs Lost 0 Tied 0 Won 11

Front Row - Henry Gramkow - Vincent Korsack - Edwin Cohen - Richard Webster - Roswell Firchette - David Derrow - Jack Knapp
 Back Row Carl Biggs, Andrew Caruso - Gerald Hunter - Robert Davis - Donald Watson - Robert Belizonzi - Robert Wright, Manager

Picture taken in back of Roosevelt School this field was used for football games and other sports until Veterans Park was built in the meadows - and continued in use for practice until the 40's

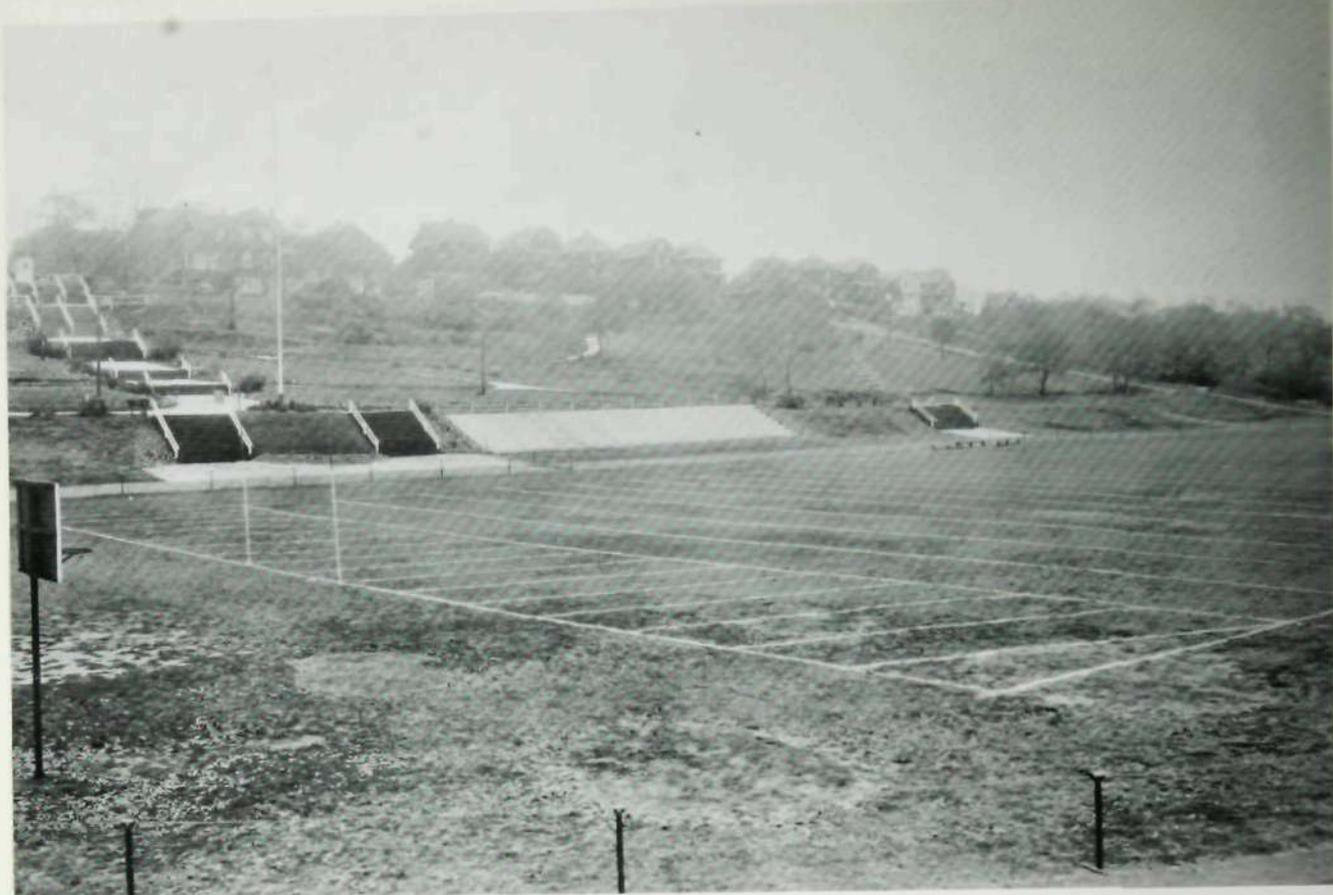


COACH BIGGS.



The old fieldhouse on the east side of Veterans Park. Almost every year the high school seniors painted their names and year on the roof. A new, modern fieldhouse has been built at the north end of the playing field.

In 1940 Coach Biggs passed away after a short illness. Almost everyone in town attended his funeral and were deeply saddened by his death. A quote from the Bergen Evening Record at the time of his illness seems to say it all: "Biggs is actually loved in the Park, and the folks who aren't close to him respect him, for they can always point out a boy who is a little better off because of him."



Veterans Park in the early days, just after the Stadium was installed. More seats were added later, and the stadium was named Biggs Stadium in honor of Coach Carl S. Biggs.

Coach Carl S. Biggs coached all sports in Ridgefield Park from 1926 through 1939. He had an outstanding football record during those years:

YEAR	WON	LOST	TIED	
1926	9	1	0	
1927	4	3	2	
1928	11	0	1	State Champs, unscored upon
1929	8	0	3	
1930	7	1	2	
1931	5	5	0	
1932	5	5	0	
1933	8	1	1	NNJIL/Group III State Champs
1934	7	2	2	
1935	8	1	2	
1936	8	1	0	
1937	9	1	0	NNJIL/County Champs
1938	4	3	2	
1939	11	0	0	NNJIL/Group III State Champs
Totals	104	24	15	

Outstanding Players:

1928 State Champs (see picture #)

1929 Rudy LoBoves, Harry Bergcamp, Pete Anderson, Hen Merz (Rudy LoBoves is the only living three-time all county ball player.)

1933 Tom DellaTorre, Gus Hanna, Rudy Pheiffer, Ernie Reis, Charles Sievers, Hank Welker

1936 Henry Reis, Jim Walsh, Jerry Perry, Tom McKinney, Ed Strippell, Bill Pheiffer

1937 Henry Reis, Al Vandewege, Jim Ward, Bill Hassinger, Marvie Wolf, Frank Dupignac, Len Graziano

1939 NNJIL/Group III State Champs (see picture #)

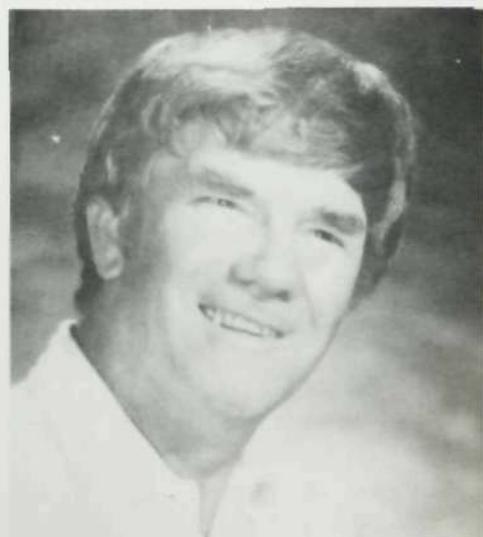
1940s All-County Players: Andy Caruso (1940), Joe Monaco (1943), John Swift (1943), Alex Lenowicz (1943), Art Fitzgerald (1944-also all-state in basketball).



Basketball 1943-44-NNJIL State Champs, Group III. Front Row: Art Meyer, Jim Doran, Bob O'Brien, Ed Fisco, Art Fitzgerald, Bill Soine, Bill Eucker. Back Row: Milt Cole, Manager, Henry Diks, Asst. Manager, Bill Fass, Bill Rietdorf, Coach Frank Bell, Al Balchen, Ray Scanall, George Bernhardt, Asst. Manager. Coach Bell played football, basketball and baseball for RPHS; before coming to RPHS as a coach, he had an outstanding coaching record at Bergen Junior College, Teaneck

Over the years there were many good track teams. Some of the records lasted a long time. James (Red) Walsh was coach for many of those years.
ALL-TIME TRACK RECORDS AT RPHS:

YEAR	RECORD	NAME (BOYS)	EVENT	YEAR	RECORD	NAME (GIRLS)
1957	9.8	T. Bassano	100 METER	1985	13.3	S. Fox
1971	9.8	J. Graves				
1972	21.4	J. Spina	200 METER	1980	27.6	S. Anderson
1983	51.3	J. Matuszewski	1/4 MILE	1985	62.3	S. Fox
1983	3.20	J. Matuszewski,	MILE RELAY			
		T. Monaco, J. Mule,				
		Navalance				
1982	14.8	R. Ferraro	HURDLES	1985	16.0	S. O'Gara
1967	21.5	D. Accavallo	BROAD JUMP	1980	15' 11"	S. Anderson
1964	21.5	V. Guisto				
1968	6'5"	R. Plancher	HIGH JUMP	1977	5' 2"	A. Guercio
1958	61'10"	H. Rosdahl	SHOT PUT	1980	39' 11"	J. Welte
1958	174 1/4"	H. Rosdahl	DISCUS	1980	125' 10"	J. Welte
1985	216' 2"	B. Parisi	JAVELIN	1982	128' 3"	P. DiMeglio
1985	9.12	R. Byrne	3200 CROSS COUNTRY	1982	11.19	K. Greaney
1982	4.18.6	R. Byrne	1600 CROSS COUNTRY			
			POLE VAULT. . . .			
13'		F. Polinich	TRIPLE JUMP	1985	31'7"	S. O'Gara
			MILE RUN	1982	5.16.4	K. Greaney



COACH JAMES (RED) WALSH



1958 football team, pictured in Veterans Park. Hatch Rosdahl was one of the players on this team; he went on to be All-American while playing for Penn State, and played professional football for the Kansas City Chiefs, Buffalo Bills and New York Jets. First row: F. Nejeschelba, B. Huggard, H. Rosdahl, M. Feather, F. Bell, ?, G. Frankovitch, R. Ruland, R. Habib, Second row: R. Hubbard, R. Quinn, P. Feeney, ?, P. Slakie, R. Wever, A. Firl, R. Wall, W. Anderson, R. Leiss, ?. Third row: Asst. Coaches R. Webster and L. Koval, R. Sumner, B. Whitaker, J. McEntee, B. Rock, V. Marino, ?, A. Eilers, M. Mullaney, Head Coach B. Peck.

Hatch Rosdahl held the Discus record for many years, thrown at the Randalls Island meet. He was also All-County Shot Put and Discus thrower in '57, '58 and '59. Shot Put: 61'10"; Discus: 174 1/4"

George Frankovitch and Hatch Rosdahl played against each other in 1960 on national TV in a college game — Syracuse vs. Penn State.



1960 State Champions - Basketball Front row: R. Muoio, P. Shipper, B. Feehan, B. Miller, Coach F. Bell, J. Pryor, D. O'Keefe, A. Lutz Back row: Asst. Coach J. Yenser, R. Olasin, J. Knapp, R. Koenig, G. Stoff, H. Hill, D. Amico.

Fencing was introduced into high school sports for girls in 1964-1965. One of the winning fencing teams. Pictured left to right: D. Gunther, R. Mantineo, N. Celantano, D. Cinotti, M. Mullane, J. Toli



Tom Franco on his way to a touch down at the Giant Stadium. Under the direction of Pete Natale, the 1977 team won the NJIAA Group II Championship game played at the new Giant Stadium in Rutherford, N.J. Score 34-0



The team in 1978 Under the able direction of Coach Don Gsell - Teel - Walters Perlongo - Criscuolo - Krejsa - Kane - Dyer - Gandolfo - Kraljic - Sherman-Knapp From this team Steve Criscuolo and John Gandolfo were picked to play in the 1st Annual H S All Stars Game at Princeton University. They were also selected for the 1978 All Bergen Baseball along with Don Gsell as Coach of the Year.

John Perlongo - Bob Kosa - Pete Kraljic - Tom Teel - Ken Dyer received Honorable Mention

Criscuolo also made All League - All County - All State and Tri State Champions that year.

Sitting: R. Rohlfs, D. Di Archangel, T. Teel, T. Brennan, N. Cioffi, K. Kosman. Standing: D. Erdman, M. Brogan, G. Cutrone, J. Perlongo, K. Korz, B. Kosa, S. Devine, J. Trochanowski, J. Gandolfo. Not shown: J. Smykal, K. Giambagno, S. Criscuolo, M. Osborn, J. Kosa

HOME OF CHAMPIONS RIDGEFIELD PARK N.J. H.S. SCARLETS 1976-77

FOOTBALL NJ SEC. I	GROUP 3	} CHAMPIONS
BASKETBALL NORTH JERSEY	" "	
BASEBALL NJ STATE	" "	
BCSL GIRLS SOFTBALL	" "	
BCSL GIRLS VOLLEYBALL	" "	

Sign in front of Municipal Building during 1976-77 championship year.

HISTORY OF WANDA CANOE CLUB

The Wanda Canoe Club was founded in the early 1900's on the Hudson River in Edgewater, New Jersey. In 1965, the Wanda Canoe Club relocated to Ridgefield Park on the Hackensack River. In 1966, the Club built its clubhouse adjacent to the Ridgefield Park Pistol Range on land provided by the Village.

The Wanda Canoe Club has been instrumental in training athletes for olympic level competition in canoeing and kayaking. Several members of the Club have been members of junior and senior world championship teams and have represented both Ridgefield Park and the United States all over the world.

The Club's most recent achievement has been the fact that the Club Coach, Clyde Britt, served as the head coach for the 1984 United States Olympic Canoeing and Kayaking Team. One of its other members, Peter Tolar, served as an ICF official and was the starter at the 1984 Olympics.

Although the Club is small, it currently dominates the sport of canoeing and kayaking in New Jersey and provides a sport for the people of North Jersey to participate in — one of the truly amateur olympic sports.



RIDGEFIELD PARK VS. BOGOTA

BOGOTA vs. RIDGEFIELD PARK

YEAR R.P. BOGOTA

1926	20	0	1950	26	0
1927	33	7	1951	12	6
1928	39	0	1952	19	33
1929	7	7	1953	0	19
1930	0	0	1954	6	32
1931	6	7	1955	6	34
1932	14	8	1956	12	26
1933	33	0	1957	20	7
1934	18	0	1958	20	31
1935	15	7	1959	19	0
1936	7	0	1960	12	6
1937	19	0	1961	25	7
1938	20	7	1962	0	21
1939	21	0	1963	18	0
1940	15	14	1964	19	14
1941	13	0	1965	8	13
1942	31	0	1966	19	35
1943	26	6	1967	6	21
1944	0	24	1968	8	28
1945	12	0	1969	12	6
1946	27	0	1970	6	14
1947	12	6	1971	6	6
1948	7	14	1972	33	0
1949	7	26	1973	34	18

RECAP - 1926 THRU 1972 (47 YEARS)

R.P.	WON	28
	LOST	16
	TIES	3 47

POINTS

R.P. =	748
BOGOTA =	510

RIDGEFIELD PARK COACHES

1920-1926 - Carl Erickson
 1926-1939 - Carl Biggs
 1940-1941 - Eulo Cecario
 1941-1942 - William Dorsey
 1942-1947 - Frank Bell
 1948-1949 - Harry Hammond
 1950-1953 - Arthur Jocher
 1954-1961 - William Peck
 1962-1963 - Louis Koval
 1964-1968 - Leonard Nelson
 1969-1977 - Peter Natale
 1978- - Bob Morris

OUTSTANDING ATHLETES THROUGH THE YEARS

Gordie Adams	George Francovitch	Henry Oellermann
Milt Adams	Bob Freeman	Lou Patafio
Ralph Anderson	Milt Gallinant	Bill Parisi
Al Balchen	John Gandolfo	Jerry Perry
Bob Ball	Robert Gandolfo	Bill Pheiffer
Red Barrett	Gil Gibbs, Sr.	Rudy Pheiffer
Tom Bassano	Gil Gibbs, Jr.	Mike Pergolizzi
Ron Bassano	George Gibson	Bob Pinnell
Mike Bavaro	Jimmy Gleckner	Hank Reis
Frank Bell, Jr.	Herb Gneiding	Hatch Rosdahl
Frank Bell, Sr.	Tony Gonzalez	Richie Rohlfis
Harry Bergkamp	Art Greene	Jimmy Ross
Phil Brady	Ossie Hamilton	Larry Schlums
Jim Breslin	Bill Hasslinger	Dan Schmaeling
John Brogan	Lenny Hatton	Fred Schmidt
Mike Brogan	Howard Hill	Harold Schoenfelder
Tom Burke	Stan Hillyer	Neil Schuitema
Walter Burke	Bob Herzog	Tony Shiffer
Andy Caruso	Bob Holland	Bob Slaman
Frank Cavagnaro	Bob Huggard	Dave Solheim
Walter Cederlund	Ron Hurliby	John Smith
Ed Cohen	Gerry Hunter	Bud Steinert
Whit Conley	Mike Iacobino	Ed Strippel
Bill Connolly	Steve Keenan	Danny Teel
Steve Criscuolo	Jack Knapp	Garret Teel
Robert Crowl	Robert Knapp	Hank Teel
Peelie Crowl	Scotty Koenig	Michael Teel
Bernie Crowl	Vinnie Korsak	Tommy Teel
Art Daly	Bob Kosa	Charlie Thiel
Bob Davis	Tom Kraljic	Richard Thompson
Tommy Della Torre	Alex Krausz	Jim Trochanowski
Dave DeRyder	Alex Lenowitz	Al Vande Wege
Harold Dexheimer	Frank Lesnovich	Larry Wagner
Armand DeVitanonio	Frank Levis	Jim Walsh
Ricky DiManno	Bud Lewis	Joe Ward
Bill Doran	Rudy LoBoves	Don Watson
Jimmy Doran	Ray Lowe	Richie Webster
Frank Dupignac	Matty McArow	Warren Webster
Charlie Ecklin	John McCarton	Al Welker
Donald Ecklin	Tom McKinney	Hank Welker
Skip Emerson	Hector MacDonald	Howie Wennerholm
Howie Fackenberg	Joe Magro	Roscoe Werder
Howie Feather	Paul Malone	Joseph Wohlhaben
Mickey Feather	Ronnie Marasco	Clif Wolf
Bill Feehan	Hen Merz	Marvie Wolfe
Ed Fisco	Art Meyers	Pat Youngs
Art Fitzgerald	Joe Monaco	Sam Zimmerman
Tommy Franco	Tom Monaco	Ed Zorenko

Organized girls' athletics did not start at the high school until the 1970's. A few of the outstanding athletes since that time are:

Allison D'Amelio
 Debbie Cinotti
 Debbie Gunther
 Bernadette Gioia
 Sue O'Gara
 Janice Welte

