

The Historic County

Newsletter of The Passaic County Historical Society

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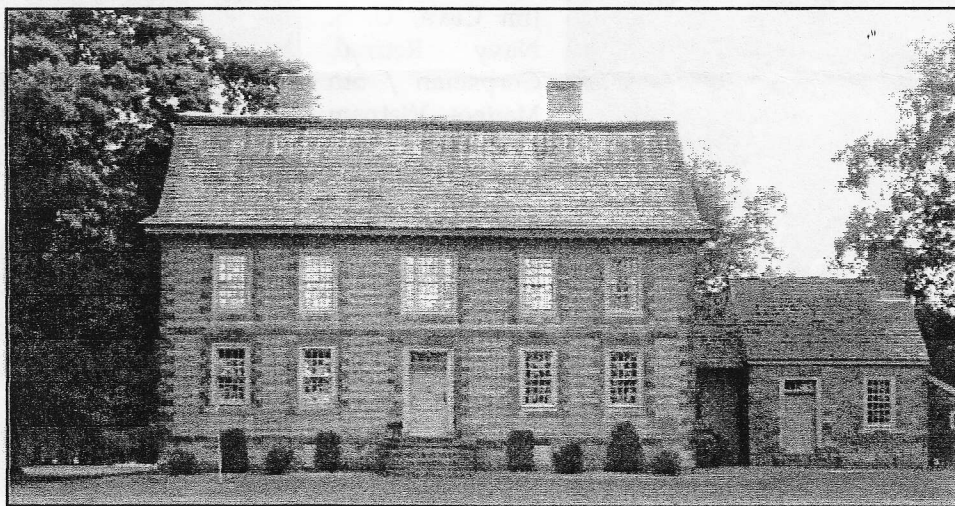
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Passaic County Awarded Funds for Dey Mansion Gardens Restoration Plan

(County Press Release dated July 31, 2003)

PATERSON - The Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders announced that Passaic County has been selected by the New Jersey Historic Trust to receive a matching grant of \$36,000 to complete a cultural landscape report for the Restoration of the Dey Mansion gardens in Wayne. A county matching grant of \$12,000 will be added to the award.



Dey Mansion, Wayne, New Jersey

A cultural landscape report by a landscape architectural firm will serve as a blueprint for the garden restoration. Dey Mansion has been in continuous operation as a public museum since 1934, and will celebrate its 70th anniversary in 2004.

"The county is interested in preserving the historic tradition of the Olmstead Brothers' plan, and we look forward to bringing back the gardens to their original grandeur for the public's enjoyment for generations to come," said Freeholder Lois Cuccinello, chair of the Public Works and Recreation Committee.

The Dey Mansion was built by Dirck Dey in 1740, and was occupied by his son, Colonel Theunis Dey, who was in command of the Bergen County militia when Washington made the house his headquarters in July and most of October and November of 1780.

*The Passaic County Historical Society is a private, not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) educational institution.
The Society operates and manages Lambert Castle, which is owned by the County of Passaic.*

Beefsteak Dinner Planned for October 8th

On October 8, 2003, the Passaic County Historical Society will re-institute a 1980s tradition of holding an annual beefsteak dinner to benefit the work of the Historical Society.

The event will be held in the Grand Conservatory at The Brownstone in Paterson. The evening begins at 6:30 p.m with a cash bar followed by a traditional New Jersey style beefsteak dinner (*all you can eat filet mignon on French bread slices*). Dinner includes an antipasto, dessert, coffee, and unlimited beer and soda.

The Society plans to hold a raffle in conjunction with the dinner. We hope that our members and many friends will support this endeavor.

Please plan to join us for a very pleasant evening!

Tickets for the beefsteak dinner are \$40.00 per person. Tickets must be purchased in advance. For more information or to make a reservation, please call 973-247-0085.

"The Greatest Nation in the World"



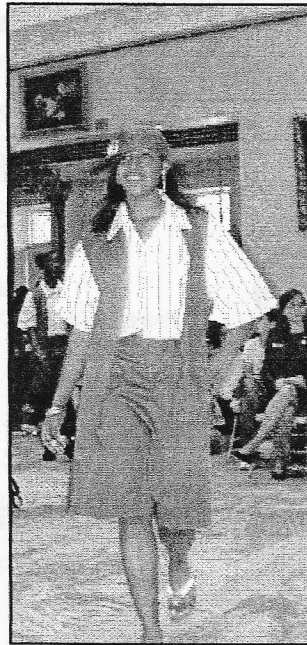
Petty Officer Jim Cava, US Navy Ret.

Petty Officer Jim Cava, U. S. Navy Retired, Corpsman / 5th Marines, Vietnam 1968, gave a stirring patriotic program at Lambert Castle on July 13, 2003. The program was titled "The Greatest Nation in the World." Cava was severely injured during the Vietnam War.

Appearing in full-dress uniform, and speaking in a manner reflective of his military bearing, Cava talked about the many aspects of patriotism. He spoke about the importance of having pride, respect, love of country, and the importance of taking responsibility for your actions. Cava provided strong, melodic renditions of the nation's most patriotic songs. He also saluted every branch of the armed services by singing the songs associated with each, and recognized the veterans and their families that were in the audience.

Several vintage military vehicles were on display throughout the afternoon through the courtesy of the Military Transport Association of North Jersey.

Girl Scout Fashion Show



Girl Scout Model



Mrs. Joey Torres,
wife of Paterson Mayor



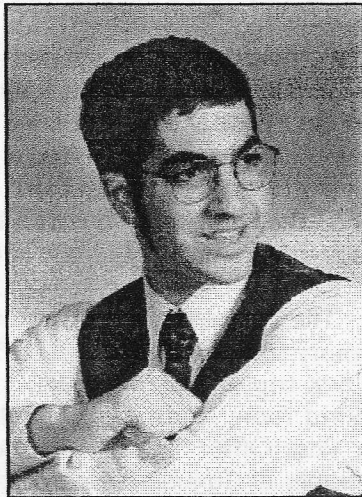
Girl Scout Leaders - Lenne Lenape Council

The Girl Scouts: Lenne-Lenape Council, Inc., based in Riverdale, New Jersey, delivers the Girl Scout program to girls in sixty-one municipalities in northern New Jersey. The mission of Girl Scouting is to inspire girls with the highest ideals of character, conduct, patriotism and service that they may become happy and resourceful citizens.

The Council hosted its Annual Girl Scout Fashion Show at Lambert Castle on Saturday, June 21, 2003. Over one hundred people attended to see the girls, ages six through late teens, modeling fashion creations of their own choosing.

Lambert Castle Museum Has. 2003 Summer Curatorial Intern

The Passaic County Historical Society welcomed its new curatorial intern to Lambert Castle Museum this summer. Morgan G. Dowd, son of Joseph Dowd and Eloise Hajjar and grandson of George Hajjar, spent eight weeks during July and August assisting Curator Rebecca S. Petropoulos with the care and conservation of historical artifacts as well as enhancing existing exhibitions in the Castle's period rooms and developing new "mini" exhibitions throughout the Museum.



Morgan Dowd

Morgan, a 2003 graduate of Seton Hall Preparatory School, is a resident of Lincoln Park, NJ. He came to Lambert Castle Museum after serving as curatorial intern last summer at the Edison National Historic Site in East Orange, NJ.

Morgan will be entering Cook College - Rutgers University this fall to study horticulture. He later intends to pursue a degree in architecture at Princeton. Morgan's longtime interest with Victorian architecture and landscapes brought him to Lambert Castle, where he intends to stay on as a curatorial volunteer while continuing his college coursework.

The Passaic County Historical Society would like to thank Morgan G. Dowd for his contribution to the collections and exhibitions at Lambert Castle Museum.

Volunteer Opportunities

The Passaic County Historical Society relies on the help of our volunteers to assist in the Lambert Castle Museum and the Elizabeth Beam Memorial Research Library. Volunteers also help the Society with fundraisers and special events. We welcome any level of involvement that your schedule permits.

Docent: The Museum is looking for docents to give afternoon tours of the museum and assist at the reception desk Wednesday through Sunday.

Museum Store: Our new Museum Store will open within the next few months. Sales help is needed as well as assistance in setting up the shop and marking the articles for sale.

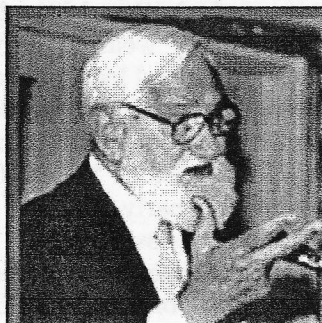
Office: Volunteers are needed during the week to answer the phones, maintain the membership roster, and perform light clerical work. We also need extra sets of hands to get out our mailings of newsletters and flyers.

Library: The Library needs assistance with the cataloging program. Volunteers are also needed to assist library patrons in the afternoon Wednesday through Friday and on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month.

Archives: We are looking for volunteers to arrange the Society's collection of important historical papers in order to make them available for research.

Please contact the office at 973-247-0085 if you would like to help with any of the above activities.

Did You Know That.....



Albert B. Sabin

ALBERT B. SABIN (1906-1993), the famous American physician and virologist who developed the oral polio vaccine, lived in Paterson, NJ. He was born in Bialystok, Russia/Poland, one of four children of Tillie and Jacob Sabin. The family came to America in 1921, settling in Paterson, New Jersey, where Sabin's father was in the silk and manufacturing industry. Sabin refused to acquire a patent on the polio vaccine, insisting that both the vaccine and its administration be delivered free of charge. European children received the vaccine, and Americans of all ages were vaccinated in the early sixties. It is estimated that the vaccine prevented 500,000 deaths and 5,000,000 cases of debilitating polio.

Coach's Legacy Endures

By Edward Smyk, Passaic County Historian

In the spring of 1857, a handsome-looking poster made its sudden appearance on the streets of Paterson. Embellished with woodcut illustrations of a horse-drawn stagecoach and a smoke-belching locomotive, the poster was designed to elicit widespread interest in the May 1 inauguration of the Paterson and Deckertown (now Sussex) State Line. Today, the mere mention of a stagecoach brings back images of a mode of transportation that once reigned supreme in the Wild West. Yet in the 1860s, the stagecoach was an alternative way for New York and local residents to reach the sparsely settled Northern Highlands region.

The Paterson and Deckertown stage got off to an auspicious start and operated every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Agent John P. Brown advertised "Good coaches, fine horses and careful drivers," and it was no exaggeration in that day to have the best men at the reins. The approximately 40-mile trip from Paterson to Deckertown was a bumpy ride along the old Paterson-Hamburg Turnpike. Many passengers must have suffered indigestion or worse from the unpleasant bounce of the stage as it made its way along dusty, rutted roads.

Individuals who wanted to make the trip left Paterson about 10 a.m. Nearly four hours later, they reached Brown's Hotel in West Milford. Others continued the voyage west, arrived at Deckertown, as noted on the poster, "the same evening."

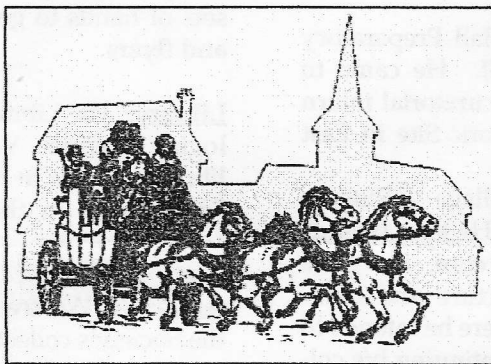
An untold number of North Jersey residents considered a trip from the Highlands to Paterson something equivalent to a trip across the continent.

J. Percy Crayon, a schoolteacher and local historian, retained a vivid recollection of what it was like for his family to make "a business trip over the old stage line." Writing in the *Pequanonck Valley Argus* of July 27, 1889, Crayon recalled what his father told him about the Deckertown stage. According to Crayon, the trip was discussed for "at least three months before the departure, and it extended to the neighbors, who would frequently drop in and talk the matter over for many weeks before." Crayon said, "anxiety increased," as the day for leaving came near and additional neighbors offered suggestions. When Crayon's father finally arrived in Paterson, he "felt like a cat in a strange garret" when away from home overnight. The city exerted a strange influence on him. J. Percy's father admitted he "couldn't get a wink to sleep" due to "noise, the bustle and the excitement of being in the town of Paterson." Upon returning home the next evening, neighbors again knocked on his farmstead door, eager to know about the "wonderful things" he had seen and heard. Crayon related that a trip to

the Silk City was a subject "talked over for the next three months."

Eventually, the Paterson and Deckertown stage was rendered obsolete by the much faster, and more comfortable railroad. Exactly 12 years after the stage rumbled out of Paterson on its inaugural run, a meeting was convened at Brown's Hotel in Newfoundland. Plans were formulated to extend the New Jersey Western Railroad. The stagecoach as a regular, scheduled means of transportation would fade into history.

The Paterson and Deckertown stage was a forgotten memory to most until May 1, 1957, when the centennial of its first trip was appropriately commemorated. The West Milford (now North Jersey Highlands) Historical Society, the Post Office Department and the Greater Paterson Chamber of Commerce sponsored a colorful re-enactment of the stagecoach run. It was a cloudless, sun-drenched day as 300 people watched the red-and-yellow coach arrive at



the Paterson Post Office. Postmaster Frank W. Murphy swore in William A. Miller of Andover, the coach driver, and John Shriecks of Lodi as authorized mail carriers. Placed in their custody were more than 3,000 pieces of mail. Shriecks acted as guard and carried a shotgun to deter "ambushers."

In addition to the driver and his gun-toting companion, the coach carried four passengers. Among them was Elizabeth Bowles, the granddaughter of stage line founder John P. Brown. Drawn by four palominos, the glistening coach advanced to Market Street for a two-day run along roads that had vastly improved since 1857. Stops were planned in Pompton Lakes, Riverdale, Bloomingdale, Butler, Newfoundland, Oak Ridge, Stockholm, Franklin and the final destination Sussex.

With its silver-maned horses and appropriately costumed occupants, the rugged coach created a mild sensation as it passed from town-to-town, especially among school children. When the stage reached West Milford, a large crowd of men and women, many wearing 19th century dress, voiced their approval. State and local police acted as escorts for the stage. Passengers and crew spent the night at the famed Idylease Inn on Union Valley Road. According to one news account, they were treated to "an old-fashioned ham dinner and square dancing party." Early the next morning, the stage rumbled off to Sussex.

The last re-enactment of the Paterson and Deckertown stage occurred during the nation's bicentennial observance in 1976. While the stage line ceased to exist more than a century ago, its memory is clearly endowed with a durable resilience.

The Birth and Early Development of the Motion Picture

by Robert P. Brooks

Originally published in the *Bulletin of the Passaic County Historical Society*, April 1959

The first theatre in the county built exclusively for showing motion pictures was the Regent. This beautiful, modern amusement house was conceived and erected by Jacob Fabian of Paterson who officially opened it to the public on September 14, 1914. It stood between old Union Street, now [1959] called World Vet's Place, and Hamilton Street in Paterson.

Believing that its huge cost would prove to be a great liability to Mr. Fabian, it was frequently referred to as Fabian's Folly during the early days of its existence. It took but a few years, however, for Mr. Fabian to show his friends how wrong they were. This playhouse for the movies was the forerunner of many others of the same type in Paterson and throughout the county for by 1915, the great progress made in the motion

picture had created universal interest in that form of amusement. The next year, Max Gold, one of the first men in Paterson to operate picture shows, built the Garden Theatre, which he first operated, but later sold to Jacob Fabian. Then in 1923, Mr. Fabian leased H. B. Kitay's Rivoli and in 1925, he erected the beautiful Fabian Theatre on Church Street in Paterson. Jacob Fabian and his sons, who were affiliated with their father, had by this time demonstrated their genius in the motion pictures and their ability to foresee a great new era in the industry. On March 6, 1926, an AP release from Los Angeles stated that Jacob Fabian and Sons had acquired a large block of stock in the West Coast Theatres, Inc., the largest company of its kind in America. Subsequently, the Fabians bought large interests in the Stanley Corporation of America to whom they transferred their interests in the great many theatres that they owned and operated in Passaic and other northern counties of the state.

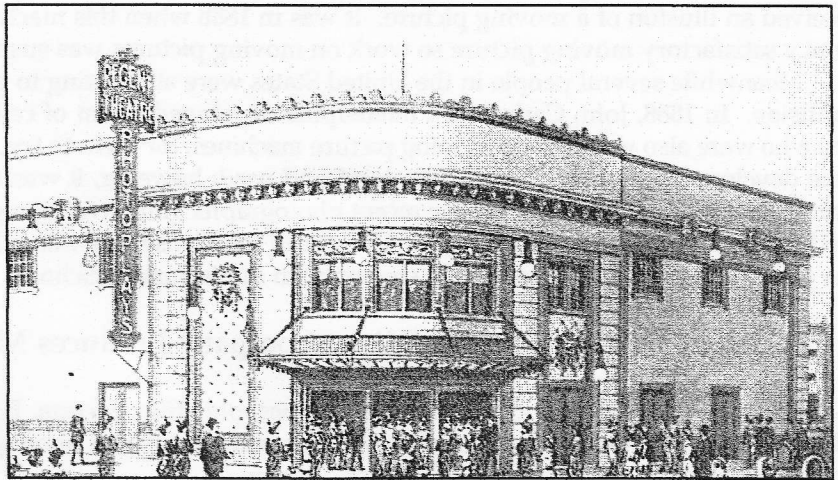
Time makes many changes in the vocabulary of a people. In Passaic County half a century ago, the words magic lantern, peep show, nickelodeon and the less elegant nickel dump were universally understood. Today (1959), these words are virtually unknown; they have been replaced by Cinerama, television, and video. All of the foregoing are a part of the vocabulary relating to the great world of amusement - the moving picture.

Since New Jersey is the recognized cradle of the motion picture industry, with Passaic County paying no small part, from the standpoint of history it might be worthwhile to consider some of the facts in its development.

Thomas A. Edison of West Orange, N.J., stands in the forefront, if not indeed actually the one person most vitally connected with the birth of the moving picture. On this point, there is some disagreement. Mechanically the motion picture is not a single invention but rather a development in at least three large areas, viz., the camera, the film and the projecting device. Within each of these areas, many persons in Europe and in the United States, intrigued with the idea of making pictures seem to move, have been very active especially during the last three quarters of the nineteenth century. Many devices and gadgets resulted which bore strange names as: Thaumatrope, Stroboscope, Phenakistoscope, The Wheel of Life, Kinematoscope, Zoetrope, Kinetograph and many others.

While the European inventors gave little or no attention to photography and screen projection, in the United States and especially in the Philadelphia area, considerable attention was placed on both of these features and applied in the early moving picture machines. In this country photographic magic lantern slides were projected upon a screen as early as 1848, and with the invention of the daguerreotype and gelatin dry plates great impetus was given to the moving picture enthusiasts. In Philadelphia, Henry R. Heyl projected photographs on a screen at the Academy of Music. This was in 1870. The inventions of the Kinematoscope by Coleman Sellers of Philadelphia and William E. Lincoln's Zoetrope were great advances leading to the motion picture.

It was not until 1887 that Mr. Edison became particularly interested in moving pictures for his great interest at about that time was concentrated in his talking machine. He did state, however, that it had occurred to him that it was possible to devise an instrument that would do for the eye what the phonograph does for the ear; and by a combination of the



The Regent Theatre, Paterson, NJ
The First Motion Picture Theater in Passaic County

two, all motion and sound could be recorded and reproduced simultaneously. (Eugene A. Luste of Bloomfield, N.J., who worked for Thomas A. Edison, developed a plan for the filming of the sound along with the picture. He actually made a short sound picture; but for the want of capital and encouragement, he never projected his invention. This was many years before the advent of the sound picture.)

Edison, with the assistance of an associate, W. K. L. Dickson, an expert photographer, began work on a machine to produce moving pictures. This machine followed many of the ideas of his contemporaries. It consisted of a cylinder with cutouts in which transparencies on glass were inserted. Inside was a light. When revolved with a crank, the viewer received an illusion of a moving picture. It was in 1888 when this machine was completed. It proved to be very remote from a satisfactory moving picture so work on moving pictures was suspended.

Meanwhile several people in the United States were attempting to devise a flexible film coated with a photographic emulsion. In 1888, John Carbutt of Philadelphia developed a film of celluloid and sent it to Mr. Edison and several others, who were also working on moving picture machines, for them to try. George Eastman of Rochester at about the same time developed a film that Mr. Edison tried and used; however, it was the Rev. Dr. Hannibal Goodwin of the House of Prayer, Broad Street, Newark, whose recent photographic film invention gave Mr. Edison the greatest encouragement. Dr. Godwin had been working for a time in the attic of the Manse, adjoining the church, trying to devise a film less fragile than the glass slides that were used in the stereopticon in his Sunday School.

The Edison Company Produces Motion Pictures

With the development of the flexible photographic film, Messrs. Edison and Dickson began work all over again in 1889. Edison had been very successful with his penny-in-the-slot phonograph and now he and his assistant concentrated on a machine that would provide a look for a penny.

Their first effort was the production of a camera with which to photograph on a celluloid film. A camera was developed that would photograph a series of pictures as the film was pulled past the lens opening. It was hand-cranked and portable. In shape and size it resembled a small upright piano. With its completion, work was begun on the machine for showing the pictures. For this a huge box about 20 square feet and four feet in height was made. In an opening was placed a magnifying glass through which one could peep and see a picture moving as it was cranked. Thus the peep show came into being.

After some refinements Edison applied for only U. S. patents in 1891 for his Kinetograph (camera) and his Kinetoscope (projector). Failing to acquire international patent rights, these machines were duplicated and improved in various parts of Europe.

First Motion Picture Studio in the USA

By February 1892, the motion picture industry was launched in New Jersey with the erection of the world's first motion picture studio on the Edison property in West Orange. This was a small, frame building, black inside and out and mounted on a revolving base so that the sun might be followed. This studio cost in excess of \$635 and was called the Kinetographic Theatre, but was better known as the Black Maria. Here were made and shown some of the first motion pictures ever made. Among those was *The Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots* filmed in 1893; the film ran almost a minute. A peep showed Mary kneeling at the chopping block with the headsman swinging his axe and the spectacle of Mary's head rolling in the dust (the head of a dummy, of course). Fred Ott, an employee of Mr. Edison was able to produce a lovely sneeze with funny facial contortions.



Fred Ott's Sneeze - January 7, 1894

Fred Ott's Sneeze was probably the first comedy released to the world. Scenes like a man shaving, a shoemaker at this bench working, a horseshoer in action, girls dancing and the infamous *Long Kiss* were among the first peeps.

The Long Kiss is the first shocker of note. This outrageous short bit appeared in a peep show in 1896 and broke all previous records for attendance. The clergy denounced it as a lyric of the stockyards and demanded that it be withdrawn. It was a short scene taken from a popular play on the Broadway stage, *The Widow Jones* in which May Irwin and John C. Rice starred.



The Long Kiss

The Peep Show Era

Following the development of the Kinetoscope there was great activity at the Edison plant both in manufacturing the machines and in taking pictures. By 1894, the Edison Company had completed 10 Kinetoscopes with enough short subjects on film to launch them commercially. They opened their first Kinetoscope Parlor at 1155 Broadway, New York, on April 14, 1894. Here the machines were set up with each showing a different picture for approximately 30 seconds. Long lines of people waited with coin in hand for a look at the peep show. The Edison invention was an immediate success.

While Mr. Edison concentrated on peep shows some others were working with screen projection of motion pictures. In Philadelphia, which for years was a center for motion picture and photographic development, several inventors set up their projection machines in make-shift halls and projected moving pictures on a screen. Among these was C. Francis Jenkins, a native of Indiana who patented his machine November 25, 1895. On December 18, 1895, before a distinguished audience in the Franklin Institute, Jenkins showed pictures life size on a screen. For this he was awarded a medal. And ten days later in Paris the Lumiere machine was used to present pictures in a theatre for which admission was paid.

Thomas Armat of Washington, D.C. had collaborated with Jenkins in the development of the machine exhibited in 1895 and he also made considerable improvement on Edison's Kinetoscope. But, lacking capital Mr. Edison procured this improved machine from Armat and presented it to the public in a demonstration at Koster and Bial's Music Hall on Herald Square, N.Y., in April 1896, where Macy's now [1959] stands.

The improved Kinetoscope became known as the Vitascope and its main feature was its adaptation to longer films that would run about five minutes. These two moving picture machines were most popular for several years.

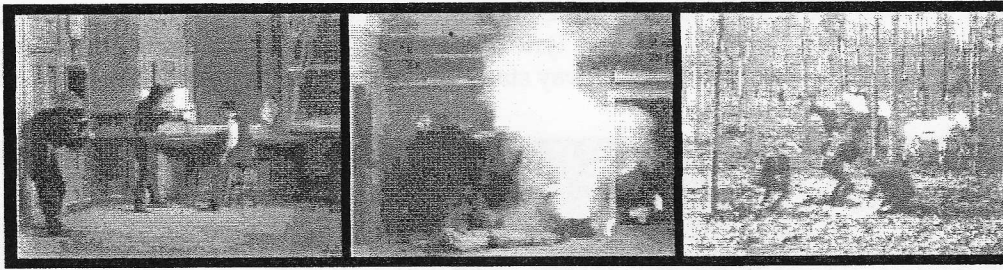
The Kinetoscope machines sold for \$200 to \$300 and they soon appeared throughout the country. In 1896, both the Kinetoscope and the Mutoscope machines were operating in a peep show parlor in Los Angeles with an Edison phonograph supplying the music.

By 1903, Edwin S. Porter, a cameraman associated with Mr. Edison, noticing that the peep show craze, so popular since 1895, was slowly losing its appeal, developed the idea of a longer film with a story. With the assistance of another Edison man, James H. White, they produced a picture, 500 feet in length that was a real thriller. It was called, *The Life of an American Fireman*. This being an immediate success, Porter then decided to write and produce through the Edison Company a longer film, which would be a story quite complete and spectacular. This was in 1903. With this picture, made almost entirely in Passaic County, a new epoch was born in the great motion picture industry. It has been noted with the exception of *Gone With the Wind* and the *Birth of a Nation*, no other picture has had a greater influence in the development of the industry than *The Great Train Robbery* that ushered in the nickelodeon era.

The train robbery was the first narrative ever made for a motion picture. It had an unbelievable length of over 650 feet with the story made up of 14 scenes ranging in length from 4 to 118 feet.

Mr. Porter secured a train from the D. L. & W. R. R. Its personnel were to run it to the vicinity of High Bridge, West Paterson where the major part of the action was to take place. The conductor of the train was Samuel J. Snyder, who in 1853 was living at North Caldwell, N.J., and was at that time aged 93. A large cast was secured with the principal actors George Barnes, Gilbert Anderson (who played five different roles), A. C. Abadie, May Murry, and others. One of the principals, who was to play the leading role in the first and tenth sequences as agent and telegraph operator, failed to appear so Mr. Fred J. Turner was prevailed upon to play the part. The passengers were a trainload of friends and acquaintances. They donated their services in order to get a close up of the thrills.

The story opens on an interior of the Little Falls Station with the agent sitting at the telegraph key. Two masked bandits appear. Pointing their guns at the agent, they tell him to set the block to stop the approaching train before it reaches



The Great Train Robbery

the station. The agent complies. The train stops near the water tank. The bandits gag the agent, truss his arms and legs and toss him on the floor. As the train slows down, two bandits who are hiding behind the water tank, board the train between the tender and the express car and, at gun point, force the express man into a corner and toss out the mail sacks. This being accomplished they then approach the tender and cab just as the engineer is about to "run off" the train at high speed. One bandit grabs the engineer and orders him to stop the train while the other engages in a tussle with the fireman, who put up a great fight with his coal shovel. The fireman is finally subdued when he received a hit on the head with a chunk of coal. He (a dummy is used) is tossed down a 200-foot embankment.

The train is stopped, the locomotive is uncoupled, the passenger car is entered and the valuables removed from the passengers. Taking their loot and the mail they compel the engineer to run the locomotive to the woods where the bandits have their horses hidden.

Meanwhile, in the station, the agent is making an attempt to rise from the floor so that he can, by leaning on the table, tap out an alarm with his chin. After several attempts he accomplishes this but again falls to the floor. He is found in a semi-conscious condition by his young daughter who enters with his dinner pail. The daughter revives him by throwing a glass of water in his face, releases his legs and hands and the agent wriggles free and dashes out to a neighboring dance hall where Mary Murry and many westerners are cavorting. The alarm is give. A posse is formed who follow the tracks of the bandits. The two groups meet. A gun battle is waged.

One of the bandits and several of the posse hit the dust but the bandits ride on and think they have finally eluded their pursuers. Seeing that they were now in a lovely valley beside a small stream and seemingly quite free from intruders, they stop to examine their booty, quite unaware that they have been tracked again by the posse who have hidden their horses in the woods and are approaching on foot. Another gun battle takes place resulting in the death of the three remaining bandits as well as several of the posse.

A note-worthy feature of this film is a close up of George Barnes pointing his gun directly at the audience. In some cases, this feature was attached to the beginning of the film and in others at the end. However, it always created loud screams from the audience.

In the filming of this picture, Mr. Porter used for the first time colored celluloid film. A yellow tint was used for the dance hall scene and bluish-green for the woods. Porter also edited the film, another first in filmmaking.

This film created a great sensation and has become a screen classic for it secured the future of the narrative film. The train robbery was a story complete in about eight minutes and it set the fashion for American film, especially for the westerns and for others photographed on location rather than in makeshift studios. Besides, the cutting bench was put into use that the directory could better tell his story.

Now interest in movies revived throughout the world and in this country nickelodeons sprang up in almost every village and town.

In *Bulletin No. 1, Series 1939-40, Stories of New Jersey, entitled New Jersey - A Preview of Hollywood, prepared by the N. J. Writers' Project of the WPS* may be found a statement that, South Mountain Reservation was the scene of the Wild West Riding, and horses were rented from a West Orange livery stable.

The Nickelodeon Era

Mr. Harry Davis, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is credited with having opened the first theatre where the first stupendous attraction, *The Great Train Robbery* was shown on a screen in 1905. It was a 10-cent thriller. All over America hundreds of Nickelodeons were opened in halls, vacant buildings, back rooms of stores, tents and legitimate theatres. In the beginning the rooms were fitted with makeshift seats obtained from old trolley cars, benches, and folding and other miscellaneous chairs. At one end a screen was hung; a booth where tickets were sold, was at the entrance. Windows were darkened, ventilation was absent, but there was no lack of patronage. Gradually, the fronts of these moving picture houses were remodeled so as to provide separate entrance and exit with the ticket booth between. As the price of admission was usually five cents, these places of amusement acquired the name nickelodeon. By 1908, there were more than 10,000 of these moving picture houses in the United States and the year 1910 saw them at their peak.

Early Nickelodeons in Passaic County

In 1906, there were several nickelodeons licensed in Paterson. Among them were:

The Elite at 201 Market Street.

The Gem, at 136 Market Street. This house was operated by Peter A. Adamopolis. From 1907 to 1915, this house operated under the name Paterson Show and it was operated by James A. Campbell in October 1907 when it was closed for a short time by the City as it was a fire hazard because the projector was covered with a cotton flannel cloth.

Daly's, at 269 Main Street; known as *The Royal* in 1913-14

The Pleasant Hour, 213 Main Street; later called *The Lyric* with Walter Sibley the proprietor.

The Bijou, 34 West Street (later called West Broadway), Butler, Jacobs and Lowry, proprietors.

The Nicolet, 162 Main Street on the S. W. corner of Van Houten, with Harry Metz and Harry Gold. Here French pictures, changed daily were shown for five cents in 1910

Another place was in *Charles Feder's Clothing Store* at 213 Main Street at the corner of Ellison..

Cuff Show, opposite *Daly's* on Main Street and in the *Red Flag Dry Goods Store* at Main and Ward Streets.

An open-air theatre, one of the first in the United States opened in 1907 or 1908 at 68 Ward Street (site of the Ward Street Presbyterian Church

In the period between 1909 and 1915 many moving picture houses sprung up in the city, and among those well known were:

Palace, 122 Main Street.

Star Confectionery Company, 137 Main Street.

The Paterson Show, 136 Market St. advertised in 1910 in *The News*, "It's a comfortable place to spend an hour in."

The Theatres:

Lyceum, 123 Van Houten Street.

Empire, 150 Ellison Street.

Opera House, 284 Main Street.

Apollo

Folly

Orpheum, on Van Houten Street, built by Billy Watson who broke from his partnership with Ben Leavitt as operators of the *West Street Bijou*. At the *Orpheum*, Watson conducted a burlesque and picture theatre.

The Washington Show, 137 Main Street. In 1913, the *Washington Show* advertised that it had "the longest, best and coziest moving-picture theatre in the city."

Lyric, 213 Main Street. In 1913 the *Lyric* advertised "up-to-the-minute motion picture for 5 cents."

New Grand, Main and Ward Streets.

Majestic, on Main Street, with vaudeville by Keith circuit and Edison's talking pictures was operated by Metz and Gold.

The Strand, 128 Main Street with its 800 seating capacity; Gold and Connor, proprietors.

United States Photo Play, Main Street, later the *U. S. Theatre*.

During the nickelodeon days in the City of Passaic there was an abundance of show places. Among the earliest recalled are:

The Nickolet, on Main Street

Nickolet, Second Street.

Nicolet, 187 Passaic Street.

The Theatorium, Main Avenue, near Jefferson Street.

Bijou, 58 Second Street.

Gebbel and Rettinger's, at Rettinger Hall, Passaic and William Streets.

Nickeldrome, Dayton Avenue, Clifton, near the Passaic City line.

The Little Wonder, 332 Passaic Street, where "3000 feet of film is shown every day with the latest illustrated songs."

Advent of the American Mutoscope and Biograph Company

In 1896, Mr. F. W. L. Kickerson left the Edison Company and with a few others formed the Biograph Company. At first Biograph produced shorts for the peep shows or penny arcades. It made its debut at Hammerstein's Olympia Music Hall in New York in the Fall of 1896 showing *The Empire State Express* and other pictures filled with action. Biograph generally used the Mutoscope, a most successful rival of Edison's Kinetoscope.

While many actors on the legitimate stage held the motion pictures in contempt, Joseph Jefferson made a scene from the popular stage play *Rip Van Winkle* in the early days for the Mutoscope and the great Sarah Bernhardt reenacted the dual scene from *Hamlet* in 1910.

In 1908, a young, good looking actor from Louisville, Kentucky, David Wark Griffith, came to New York to secure employment on the stage. He soon found his way to Biograph and was engaged as an actor-scenario writer. During that spring, he wrote several scenarios and played parts in them. His great energy and initiative won for him an opportunity to direct. The first picture that D. W. Griffith directed was *The Adventures of Dolly*.

This picture was an immediate success and Mr. Griffith made practically all of Biograph's films from then on until December 1909, and all the important ones from 1909 until 1913. What Mr. Edison was to the development of the motion picture machine, Mr. Griffith was to the art form of the picture.

During the early days in Biograph's history, most of their pictures were made on rooftops of buildings in New York, but in 1906, they leased an old mansion at 11 East 14th Street and converted the former ballroom into a studio. Now, instead of depending on the fickleness of the weather, they were able to get correct and adequate lighting through the invention of the mercury lamp that was installed overhead.

The inventor of this light was Mr. Cooper Hewitt, son of Hon. Abram S. Hewitt, former Mayor of New York City, and grandson of Peter Cooper. Although born in New York City and living in the winter there, Cooper Hewitt spent his summers, when he was in the United States, at the Cooper-Hewitt estate in Ringwood, Passaic County, NJ. After Mr. Hewitt developed his famous light, he sold it to George Westinghouse and the General Electric Company. Mr. Hewitt was an inventor of considerable talent having invented a tube used for transmitting wireless, a florescent screen, the forerunner of the fluoroscope, and many other practical and noteworthy inventions.

Mr. Griffith Brings Biograph to Passaic County

New Jersey was favored by Biograph, as it was by other companies having headquarters in New York City. The great variety in terrain and scenery made the state ideal for films made on location. Many farms, hamlets, towns, hills and valleys and wooded areas of Passaic and other counties of New Jersey, readily accessible to New York, were often used in the early days of the industry.



Mary Pickford

The rural countryside along the Passaic River provided excellent background for westerns and Indian pictures. Indians were imported from New York and home made from local residents. Bedecked with paint and feathers they frequently made camp along the winding Passaic. Their paper wigwams, well painted with Indian symbols, were set up in open spots. Their war canoes, made by covering river canoes with bark or paper, were paddled up and down the Passaic before the cameras.

During the summer of 1908, Mr. Griffith brought his company to Little Falls for the filming of his second picture. This was called *The Redman and the Child*. Charles Inslee played the Indian chief and Johnny Tansy was the child. The picture made little Johnny very famous. The *Redman and the Child* was considered at the time to have been the acme of photographic art. Another feature picture that Mr. Griffith made for Biograph along the Passaic was one entitled, *They Would Elope*. One of the elopers was Little Mary Pickford who, while trying to escape, was to meet with an accident through the overturning of her canoe. When the director gave her the cue, Mary didn't hesitate for an instant, but obediently overturned into the muddy waters of the river. She was fished out, we are told by Linda Arvidson, (Mrs. David Griffith, author of *When Movies were Young*, 1925) wrapped in a warm blanket, and placed in Mr. Griffith's waiting automobile.

During the summer of 1910, Biograph filmed a great many pictures in New Jersey. Little Mary played in most of them. As was the custom in those days, and the custom to a lesser extent still persists, the movie actors were to use fictitious names. Among the great lights of the Biograph Company were Arthur Johnson, Frank Powel, Mack Sennett, Dell Henderson, Jack Pickford (Mary's brother), Lionel Barrymore, Owen Moore, (secret husband of Mary Pickford), Blance Sweet, Mae Marsh, Mabel Normand, Linda Arvidson, Lillian and Dorothy Gish, and Theda Bara (at her climax in 1917, in *Cleopatra*).

The Call to Arms (Filmed at Lambert Castle)

For the residents of Passaic County one of Biograph's most interesting productions was *The Call to Arms*. This picture, a drama of romance and mystery of medieval times, was filmed on the grounds of Lambert Castle. It has to do with a marvelous jewel. The setting is a medieval castle. During a spell of very hot and humid weather in late June 1910, Mr. Griffith brought his company to Paterson including Owen Moore, Mary Pickford, Dell Anderson, Mack Sennett, Linda Arvidson, and others.

Here at a little hotel near the station of the D. L. & W. Railroad, Mack Sennett (often somewhat difficult) said it was too hot to don his suite of armor, but when he found that Dell Henderson, the principal, was putting his on in spite of the heat, he complied. Little Mary waiting on the lawn, clad in tights - the costume of a page. Soon action took place. Mary mounted her horse, with its medieval trappings, set out for her ride to bear a message. Soon she became exhausted and before the end of her journey, she fell in with a band of gypsies. This picture was completed and licensed on Monday, July 25, 1910, by the Biograph Company. The reviewers rated it as an excellent picture.

The Rise of Comedies and the Serials

Mack Sennett's *Keystone Comedies* became very popular from 1910 to 1915 and Vitagraph's great comedian was John Bunny - the Charles Chaplin of Later years. Bunny was formerly a shoestring salesman, but later became a minstrel and a stage actor before entering the motion pictures.

Paterson's great contribution to comedy was its native son, Lou Costello (born Louis Cristillo). His early days were spent in Paterson and before he left to join the Hollywood Colony he lived on East 33rd Street, Paterson. Besides bringing laughs to millions he brought comfort and cheer to thousands through his great beneficence and philanthropy. He was never too busy to visit a sick or crippled child at home or confirmed to a hospital. Most of his charities have not been publicized. His untimely death was a great loss to many and his native city has lost one of its greatest boosters.



A reunion was held on the set of *Caribbean Holiday* at Universal Studios when comedian Lou Costello discovered Joe LaCava, formerly of Paterson, among the extras on the set.

New Jersey and Passaic County has contributed a large share in the making of serials. One spot chosen for a thriller was the famous Mine Hole along the Wanaque River in West Milford Township. Here was a great hole about 60 feet deep and 40 feet wide used as a mineshaft prior to the Revolutionary War and into which the waters of the Wanaque River now tumble.

Garret Mountain became the locale for many of the exploits of the well known Pearl White whose breath-taking exploits will be remembered by the oldsters in her great *Exploits of Elaine*, *The Adventures of Kathryn*, and the better known, *The Perils of Pauline*. At the Elmwood Country Club in East Paterson [Elmwood Park] one of her exploits took place in which the clubhouse was burned, and Miss White was rescued from a window, amidst smoke, flames and much screaming.

Those were the days when the movies were young!

Calendar

Saturday, September 11, 2003 . 10 AM

Passaic County Historical Society Genealogy Club Meeting Program: "Before They Fade: Preserving Your Family Photographs"

Speaker: Gary Saretzky

The lecture will cover why photographs deteriorate; recommend steps necessary to preserve family photo collections, including both older types of photographs and digital images; and provide useful tips for photo conservation.

Attendees are encouraged to bring samples from their own collections for discussion

Thursday, September 11, 2003 . 7 - 9 PM

Community Interfaith Candlelight Remembrance of 9/11 at Lambert Castle Sponsored by the First Presbyterian Church of Clifton

Outdoor service: Free and open to the public

Sunday, September 14, 2003 . 3 PM

The Castles of New Jersey Slide Presentation

Presented by Mr. Phil Jaeger

Lecture and slide presentation about NJ's most famous castles, including Lambert Castle.

Free to PCHS members / Included with regular admission fee to Lambert Castle for all others

Sunday, September 21, 2003

Two performances: 2 & 3 PM

Russian Folk Dancing at Lambert Castle

Glinka Folk Ensemble - specializing in dance and song of Eastern Europe. Plus special display about Russian immigration to Passaic County

Free to PCHS members / Included with regular admission fee to Lambert Castle for all others

Sunday, September 28, 2003 . 1 - 3 PM

Guided Tour of Historic Cedar Lawn Cemetery via Historic Paterson Trolley Car

Tour departs from Lambert Castle. Conducted by Howard Lanza - author of *Gateway to the Past: A Guide to Cedar Lawn Cemetery*.

Admission: \$5 for members / \$7.50 for all others. Includes transportation from Castle to Cedar Lawn Cemetery on the historic Paterson Trolley!

Wednesday, October 8, 2003 . 6:30 PM

Beef Steak Dinner at The Brownstone

Tickets: \$40 per person, available in advance only. All proceeds benefit the PCHS.

Saturday, October 11, 2003 . 10 AM

Passaic County Historical Society Genealogy Club Meeting Program: "Lessons from Gravestones"

Speaker: Roberta Halporn

A perfect topic for the month of Halloween, our speaker will cover gravestones and what can be learned about family members and the culture in which they lived. She will also discuss the various types of headstones used over the years, and the proper way to do gravestone rubbings.

Saturday, November 8 through Sunday, November 30, 2003

Holiday House Boutique -
(Closed Monday & Tuesdays)

Saturday, November 8, 2003 . 10 AM

Passaic County Historical Society Genealogy

Club Meeting Program: "Naturalization and Alien Registration Records - Colonial Period to Present"

Speaker: Arnold Lang has performed extensive research and has talked about Ship Passenger Lists and Naturalization Records at various genealogical societies and libraries throughout northern New Jersey and New York for the past eight years. His web site on the internet, "Research Guide to Immigration and Ship Passenger Lists," has won awards and noted mention by Ancestry, Heritage Quest, Family History Magazine, and others, and has been featured on the web site of the PBS show, "Ancestors." Because of the wide popularity of his web site, Mr. Lang actively responds to queries on this subject

Check our internet calendar for changes and updates:
<http://www.lambertcastle.org/calendar.html>