

HISTORY OF SECAUCUS



FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

1950

History of Secaucus

New Jersey

IN COMMEMORATION OF
THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY
OF ITS INDEPENDENCE

EMPHASIZING
ITS EARLIER DEVELOPMENT
1900 — 1950



EDITED BY

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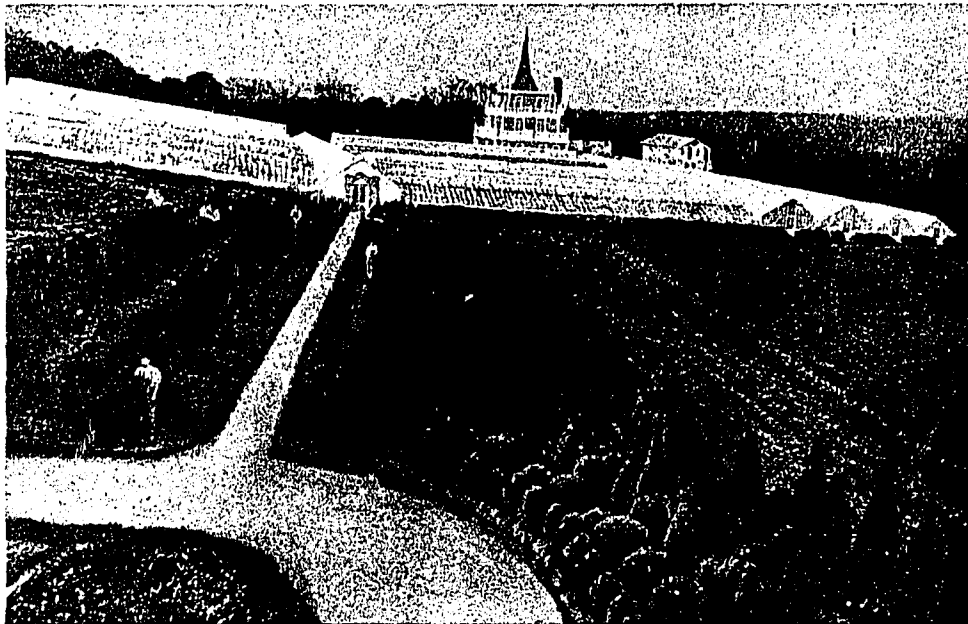
G. S. R.

R. E. H.

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FROM
THE
EARLIEST
TIMES



MUTILLOD NURSERY and the "Castle". Nothing remains of this romantic spot which specialized in exotic plants and flowers. It was located between Route 3 and Route S-3 behind Tito's.
(Courtesy Valentine Boulanger)

Geologically Speaking

Geological upheavals and the slow transformation of land through erosion and weathering produced the strange geographical location in which the town of Secaucus now stands. Less than a million years ago, the mammoth glaciers which had once covered all of New Jersey retreated to leave the fossil remains of dinosaurs, crocodiles and huge turtles lying under the red soil of sandstone and shale in the central part of the state. Archeological dispute still belabors the existence of a prehistoric man, perhaps living in the Ice Age, in New Jersey. The peculiar rock mass of Snake Hill is believed by geologists to be the stump of a volcano which long ago erupted to form the Watchung Mountains. More speculation exists as to the presence of large forests in the Secaucus area, and to the archeological curiosities and remains of plant life that may be found under the swamps which formed as a result of the steady drainage of water. In digging for the new Route 3 in 1948-1949 through Secaucus, giant cedar logs were found revealing trees at least 300 years of age when they fell, indicating that the area was once heavily wooded. A Torrey Botanical Society paper on the cedar bog was published early in 1950.

Lenni-Lenape Indians

AREA SKIRTED At any rate, in the time of the Indians who inhabited this area, the land was much as it is now: a ridge of land, substantially an island, surrounded by swamps, creeks and a river, with a black rock arising abruptly out of the marshes to the south. The Indians were of the sub-tribe Hackensack of the Lenni-Lenape or Delaware, as the Dutch called them. Although there exist extensive records of their villages in the area between the Hackensack and the Hudson and west to Passaic, and of routes connecting villages and leading to hunting grounds, no settlements or major trails are to be found in the Secaucus area. The probable reason for this was the difficulty in crossing the swamp areas by canoe, so the Indians were primarily concerned with skirting the area, which they accomplished either by crossing narrow stretches of the Hackensack to the south, near Newark, or by crossing the river to the North near Little Ferry, a route which enabled them to pass the Passaic River where it makes a 180 degree turn to the south around the present city of Paterson. The paths, narrow by virtue of the Indian method of walking by placing one foot directly before the other, by-passed obstructions and were the most direct paths to different areas. For this reason the white men followed these paths gradually widening them with horse and cart until they became many of the modern roads of today; charts indicate that Tonnelle Avenue follows an Indian trail in large part.

KIND AND LOVING Perhaps on the basis of two massacres during the early colonization of the Hudson County area, the reputation of the Hackensack for barbarism exceeds the knowledge of their excellent traits. But early settlers reported them a "a kind and loving people, exact observers of property,"⁽¹⁾ generous, hospitable and honest. The Lenni-Lenape were chiefly a roving people, supported by their fishing and hunting, with the women and girls planting corn in the vicinity of their rather temporary wigwams. The men were well-

built and strong, with broad shoulders, small waists and coarse black hair which they pulled from their heads with mussel shells, leaving but a single tuft, convenient for an enemy's scalping knife. "The women, not having the advantage of Christian training, and being less wise than their white sisters, were wont to paint their faces, and in general they adorned themselves more than did the men . . ." ⁽¹⁾ They were said to have flat heads because at birth the children were tied upon a board and carried so for a long time upon the mother's back. William Penn called them "the most merry Creatures that live, Feast and Dance perpetually;" ⁽¹⁾ they were fond of games, and were inveterate gamblers. No intoxicants were known among them until the coming of the white men, nor had they a word for drunkenness in their otherwise rich and expressive language.

INFLATION - Although writing as the European knew it had not been devised by the Delaware, belts of wampum strung in various patterns signified particular affairs or circumstances. Also widely used for personal adornment, the most important function of wampum was its use as currency. This money was made from periwinkles and quahags (clams), and sometimes from the insides of oyster shells; when properly polished and strung, three black shells were worth one stiver (about two cents), and white shells one-half that much. The Dutch adopted the use of wampum of necessity, and it was even used in Dutch West India Company salaries and church collections. This encouraged many to make a business of shell fishing, so that the system soon became inflated, flooded with poorly polished shells. When circulation of a great deal of bad seawant (the Dutch name for the shells), became excessive, Governor Kieft of Nieuw Amsterdam was forced to set values on the various finishes, as well as requiring that all be strung.

There were not more than two thousand Indians in the whole province of New Jersey while under Dutch domination, and this number declined rapidly, owing to the sale of their lands, disease, migration and liquor, until by 1758 there were but a few hundred scattered in this region. The Lenni-Lenape were under Iroquois domination between 1720 and 1763, and then under pressure from

the whites, migrated westward. Remnants of the tribe are to be found today in Oklahoma.

Coming of the White Man

HENRY HUDSON Henry Hudson's vivid praises of the land he had seen in his voyage of 1609, raised high hopes of lucrative trade and bounteous living in the New World. "The most beautiful country on which you could tread with your feet,"⁽¹⁾ was said to have rivers teeming with fish, immense forests and woods, trackless swamps with wild beasts of costly furs, and endless tracts of fruitful soil. In 1621 the Dutch West India Company obtained a twenty-one-year charter, with exclusive rights to New Netherlands, and became its virtual ruler. Trading posts were set up to barter trinkets for the Indians' luxurious furs. Until 1629 no attempts at settlement were made, but thereafter colonists were encouraged with liberal grants of land. In this way Burgomaster Michael Pauw of Holland secured a tract of land opposite Manhattan on the banks of the Hudson, later known as Paulus Hook, in Jersey City, on which he founded the first New Jersey farm. The fertile soil, and hopes inspired by the flowery descriptions of the land, attracted many settlers to Manhattan, as well as to the small tract of Jersey land nearby. The colonists were mostly from Holland where overcrowding was severe due to immigrants fleeing persecution in Europe's Thirty Years War.

TROUBLE BREWS For a time the Indians were friendly, but unscrupulous traders, a small minority of the people, by unjust terms and the trading of firearms, soon stirred up trouble and aroused the resentment of the tribes. The flames were fanned by Governor Kieft, who did not understand, nor cared to understand, the causes, but insisted upon harsh unyielding treatment of the natives. Other causes of the quarrel arose through Indian misunderstanding of land transactions, for they

greatly resented losing hunting and fishing rights in the lands they had sold, and some thought that they had only leased the land. The rivalry culminated in two terrible Indian massacres, several years apart, in which all the inhabitants of the New Jersey area around Jersey City were either killed or driven away, their houses and farms destroyed, so that by 1645 the only Dutch survival was the Van Vorst estate on Paulus Hook, which had become the farm of the West India Company.

**CAPTAIN
ADRIAN
POST** In 1655, in the second massacre at Pavonia, as the New Jersey colony around Jersey City was called, Captain Adrian Post, renowned ancestor of the present day Posts in Secaucus, with his wife, five children, two servants, and one girl, was taken prisoner by the Indians. The family escaped by the payment of a heavy ransom and Post then acted for the colonists as an agent for the release of the 14 other prisoners held by the Hackensacks.

Petrus Stuyvesant

**THE
ISLANDT
SISKAKES** Petrus Stuyvesant succeeded the headstrong and extremely unpopular Kieft as governor in 1647, and under his wise rule a relatively lasting peace was concluded after the 1655 uprising. The colonists, taking refuge at the fort in Manhattan, however, were not anxious to return to Pavonia, having suffered so much at the hands of the Indians. Party to appease the Indians, and partly uncertain as to the legality of the Dutch claim, Stuyvesant concluded a treaty in 1658 with representatives of all the tribes in the area to purchase the territory practically coinciding with the present-day Hudson County. It is in this Indian deed that Secaucus is first mentioned, for the treaty includes: ". . . the lands lying on the West side of the North River, (Hudson) in New Netherlandt, beginning by the Rock above Wiehacken, and from thence across through the lands, till above the *Islandt Siskakes*, and from thence

along the Channel side till Constable's Hook (Bayonne). And from Constable's Hook again, till the aforementioned Rock, above Wiehacken . . . "(2) For this entire stretch of territory the Indians received "80 fathoms of wampum, 20 fathoms of cloth, 12 brass kettles, 6 guns, 2 blankets, 1 double brass kettle, one-half barrel of strong beer".(2) The eighty fathoms constituted 480 feet of wampum. The representatives met and signed the deed at Fort Amsterdam in Manhattan.

FOUNDING OF BERGEN

About this time, to prevent easy Indian attacks on vulnerable scattered farms, Governor Stuyvesant ordered the settlers to live together in fortified villages. As a direct result of this edict the old village of Bergen, now Bergen Square in Jersey City, was established in 1660. The old town, laid out in a square and surrounded by a heavy wooden palisade, included as buytentuyn, or out-gardens, all the territory now included in Jersey City, Hoboken, Bayonne, North Bergen, Secaucus, Union City, Guttenberg and Weehawken, and served as the center of this whole area for many years. The story of its laws, customs, and conditions, therefore bears directly upon the affairs of Secaucus, which remained part of Bergen until 1843.

SECAUCUS GIVEN TO BAYARD AND VARLET

The second reference to Secaucus is made in the grant of all its land to Bayard and Varlet on December 10, 1663, by Governor Stuyvesant. The boundaries mentioned are those of today, and were described as: "Beginning at the Mouth of Pinhorne's Creek (on the North-easterly side of Hackinsack River River) and thence runs up along said Pinhorne's Creek the several Courses thereof as it runs to a Creek or Ditch (which communicates or joins said Pinhorne's Creek with another creek call'd Crom, a-Kill) Then along said Creek or Ditch as it runs to said Crom, a-Kill Creek, Then down along said Crom, a-Kill Creek the several Courses thereof as it runs to said Hackinsack River, Then down along the said Hackinsack River the several Courses thereof as it runs to the Mouth of said Pinhorne's Creek the Place of Beginning."(3) The land given

to Bayard and Varlet, although describing exactly the present boundaries of Secaucus was said to contain only 2000 acres, or approximately one half of the actual area, showing that the territory had not been well surveyed at the time.

Nicholas Varlet was of French origin, in contrast to the many Dutch people in the area, and a man of note who owned considerable land beside his Secaucus Patent. In 1656 he had taken as his second wife the widow Anna Bayard, sister of Stuyvesant, and thereafter he held many offices including Commissary of Imports, Captain of the Militia in Bergen, and membership in Carteret's Council. His other lands included Hoboken, and various pieces of land in and around the town of Bergen.

Nicolas Bayard was also a well known man and among his many offices he represented Bergen in the first and second General Assemblies in East Jersey. In 1678 he secured part of Weehawken and operated a saw and corn mill there. One of his descendants was later a notorious Tory and a great deal of his property was confiscated by the American government.

"AN ANKER OF RUM" In 1674, while the land was still in the hands of Bayard and Varlet, the Indians took exception to the Dutch title to Secaucus, claiming that it was not included in the deed of 1658. Although the boundaries were clearly expressed, the Indians maintained that they understood the sale to include only "Espatingh (a section on the Hill) and its dependencies".⁽³⁾ and felt that they might be satisfied with "an anker of rum".⁽³⁾ So, for 10 gallons of rum, which was paid to extinguish all claim to the land, Secaucus passed indisputably into the hands of the white man.

Secaucus Sold

EDWARD EARLE, JR. The whole of Secaucus was next, in 1676, sold to Edward Earle Jr. of Maryland, an Englishman, later tax commissioner for Bergen, Commissioner of Highways, and member of the House of Deputies. In 1679 he sold an undivided half of his land, stock, and servants

to Judge William Pinhorne for the sum of 500 pounds. At this time the plantation was said to include "One dwelling house, containing two lower rooms and a lean-to below staires, and a loft above. Five tobacco houses, one hors, one mare and two Coultts, eight oxen, ten Cows, one bull, foure yearlings, and seven Calves, between thirty and forty hoggs, foure neggro men, five christian servants."⁽²⁾ A short time later, in a brochure entitled "Model of the government of East Jersey", published in Scotland, a mention is made of this piece of land: "Near Unto Snake Hill is a brave Plantation, on a piece of Land almost an Island, containing 1,000 or 1,200 Acres, belong to Mr. Pinhorn, a Merchant at New York, and one Edward Eickbe (Earle). Its well improved and Stockt."⁽³⁾ The land here mentioned was probably the ridge from the Paterson Plank Road south almost to Snake Hill.

JUDGE WILLIAM PINHORNE

Judge William Pinhorne, who gave his name to the Creek near his land, was both prominent and notorious. Involved in both New York and New Jersey politics, he was praised by his friends and attacked as extremely dishonorable by his numerous enemies. Arriving from Eng'and in 1678, he was originally a merchant, but later held such New York offices as Alderman, Recorder, speaker of the assembly, and fourth Justice of the New York Supreme Court. After his retirement to Secaucus in 1698 he held positions of equal importance in New Jersey, serving for a short time as Commander in Chief of the province.

Division of the Land

POST ESTATE Little of importance is known about the subsequent division of land, except that it was divided and redivided among the heirs of Pinhorne and Earle, and within a short time much of the land must have passed out of the hands of these families, for there are indications of other settlers here soon afterwards. The Post estate, formerly on Chestnut

Street where the De Buck home now stands, was the site of one of the oldest residences in town. A log cabin built there by Post was later replaced by the Post homestead.

COMMON LAND

In 1762 Andrew Tweed, in an advertisement in the New York Mercury offered for sale his Secaucus farm containing "400 acres of choice land and meadow, with a right in Bergen Commons . . . vastly convenient for raising stock."⁽³⁾ The common land referred to consisted of large tracts of land outside the town of Bergen which belonged to the township and were used in common by all as pasture and source of firewood. Later, so many people misused the land or encroached thereon that it was partitioned in 1763 among the people of the Town of Bergen, who, by their grants and patents were entitled to this land. The area just east of Penhorn Creek and Cromakill Creek was designated as the Common Land of Secaucus, and because of disputed ownership, the 1763 Commission could come to no decision and a special Commission redistributed it in 1785. This land is not now a part of Secaucus, but belongs to North Bergen.

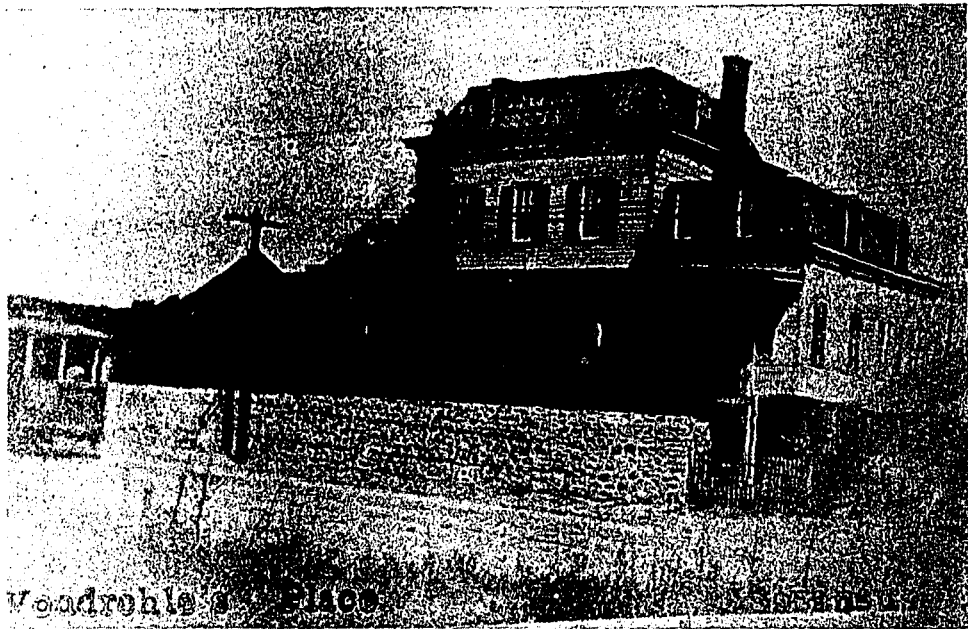
FRENCHMAN'S GARDEN

A small portion of this common land was at the time part of the famous "Frenchman's Garden", a short distance from North Bergen's present Grove Church. "In a wild and romantic situation on Bergen Creek, nearly opposite the City of New York, thirty acres of land were purchased for a garden and fruitery by the unfortunate Louis XVI . . ."⁽³⁾ The king's botanist, Andre Michaux, was commissioned to travel throughout the United States and he had power to import from France any tree, plant or vegetable that might be wanting in this country. His collection in North Bergen, enclosed with a stone wall, contained "exotic, as well as domestic plants, trees and flowers . . . which in time must rival, if not excel the most celebrated garden of Europe . . ."⁽³⁾ It was from Michaux's garden that the Lombardi Poplar tree was introduced into the United States.

Customs and Conditions

ALLEGIANCE Secaucus was one of the earliest settled country districts near New York and the land was highly prized by planters, for both Secaucus and Snake Hill appear frequently in subsequent land transfers. To understand the conditions and customs of the early Secaucus farmers it is necessary to identify them with the interests and ways of the little town of Bergen, which was their center, and about which much has been written. As New Amsterdam became prosperous, the English claimed all of North America, based upon the early discoveries of Cabot. Charles II granted to his brother, the Duke of York, a patent for all of New Amsterdam, and he in turn conveyed the territory between the Hudson and Delaware Rivers to Lord Berkeley and Sir George Carteret, which territory was to be known as Nova Caisarea or New Jersey. In 1664 an English expedition captured the territory from the Dutch and it remained in English hands except for a short two year period in the 1670's. Except for a required oath of allegiance to the English, the settlers at Bergen remained practically unaffected in their daily lives by the transfer, and their old Dutch ways clung to the settlement for many years. The Dutch language was spoken almost exclusively, and all the old records are so written.

OCCUPATIONS For many years farming was the main occupation, and cabbage the chief crop, of which immense quantities were raised, not only for supplying the neighboring city of New York, but for shipment to all parts of the country. Another source of income to the early farmer in addition to the vegetables, grain and hay raised and sold, was the green clover that was sold in New York as a healthful and necessary food for horses. This agricultural predominance contributed to the establishment of home industry, and soap, candles, textiles, even tools, were manufactured in the home.



VON DREHLE'S HOMESTEAD which was located across the Plankroad from where the Denver Chicago trucking terminal is today. Note the trolley and tracks and the French roof of the building. *(Courtesy Mr. and Mrs. Henry Luhrmann)*

JERSEY MOSQUITOES

The territory was considerably more wooded than it is today, but swamp-land and mosquitoes abounded. The early residents made much mention of the troublesome "Musketoes" and long before they came, the Indians had tried to ward them off with the "oyl of Fishes, the fat of Eagles, and the grease of Rackoons."⁽¹⁾ The marshes were the haunt of wild fowl and oftentimes great flocks of wild pigeons, as well as harboring blackberries, huckleberries, snapping turtles, killies and mushrooms. Nutbearing trees abounded throughout the area.

SETTLED AREA

At the time of the English conquest in 1664, there remained in New Jersey, due to Indian troubles, only the small compact settlement at Bergen, and a few scattered boweries along the Hudson. By 1668, however, there were five villages in New Jersey, and Bergen boasted of approximately forty families. The Towne and Corporation of Bergen had an area of 11,500 acres, and up to the end of 1669 less than one-third of this area had been patented to settlers; the balance, more than 8000 acres, was used in common by the patentees for nearly a century. George Scott, the Edinburg traveler, wrote in 1680 "There are not above seventy families in it (Bergen). The acres taken up by the town may be about 10,000 and for the Out Plantations, 50,000, and the number of inhabitants are computed to be 350, but many more abroad."⁽⁴⁾

ROADS

The laying out and maintenance of roads was one of the chief interests of the area, and a road tax was levied, to be paid in currency or labor on the roads. Secaucus was populous and important enough to become one of the 9 road districts into which Bergen was early divided, and some time before 1718 a road was laid out to the settlement that later became the Paterson Plank Road.

JUSTICE

A court was established in Bergen in 1661, from which local puritancial "justice" was administered. The names of Daniel and Job Smith, both of Secaucus, appear often in the 1700's as members of the Bergen Co. Justices and Freeholders.

The whipping post, stocks and pillory were a familiar sight, and continued long after the Revolution. Capital punishment was exacted for a number of offenses, including disrespect of children to their parents. The first capital punishment in Hudson County was the execution in 1669 of Emanuel, a Negro, who had set fire to the barn of his employer, Nicholas Varlet.

SLAVERY Slavery was common in New Jersey at an early date, and there are many records of unjust laws and punishments relating to it until 1864 when the general emancipation law was passed. For the slightest offenses, often on very meager evidence, slaves were whipped to death or burned alive. Indians, as well as Negroes, were held as slaves, as evidenced in a 1763 newspaper notice of the "Indian servant lad who was taken up as a runaway at Cecaicos at the house of Reiner Vangesan."¹⁵ Isaac Van Gesen, in 1784 wrote to his brother from his plantation in Secaucus about his Negro "France", as well as Daniel Smith's Negro "Jack", both of whom had run away.

RELIGION Religion and education were considered of the greatest importance by the early Dutch settlers. For several years the village of Bergen had the only organized church, Dutch Reformed, west of the Hudson and people came from near and far to worship there. The first building was of logs, followed by an octagonal stone church in 1680. Mail communication of the people of Bergen was very limited and the few letters were brought from the offices at New York by anyone who visited these places and distributed as occasion offered. The people were industrious, honest, and hospitable, and until about 1840 the township of Bergen and its surroundings did not change much in the character or habits of its people.

The Revolution

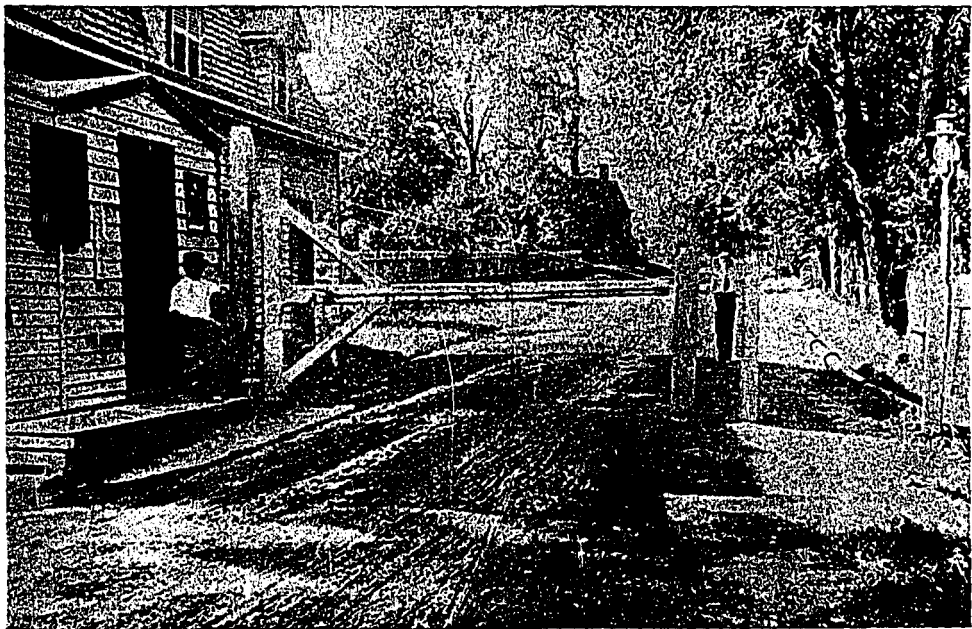
VANTAGE GROUND Except for a short encounter at Paulus Hook, the Hudson County area of New Jersey saw no great battles, but was instead the vantage ground of both sides. The heights of Bergen, because of their nearness to New York, were a place of observation and operation. General Mercer, who was later killed at the Battle of Princeton, had scouts there, concealed by the woods and thickets, watching the activity of the British troops stationed in New York and Paulus Hook. The rich crops and stock farms made it also a favorite raiding area for the Americans and British alike, so that the people were subject to extreme privation. An account in the April 7, 1777 Tory Newspaper, the *New York Gazette* reported that a rebel crew of an American vessel had run ashore. "The rebels came down to Secacus had carried away all the grain, horses, cows and sheep they could get together, which they were obliged to swim over the Hackensack River for want of Boats."⁽⁶⁾ In 1780, three rebel officers were taken prisoner in "Secacus" and brought to New York, but further details of the scene of action are not available.

LEANINGS BRITISH The Americans were early forced to abandon East Jersey, and the British held Paulus Hook until the end of the war. There were few people in the area who so deeply sympathized with the patriot cause that they failed to lean toward the British who offered them semi-protection from raids and plunderers. The Secaucus farmers are said to have been mostly Tory, and Garret Van Giesen, Job Smith, Daniel Smith, and Henry Maish were ordered arrested for desertion, joining the British Army, and other treasonable acts. Job Smith's name is also mentioned in connection with the brutal slaying of Stephan Ball, who was selling supplies to the British, on Staten Island, after a declaration from them that all persons who would bring provisions should have liberty to sell the same and

return unmolested. On his return Ball was captured by a party of six or seven Tories, who despised all rebels, whether they had provisioned the English or not, "Then Hetfield and his party robbed Ball of what property he had with him, took him to Bergen Point, and without the form even of a trial, immediately told him he had but ten minutes to live."⁽³⁾ Smith's name, and his Secaucus residence, are mentioned in the account.

After the revolution, the area remained in almost primitive wilderness, with a farm house here and there, and the inhabitants returned once more to the peaceful cultivation of their soil.

THE
19th
CENTURY



A toll gate on the Paterson Plank Road similar to one on that road at the Hackensack River Bridge when it was a toll road. There was another such toll gate on the road near where the railroad tunnel is in North Bergen today. (Courtesy Mr. and Mrs. George Behrens)

Part of Bergen

ONLY 5651 PEOPLE IN 1830 The beginning of the 19th century found the township of Bergen a busy and thriving little community of about 300 people, surrounded by long stretches of woodland and swamp broken only by scattered dwellings and farmhouses. All of Bergen County in 1809 contained only 2213 dwelling houses, but the value of the slaves held was well over \$100,000. Bergen Township, including all of New Durham, Weehawken, Hoboken, Jersey City, Communipaw, Pamrepaw, and Secaucus, boasted a population of 5651 in 1830, with a third that many horses, mules and cows. Its 22 merchants and 4 industries included 1 grain distillery, 1 glass and china manufactory, 1 wooden manufactory, and 10 tan vats. Farming was still the dominant occupation, with fruit, cabbage and butter among the common marketables.

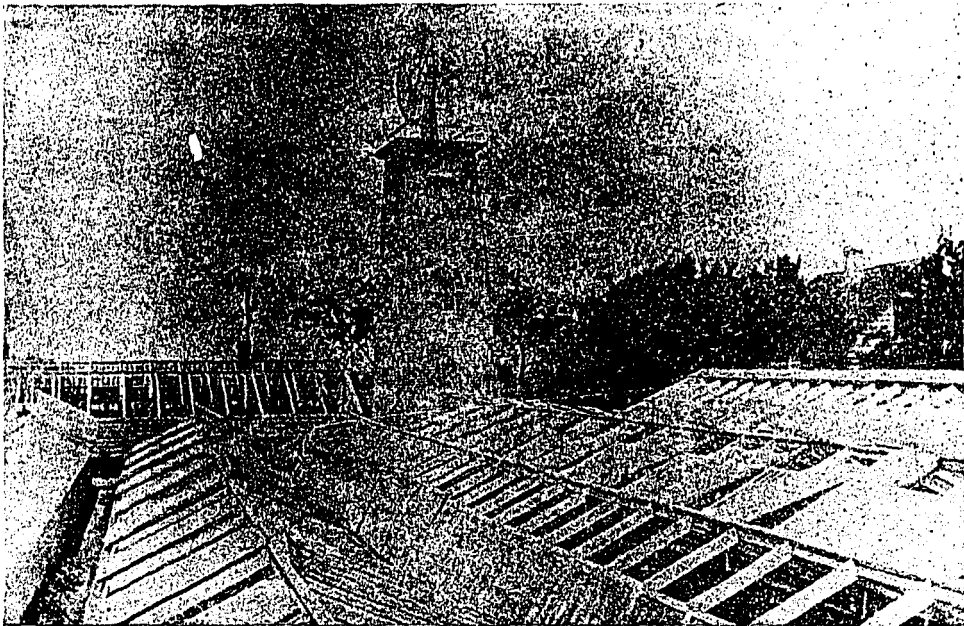
SECAUCUS Secaucus at this time, merely an isolated farming district that depended on Bergen or one of the other small settlements around the present Jersey City for all its necessities, could not have had more than 8 or 10 farms, with absentee ownership of much of the land that was inherited from the Earle and Pinhorne estates. There is a mention of a Van Dine Dairy in 1824, and a miller's wheel worked busily way off in the woods where Mill Creek joins the Hackensack. The few scattered pieces of mill stone lying in the creek at the end of Stonewall Lane were once 2 massive 6 foot wheels, but even farmers of the 1860's, when the mill was already a ruin, could not discern whether they

had ground wheat and rice raised on Secaucus farms, or used as fly-wheels for a saw mill in an area that was once extensively wooded. It is possible that the mill was used both to saw wood and as a granary.

Among the farmers who can be traced to this period are found the names of Post, Smith, Van Gesen, Constantine, Earle and Dean, most of whom very likely kept slaves, for a separate Negro graveyard was set aside. White people buried their dead on family farms or in the cemetery on the Post Estate near the present Mental Disease Hospital.

A Farming Experiment

Another early Secaucus venture, almost completely forgotten, is mentioned in the 1896 Rand McNally guide book: "These (Secaucus) marshes were the scene of an experiment in farming which ruined a prosperous family many years ago. Prominent men in the early years of the century (19th) were Samuel and Robert Swartwout; and they imagined that these meadows might be reclaimed and made very profitable as market-gardens. They built ten miles of embankment, and sank some hundreds of thousands of dollars in a fruitless attempt, so far as they were concerned, though others have since profited to some extent by their labors. 'When in summer' remarks Felix Oldboy, 'the train dashed across the miles of swamp land beyond Hoboken, and the long salt grass, jeweled with wild flowers of brilliant hue, sways and tosses to the breath of the wind, it seems to me, as I look out from the car window, as if the wild roses and the meadow grasses were growing over the graves of those buried hopes.'" The only other mention of the fabulous Swartwouts in connection with Secaucus is the sale of their property in 1826 for the poor house farm, the forerunner of all the county buildings and institutions at Snake Hill, where real development did not start until the 1860's.



BRAUBACH'S FLORIST on County Avenue near the Plankroad. The florist reached from where Meerbott's home is today to the Dorigo home, with the windmill nearer to the Plankroad.
(Courtesy Mr. and Mrs. George Behrens)

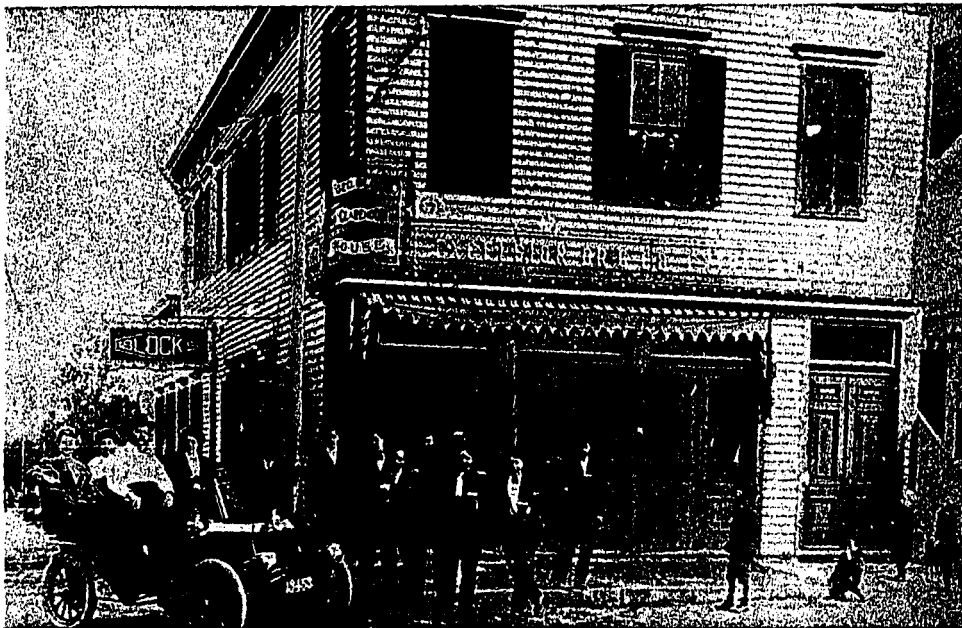
Hudson County is Born

SECAUCUS IN NORTH BERGEN

The disintegration of Bergen Township began in 1820 with the incorporation of the City of Jersey. In 1840 Hudson County was separated from Bergen County and the new name given to the territory almost coinciding with the land purchased from the Indians in 1658: "Where-as the inhabitants of the township of Bergen and Lodi, of Jersey City and the villages of North Bergen, Harsimus, Hoboken, West Hoboken, Weehawken, New Durham, Secaucus, and Greenville, respectively, have by their petitions set forth, that by reason of the great increase of business from year to year, calling for the attendance of parties, jurors, and witnesses, at distances varying from twelve to twenty miles, and the proximity of the city of New York requiring the exercise of a rigid police, they are at an inconvenient distance from the county town, (Hackensack) and the courts of justice, and have prayed that a new county should be erected . . ." ⁽⁶⁾ A little over a hundred years ago, in 1843, all that portion of the land lying north of the New Jersey Railroad and Mill Creek, (Jersey City) was set off from the township of Bergen and named the Township of North Bergen, and Secaucus thus became part of the newly created township.

Early Hotels and Inns

Before the close of the first half of the century the island was already crossed both by railroad and by turnpike from Hoboken to Paterson, so that Secaucus, although away by itself in the lowland, was in a direct line of traffic between two busy areas. Probably as a result of this stream of travelers the little town had two thriving hotels soon after the Civil War, the Sunnyside and the



GEORGE BLOCK'S CLARENDON HOUSE at the corner of Fifth Street and Front. The Zengel sisters are in the auto. Note that Front Street is still unpaved. The firehouse was directly across Fifth Street.
(Courtesy Secaucus Library)

Old Inn, both on the 18th century road that was first a turnpike and in 1852 became the Paterson Plank Road. Two other road houses, possibly pre-Civil war, were Haege's Hotel, near the present Old Inn, and the picturesque Apple Orchard Ale House. The latter is considered the oldest 19th century inn in Secaucus, and it stood amid the apple trees near where the Masonic Temple now is. It was a much frequented spot and the lively parties which visited from New York enjoyed the country atmosphere. Row-boats drifted lazily back and forth in a little pond across the Plank Road from the Ale House.

Turnpikes and Plankroads

Both the turnpikes and the plank roads were built by private companies and tolls were, naturally, charged. Toll stations for the area were located at First Street in Hoboken, a second near what is now the Pennsylvania Railroad tunnel in North Bergen, and a third fare was paid at the Hackensack River bridge in Secaucus.

The plank road movement swept the country shortly before mid-century, and various and exaggerated claims were made for them. Because the surfacing material consisted of sawed lumber, they were said to combine cheapness of construction with maximum utility, and travel over them was supposed to be smoother and twice as fast as over the best turnpikes, which were dirt or macadamized roads. The flooring was made of planks 3 inches thick laid cross-wise to the road, in one or two tracks, each 8 or 9 feet wide, resting on sleepers from 3 to 5 in number buried lengthwise in the ground. Since one of the wagons had to leave the road in passing, the shoulders were graded even with the planks, and the road itself was covered with a thin layer of sand or fine gravel to reduce wear. Cost of construction was about \$1,800 a mile, and decay was rapid because the planks were almost constantly damp.

Toll roads, whether turnpike or plank road, came increasingly

into public disfavor, and a series of state acts, culminating in 1897, provided for the state and counties to buy out the private owners.

The very early route of the turnpike that was to become the Paterson Plank Road was said to be slightly different from that which it now follows, coming up Peterson's Lane, following what is now Front Street to Hudson Avenue, and then up the North End to cross the Hackensack river. The Plank Road Bridge, later known as the "White Bridge", because of its sparkling coat of paint, opened to allow boats to pass through with provisions for the towns further up the river. Children used to cling to the moving section of the bridge for the ride while the bridge tender turned the winch. Earlier the road was part of the Paterson Hamburg Turnpike, and when the 1816 extension was laid through to Hoboken, the traveling time between Paterson and Jersey City was reduced from 2 days to 1.

Within a few years after the Paterson Plank Road was constructed the planks were covered over with dirt or stone, but even as late as 1875 the early spring rains brought some of the wood to the surface and it could be seen floating in the puddles and ditches. Tolls were collected for many years, however, possibly until about 1879 when the Hackensack River bridge was rebuilt.

The First Railroads

The first rail transportation in northern New Jersey was provided by the Paterson and Hudson River Railroad, chartered in 1831 and it followed the same route through Secaucus as the present Erie, to which it was leased in 1851. Drawbridges were built for it across the Hackensack and Passaic Rivers. The New Jersey Railroad, later to become the Pennsylvania, was chartered in 1832, and in the following year the two railroads had a junction at the foot of Bergen Hill now known as Marion Junction.

The original bridge over the Hackensack River in Secaucus, some 1700 feet in length, is reputed to be the first railroad draw-

bridge constructed in the United States. In 1833 the tracks were laid through Secaucus, and in December the trains operated between Paterson and the junction, the last lap of the journey through to the waterfront and ferries being made by stage coaches. An advertisement at the opening of the first stretch of the Paterson and Hudson between Passaic and Paterson boasted three double-decker cars, each capable of accomodating 30 passengers and drawn by "fleet and gentle horses". When the line was finally finished, car-fare between Jersey City and Paterson was $56\frac{1}{4}$ cents, and by the end of 1835 all cars were pulled by locomotive. Earlier in the year, the company had scheduled, for the timid, one train a day drawn by horses.

Timetables tactfully refrained from stating times of arrival, but the usual running time between Jersey City and Paterson was one hour and thirty-five minutes. By 1835 the railroad was carrying 23 tons of freight a day, consisting largely of iron products, machinery, nails, cotton and flax goods, and fruit and farm products.

Construction of the rail through the marshland presented a major problem. The Erie Railroad Company describes the technical operations as follows: "The foundation of the road consisted of a line of pits under each rail 18 inches square and three feet in depth. These were placed three feet apart from center to center and filled with broken stone. On this foundation transverse wood sleepers eight inches square and seven feet in length were firmly imbedded and upon which the longitudinal sleepers or string pieces 8" by 6" rested. To these stringers the plate or strap rail $21\frac{1}{2}$ " wide and $1\frac{1}{2}$ " thick were spiked. Due to increase in weight of rolling equipment, the strap rail finally gave way in 1844 to what was known as "H" rail which weighed 45 pounds per yard and was quite similar in design to that used today."

Three Way Growth—1850

The second half of the 19th century saw the growth of Secaucus in three directions: the development of the Snake Hill institutions,

the establishment of the foundry and Sauer Island colony, and the general influx of farmers into the other areas of town. Secaucus attracted a great many German immigrants, so that by 1875, they accounted for almost 90% of the population. The farmers skillfully and industriously tilled the fertile soil and rich blooming gardens were seen in every direction. In 1860 the Underhill Farm occupied the spot where the bank now stands and a separate house was kept for slaves. Strange tales were told of Mr. Underhill, for he supposedly had his coffin stored in the attic. His house, now over 100 years old, is still standing near the corner of County Avenue and Paterson Plank Road where it was moved many years ago. The 25 or 30 residents did all their shopping at the time in Union Hill, and people mostly walked or rode on horseback the stretches between the scattered farmhouses, for the roads were muddy and bad, and there was, for a long time, no public means of conveyance. The North Bergen officials had for the most part their offices in their respective homes. For the convenience of the public they met at certain times in different parts of the township, e.g. the tax collector made his temporary headquarters in turn at Secaucus, Union Hill, West Hoboken, or Five Corners. An 1860 tax bill at the Secaucus Free Public Library shows a total township tax of 46 cents for a Mr. Ohlands, who owned a Secaucus dairy. A road, school, county, and poor tax were included in the amount but he was exempted from a poll or dog tax.

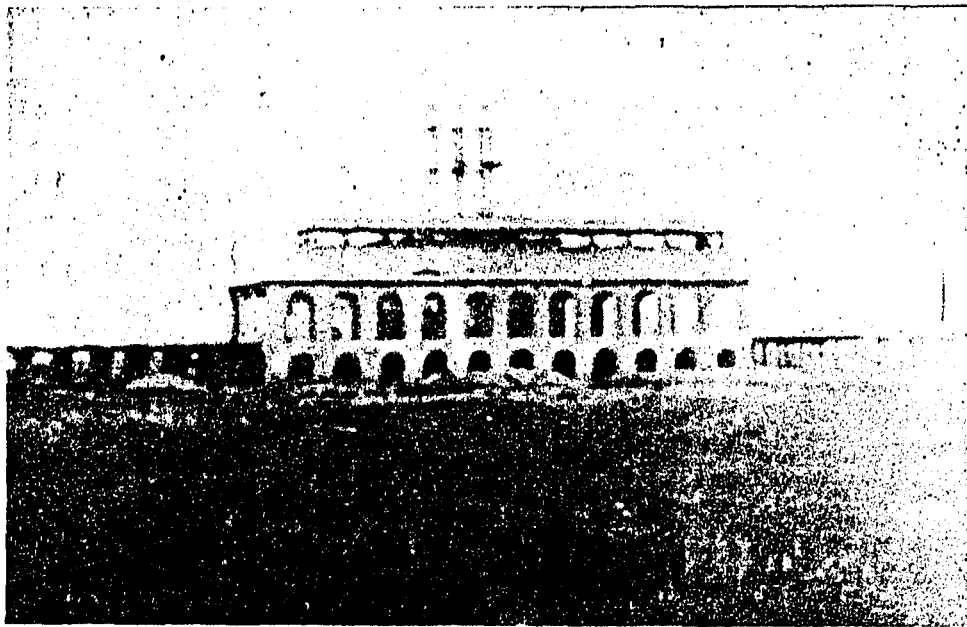
The Race Track

The Hudson County Agricultural Society constructed a race course and fair ground in Secaucus in 1862, partly, it is reported, because of their interest in developing a superior species of pumpkin. Four years later a Virginian, Colonel McDaniel, assumed a proprietorship and bringing with him a large retinue of Negro servants, he "lived as he was accustomed to in Virginia".⁽³⁾ A few

races were held, but nothing startling in endurance or speed, so that the Colonel, already disappointed by discovering less chivalry than he had anticipated, abandoned the place. In 1870 the land was sold to Bishop Bayley, and in an 1874 commentary on the place, Charles H. Winfield says: "It has in part relapsed to its former condition, perhaps it would be proper to say its last state is worst than its first, for it is now devoted to 'scrub racing, Indian exhibitions, and other amusements of inferior character'." The race course, a little over a mile long, earlier used for running, was later devoted to trotting races. The large inn and hotel that once catered to the sporting set was later used by successive families as a dwelling house, but is now completely removed. Wood from the old grandstand was used to build Secaucus' earliest blacksmith shop. that of Anthony Boulanger on Roosevelt Avenue.

Sauer Island

THE IRON FOUNDRY In the early 1870's the Pardee brothers established the iron foundry at Sauer Island and started a miniature boom town in the flat meadowlands of Secaucus. Conveniently situated between the D. L. & W. and Erie Railroads, special sidings carried in huge carloads of ore to be smelted into pig iron in the glowing furnaces. The ore was hoisted up and poured down into the blasting chamber and a large bell dropped on top of it shooting myriad sparks into the air. The evening sky was brilliantly illuminated for miles around when the giant furnaces were fired. It was a busy and thriving industry for over 30 years, and during this time the company built 34 double houses for its workers. The property was owned by Bishop Bayley and Mr. Sauer. Both their names were taken in connection with the colony, with Bayley Avenue the main thoroughfare from the town proper to the island, connecting at Fifth Street. The place was truly an island for three creeks separated it from town and sluice boxes which narrowed them down for bridging also served as excellent swimming holes.



PARDEE BROTHERS FOUNDRY in Sauer Island which was very active before 1900 smelting iron. It supported many families in this once thriving section of town. Today only the bottom arches remain of the once massive structure.

(Courtesy Mr. and Mrs. George Busch)

"COMPANY STORE" Louis Kiesewetter, father of Ernest Kiesewetter, owned a meat market and grocery store there, known as the "company store", for any bills owed were automatically deducted from the pay checks. Later on mail was delivered to the settlement and a one-room school house doubled as a church for Sunday services. A little two-wheeled fire engine was also one of the colony's early possessions. There was no drinking water at all on the island. People carried water in pails from a clear bubbling spring, surrounded by water cress, which was located in the race course at the end of Fifth Street. On washday the women watched for the Hackensack tide to come in, and when enough clear water was trapped in the sluice box, they vigorously washed their clothes. County maps of 1889 had already blocked off the whole area into streets that ran east-west from a First to a Thirtieth Street, crossed by Dagget, Selleck, Gillies, Jackson, Depeyster, Hackensack, and Bayley Avenue.

A MEMORY Today Sauer Island is little more than a memory and the crumbling remains of the once busy foundry. Before the end of the first decade of the 20th century the blast furnaces, after one brief spurt of energy in the 1900's, were closed down for good and most of the iron workers moved away. The old red brick walls of the structure today form an enclosure of graceful arches completely overgrown, within and without, by deep green meadow weeds. No sign is left of the roof and a well grown cherry tree blooming inside the walls gives evidence of the long years that the place has lain idle and perhaps of some worker who offhandedly tossed aside a cherry pit while eating his lunch one day.

The entire area was sold some years ago to New York Air Terminals Inc. which had planned a 900 acre land and seaplane center there. To that end, all the remaining houses were destroyed and plowed under, but the venture was never successfully completed by them or Curtis-Wright which now owns the land.

Early Florists and Farms

Toward the end of the century, Secaucus, just a little country town, was known for its excellent market gardens, and the many wholesale florists that supplied the New York dealers with all varieties of plants. Among the most flourishing farms were those of Post, Hagan, Van Drehl, and Born. Wiegand's florist occupied a wide area on the lane named after the family and 22 or more green houses stretched to Washington Avenue. Otto Grundman had a large florist on the Paterson Plank Road in the North End. Mutilod' Exotic Nursery on Cedar Lane just off the Paterson Plank Road was the largest of the later florists, specializing in rare and ornamental ferns. Row upon row of green houses kept lush green plants and an excellent garden, dotted with imported statuary, surrounded the quaint luxurious pointed roof house of the owner. It is said to have been one of the most picturesque spots in all Secaucus, with an almost otherworldly serenity. Today almost no trace remains of the once romantic spot for in one night the entire stock was killed by frost when the giant boiler broke. So much was lost that the business could not withstand the jolt and it, as well as the beautiful gardens and grounds, slowly deteriorated.

Other Occupations

Another of the late 19th century occupations was stock raising, but it had not yet reached the proportions of today. The farms were few and small, and also more widely dispersed about the town. Mrs. Kroll on Raydol Avenue had a flourishing stock farm in the 70's and the North End farms also raised a quantity of pigs.

A much earlier occupation in Secaucus was the gathering of blue bent, cooper's flag, and cat tails, all products of the meadowland along the Hackensack River and neighboring creeks. The

former was used in thatching barns and barracks and later to make mat coverings for garden sashes. Chair mats and rush bottomed chairs were made from the cooper's flag and cat tails. John Earle, at the beginning of the 19th century, is said to have stripped 800 pounds of cat tails in one day, considered a great feat throughout these parts.

Very few of the people worked out of town, and before the trolley line they were obliged to walk to their places of employment in Homestead, Hoboken, or the "Hill".

The First Trolley

The Jersey City, Hoboken and Rutherford Electric Railway Co. having some time before built its carbarns in Secaucus, started service between Hoboken and Rutherford in 1895 and was leased in the same year to the New Jersey Electric Railway Company. Connection was thus established thru to Paterson. In 1898 the line was taken over by the White Line Transaction Company and the trolleys were painted white to distinguish them from the red cars of the Paterson Railway Lines. When passengers emerged from the plush-seated cars at Front Street they often sank ankle deep in mud, or had to jump deep ditches on either side of the street. At first the line was not given permission to ride all the way to the Hoboken Ferry, but by an ingenious arrangement Secaucus residents could reach the ferry after four transfers—all for one thin nickel. The trolley line operated until 1937 and served as a convenient connecting link with the surrounding quickly developing areas. In the later part of their careers the trolleys were generally known as "the banana line" because the cars would always come in bunches.

Before 1900

In the 1880's Kiesewetter's meat and grocery store moved from Sauer Island to Fifth Street, and later the entire building was taken to form the second story of the building now on the corner of the Paterson Plank Road and Front Street. In March, 1950, the building was destroyed in a spectacular blaze that routed three families and burned for five hours. Other early markets were Neubert's store on First Street, and Fred Hanse's place near the corner of Humboldt Street. Bakery wagons and other peddlers from Homestead and the "Hill" supplied the townspeople with provisions. One of the most popular spots in the old town was Fred Lowry's Hotel between Golden Avenue and Humboldt Street and the farmers often gathered there on the way through town. It was the scene of many a clambake and picnic for the area thereabouts was a wooded picnic grove. The old Sunnyside Hotel, almost opposite the Municipal Building, was another favorite gathering place and the Old Inn, still on the Paterson Plank Road, replaced Haege's Hotel which was destroyed by fire in the 70's. Both were stopping off places for those travelers following the Turnpike or Plank Road to Paterson and beyond. Three or four dances were held here each year attracting the townspeople and many outsiders. There was no public recreation but the people gathered at neighbors' houses and clambakes and picnics were frequent occurrences in the wooded country-like spots in town. The Halfway House, across the Hackensack bridge, was also a favorite picnic spot and the school children were taken there by their teacher to frolic in the double swing and have their fill of peanuts and lemonade. The farmers, with their wagons gaily decorated, journeyed to Union City once a year and celebrated their plentiful harvests at a Schuetzen Park picnic. Huckleberries grew in endless patches and in the fall the nut trees bore their fruit. Some of the best fishing in these parts was in Penhorn Creek where perch, catfish, and eels abounded.

In 1877 Secaucus had 186 pupils in its elementary schools, and by 1890 the number had increased to 230 showing some indication of town population. The total appropriation for school support in 1877 was \$720.04. The two-room school house, a little south of the

present Lincoln Junior High School, supplemented for many years by the Sauer Island school, served all the Secaucus children until Clarendon School was built in 1904. It was rebuilt, however, after suffering almost complete destruction in a fire in 1895. In illness the town depended upon Jersey City's Dr. Stout, and later, Dr. King, until recently in charge of the Mental Disease Hospital. Romeo Churchill, town veterinarian, also served later as tax collector and mayor. When a death occurred, a neighbor or perhaps two school children were told and as a service to the bereaved family they notified all the townspeople that a funeral was soon to be held. The first firehouse was located on County Avenue just south of the present institutions. About 1890 it was moved south on County Avenue almost opposite Washington Avenue.

Up to the turn of the century life remained simple and pleasant in Secaucus. Many still remember it as a somewhat secluded country spot where little boys liked to spend vacations, and several families kept summer houses. Thus Secaucus spent its adolescence, a quiet, almost isolated little farming town, ready by 1900 to be awakened to political maturity.

THE
20TH
CENTURY



FARLEY'S BUILDING in the Plaza. To the extreme left is the building that housed the First National Bank and was later enlarged as the Peoples National Bank.

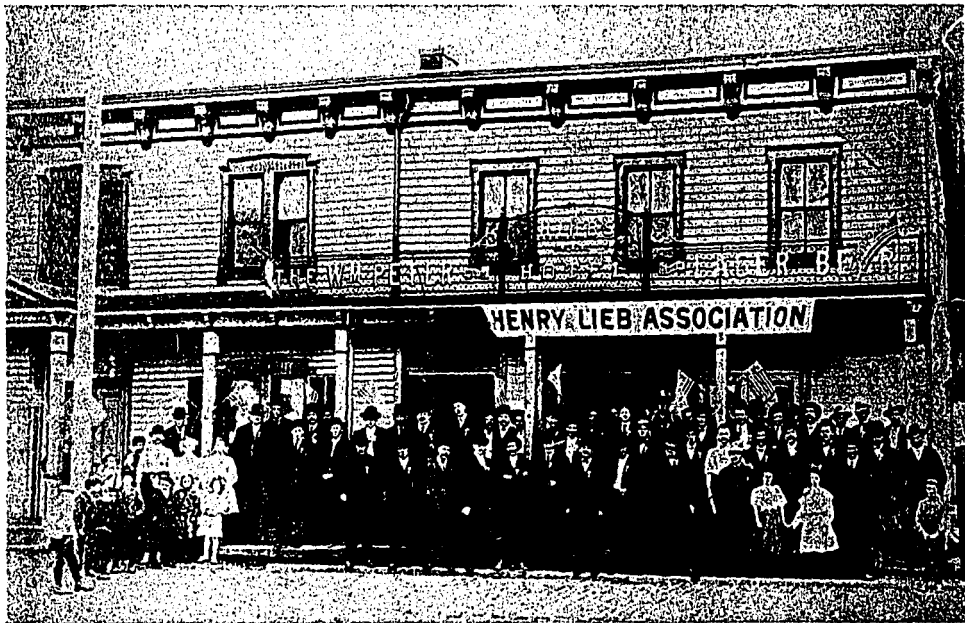
(Courtesy Secaucus Library)

The Old and The New

COMPARISON Those who remember back just 50 years have in their minds a very different picture of Secaucus. No startling events can be cited to show the development, but comparison of the two eras point up only few similarities. Where little ditch lined dirt roads connected the scattered farms and led to the few taverns and stores, modern paved roads and highways accomodate automobiles and heavy trucks. Long stretches of farming lands have given way to residential areas; and electricity, water and gas replace the older oil lamps, wells and wood. The changes are many and yet, in some ways, few, for while Secaucus remains one of the closest residential districts near New York City, stock and vegetable farming account for much of the town's income, and the vast stretches of meadowland still isolate it from the surrounding communities.

Secaucus Becomes a Borough

JANUARY 23, 1900 Secaucus started the 20th century with a political eruption. On January 23 1900 Assemblyman Julius Emil Walscheid introduced Assembly Bill No. 44 in the New Jersey Legislature entitled "An act to incorporate the borough of Secaucus, in the County of Hudson." On March 12, 1900, Secaucus was separated from North Bergen, of which it had been a part since 1843, and became the Borough of Secaucus. It was a step that had long been contemplated, for the Secaucus residents felt themselves too far removed from North Bergen to be so intimately connected politically. Being such a close knit group, the people wanted more freedom to control their local affairs, and were also somewhat dissatisfied with existing taxing arrangements.



LOWRY'S HOTEL in the Plaza changed hands several times and H. Lieb owned this part when the photo was taken. Note the cobblestones in the street. It was in this building that the first Secaucus bank was started and the Building & Loan. Wunner's would be to the right.
(Courtesy Mr. and Mrs. Fred Blatz)



MORNINGSIDE HOTEL at the corner of Front Street and Paterson Plank Road sometime around the turn of the century. The top part of this building was brought up from Sauer Island and had been a part of Kieswetter's Store there. It was destroyed by fire in 1950. Front Street is on the left. *(Courtesy Henry Harms)*

HUBER Two parties contested for the first mayoralty and the
FIRST "Citizens Party" won with the election of Jacob C.
MAYOR Huber, a Democrat, formerly town committeeman of
North Bergen for three years and forebear of many
of the present day Hubers. Sixty-four of the 99 votes
cast went to Huber, while William Hagan, Democratic candidate,
received the remaining 35. On first glance, this vote seems surpris-
ingly small, since the borough at that time had 1629 residents.
However, this was long before the advent of woman suffrage, and
a high percentage of the residents were not U. S. citizens. The
first board of council met with the mayor in No. 2 schoolhouse on
County Avenue, April 16, 1900. Councilmen were Charles E. Born,
Andrew Bremmer, August Becker, Adam Zengel Sr., Sebastian
Meisch, and George Lausecker. Adrian Post, descendant of one of
the earliest settlers in Secaucus, became the first borough clerk,
and served in that office, with various interruptions, until his
death in 1946.

THE After the appointment of a borough clerk, by the
"COOLER" first ordinance, police protection was provided for.
The first guardians of the law were the borough
marshals, under the jurisdiction of the council po-
lice committee with Andrew Bremmer as chief. The marshals re-
ceived two dollars for a ten hour day and two and a half dollars
for night duty. A barroom ice box was purchased for \$10, and
moved to a rear room of the Sunnyside, where it served as bor-
ough jail until the erection of the Town Hall. The prisoners in the
"cooler" probably enjoyed the company of relaxing farmers and
travelers in the old tavern; the proximity of the bar was an insur-
ance against thirst. Henry Engelbrecht, owner of the Sunnyside,
became jailer. On February 23, 1901, a complaint was lodged with
the borough council that the jailer refused to accept a prisoner.

Gay Days

THE PLAZA What today constitutes the center of town was, around 1900, very different. Lowry's hotel occupied a prominent place on Front Street, between Humboldt Street and Golden Avenue, where the Moskowitz Store now stands, and what was formerly Kieseewetter's meat and grocery store had been converted into a saloon. Some time afterwards a fire company was housed in the building where the bakery now is, at the corner of Front Street and Golden Avenue, and the whole surrounding area in back of these buildings was wooded. It has been said that every backyard, every unused piece of ground in Secaucus, was a picnic ground, so inviting and expansive were the woods and meadows. The cool clear waters of Penhorn Creek attracted folk from miles around, to swim, or to fish from its shores.

EARLY RECREATION Kieseewetter's Pavilion, an amusement and recreation center near the Hackensack River on Paterson Plank Road, was a popular gathering place, especially for people from out of town. It was later known as the Riverview, and was destroyed by fire in the 20's. The Old Inn continued its 2 or 3 yearly dances, and the young ladies of the Columbia Sewing Circle had fine parties for the young men in Hugerich's, a dance hall opposite Fourth, on Front Street. Chowder parties were popular and often special police were needed to keep the patrons from becoming too wild. Any gathering, in these early days, was something of a party, for everyone knew everyone else, and all helped one another in time of need.

LIGHTS Nine dollars a month was paid to the lamplighter who was in charge of the 6 gas lamps that guided people about the borough at night. "Tony the Lamp Post Lighter" was a familiar figure to many present day Secaucusites. By 1905 the number of lights had increased to 27 and electricity was used.



KIESEWETTER'S RIVERVIEW PAVILION on the Paterson Plank Road where many of the town's social functions were held. To the left is the old Hackensack River Bridge. The building was destroyed by fire in the 20s. *(Courtesy Mr. and Mrs. Louis Schelling)*

Secaucus Grows

FARMS In these early days before World War I, the agrarian nature of Secaucus remained, on the whole, undisturbed. Far and wide the prospering farms stretched, and all the biggest roads—Front Street, Paterson Plank Road, County Avenue, still unpaved—were bordered with their greens. Leafy vegetables abounded, and the ready New York markets bought all that could be grown. Celery was one of the specialties; some of the finest varieties were developed and grown in Secaucus. Stock farming was a big part of the town's industry and was described in 1905 as "the oldest and most prominent business in Secaucus".⁽⁷⁾ At that time there were about 35 stock farms and 50 vegetable farms in Secaucus. George Lausecker was owner of the largest stock farm, located in the North End off the Paterson Plank Road. A Rand McNally guide book around this time, however, made no mention of pigs, but described the borough as "mainly a squalid lot of goose farms and market gardens". The borough council warned a local dairyman in 1900 to "keep his cattle from straying or pasturing on the public streets."

INDUSTRY Some industry had already started, however, and pearl button making and Swiss embroidery were the most prominent. On Raydol Avenue there was an early smokeless powder plant, put out of business by a minor explosion. Probably the 1906 town ordinance regulating the manufacture of explosives was inspired by this concern. There were 2 other explosives plants, one behind Ullmeyer's farm on County Avenue, the other on Ernest Zitzman's property in Clarendon. There were a number of businesses devoted to harness making, carriage building and horse-shoeing.

MAYORS The first decade of its existence was an important one for the new borough, for it showed noticeable growth, both in population and material improvements. William Hagan (1906-1907), Romeo Churchill (1908-1909), Democrats,



The SECAUCUS GENERAL STORE was owned by Emil Alpen and Julius Kroll and was located on the Paterson Plank Road where the Secaucus Fuel Supply is today. The wagon bears the name "H. Henkel."
(Courtesy Mr. and Mrs. Louis Schelling)

and Andrew Bremmer (1910), Republican, succeeded Mayor Huber in this era. By 1905 the 1629 "founding fathers" had increased to 3191 and in 1910 population was 4740. Local affairs were being conducted from the newly erected Borough Hall which was built by John H. Hoffman. Completely furnished it cost about \$30,000. Proposals for a Borough Hall were begun already in 1904 and during his term Mayor William Hagan consistently vetoed the project. From the beginning it was planned to be a borough hall, lock-up, and firehouse, although there was considerable feeling among the townspeople of the need for an assembly hall which, a petition to the borough council in April, 1906, said "would also furnish an excellent place for meetings of our societies and young people and for all large public and private gatherings." The first council meeting in the new building was on December 18, 1909. Its site was formerly part of the Post estate, which was well known for its fine farm and apple orchards.

GROWING By 1900, electricity had been introduced, and a short time later the Hackensack Water Company replaced the wells with water mains. Part of the town, although a very small part, was already sewered by 1910. As population increased, more school space was needed, and in 1904, Clarendon School supplemented the one on County Avenue. The town's financial institutions, too, had their start in this era. The First National Bank first conducted business in the parlor of Lowry's Hotel. In July, 1909, it became the depository of Borough funds.

**FIRST
NEWSPAPER** "The Secaucus News" was the first newspaper to be published in Secaucus with the first edition on October 10, 1910. On January 3, 1911 it was accepted as an official newspaper of the Borough of Secaucus. Charles Haeger was the founder and until 1948 the newspaper was published weekly by him except for two short periods when it was sold and rebought. In 1926 the name was changed to the "Secaucus Home News". In 1948 Robert Henkel became owner and editor. The newspaper is independent in political matters and has tried to foster greater interest in the town.

Fire Department

The first firehouse in Secaucus was located across County Avenue from Zirk's farm where the County Institution farm ends. Before 1900 this was a part of the North Bergen fire department. In 1889 a hand drawn hook and ladder were purchased from the Washington Street, Hoboken, firehouse. It was stored in a barn on Secaucus Road until the firehouse could be made big enough to hold the equipment. A short time later the firehouse burned down and the apparatus was moved to a spot behind Feitner's, across County Avenue from Schuele's. Later it moved again to a spot on Washington Avenue, the street taking its name from the firehouse.

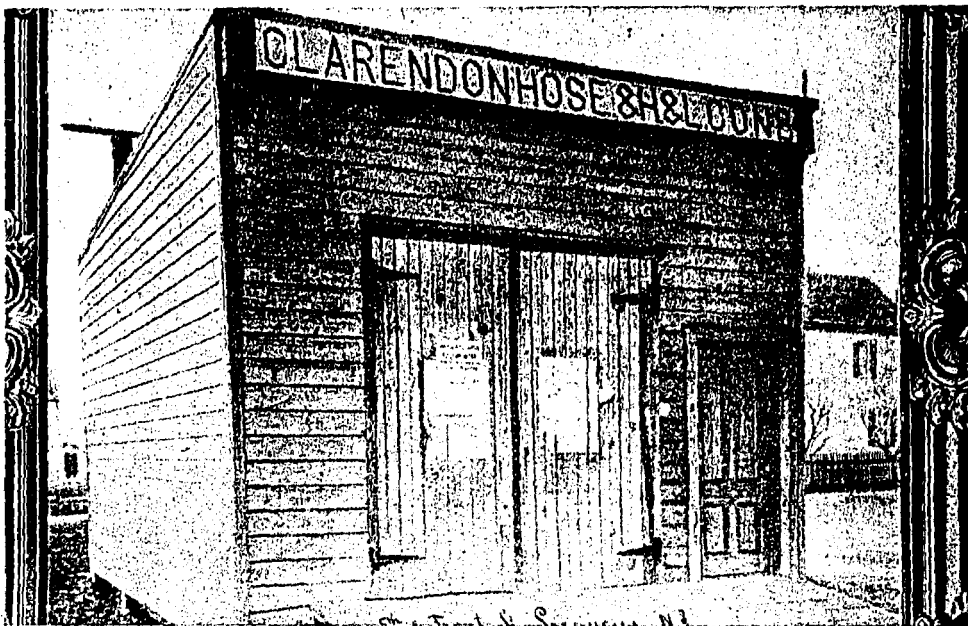
Meeting in Tammany Hall in 1891, George B. Bergkamp and several other men organized the first Secaucus fire department and named it the Washington Hook and Ladder No. 1. Previously members of the fire company were considered part of the North Bergen fire department and had to respond to North Bergen alarms. When Secaucus became a borough in 1900 this was the fire department.

In 1902 the company moved into its present location at the corner of Lincoln and County Avenues.

Engine Company No. 1, formerly Secaucus Hose Company No. 1, was at first located in the Plaza where the bakery is today, in a garage owned by Mr. Zitzman. On January 20, 1903, the borough council approved this as the second company in the Secaucus fire department and paid for the hose and carriage which the company had previously purchased. It moved into its present quarters shortly after the Borough Hall was completed in 1909.

Hose Company No. 2 was organized when a firehouse was built at the corner of Fifth Street and Front around 1900. It was known as Clarendon Hose and Hook and Ladder Co. and became a part of the Secaucus fire department on April 19, 1910 as Clarendon Hose and Hook and Ladder Co. No. 2.

Hose Company No. 1, formerly Luhrman Hose Company No. 3, was an independent company until around 1920 when it became



One of the first firehouses in town the Clarendon Hose & Hook & Ladder Co. No. 2 was located at the corner of Fifth Street and Front. Later it was moved to its present home on Seventh Street.
(Courtesy Hose Co. No. 2)

a part of the town's fire department.

In May, 1920, a group of men met in Fox's Garage on the Paterson Plank Road and started a fund raising campaign for Chiora Park Chemical Co. No. 1. In 1921 the unit was incorporated and a truck was purchased. At first it was stored in the Brockman garage on Chestnut Street, later in Sturm's garage on Centre Avenue. It moved to its present quarters on New Year's Day, 1922. Larry Harkins was the first fore man. It is still an independent company.

The biggest fires in Secaucus have been among the soap and grease plants and the hog farmers. A spectacular blaze in 1906 started at Stearn's plant and burned out four of these farmers, two Eisings, Tishman and Sturm. During World War I and after several big fires ruined more pig farms as Redfern and Altman. Another big fire was the burning of the Riverview in the 20's.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

In 1915 the Building and Loan was started, (at Lowry's) and almost coincident with this accumulation of money, the marshals were replaced by a regular police department in 1916. Edward Doyle was the first chief succeeded by the present chief, Arthur Temple. Today there are nineteen men in the department including seven sergeants. It is equipped with radio cars, a town ambulance and modern fingerprint and picture files.

A Sports Center

Before the days when every family had its own automobile the town flourished as a sports center and its basketball, baseball, and bowling teams were known throughout the county. One of the first organized groups of athletes was the Acme Club which started soon after the turn of the century as the American Athletic Club and met in members' homes. Later they built their own club house on Front Street now used as the Democratic headquarters. Boxing, weight lifting and other sports were sponsored by the club

which also held social affairs and gave yearly dances at the River-view.

Various spots in town were used for baseball and other athletic events: the powerhouse grounds on the Paterson Plank Road, the field between Fourth and Fifth Streets from Front to Centre and the old race track on Sauer Island.

It was in the period around the 30's that Richard Schuele was Hudson County bowling champ and before him Tony Beckman was a world renowned six day bicycle rider.

The "Hackey" was also a lively spot both in summer and winter. Shell racing was a popular sport with two well known local clubs, the Atlantic Boat Club and the Rosedale Boat Club. In the winter there was ice skating and fishing for eels through the ice, besides riding cars on the thick ice. Penhorn Creek and other streams were likewise used for fishing and skating.

Before 1925, the little town already boasted a movie. The Community Club (built around 1927), became the social and sports center of the town. Its ballroom facilities made it the most favored Saturday night dance spot in Hudson County. In addition the local social and political clubs staged their minstrel shows and plays there. In the winter time there was a basketball league operated for the benefit of the local youngsters. The four bowling alleys were rated with the best in the county and served as the home alleys for many of the best teams in the area.

In the last few years, since the end of World War II, there has been a noticeable increase in sports activity . . . in baseball, basketball, football after years of less activity. The Rams, Trenz, Otto Mack, Build Better Boys, are becoming bywords in local sporting circles.

A Post Office Grows

The first post office was begun by Otto Stoss in 1891 at the spot where the A & P stands today. There he had a barbershop and candy store and gave up the candy to handle mail. Later he moved

to the spot where Kalmeyer is now located. Mr. Stoss would pick up mail at Sauer Island from fast moving trains and distribute it about town. First he used a horse and buggy and later a bicycle. The usual fee for delivery was 2c for a letter and 1c for a post card. People could leave outgoing mail at his store or could give it to him on his irregular rounds. This would go to Sauer Island where it had to be thrown onto the train as it sped by.

Previously residents would travel to the "Hill" for mail or pick it up at the home of a friend. Even after 1900 the borough council was petitioned to seek rural free delivery service.

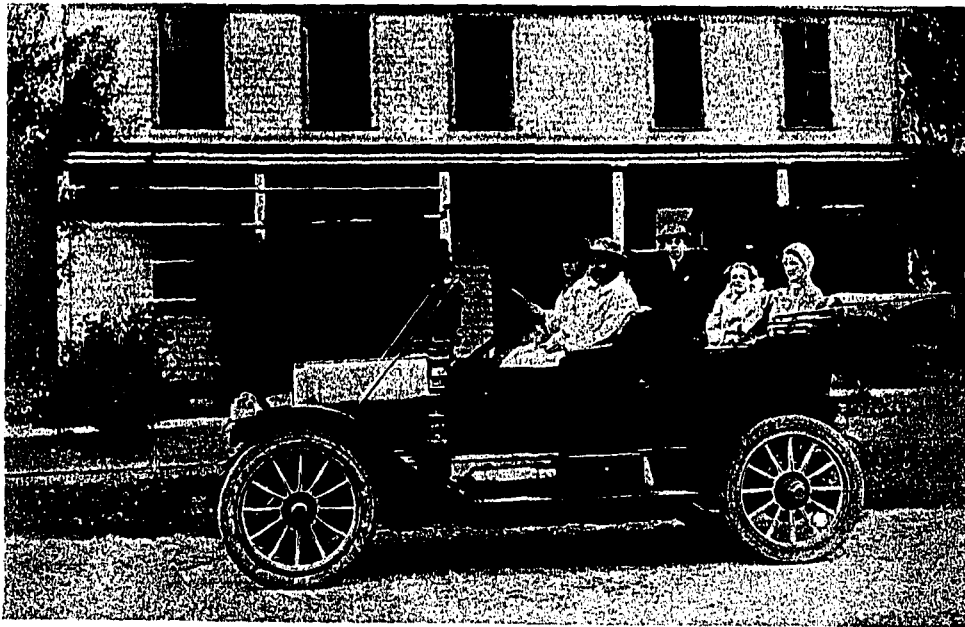
In 1914 the Stoss post office became a branch of the Weehawken office and used a building where the Secaucus Fuel Supply is today. In 1925 it became a branch of the West New York office and in 1945 it was moved to its more spacious quarters next to the bank.

Politics — War

Andrew Bremmer resigned after one year of his term of office as mayor and Sebastian Meisch was appointed to finish the unexpired term. Romeo Churchill was reelected on the Democratic ticket serving in 1912-13. Henry Koch was elected second Republican mayor and served from 1914 until 1922.

One hundred seventy-five men left to fight in France when the United States entered World War I in 1917. The Liberty Bond sales were led by Mayor Koch. The town welcomed its returning heroes with a parade, speeches, and then a lively party at the Riverview. One soldier had been killed in France, and in his honor the American Legion Post, established in 1921, was named the Corporal Joseph Hassenforder Post.

Interest in saloons must also have been increasingly heightened, because in 1917 a movement was started to change from a borough to the town system of government. On June 5, 1917, the change was made, with many a sigh of relief that the local government could now issue liquor permits and the dearth of saloons (there were 14) could be corrected. First town councilmen were



Former Mayor Andrew Bremmer (with the mustache) in front of his Fifth Street home. His son is driving the car which is equipped with gas lamps.

(Courtesy Mr. and Mrs. Henry Luhrmann)

John F. Cadell, Albert Buchmuller, Sr., Louis H. Hilke, George Smith, Conrad Luhman, and Jacob Schmitt. Population at this time was a little over 5000.

In one of the closest political battles in the history of the town Jacob Schmitt edged out Peter Farley for Mayor in 1922. Farley carried both the Second and Third wards but was defeated by a heavy First ward and Laurel Hill vote.

Up until 1924, much of Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Streets bordering on Front, were farmland, but about this time the area was developed as a residential section. When trees were cut down to pave roads in this and other sections of town, much of the country-like beauty of the town was lost. Some relatively unsuccessful effort has been made from time to time by Mayor John J. Kane to replace the lost shade trees. In some sections, however, owners have themselves planted trees.

An Airport — Almost

In the years before the depression, a New York air transportation company had great plans for the little town, thinking to convert the central swampland, part of which had housed the foundry years before, into a giant land and seaplane base. Its proximity to New York, and wide stretch of territory recommended it especially for this use. The difficult task of filling in the swamplands was undertaken, and thousands of tons of dirt were taken as fill-in material from the ridge on County Avenue, and in addition large quantities of sand were flooded over part of the area from the Hackensack River. The ambitious project was suddenly halted by the Depression, and today there is still speculation as to whether the present owners of the land, the Curtis Wright firm, will undertake to finish the job.



The MEISCH HOMESTEAD on County Avenue before it was rebuilt and enlarged. For years the Meisch farm was the largest in the town. The property was sold in the late 20s to make room for an airport which was never built. (Courtesy Mr. and Mrs. John Block)

Transportation

Sometime before 1917 a two horse stage ran between Hudson Avenue and Bergenline Avenue at 32nd Street in Union Hill. The fare was 15 cents. Later Leo Brandenburg operated the first "jitney" and 3 cents provided transportation for school children. In 1918 George Fox started a bus line between the Secaucus Town Hall and Laurel Hill, succeeded in the following year by Edward Fisher. The buses operated on Wednesdays and Sundays. Another of Fisher's jobs was transporting children to school.

In 1919 Henry Harms and Mayor Koch started a bus route between the Hackensack River bridge and the Hoboken ferries. The venture was unsuccessful, however, and was discontinued after a short time. The Hudson Bus Transportation Company started a bus route after the first World War between the Five Corners and the Secaucus railroad tracks. Later the route was continued to Laurel Hill and its route between Eighth Street and Journal Square was started.

In 1903 the White Line, which later became known as the Passaic Line Street Railway, was taken over by Public Service, and ran until March 22, 1937. From that time, until 1947, all-service vehicles were employed on the line, now replaced by buses. Since the old Hackensack bridge was torn down in the late 20's this line, now called No. 15 Passaic, has been operating only between Secaucus and Hoboken.

The present Public Service No. 3 was started in 1928 as route No. 42, between Secaucus and the Weehawken Ferry. In 1935 this line and the Paterson-East Rutherford Bus Route were combined and operated as a through route between Paterson and the ferry.

Other Secaucus transportation facilities include the Inter-City and Garden State bus lines, which carry Secaucus passengers to and from New York, although their routes continue past the town into Paterson and Nutley. The No. 97, only several years old, runs between Jersey City and East Paterson through Secaucus.

Thus, Secaucus is connected by bus lines with every important city in the vicinity. Although crossed by three railroads, the Erie, Pennsylvania and Lackawanna, almost no commuters or shoppers make use of them. Only the Erie and Lackawanna have passenger stations, the former dating back to 1833, when the line was part of the Paterson and Hudson River Railroad. In 1905 the Pennsylvania constructed its elevated line through Secaucus, on a piece of unused meadow land for which it paid \$43,832. Dirt to construct this elevated section was taken, in large part, from the old Abel I. Smith estate, to the east of the County Avenue and Secaucus Road fork. An attempt was made by a local board of trade to have this railroad build a passenger station here at the same time that the tracks were laid.

John J. Kane

John J. Kane was elected to office in 1928 and has served as mayor since then. He had formerly been president of the Board of Education, and his chief campaign promise was "a seat for every child"—alleviation of the overcrowded conditions of the schools. When he assumed office the schools were only operating on a half session basis, and rooms in the firehouse were pressed into use. By 1929 Lincoln School had been built, a little north of the old No. 2 schoolhouse, long since removed. By application for W.P.A. funds the town saved more than half the cost of the project, including the building of the athletic field and Kane Stadium. Actual cost to the town was \$60,000. During these early years, Lincoln was a grade school, and when it was converted in 1937 to a Junior High, an addition was made to house the primary school children of that area. W.P.A. money also aided the town in the construction of a sewer outfall and pumping station, and County money provided for the permanent surfacing of Front Street, Centre Avenue, and Secaucus Road.

The Town Grows

NEWSPAPER The "Secaucus Progress", a weekly newspaper, was started by two members of the William Trenz Club in the Fall of 1931 to give publicity to sports and the "Trenz Flying Dutchmen". Later the paper attracted wide attention when a group of Fusionists made sensational charges in it to discredit the Democratic administration in the 1932 election and was instrumental in seating two Fusionists, Roland Wrightson and William Grunner, on the Town Council. For threr or four years thereafter the newspaper was run by Roland Wrightson.

**A
NEW
BANK** In 1934 the Peoples National Bank of Secaucus replaced the First National, which had succumbed to the economic pressure of the early 30's. The original Board of Directors consisted of Sebastian Meisch, George Behrens, George W. King, Charles Assel, William Crapp, Peter Farley, and William Trenz. Starting with an initial capital of \$120,000 the bank's resources are 10 times the amount shown on the 1934 statement, and it is considered one of the most liquid banks in Hudson County.

**A
LIBRARY** About this same time, a group of public spirited citizens including several of the local school teachers cooperated in the establishment of the Secaucus Free Public Library. With the help of the New Jersey public library commission, a tiny library was started on the top floor of the Municipal Building. The town received some W.P.A. money at first but since 1941 has assumed full responsibility. The entire venture has been one of enthusiastic cooperation and volunteer work. Even today the appropriations are not sufficient to maintain full service, and members of the Board of Trustees give their time to keep the library open evenings. Mrs. Marion Dudley, who has been with the venture since its beginning, is the librarian, and there are approximately 10,000 books, pamphlets and periodicals in the collection. The original Board of Trustees, except for the

addition of Mrs. Madeline McClure and Mrs. Margaret Arrigo, is still serving. On the whole, principally enthusiastic and relatively young readers venture to climb the many stairs to the three little rooms, but some hope has been expressed that the town will in the near future enjoy a separate library building and increased facilities. In such an eventuality, the new library would be in a position to assume leadership in such town activities as young people's groups, adult education, and general cultural programs, as well as furnishing books for our students and other readers.

World War 2

Immediately behind the Mayor's chair in the Town Hall are the pictures of twelve men, a grim testimony to war, who gave their lives for their country in World War II. They bear the names of Thomas G. Blondel, Howard Eckel, Edward C. Riedel, Louis A. Lanza, Martin Sampson, Adrian Smit, Arnold P. Sparman, Paul Shetik, Angus J. Gillis, Edward Ivanoski, William Mansfield, Fred Koelle, Jr., Frank C. Schultz and Henry P. Walters.

A plaque beneath the portraits bears this inscription:

That We May Keep Forever Bright
The Memory of Their Glorious Past
In the Struggle to Defend
"Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness"
Donated by "Secaucus Canteen Corps"
Mrs. Margaret Kans, Chairman
May 30, 1946

Oddities

Sometime before the first World War a miniature "Gold Rush" developed in Secaucus on Secaucus Road when "Gold" was discovered on the farm of Charles Koegel. The affair got wide publicity but it turned out to be only "cat's gold."

A homemade blimp owned by Morris F. Hamza of Union City

and flown from Sauer Island made news on August 3, 1927, as it broke loose from its mooring and started an unscheduled journey over New York City and finally came to rest on a marsh north of Flushing, Long Island. A. A. Hensler was at the controls of the motorcycle engine which had gone dead before the blimp started its trip. The blimp was 94 feet long and held 15,000 cubic feet of gas.

In the 1930's Secaucus was host to a fracas that resembled the roller skating derbies of today. In the old carbarns of the White Line Trolley, a dance marathon was conducted, and weary couples danced for weeks while spectators paid to watch. Several weddings were performed there, and the affair was broadcast on the radio at various times. A sequel was planned, but prevented by the town officials from starting. Although the townspeople did a great deal of watching, most of the dancing couples were from out of town.

A third weekly newspaper to make its appearance in Secaucus was the still published "Secaucus Press". It was started by Martin Calbert and Donald Harold Richmond on March 15, 1945. It opposed Mayor John J. Kane in the mayoral election of 1948. Shortly thereafter the owners sold out to Mr. Cangiano, the present owner.

Today and Tomorrow

Today Secaucus, enclosed in the original boundaries of the Bayard and Varlet grant of 1663, covers 6.6 square miles and has an elevation of 0 to 203 feet (Snake Hill). Although the town has never been the site of any particular event, historical or otherwise, traveling Secaucusites will find it known by many a person as far west as Chicago and men returning from the war tell stories of its "fame" even beyond. O. Henry mentions the town in his short story, "The Cosmopolite."

The reference to Secaucus is usually made because of the great number of pigs raised here. Passing motorists and bus and train commuters have occasionally been subjected to a barrage of odors

reminding them of the pigs. Oftentimes the odor is actually emanating from the numerous soap and tallow plants in town or from the neighboring dumping grounds, for several nearby municipalities dump and burn their refuse at Secaucus' doorstep. The damming up of Penhorn Creek when the railroads were built in the southern part of the town also accounts for some of the odor, for it caused the creek which was a favorite fishing ground some years before, to become stagnant. As early as 1903 complaints had been made with the borough council against a fat rendering plant and the partial closing of a sluice box at the railroad tracks.

Today there are approximately 50 pig farms in Secaucus which annually send more than 100,000 pigs to market. Since after the first World War it has been the biggest single industry. It was during that war that the stock farms, as we know them today, got their start—large concentrated, businesses with thousands of pigs crowded into low rambling sheds. The Town Council at various times considered means to restrain the growth of the farms. Realizing the anomaly of pig farms so close to New York and residential areas, many of these farmers have already purchased farms in other parts of the state lest they should suddenly be obliged to sell. Today the prospect is that the construction of the Turnpike Route 100 through Secaucus will necessitate the removal of additional farms.

The industry second to pig farming for a long time was truck farming. While the former prosper because of the cheap feed in refuse from Metropolitan eating places, the latter have had an advantageous position in being close to large markets to sell their fast grown crops. Many of these truck farmers have likewise sought other places to farm so that today the total acreage owned by Secaucus farmers is considerably less than 15 years ago. Many farmers have sold their farms at lucrative prices for industrial or home building.

The Meisch brothers, Adolph and John, with their father, Sebastian, until 1946 operated the largest truck farm in this area. At one time the elder Meisch was called "The Celery King". Reference was to the fact of the great amount of celery and celery

seed grown on his farm on County Avenue. The brothers now operate a farm in North Arlington.

INDUSTRY MOVES IN Since 1940 there has been a tremendous influx of business into Secaucus. Its location so close to New York has probably been the chief factor. The biggest of these new industries is the trucking business. The Service Transportation Company owned by Albert Buchmuller was the only such firm here twenty years ago. Today there are seven such firms with the Mason-Dixon opening a huge terminal between Peterson Lane and the Paterson Plank Road in 1949.

Two other plants also started operations on Peterson Lane in the past few years, the Union Textile Printers and J. Cane and Sons. The latter manufactures cake mixtures. Their joined factories occupy about an acre of land.

One of the large oil distributors in this area, Air Pilot Oil Company, also has its tanks and equipment here on the Hackensack River where barges and tankers unload more than 25 million gallons a year. A short distance up the river is one of the oldest industries in town, a building material plant now operated by the Hudson Builders but at one time owned by Jacob Schmitt and his sons. Sand, gravel, cement and other materials are likewise unloaded from barges for distribution. The plant of the Clinton Asphalt Company is located in this same area.

Embroidery and allied industry are still important occupations with more than a dozen plants ranging in size from owner-operator to several that employ more than 25 people. The largest embroidery is that operated by Alfred Floriani on Third Street.

There are also light machine and casting works where truck springs, tools, forgings, and machined products are processed. Since 1940 Secaucus has had the benefit of air transportation at the Dawn Patrol Seaplane Base. There, at the foot of Farm Road on the Hackensack River, six seaplanes and two amphibious planes are available for flight instruction, sightseeing, chartered service and aerial photography. A new hangar is planned for the near future together with a marine railway and pilot's lounge.

ON THE "HACKEY" One of the favorite haunts of boatmen, hunters, and fishermen almost since the turn of the century has been Snipe's Beach on the Hackensack River at the foot of Centre Avenue. Here are all sizes of boats from large cabin cruisers to row boats. In the days before large boats were wont to go up the "Hackey", Dr. Leo Brandenburg was known for driving his auto on the ice-choked river. Crabs and killies are the only living things in the river that was once filled with fish. The pollution of the river by towns and industry along its route account for the change. Despite the dirt, hundreds of children can be found swimming there in the heat of the summer, either from boats or off the old derrick near the Erie Railroad Bridge.

A newer boat anchorage is that at Tony's Old Mill at Mill Creek and the Hackensack River where similar facilities are offered. It seems that the river will return someday to its former clean condition for in 1948 a state commission was empowered to clean up the river. Towns and industry along its banks have already been directed to install proper sewage treatment facilities.

SECAUCUS
GRAVEYARDS



Photo taken in the Abel I. Smith Cemetery shows Melvin McClure, Anita Koch and Beatrice Irving at the underground vault. It has been proposed to make a park of the site.
(Home News Photo)

Earliest Records

OLDEST TOMBSTONE The oldest records housed by Secaucus itself are those engraved upon the old and decaying grave stones of its cemeteries. Today the dead are buried in the cemeteries of neighboring towns, but at one time various places in Secaucus served as burial grounds. Most likely the early farmers had parts of their own land set aside for such purposes.

The oldest house in Secaucus, the Post homestead on 9th Street, at one time had its own plot, but the stones were all removed so that no trace marks the spot today. One of the head stones was taken to Glindmeyer's farm, and is the oldest record that can be found. Some of the engraving is indistinct, so that it can be only partly deciphered:

. . . Memory of . . . Vangezen
Who Departed This Life
March 18, 1799
Aged 68 years and 9 Months

Because of the proximity of the graves, the Post house was once thought to be haunted, but no ghosts, distinguished or otherwise, have been seen.

SLAVE CEMETERY Representing a second type of cemetery, is the slave grave yard on what is now Schmitt's farm on Secaucus Road, near the fork of County Avenue. Shaded by a peach and cherry tree, the area is unmarked and unused. The last Negro was buried there about 1902, Old "Nigger Tom", who had been a slave of Abel I. Smith, and when freed, his former master gave him a plot of land near Snake Hill which he farmed until his death. The gravestones, made of perishable sandstone, have long since deteriorated. In purchasing the ground the present owner had to agree to leave the ground unused for a period of years.

ABEL I. SMITH CEMETERY

The best known burying ground in Secaucus is located in a charming grove on one of the highest spots in town. West of County Avenue, just bordering on the grounds of the Mental Disease Hospital, the little plot overlooks the wide expanse of the central Secaucus meadows and away over to the Hackensack River. The entire area is shaded by wild cherry trees, and in summer the high grass covers over most of the tombstones, long since knocked over or broken. Away from the busy noises of the town and highways, only the singing of the birds breaks the silence. An underground vault once held the bodies of the Abel I. Smith family, but the bodies were removed some time ago because of grave robbers. The crypt has 24 shelves, 12 built for adult coffins, and 12 for children. The gravestone inscriptions have been worn smooth by time, and long years of neglect or misuse have resulted in the breaking or complete disintegration of many of the markers. Oldest of the readable stones is one of 1803. The following inscriptions have been copied from these stones:

. . . of Daniel Smith of Weehawk,
Who Departed This Life
October . . . , 18 . . .
At 1 o'clock in the Morning
In the 50th Year of his Age

Both few and ill the days of man
Away do quickly pass
Just as a hand breadth or a span
All flesh is like the grass

In memory of
Ezekiel Stillwell
Who Departed This Life
October 8th, 1803
Aged 22 years and 7 months

. . . John Constantine
A native of Darbyshire in England
A loving husband and a faithful friend
Lies sleeping here

John H. Smith
This stone which fond affection here hath placed,
Which feebly speaks the genius of my mind,
So in my breast they monument is raised,
And there in bright remembrance dwell my name

Sarah Post (1826)
Weep not for me, my children dear
I am not dea; just sleeping here.

Maybelle Dean
As I am now, so you will be;
Prepare for death and follow me.

The sweet remembrance of the just
Shall flourish, while they sleep in dust.

Other names on the gravestones are those of John Hen, 1811; William Myers, 1858; Egbert Post, 1825; Henry Post, 1823; John H. Post, 1811.

In 1948 Mrs. Marion Dudley, librarian, suggested to the town officials that the Abel I. Smith graveyard be set aside as a memorial park because of its age and its position, overlooking the town of Secaucus.



MENTAL DISEASE HOSPITAL on County Avenue as seen from the air. It was built in the late 20s to replace a similar hospital on Snake Hill. An addition is being planned for the near future to alleviate overcrowding. *(Courtesy Warden Arthur Orr)*

EDUCATION



SCHOOL NO. 2 on County Avenue before the turn of the century and before it burned down and was replaced by a brick school. To the left of the picture is the Reformed Church. Many of the people pictured here live in Secaucus today.

(Courtesy Miss Margaret Lehfeld)

Reawakening

*What sculpture is to a block of marble
Education is to an human soul.*

—ADDISON

Cornerstone inscription on
Lincoln Junior High School

In the wisdom, ideas and ideals of its young people, any town can catch a glimpse of its future; any nation, a gauge of its strength. We do not, and should not, educate merely to inform, but to develop the intellectual, and cultural potentialities of the individual to their fullest, both for the collective social good and for personal fulfillment and enrichment. To this high purpose our schools are dedicated and by this strict gauge we measure them. Too often we look at them as buildings and plan them as temporal objects, when only for their ideas are they important.

In our town, a slight awakening from the cultural lag of the past few decades gives promise, perhaps, of a better era to come, one in which the greatest individual growth will be coincident with the improvement of the social, cultural, and intellectual tempore of the community. One indication of present stirrings is the renewed interest in and use of the town library. Many an evening, especially in winter, the 3 little rooms at the top floor of the town hall are crowded with townspeople searching the open shelves. A little theatre group in town engages the interest of many of the younger people, and several successful productions have already been staged. A tribute to our schools is their part in stimulating more and more young men and women to accept the advantages and assume the responsibilities of higher education, for Secaucus' number of college students, formerly almost nil, is promisingly improving.

As the town enters the second half of its first century, it may, perhaps, be on the verge of a renaissance. If it is not, that very fact should indicate a direction for our educators, leaders, and the "man in the street" to take. Let the emphasis on all three be equal, and cooperation be the keynote. Then perhaps the second history of Secaucus will proudly record a model community where young and

old alike enjoy the benefits of a community center, a high school, pleasant little parks, musical programs, and general civic planning for satisfying and useful living.

Early Schools

SCHOOL NO. 2 The earliest efforts of Secaucus residents to provide for the education of their children are unrecorded or lost. The island has been inhabited at least since Earle established his plantation in 1676, but the first mention of a school is in 1860. Before that, there may have been some instruction in town but the children probably walked the long stretches to Jersey City or Hoboken for their education. There is some evidence that there may once have been a school where the town hall now stands, and which burned down shortly after 1860. Such a school was spoken of by Mrs. Meerbott, mother of Percy Meerbott, who attended school in Secaucus in the 60's. At any rate, the two room school house on County Avenue, built in 1863, was known as school No. 2. Possibly the town hall school was No. 1, or perhaps, as is quite likely, the County Avenue school took the number of the school district, which was district No. 2 of North Bergen Township.

The school house on County Avenue, a little south of the present Lincoln Junior High School, was enlarged in 1875. It burned down about 20 years later in a blaze that almost set fire to the Reformed Church which stood next to it at that time. The exciting event, probably the fulfillment of many a child's dream, allowed no holiday. School was conducted in Kiesewetter's building at the Plaza and possibly in one or more of the saloons in town. A new school was erected on the same site, somewhat larger than its predecessor, and served for many years as the meeting place of the early town councils, religious congregations, and other organizations. In 1917, School No. 2 was condemned by state inspectors as a fire-trap. Teachers and pupils, carrying books and school supplies, marched



Classroom scene in School No. 2 on County Avenue more than fifty years ago. Note the seats that can accommodate two pupils with ease. This school was probably the first to be constructed in Secaucus.
(Courtesy Secaucus Library)

to Clarendon school thereby forcing that school on a part time basis. When Miss Thomas (later Mrs. Ernst) taught at School No. 2 the students sat in old-fashioned double seats and used pieces of cardboard to separate themselves so that no one's property would be infringed upon. At least two classes were conducted in each room and very often three or four.

When the foundry at Sauer Island was at the peak of its operations and that district fairly well populated, overcrowding in School No. 2 as well as its distance from the Island, necessitated the building of a school there. This 1882 "Foundry School", as it was called, was only a small building of one room and, like its predecessor, served for public meetings and church services as well as instruction.

TEACHERS The earliest mentioned teachers are Mr. Brower who later became principal of the Hoboken High School, and Miss Hennessy. In 1882, Elizabeth Born was added to the teaching staff, and served for many years as a member of the faculty. By 1877 Secaucus had 186 pupils and total apportionment to the school was \$720.04. In those days, as now, Secaucus had provisions only for elementary education, but at that time very few children went to high school. Boys who wanted to complete their education walked to school in Hoboken or Jersey City. For the most part not too much consideration was given to the girls' education, for they were needed at home to help with the housework.

Later Schools

The next school to be erected, the oldest now still in use, was Clarendon School No. 1 on Fifth Street and Centre Avenue. When built in 1904, it had only 6 rooms and was considered quite modern because it had single seats. An addition for several classrooms was built in 1916.

In 1910, Huber Street School was built and for many years thereafter school facilities were adequate. However, with the steadily

increasing population, overcrowding was inevitable, so that by the late 1920's school had to be conducted on a half time basis to accommodate all the pupils.

One of John J. Kane's chief appeals in the 1928 campaign was "a seat for every child" in the local schools and within a year after his election, as Mayor, Lincoln School was built at County Avenue and Peterson Lane. It was a grammar school at first and cost \$225,000 to build.

In 1937 an annex was built to Lincoln School for primary grade pupils, and the rest of the building became a junior high school. Students who formerly received only 8 years of their education in Secaucus, now attend the 7th through the 9th grade in Lincoln Junior High School. Mr. Casazza, a former teacher, became principal and Mrs. Ernst, vice-principal. Coincident with the change, an athletic stadium was built behind the school with a seating capacity of 1,500. A great many of the town's athletic activities are centered at the stadium and it has doubled as an outdoor graduation stage, a Boy Scout Camporee site and other diverse activities. The school gym is used for basketball during the winter months.

Today, there are three schools in Secaucus, Clarendon, Huber Street and Lincoln Junior High School with a combined student body of about 900. Senior high school students travel by bus to attend neighboring parochial and high schools. The town also provides transportation for more than 60 grammar school students who live at inconvenient distances from the schools. While seating capacity is now adequate for all the children, the two grade schools are forbidding in appearance and there is some shortage in the teaching staff, with combined classes necessitated in several instances.

Parent-Teacher Units

When John J. Kane was president of the Board of Education in 1925 he spearheaded the movement to organize both the Clarendon and Huber Street Parent Teacher Associations. Mrs. Frank Glassford became the first president of the Clarendon unit and a week



HAGAN HOMESTEAD in the North End near the Hackensack River, several hundred feet off the Plankroad. It was surrounded by beautiful grounds and fruit trees.

(Courtesy Secaucus Library)

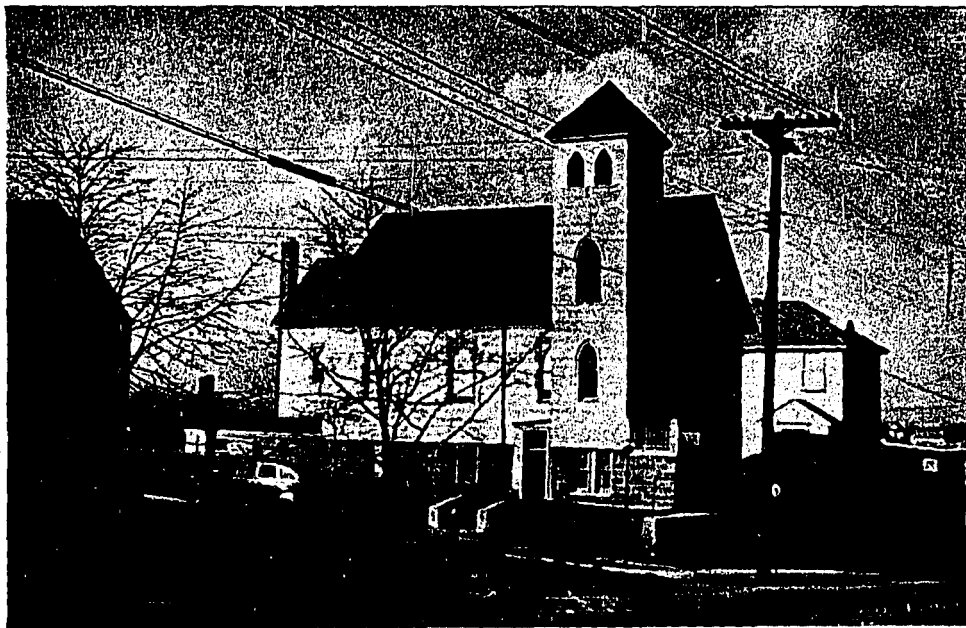
later Mrs. John Ludwigsen was named head of the Huber Street unit. Both groups have functioned uninterrupted since that time and have encouraged better education in Secaucus.

They carry on a wide variety of activity to help the child, parents and teachers and sponsor various social programs. The Huber Street unit also has had a separate Glee Club directed by Mrs. Louis Schelling for many years. In 1946 the Huber Street unit purchased a moving picture projector for use in the school and the Clarendon unit is working on a similar project today. Both units have for the past year or more had regular representation at the meetings of the Board of Education. These members report back to their respective groups with the idea to better cooperation between administration and teaching. One of the chief aims of the Parent Teacher movement in Secaucus as well as other communities has been cooperation and education on all levels—community, county, state, national, international.

Teachers Unite

The Secaucus Education Association was formed on April 18, 1947 with a membership of 34 teachers, including all the teachers in the three Secaucus public schools. Besides desiring greater cooperation with the community, the newly formed group affiliated itself almost immediately with the New Jersey Education Association and, later, the National Education Association, to provide an opportunity for a continuous study of the problems of the teaching profession. Stanley Massarsky became the first president of the organization.

CHURCHES



FIRST REFORMED CHURCH at Post Place and Centre Avenue was the first church to be erected in Secaucus and stood at one time at County Avenue opposite the entrance to the Mental Hospital. It was moved to its present spot in 1914.

(Courtesy Reverend Lewis Kuester)

Early History

Early residents of Secaucus trudged the long hill or rode by horse and buggy to Bergen and later to other nearby towns to attend religious services, for the first church in town was not established until 1872. Since the first colonists in this area were Dutch, the Reformed Church was the first and only one in existence for many years, and it was closely connected with civic as well as religious affairs. As early as 1662 the inhabitants of the village of Bergen taxed themselves to build a church, a log tabernacle to be followed by the old octagonal church in 1680, on the site of Old Bergen Church in Jersey City. Seats were placed around the wall for the men, and women occupied their personal high backed chairs. In the winter they brought little floor stoves, aglow with smoldering embers, the only heat during the long services. Collections were taken in wampum, which was sold by the deacons to the heads of families.

In 1809 the growth of other religious communities in Jersey City was encouraged by the New Jersey Associates' offer of ground to any religious denomination which would erect a building. The Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Catholics took advantage of the offer, the last mentioned after a rousing sermon in St. Patrick's Cathedral urging that assistance be given to the "poor Catholics of Paulus Hook". The next day between 200 and 300 horses and carts and a large number of men went over the ferry to fill in the ground for old St. Peter's in Jersey City.

Today Secaucus has six active church organizations, three Protestant, one Catholic, one Jewish, and one independent church of divine metaphysical healing.

First Reformed Church

The first religious community to be organized was the First Reformed, and as early as 1860 Sunday school was being conducted supposedly in a one room schoolhouse where the Town Hall now stands. Later, students from Rutgers Theological Seminary conducted regular services in the School, No. 2 on County Avenue which had been enlarged to two rooms. Abel I. Smith donated a plot of ground to the church just south of Lincoln School upon which a building was erected in 1892. In 1914 the Church was moved to its present site on Centre Avenue, where it was remodeled and rededicated. In addition to the long line of student preachers, pastors have been the Rev. E. C. Sult, Rev. J. H. Howard, Rev. C. M. Severence, and the present Rev. Lewis Kuester.

The Catholic Community

Early Catholics, few in number, were obliged to ferry to New York to hear Mass. With the completion of St. Peter's in Jersey City in 1836, the Hoboken Mission, including all the territory between the Hudson and the Hackensack Rivers from the Five Corners in Jersey City to Fort Lee, assumed charge of Secaucus, and at the end of the 19th century until 1908, Mass was celebrated every Sunday at Sauer Island by the Passionate Fathers of St. Michael's Monastery. Each Saturday night a priest was picked up to stay overnight, and the service was held next morning in the one room schoolhouse. Protestant denominations also used this schoolhouse for their meetings. In 1908 Secaucus became a mission of New Durham's St. Bridget's Church, and Masses were heard first in Clarendon Hall and later in School, No. 1 on Fifth Street. By December of the same year a parade of over 1000 men from all the neighboring churches celebrated the laying of the cornerstone, and in March,

1909, the Church of the Immaculate Conception on Paterson Plank Road and the corner of Post Place was dedicated. Reverend Marshall was the first resident priest. With a view toward future expansion, the parish bought a part of the Post property in 1924, and in September of 1949 the new Immaculate Conception Church, one of the largest projects ever undertaken in Secaucus, was formally opened across the street from the old church. Also included are a parochial school and a nun's home. Planning for the new church began with Reverend Auth's installation in 1917, and the succeeding priests, the Reverends Holson, Gormley, Hennesey, and Reilly each worked patiently to carry the project to its successful completion. The parish also maintains, since 1936, a chapel in the Hudson County Hospital for Mental Diseases.

Saint Matthew's

Secaucus has had since the mid 1800's, a great number of German people, and a correspondingly large congregation of Lutherans. Just as with the other denominations, the early Lutherans walked to nearby towns for Sunday worship. It was not until 1908 that the first service was held in Secaucus, in Public School No. 2 on County Avenue, since demolished. Pastor A. Gurschke of West Hoboken was in charge and thirty-seven worshippers were present. The first session of the Sunday School was also held on August 30th of that year, with 39 children and five teachers present. In September, 1908, the Reverend John M. Eberlein was installed as the first resident pastor of the congregation. Under his leadership the congregation increased in number, and so the need for a church building was recognized. The cornerstone of Saint Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church was laid on Memorial Day, May 30th, and it was dedicated on September 26, 1909. In November 1914, the Reverend H. C. Beckmann was installed as pastor, and the first English service was conducted on July 1, 1917. Before that, all services had been in German. Pastor Julius B. Tusty was ordained and installed on

August 27, 1939, as pastor of the congregation and is still serving in that capacity. A building project, including plans for a Sunday School Building and Parish Hall, was delayed because of the outbreak of the Second World War, but the project was started on April 30, 1950. The congregation has grown from its original 37, to more than 400 communicant members, and the Sunday School has an enrollment of about 250 pupils. Of the considerable number of organizations within the church, the oldest is the Ladies' Aid Society. A Boy Scout Troop is also sponsored. The seal of the congregation contains the following scriptural reference: "If ye continue in My Work, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and truth shall make you free."

Anshe Sholem

Congregation Anshe Sholem, the Jewish Temple in town, stands as testimony to the hard work and perseverance of the score of Jewish families in town. Since the late 1920's the group had been meeting for religious services in the Junior Order, the American Legion Building, and elsewhere. In 1927 a celebration was held to commemorate the buying of a Torrah, and in the following year the congregation purchased a lot on Roosevelt Avenue. The building was erected in 1941, using as a foundation the small building of the relay radio station that was once in the meadows at the end of Roosevelt Avenue. Three years ago a fire destroyed the inside of the temple, and it has since been completely remodeled. Services are led by members of the congregation and visiting Rabbis attend on high holidays.

Church of Our Savior

For many years early Episcopalians had to travel to West Hoboken or to the Hill, until services were finally held in Secaucus. In

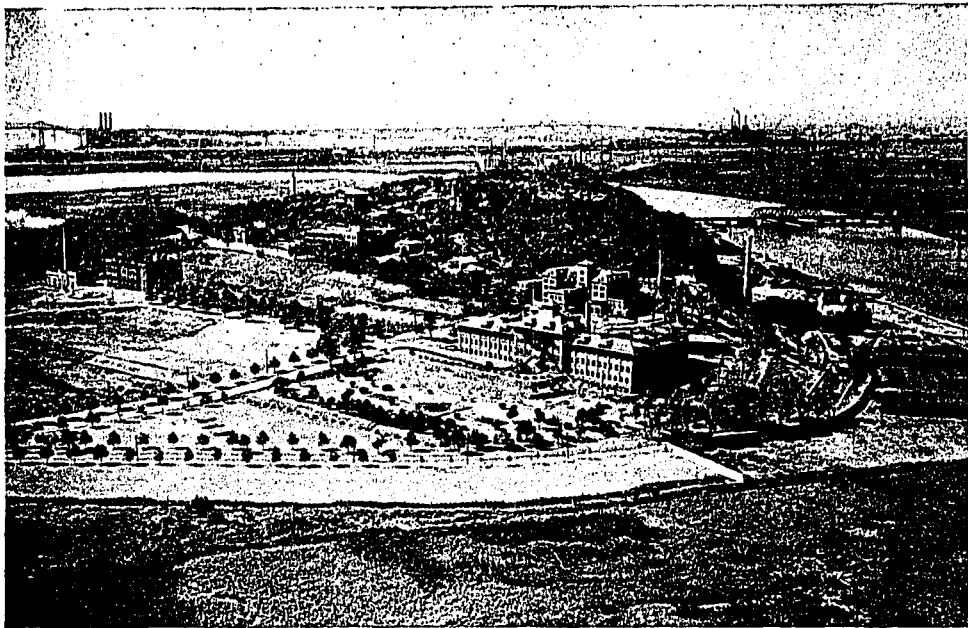
1925 the Reverend William White, the present pastor, was commissioned by Bishop Stearly of the Diocese of Newark to establish a mission in Secaucus. The first services were held in the Junior Order Hall, but the 25 to 30 parishioners within a year had built the Church of Our Saviour that now stands on First Street. Since that time services have been held every Sunday and the parish has grown to well over 100 people. Although still a mission, sharing its minister with St. James Church in Richfield, the parish hopes to become an independent church sometime in the very near future. The parishioners have long been collecting money for a pastor's house, and hope to have a resident pastor very soon. The small but active church sponsors various groups, including the Boy Scout Troop No. 22 and Cub Scout Pack No. 50.

Church of Inner Truth

The Church of the Inner Truth, now near the end of Farm Road, was established by the Reverend William Carl Hirsch, assisted by his wife, and the Reverend and Mrs. Flood, all of whom are working in the church at present. Before coming to Secaucus in 1931, New York was the center of its activities. An independent divine metaphysical healing church, the teachings are those of Dr. Hirsch. Although there are no formal members the Church is constantly in touch, through correspondence and a monthly bulletin, with people throughout the United States and Canada, who visit the Friday night services in Secaucus whenever possible. Dr. Hirsch, who has great compassion for all ill people, feels that sick children are his greatest inspiration.

GEOLOGIC

ODDITY



SNAKE HILL as seen from an airplane today. On the far right is the Hudson County Penitentiary; on the far left is where the Turnpike Route 100 will go through. In the background is the Pulaski Skyway.
(Courtesy Warden Arthur Orr)

Snake Hill

SLANGENBERG Snake Hill, rising boldly from the salt marshes in southern Secaucus, has long been a source of wonder and speculation. Because of the numerous snakes which infested it, the Dutch called it "Slangenberg", the Hollandish equivalent of its present name. Van Winkle says that "all the early colonists gave it a wide berth notwithstanding that its wood-crowned heights sheltered many acres of highly productive soil. They kept away, however, because the marsh land, which borders the peculiarly sloped hill that rises like a buttress from the dead level of the wide meadow tract, was literally infested with huge black water snakes, many of them from twelve to fifteen feet long."⁽²⁾

Old time Secaucus residents tell tales of black snakes in the Snake Hill area and some remember going on snake hunts in the late 1800's. However, during the past 25 years it seems that any large snakes have disappeared from the area.

WASHINGTON IRVING'S STORY Washington Irving related an interesting theory of the hill's formation in Knickerbocker's History of New York. When the first group of Dutch colonists arrived in the New World, "A boat was immediately

despatched to enter into a treaty with them, (the Indians) and, approaching the shore, hailed them through a trumpet in the most friendly terms; but so horribly confounded were these poor savages at the tremendous and uncouth sound of the Low Dutch language, that they one and all took to their heels, scampered over the Bergen hills, nor did they stop until they had buried themselves, head and

ears, in the marshes on the other side, where they all miserably perished to a man, and, their bones being collected, and decently covered by the Tammany Society of that day, formed that singular mound called Rattlesnake Hill, which rises out of the centre of the salt marshes, a little to the east of Newark Causeway."⁽⁸⁾

VOLCANO STUMP For the less credulous, geologists attribute the hill to a giant convulsion of Nature, which threw up the rock, later to be coated with the drifts and detritus of centuries. Others claim evidence of its being the stump of an ancient volcano whose eruptions, in the period when the Palisades were moulded, formed the Watchung mountains, about 10 miles away. Close by is a small 76 foot outcrop of land, almost circular, known as Little Snake Hill. Like its companion it is an outburst of trap rock through the shale, which measures 360 ft. through its largest diameter, compared to the half mile stretch expanse of Big Snake Hill.

CAPTAIN KIDD Just north of the Hill, in along the winding crooked snake infested banks of Berry's Creek, Captain Kidd and his Pirates are said to have had a camp in the 1660's. In this heavy but stunted growth of gun-wood trees and tall reeds of the salt marshes, they sought to escape the merchant colonists of New York, who, becoming increasingly annoyed at their escapades, had organized armed patrols to discourage them. When the situation finally came to a head, the sheriff at Bergen furnished several hundred men from the surrounding area, and together with the New York authorities, they concentrated on routing the pirates from their meadowland haunts. A Naval boat bombarded the creek and adjacent territory, and a volunteer party of 18 heavily armed men rowed up the sluggish waters. After their departure long continued firing was heard and not one of the party returned. As a final resort, the authorities set the meadows ablaze from Newark Bay to Little Ferry, and the pirates were captured or killed as they sought to escape to high ground. The fire burned three days and nights, and when it subsided, the charred meadows were free from all invaders.

Only A Rock

Old Siangenberg must have been the cause of many other and exaggerated tales for as early as 1679 one disappointed visitor wrote: "The Slangenbergh of which I have heard so much and which I had imagined to myself was a large projecting hill, lies close by and is only a small round hill and is so named on account of the numerous snakes which infest it. It stands quite alone and is almost entirely encircled by the North Kill (Hackensack River). It is nothing but rock and stone, with a little earth up above where a plantation could be formed."⁽²⁾

SITE OF COUNTY BUILDINGS

"New Jersey's geologic oddity", rising 203 feet above the surrounding swamps is today the site of many Hudson County institutions. Three hundred acres of the old Pinhorne plantation were taken for Bergen County's poor house farm, 200 acres purchased in 1820 from Abel I. Smith who became the owner of a large tract at Secaucus, and an additional 74 acres from Samuel Swartwout, in 1826. Samuel and Robert Swartwout were members of a once prominent and prosperous family who were ruined in a farming experiment in these Secaucus meadows early in the nineteenth century.

In 1864, some time after Hudson was set off from Bergen County, the newly formed county purchased from its previous owners, the old township of Bergen, the poor house farm, and soon thereafter began erection of the institutions. The Alms House was completed in 1863, and could accommodate 500 people. Before the completion of the present Alms House, the old red building north of the Boonton Branch Railroad was used for this purpose. Earlier treatment of the poor is shown in a clipping from the 1730 *New York Gazette*: "In the olden times the poor were cared for by selling them to the lowest bidder. The following extract will give a clear idea upon this subject; 'at a Bergen Town Meeting, December 15, 1674, at a public Outcry is sold Enoch Earle to the lowest bidder for the sum of seven

pounds ten shillings; the conditions are as follows:—The buyer is to find the said Enoch Earle a good bed, washing, lodging, and such victuals and mending his clothes; the Overseer of the Poor are to find all the new clothes and then the said Enoch Earle is to work for the buyer as much as he is able to until the years end.' ”

In 1870 the Penitentiary, and 3 years later, the Lunatic Asylum were ready and the first criminal interned was convicted of entering and larceny. These buildings have all been enlarged and improved, and others added, so that the County General and the Contagious Disease Hospitals, are now located there. The Tuberculosis Hospital, formerly located there, and the Insane Asylum have been removed, the former to Jersey City, and the latter, the Mental Disease Hospital, to its present attractive setting and building on County Avenue in 1927.

Until recently the New Jersey Trap Rock Company operated a quarry at Snake Hill and it was the chief source of rock and fill for the roads and highways in this area. With the advent of modern paved roads the plant was forced to close.

Other facilities located on Snake Hill today are a Tuberculosis ward for patients from the Mental Disease Hospital, a Boys' Camp maintained by the Jersey City Board of Education, a Catholic Church and a Protestant Church, a unit of the Hudson County Fire Department, and storage space for supplies for county institutions and election equipment.

The estimated value of all the county buildings, both at Snake Hill and the Mental Disease Hospital, is from \$12 to \$15 million. The tax exemption for county buildings on the Secaucus tax lists is \$6,500,000.

“A rose by any other name . . .”

The Little Old Town of Secaucus

By Henry B. Russell

In the good olden time, when to drink was no crime,
If you handled your drink as you'd "oughter;"
And the wine and the beer, and the other good cheer,
Was flowing as freely as water;
It was our delight, on a day that was bright,
With no clouds to hinder or balk us,
To jump on the car that would take us afar
To the little old town of Secaucus.

We'd get off at Malt's—have a couple of "jolis"
—Have a couple of "hookers" at Hencken's,
And then down the way to Joe Huegerich's "Cafay,"
Where we'd sample his "Macy and Jenkins."
Up Front Street we'd stroll, which sure was some hole
Until they put in the new sidewalks,
To Woeccker's we'd wend, and our elbows we'd bend,
And with the boys have a few side-talks.

Then to Walter's we'd go—(brother to Joe).
It's closed, but the place once was famous.
Old Huegerich's Hall, where many a ball
On a Saturday evening would claim us.
A block up to Bloch's—for a couple more "shocks."
Bloch's out, but the place still is going.
It's now run by Busch—the man with the push,
And the many attractions he's showing.
To Grobel's—(You know, that's two blocks below),
And we'd eat and we'd drink our fill there,
But a kindly old face we now miss from the place.
Tho' the widow and Rudy are still there.

At the foot of Front Street, John Fechtman's you
meet,
And we'd get there later or sooner.
He'd rent you a boat, on the river to float,
Put first he would tell you a "schooner."
Within a short reach we'd come to "Snipes" beach
To be met by our genial host Rodei,
With the water so near, and the booze and the beer,
A fellow would never there go dry.

We'd then take a whack, at the old Hackenstack,
And sail on the stream a few metres,
We'd get off at Rose's and bury our noses,
In a couple of cold "William Peters."
Down Rose's Lane—on our journey again,
Through the Farm Road and over to Mosie's;
We'd there make a stop, for another "wee drop,"
And to give our poor, tired toes—ease.
That's enough for a day, but sometimes we'd stray
(If it wasn't too hot or too showery)
Along the old farms, till we got to Hen Harms',
Not forgetting Rauber and Lowery,
And sometimes we'd call, at old "Tammany Hall,"
(Charlie Muller was then the inn-keeper.)
Or at Korter's, quite near, and buy us a beer,
Or something a little bit steeper.

Ah! those were the days—all worthy of praise,
When the men that you met were all free men,
'Ere the fakirs and fools—with their law-making tools,
Had turned us to coffee and tea men,
With good wine and beer, life never seemed dear,
And none could out-joke or out-talk us,
As we strolled at our ease, and did as we'd please
In the little old town of Secaucus.

This poem was written by Henry B. Russell a good many years ago and mentions many of the popular inns and taverns in the old town. Old timers can probably remember most of the names.

(Courtesy Mr. and Mrs. John M. Schoeller)

The Name "Secaucus"

In its almost four centuries of existence under Indian and white domination the name "Secaucus" has come thru any number of spellings, and has had almost as many meanings attached to it. In the original Indian deed of 1658 the territory is called "Siskakes", and in Carteret's patent, "Sickakus". In William Pinhorne's time, at the end of the 17th century, the area was known alternately as "Cekakus" and "Snake Hill". Two almost forgotten names are "Long Neck", which referred to the area of Pinhorne's around Snake Hill, and "Panepack Neck", the northern end of the island. Almost "normal" in 1762 as "Secacus", the *New York Gazette*, the next year resorted to "Cecaicos". "Silkakes" and "Seacaucus" are both known to have been used at different times and it was in "Sekacus" that an errant slave bought "trade" in 1744 to poison his master.

The possible derivations are numerous, and even experts don't seem to agree. From the Indian "sukit achgook", "black Snake" is derived, and from "Siskakaskeg", "salt sedge marsh". Other suppositions lead to "a land of terror", because of the many snakes, "the land of the big snake", "place of snakes", "home of snakes" and "place where the snake hides". The Indian word "cawcawwasough", meaning a promoter, may also have had some connection with "Caucus."

While the exact metamorphosis of the name "Secaucus" is perhaps lost in history, it is easy to understand how changes come

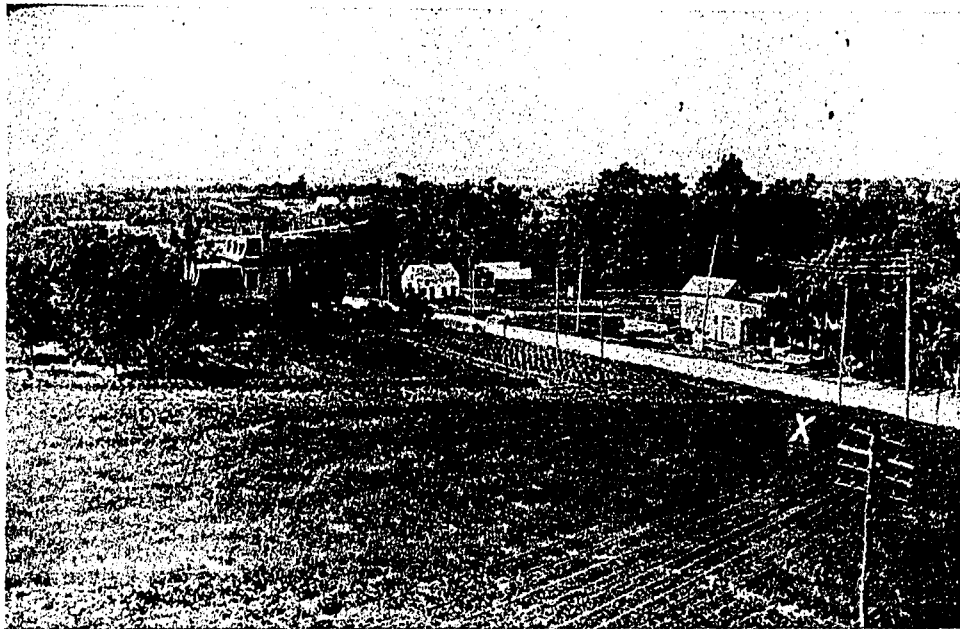
about in a place name. The name Pinhorne (variously spelled with or without an e) was given some 200 years ago to the creek on the easterly boundary of Secaucus after Judge William Pinhorne. Today the stream is called "Penhorn Creek" and few are the people who know the former 'correct' name. The change was influenced, perhaps, by the building of the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks near the creek and "Pin" was changed to "Pen".

Another example of a change in name is from "Snake Hill" to "Laurel Hill". Known from the earliest times by the former name, it appears more often today in official documents, newspapers and conversation as "Laurel Hill".

At different times movements have been started to change the name of the town, possibly to Clarendon or Laurel Manor, because it was felt that "Secaucus" made it the butt of too many jokes which might possibly be retarding development. Although "Clarendon" survived for a section of the town, the movements came to nothing and the good old Indian name has survived.

The word "Hackensack" is also the subject of considerable etymological dispute, having even more spelling variations than "Secaucus". An unsustained fable attributes it to an unsuccessful attempt to carry eggs in a sack. The shortest equivalent recorded is "lowland"; the longest, "The stream which discharges itself into another, on low level ground".

ORGANIZATIONS



"X" marks the spot where the Town Hall stands today. The building in the foreground was the Post Estate, today the rectory of Immaculate Conception Church. Across the Plankroad is the Sunnyside Hotel. Posseh's House can be seen on the Plankroad and a building in the Plaza.
(Courtesy Mr. and Mrs. George Behrens)

American Legion.

Three years after the close of World War I, the Secaucus American Legion Post No. 118 was formed, with Joseph Temple as first commander. The Post name commemorated the one Secaucus soldier who was killed in battle, Corporal Joseph Hassenforder. Some time afterward the Post lost its charter, but was reorganized in 1924 under the same name. Frank Doyle was temporary commander of this second Post, which was started by 13 veterans, of the 175 who took part in World War I. At first, the men met in the town hall, but in 1930, when Edward Strich was commander, the present Legion Hall on Second Street was constructed. At present there are almost 300 members in the Post, including many representatives of the almost 1000 men who served in World War II.

In 1949 the name was changed to Memorial Post No. 118, so that in name, as well as in spirit, the post might commemorate all who had given their lives in war.

Legion activities are concerned chiefly with rehabilitation of veterans, and hospital work with those who were injured. Athletic teams are sponsored for young people, and at one time, the Post had a junior band.

A Ladies' Auxiliary to the Post was established in 1925, with Mrs. Anna Blondel as first president. One of its members, Mrs. Werner, served as Hudson County Auxiliary president in 1948-49. The Auxiliary's 52 members have much the same veteran interests as the men, and also devote some of their time to child welfare work.

Lodge No. 282, F. & A. M.

In 1922 the Craftsman's Club of Secaucus was organized by the Masons residing in town, with John Cadell as first president. Until

1930 those of the Masonic fraternity were members of various out-of-town lodges, but at that time permission was obtained from the Grand Lodge of Masons for the State of New Jersey to form a Masonic Lodge in Secaucus. Wilhelm Herting was first Master, and meetings were held in various places in Secaucus and Union City. To enjoy a meeting place of their own, members started actively to plan a building in 1937, and by the following year, the attractive Temple on Paterson Plank Road was dedicated.

The 60 founding members have now increased to over 100, and the Lodge is an active and prospering one. Impressive among its yearly activities is the annual Christmas party, to which children from several of the area's orphan homes are invited.

Frank Seidl is the present Lodge Master, and Gerard Fabrizio, president of the Craftsman Club.

Kiwanis Club

In 1935 the first service club was started in Secaucus, the Kiwanis Club, with Daniel Frees as its president. Meetings were first held at Cimler's on Front Street, later at Koerner's, and today at Tito's Old Inn. Devoted to better community cooperation the club has sponsored a wide variety of activities and has had many notable speakers address its weekly meetings. It organized the Lincoln-Kiwanis Band, the first of its kind in the community; sponsored the Community Players in its dramatic presentations; bought a barge and motor launch for the Sea Scouts; gives financial aid to summer camps; purchased an audiometer for school use; maintains a students loan fund for needy students. In many other ways the club tries to participate in community affairs to build a better community.

Post 3776, V. F. W.

The idea of organizing a Veterans of Foreign Wars post in Secaucus was conceived on November 10, 1938 by three Secaucus veterans, Sebastian Romano, Fred Blondel and August Mangin at a meeting in Tito's Old Inn. Later they met at the Town Hall and decided on the name "Sgt. John E. Degelmann Post No. 3776 V. F. W." after a former town attorney. On February 25, 1939, thirty-six charter members of the post were obligated and officers were installed with Stanley Allen as first commander.

On September 26, 1949, the post name was changed to "Secaucus Memorial Post No. 3776 V. F. W." to honor all Secaucus men who had given their lives for their country.

An auxiliary to the post was formed in March, 1939, with Mrs. Alberta Degelmann as the first president.

Navy Mother's Club

The Secaucus Chapter of the Navy Mother's Club was organized in 1944 with Mrs. Charlotte Buesing as the first commander. Known as No. 627 the local unit devotes much of its time at the nearby veterans' hospitals, particularly Halloran and Lyons, where they take gifts at Christmas or other holidays.

Mrs. Buesing is still serving as commander and the club meets at 195 Franklin Street with approximately 15 members.

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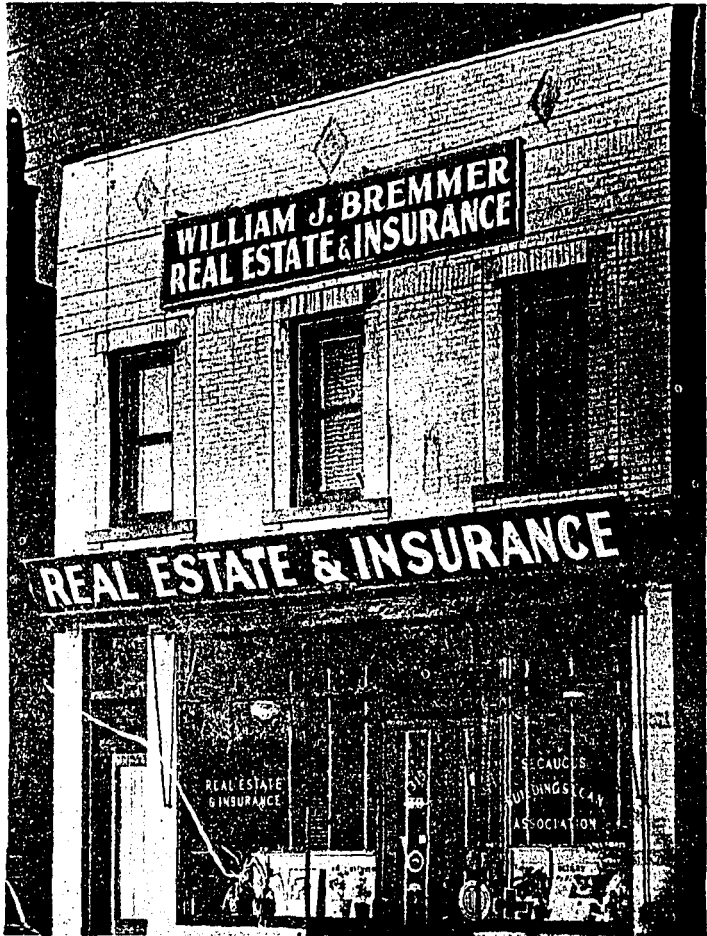
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Since 1914





Thompson's Esso Servicenter on Route 3 at Roosevelt Avenue. It was the first business to start operations on the new highway, when it opened on November 4, 1949. For fourteen years previously Bill Thompson had operated at 1351 Paterson Plank Road.



The Plaza Recreation Ballroom at 1309 Paterson Plank Road is the scene of most Secaucus social festivities and sporting events. It is operated and owned by Rudy Mraz.

CONGRATULATIONS!

to the town of SECAUCUS on its

GOLDEN JUBILEE

Your town's completion of a half century marks a memorable milestone in your growth and development. An occasion of truly great importance, it commemorates a long and noteworthy record of distinguished achievement.

In extending our congratulations, we of Commonwealth Trust Company join the town's other well-wishers in the sincere hope and belief that this Anniversary will merely mark the beginning of a new era of even greater progress in the future.

Through the years, our bank, too, has grown steadily, as evidenced by the accompanying table showing the increase in our assets during the past 40 years.

ASSETS:

JUNE 30, 1910	_____	\$ 683,000
JUNE 30, 1920	_____	5,060,000
JUNE 30, 1930	_____	10,970,000
JUNE 30, 1940	_____	14,667,000
MARCH 31, 1950	_____	46,250,000

Commonwealth Trust Company

UNION CITY, NEW JERSEY

MAIN OFFICE, Bergenline Avenue at 22nd Street

Summit Avenue at 7th Street
Bergenline Avenue at 39th Street

Weehawken Office, Park Ave. at 36th St.

Woodcliff Office, Broadway at 75th St.

MEMBER FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

OPEN MONDAY EVENINGS FROM 6 TO 8

Congratulations
on
Your 50th Anniversary



We have enjoyed the privilege
of being the *Authorized Ford Dealer* in your community
for 28 years

WALTER EICHLER, SR.

WALTER EICHLER, JR.

EICHLER MOTOR CORP.

Hudson Blvd. @ 55th Street
West New York, N. J.

UNion 5-9555

Always Open

PAUL'S MODERN DINER

Everything Home Made

Route S-3
Secaucus, New Jersey

The First National Bank of North Bergen

which has served the people
of North Bergen and Secaucus
for the past 25 years

*Salutes the Town of Secaucus
On It's 50th Anniversary*

Member of Federal Reserve System

Member of Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

CERTIFIED LUBRICANTS • COMPANY

INDUSTRIAL OILS . . . GREASES AND AUTO SOAPS

- Stainless Machine Oils
- Sewing Machine Oils
- Electric Motor Oils
- Spindle Oils
- Neats Foot Oils
- Knitting Machine Oils
- Lard Oil
- Lard Cutting Oils
- Belt Dressings
- White Slab Oils for Bakers
Candy Manufacturers
- Ice Machine Oils
- Diesel Engine Oils
- Turbine Engine Oils
- Transformer Oils
- Cutting Compounds
- Steam Cylinder Oils
- Fish and Sperm Oils

SALES **ALEMITE** SERVICE

Grease Guns - Parts - Fittings - Etc.

400 West Side Avenue

Jersey City

Day Phone:
BERGEN 3-0013, 3-1202

Night Phone:
DELAWARE 3-6661

U. S. F. CO.

Serving Christ In Secaucus Since 1872

First Reformed Church

A Community Church

REVEREND LEWIS KUESTER, Pastor
CONSISTORY

ELDERS

Valentine Boulanger
Charles Henkel
Herbert W. Salch
Ernest Di Liberti
Cornellus Kasten

DEACONS

Louls Burkhardt
George McClure
Edward Hoehne
Max Fraude
Stanley Albanelus
Edward Schreiber

MISS MARGARET BLATZ, Organist

SUNDAY SCHOOL Herbert W. Salch, Sup't.
CHOIR George McClure, Dir.
LADIES GUILD (Mrs.) Anna Tagilabue
MEN'S CLUB Edward Hoehne, Pres.
CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR Frank Allison, Pres.
JR. CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR Grace Hinsch, Pres.

RADIGAN — SMITH

Engineering Associates

FRANK J. RADIGAN, C. E.

HOMER O. SMITH, P. E.

Peoples National Bank Building
Secaucus, New Jersey
UNION 3-1509

*1950—the Golden Jubilee Year of Secaucus
is also Hudson Trust's
Sixtieth Anniversary Year*

SINCE 1890, the Hudson Trust Company has been serving customers from its neighboring community of Secaucus. May your Golden Jubilee be eclipsed only by the Secaucus Centennial Celebration in the year 2000!

HUDSON TRUST COMPANY

UNION CITY
3 offices

HOBOKEN
2 offices

Member Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation



HARMS ROAD HOUSE at the corner of County Avenue and Lewis Street around the turn of the century. Note the horse watering trough and hose indicating that water mains had already been laid on County Avenue.

Courtesy Henry Harm

JOE DORIGO & BROS.

STOCK FARMS

*Leaders In Secaucus'
Oldest and Biggest
Industry*

178 County Avenue

Secaucus, New Jersey

UNion 7-9737

SCHUELE'S TAVERN

POOL
BOWLING
FIRST BOWLING ALLEYS IN TOWN

ALL WELCOME —●— BOWLING PARTIES

290 County Avenue
Secaucus, New Jersey

GEORGE W. KING

JUDGE OF THE MUNICIPAL COURT

**The Hudson Bus
Transportation Co., Inc.**

437 Tonnele Avenue
Jersey City, New Jersey

Serving the People of Secaucus for More than 25 Years

Founders and Operators of the Laurel Hill and No. 2 Bus Routes

For 35 Years the Home Owners Friend

Secaucus Building and Loan Association

ESTABLISHED 1915

MORTGAGE LOANS

UNion 7-8931

North Hudson Beverage and Distributing Co.

Home Delivery Service to the People of Secaucus
for more than a decade

BEER — ALE — SODA

134-68th* Street

Guttenberg, New Jersey

SCHELLING HARDWARE CO.



734 WILLOW AVE.,
HOBOKEN, N. J.

TEL. HO - 3 - 7335 - 6 - 7

INDUSTRIAL-MARINE SUPPLIES AND PAINTS

Over 25 Years of Service to the People of Secaucus

FINGER and LEVINE, Inc.

Insurance

415-32nd Street, Union City, New Jersey

Phone UNion 3-4200

UNion 3-9285

COZY CORNER BAR and GRILL

*Sandwiches — Television
Hall for Hire*

234 County Avenue

Secaucus, New Jersey

John Dennis, Proprietor

SECAUCUS FLOWER SHOP

FLOWERS FOR ALL OCCASIONS

Member Florist Telegraph Association

K. Buchanan Eickmann, Proprietor

1247 Paterson Plank Road

Secaucus, New Jersey

SNIPE'S BEACH

Boat Anchorage — Boats to Hire — Trap Shooting

Since 1905

Charles Bodel, Proprietor

On the Hackensack River

Foot of Centre Avenue

Secaucus, New Jersey

EDWARD WITTREICH

Plumbing and Heating

Oil Burner Installation

220 Franklin Street

Secaucus, New Jersey

C. F. MALANKA and SONS, Inc.

— CONTRACTORS —

Union City

New Jersey

UNion 7-1705

QUAKER SOAP COMPANY

334 Secaucus Road

Secaucus, New Jersey

UNion 3-9625

BOB'S HARDWARE

— PITTSBURGH PAINTS —

We grew with the Town
serving Secaucus people for almost a quarter of a century with
Hardware - Paints - Housewares - Plumbing Supplies - Roofing
Floor Covering

153 Front Street

Secaucus, New Jersey



SNIPES BEACH at the foot of Centre Avenue before the various boat houses were completed. A favorite spot for hunters and sportsmen for almost a half century.

(Courtesy Mr. and Mrs. George Busch)

Everyone Welcome

St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Paterson Plank Road and Roosevelt Avenue, Secaucus, N. J.

JULIUS B. TUSTY, B. D., Pastor

Res. 718 John St.—Tel. UNion 5-0035, Secaucus, N. J.

Church Telephone UNion 5-4185

Divine Worship 8 A. M. and 10:30 A. M. (Summer only 8 A. M.)

SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:15 A.M.

Holy Communion, First Sunday 8 A.M. — Second Sunday 10:30 A.M.

Compliments of

DR. MARIO G. DEL BAGLIVO

and Family

THE STRENGTH OF SECAUCUS is directly related to the growth of its agricultural industry.

AMERICAN FEED COMPANY

2235 Light Street

New York 66, N. Y.

UNion 7-9348

HENRY HARMS TAVERN

7 County Avenue

Secaucus, New Jersey

**Union Textile Printers,
Inc.**

1130 PETERSON LANE
SECAUCUS, N. J.

A. Manzo & Sons

Builders

770 THIRD STREET
SECAUCUS, N. J.

Harry Miller

Electrical Contractor

818 EIGHTH STREET
SECAUCUS, N. J.

UNION 7-3647

Emil Fetzner

Plastering - Stucco - Cement Work
General Alterations

214 CENTRE AVENUE
SECAUCUS, N. J.

UNION 3-3505

Alco Cinder Supply

Dirt for Fill
Cinders
Excavating

381 CENTRE AVENUE
SECAUCUS, N. J.

A. Villavecchia & Sons

Jewelers & Opticians
Since 1900

1206 SUMMIT AVENUE
UNION CITY, N. J.

UNION 7-3929

Frank J. Ricker

—AND—

Louis A. Axt

Associated Architects
6115 HUDSON AVENUE
WEST NEW YORK
NEW JERSEY

Wieben's Delicatessen

300 GRACE STREET
SECAUCUS, N. J.

Open Sundays
— We Deliver —

Home Made Salads
UNION 3-9347

Pat's Beauty Salon

325 FRONT STREET
SECAUCUS, N. J.

UNION 5-0600 Pat (Scalzo) Pero



3907 BERGENLINE AVENUE
UNION CITY, N. J.

UNION 7-4279

Ray L. Chase

Commercial & Society Printing
Since 1927

144 FRONT STREET
SECAUCUS, N. J.
UNION 7-2662

Henry Krajewski

proprietor
of

TAMMANY HALL
SECAUCUS, N. J.

DeTitta's Florist

175 FRONT STREET
SECAUCUS, N. J.

UNION 5-0448

Hudson Quality Feed, Inc.

HAY - GRAIN - FEED
European & Canadian Peat Moss
Garden & Poultry Supplies
Fertilizer - Salt

839 EIGHTH STREET
SECAUCUS, N. J.

Joseph Olfert, Mgr.

Compliments of

The Censullo-Burke Construction Company

SECAUCUS, N. J.

Mr. & Mrs. Conrad Gugel, Sr.

370 SECAUCUS ROAD
SECAUCUS, N. J.

Edward Walka

39 COUNTY AVENUE
SECAUCUS, N. J

Plaza Delicatessen

131 FRONT STREET
SECAUCUS, N. J
UNion 7-1032

Ludwig's Body Shop

Herman Ludwig, Prop.
Auto Painting
Body and Fender Repairing
112 CENTRE AVENUE
SECAUCUS, N. J
UNion 7-7577

Tito's Old Inn

Established 20 Years
1148-1152 PATERSON PLANK ROAD
SECAUCUS, N. J

Richard Ruezinsky

Dealers In
Choice Meats & Groceries
1536 PATERSON PLANK ROAD
SECAUCUS, N. J
UNion 3-3883

Saveon Office Supplies, Inc.

Office Furniture
Commercial Stationers
Printers
457 CENTRAL AVENUE
JERSEY CITY 7
NEW JERSEY

Ignazio Buda & Son

Painters and Decorators
712 GRAND STREET
HOBOKEN, N. J.
HOboken 3-2213

Secaucus Beverage Co.

Distributors of
All Brands of Bottled Beer & Soda
Barrel Beer - Coolers Supplied
189 FRANKLIN STREET
SECAUCUS, N. J
Charles A. Diehl UNion 3-3704

Joe's North End Market

Prime Meats & Groceries
Beer - Wine - Liquors
Est. 1921

1606 PATERSON PLANK ROAD
SECAUCUS, N. J.
UNion 7-9163

Hudson Moulding Co.

Plastic Moulders

Est. 1946

1610 PATERSON PLANK ROAD
SECAUCUS, N. J.

Club Royal

Est. 1937

ROSE'S BEACH
Mary Smith, Prop.

Lichtman Bros.

Livestock Dealers

H. Reymann

Hardware

1167 SUMMIT AVENUE
JERSEY CITY
NEW JERSEY

Doyle's Oil Heating & Supply Co.

Automotive Heating & Service
Vacuum Cleaning

Fuel Oil & Kerosene

252-254 COUNTY AVENUE
SECAUCUS, N. J.

Call UNion 7-9265
or TEaneck 7-6580
Day or Night

Office and
Factory Forms
Snap-Outs
COMMERCIAL PRINTING

Booklets - Catalogs
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PRODUCED BY
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Low Prices
Consistent with High Grade Work
Prompt Service

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37-45 WEST 20th STREET
NEW YORK, N. Y.

W. A. Stackpole Motor Trans., Inc.

Overnight Motor Transportation
From New Jersey & New York

To Conn., R. I., Mass.,
New Hampshire & Maine

—All Loads Fully Insured—

Main Office & Terminal
47 1/2 VALLEY STREET
MANCHESTER, N. H.

Tel. 5-8561

Secaucus Terminal
1025 PATERSON PLANK ROAD

J. Wind

The Square Outfitting Co.

Clothing - Cloaks - Furs
Carpets - Furniture
Serving Secaucus for 31 Years

3508 SECOND AVENUE
NORTH BERGEN, N. J.

UNion 3-3671

UNion 7-8710

UNion 5-9169

K. & K. Fuel Supply Co.

Koenemund & Kane, proprietors
Burners - Sales & Service

306 CENTRE AVENUE
SECAUCUS, N. J.

Muller's Bakery

Specializing In
Bridal, Shower & Birthday Cakes

135 FRONT STREET
SECAUCUS, N. J.

UNion 3-6159

"Best Service In Town"
Captain John Decker, prop.

Decker's Luncheonette

Luncheonette - Ice Cream

1142 PATERSON PLANK ROAD
SECAUCUS, N. J.
(Corner of Cedar Lane)

UNion 3-9353

Reinl Brothers

Painting & Decorating
770 SEVENTH STREET
and
289 FRONT STREET
SECAUCUS, N. J.

UNion 7-2824

UNion 7-6521

Charles Wittreich

Plumbing & Heating

1103 FARM ROAD
SECAUCUS, N. J.

UNion 3-8676

FRED GERMER, JR.

*One of Secaucus' First Builders
General Contractor*

707 Post Place

Secaucus, N. J.



Patrons



George Vanderveer

815 Second Street

J. Cane and Sons, Inc.

1130 Peterson Lane

Rev. Patrick A. Reilly

Otto Mack

Philip Gemore

340 Centre Avenue

Joe-Ray's Market

1181 Paterson Plank Road

**Dawn Patrol
Seaplane Base**

**Denver-Chicago
Trucking Company, Inc.**

Henkel's Garage

61 County Avenue

Chas. Hubner

769 Ninth Street

Hugerich Family

260 Front Street

Ray's Shell Service

1137 Paterson Plank Road

**North End
Stationery Store**

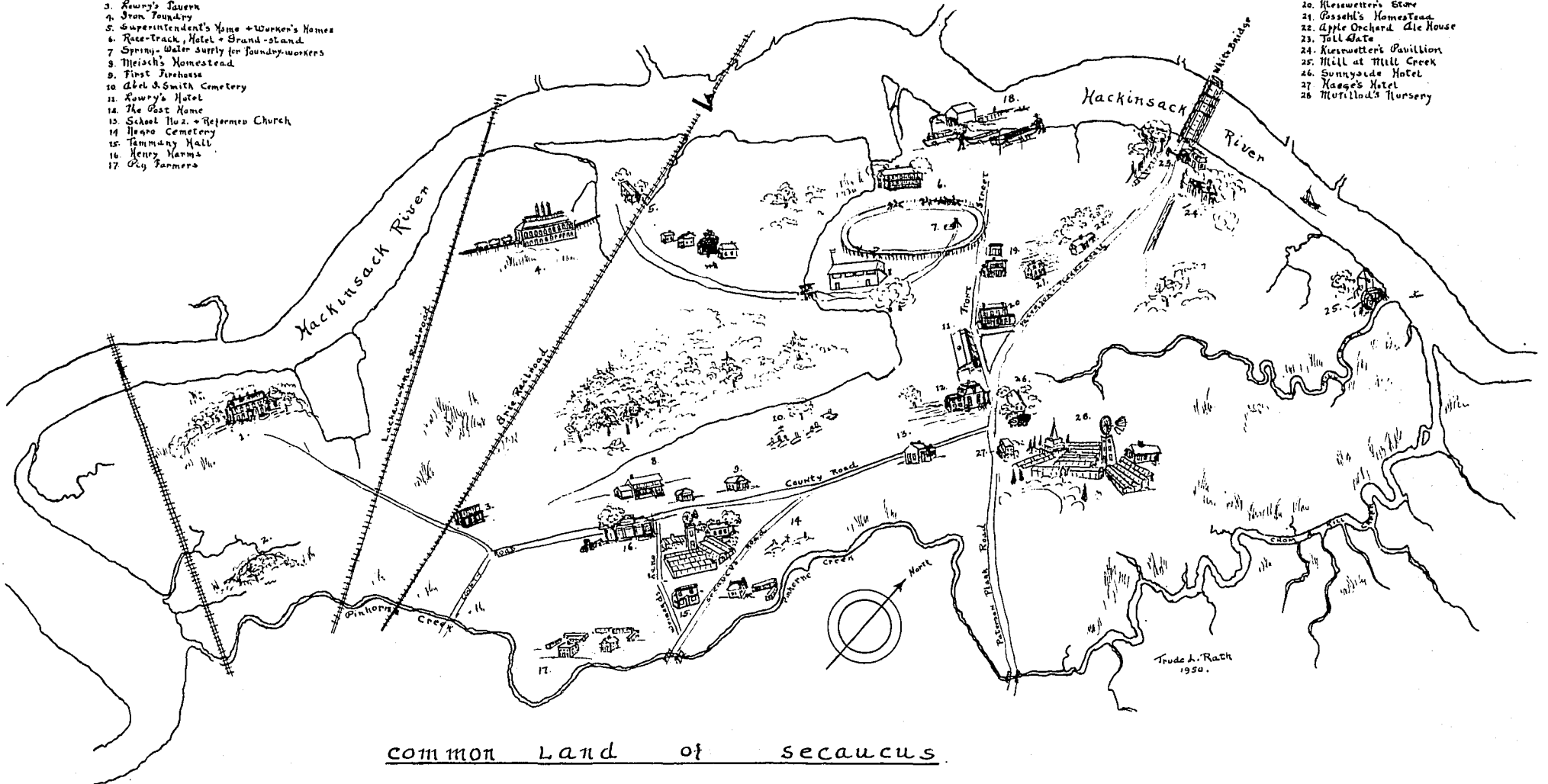
**Ernest Braun
Embroidery**

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Secaucus 1900.

1. Snake Hill
2. Little Snake Hill
3. Lowry's Tavern
4. Iron Foundry
5. Superintendent's Home + Worker's Homes
6. Race-track, Hotel + Grandstand
7. Spring - Water supply for foundry-workers
8. Meisch's Homestead
9. First Firehouse
10. Abel & Smith Cemetery
11. Lowry's Hotel
12. The East Home
13. School No. 2 + Reformed Church
14. Negro Cemetery
15. Tammany Hall
16. Henry Harms
17. Pig Farmers

18. Snipes' Beach
19. Clarendon Fire-house + Black's Tavern
20. Kueswetter's Store
21. Bossch's Homestead
22. Apple Orchard + Ice House
23. Toll Gate
24. Kueswetter's Pavilion
25. Mill at Mill Creek
26. Sunnyside Hotel
27. Kasse's Hotel
28. Mutillod's Nursery



common land of secaucus

