

ENGLEWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER 2009

Kevin Wright to Speak on Historic New Bridge Landing

Most of us remember learning in school about George Washington's troops crossing the Delaware in a snowstorm and defeating the Hessians in the Battle of Trenton at Christmastime in 1776. But how many know that those very same troops narrowly escaped defeat by a superior British force only a month earlier in Bergen County? They were able to escape across the Hackensack River at New Bridge in what is today River Edge.

There is today a historical park at the site, and efforts are underway to create a major tourist destination and learning center. **At 7:30 PM on Wednesday, May 6, in the Mackay Room of the Englewood Public Library noted historian Kevin Wright will give a power point presentation about Historic New Bridge Landing** and its importance to our history. All are welcome.

Englewood's Sesquicentennial

"Sesquicentennial" is a big word, meaning one hundred and fiftieth anniversary. This year, 2009, is Englewood's sesquicentennial. We were founded in 1859 when the Northern Valley Railroad was extended north from Jersey City and an enterprising lawyer named J. Wyman Jones identified this location as ideal for a new community. Having acquired land and invited people to join him, Jones filed the necessary papers with the County Clerk in Hackensack to create the new village of Englewood on August 15, 1859. He can fairly be described as Englewood's founder.

On March 4, 2009, at our Annual Meeting, EHS President Norman Davis gave a presentation in the Mackay Room about the events of that far distant era. It was just two years before the Civil War, James Buchanan was President, and railroads were being built in many areas of the country, facilitating commerce and leading to the development of new communities. What is today Englewood was 150 years ago part of a large ill-defined farming area shown on the old maps as "English Neighborhood."

Jones, evidently an entrepreneur of some ability, was an organizer of the railroad and became a major land owner, selling off lots for residential and commercial development in this area. The name "Englewood" was apparently made up by him, and was later copied in at least six other states. Jones gave his name to Jones Road, and 150 years later his Victorian stone house, which he called "Erdenheim," still exists at 59 Walnut Court. According to *The Architecture of Bergen County*, by T. Robins Brown, the house on the J. Wyman Jones estate "is one of the most outstanding examples of mid-nineteenth century (architecture) in the county. "

2009 Award to David Maron

The Society's 24th Annual Award Dinner took place on April 1, 2009, at the DoubleTree Hotel in Fort Lee. The Award was given to David Lloyd Maron, an architect and 40 year resident of Englewood. David served for seventeen years as a member of the Planning Board, including twelve as Chair. He is currently a member of the Board of Adjustment. His architectural contributions to Englewood can be seen at Liberty Square (the area around the monument), Flat Rock Brook Nature Center, the Bergen Family Services building on Armory Street, Janis Dismus Middle School and the former American Red Cross building on Grand Avenue.

A bronze plaque was presented to David by former mayor and EHS board member Sandy Greenberg, who praised his long-term commitment to the community, to good architectural taste, and to the

preservation of our past. Attendance at the dinner included members of David's family and many friends.

In addition, a plaque was presented to Flat Rock Brook Nature Association. Flat Rock Brook had initially received the EHS Award in 1988, for preservation of the land which it manages in the Second Ward, but plaques were not being given at that time. Lorraine Cohen presented the plaque to Flat Rock Brook President Jim Robison.

The Revolutionary War in Bergen County

On September 10, 2008, the EHS sponsored a presentation by Leonia Municipal Historian Carol Karels. Carol is the editor of *The Revolutionary War in Bergen County: The Times That Tried Men's Souls*, which includes twenty-two essays contributed by seventeen Bergen County historians. Published in 2007, the book received a Bergen County Preservation Award in 2008.

The essays focus on events or people who spent time in or around Bergen County during the Revolutionary War. Carol brought to life for us the extraordinary hardships endured by the people then living here, as armies from both sides repeatedly passed through their properties and through their lives.

Coach Monroe Brings Back Memories

On November 5, 2008, and again on January 7 of this year, the EHS sponsored a program by retired Englewood teacher Thomas E. Monroe entitled *Steal Away, Steal Away: Englewood's Rich Black History As Seen Through the Eyes of Thomas E. Monroe and Longtime Englewood Residents*. Between 2004 and 2006, Tom had interviewed 30 longtime residents of Englewood's Fourth Ward, ranging in age from 53 to 95, to hear their reminiscences about life in Englewood.

Tom had many, often amusing, stories to share with the audience, as well as a fascinating collection of clippings and old pictures. He has recently been appointed as a member of the Englewood Historical Preservation Advisory Committee.

Progress on Archives

Englewood Public Library Donald Jacobsen has indicated his intention to include permanently on the Library staff a specialist in local history. At present that position is held by Peter Havel, who holds an MA degree in American History and a Library Sciences degree specializing in archives from Simmons College. Peter worked with Irmari Nacht and Bobbie Bouton-Goldberg to prepare the exhibit last December of the archival material collected by Robert Griffin, Eleanor Harvey and Natalie Beaumont. Since then he has been working on digitizing the extensive "Englewood Collection" of clippings and other material assembled by Jean Grushkin over a period of many years. He is also working on the Gary L. Price collection of photographs, and hopes in the near future to make these available to the public online. There are more than 40 other collections of material contributed by various donors which can eventually be indexed and made available on line. Interested persons will be able to access the Library homepage, click on "Archives," and view those items which have been made available.

We Welcome New Members

The Englewood Historical Society is happy to welcome new members, and we welcome particularly members who would like to work on existing or new projects. In the past, for example, the EHS has sponsored bus tours and publications. We can always use ideas for programs, help with publicity,

expertise with mailing lists, liaison with other historical organizations, etc. Anyone interested should contact President Norman Davis at 201-567-8857, or email n_w_davis@mindspring.com.

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