

# Bernardsville Times

WEDNESDAY

BERNARDSVILLE, N. J., 1905

APRIL 26

TWO CENTS

## AN HISTORIC OLD TAVERN

National Interest Clings To Building In Basking Ridge.

### LEE WAS CAPTURED THERE.

Ancient Structure Now the Property of N. M. Colberson, Formerly of East Orange.

Situated on a high knoll, about a half-mile from Basking Ridge, stands "the Old White Tavern," to which a great deal of historic interest still clings, it being the place where General Charles Lee on December 13, 1776, was captured by British dragoons, under Lieutenant-Colonel Harcourt.

Lee was a staunch supporter of the provincial claims against England. His commanding appearance, fluent tongue and undaunted spirit soon won him a foremost position among the leaders of the Revolutionary movement. Lee being a man of great foresight, readily saw that this war, if successful, would place the commanding general among the most renowned men of the world. Convinced of this, he coveted the position of commander-in-chief, and felt keenly the disappointment when Washington received that honor.

Lee's record was unimpeachable during the first year of the struggle, but as time passed he felt more and more his disappointment, and when Washington was fleeing across New Jersey and had sent word to Lee to reinforce him, Lee deliberately disobeyed those commands, leisurely directing his troops across the state taking adequate means not to catch up with his chief. On the night of December 12, 1776, his command, numbering about three thousand, encamped on the old historic farm, "the Melick farm," near this place. Sullivan was left in command of the troops and Lee rode to the Widow White's tavern at Basking Ridge, accompanied by only a small guard.

The next morning, before daylight, when Major-General Wilkinson, of General Gates' staff, arrived at the tavern, with a dispatch for Lee, he found the general in bed. Lee sent word that he would answer the letter after breakfast. Lee arose about 9 o'clock and came down stairs, scantily attired in a dressing-gown. After breakfast he proceeded to write a reply to Gates. Wilkinson saw a company of dragoons turn in the lane, and he hastily apprised Lee of his danger. The general exclaimed: "Where are the guards? Why don't they fire?" The guards, possibly getting their careless habits from Lee, were lazily basking in the sun on the south side of the house,

and were taken by surprise. Two of them offered resistance and were killed with sabre strokes. Lee's suite made a short resistance, firing from windows, but was soon overcome.

### BULLETS STILL THERE.

Some of these bullets may still be seen at the rear of the old building. The dragoons gave Lee five minutes to surrender, threatening to burn the house. The discomfited general, seeing the uselessness of continuing the struggle, immediately appeared at the door, saying: "Here is the general; he has surrendered." He was placed and bound on Wilkinson's horse and, with nothing on but a dressing gown, had to endure the cold December air on his ride to the British camp at New Brunswick, a distance of fifteen miles. In a local history it is claimed that Lee's capture was caused by an elder of the Mendham Presbyterian church. This elder suffered the loss of a horse, which he had reason to believe was stolen by Lee's troops, and as a means of retaliation informed the British of Lee's sojourn at White's tavern.

The old tavern has changed owners many times since the historical incident occurred. About twenty-five years ago an addition was added to the front part of the tavern. None of the old building was disturbed, but remains today the same as 125 years ago.

### ENTERTAINMENT AT PEAPACK.

"Tony the Convict," will be given in Allen's Hall, Peapack, Friday evening, April 28, for the benefit of the Peapack and Gladstone baseball team. The following program:

Tony .....	Thomas Finn
Weary Wayside .....	John Druany
James Barkclay .....	Fred Crater
Judge VanCruger .....	Herbert MacIre
Phillis Warbington .....	Harry Courters
Jackson .....	P. S. Miller
Warren Burrow .....	Charles Hilliard
Mrs. Van Cruger .....	Mrs. J. Druany
Lena .....	Gertrude Courters
Salley .....	Gertrude Todd
Miss Sedley .....	Leona Bodine

This play is under the management of Thomas Finn.

### SEVERELY INJURED.

Mrs. John B. Dunster was seriously injured this morning while preparing to feed her cow. She entered the stall of the animal, which had beside it a two days old calf, with a pail of feed and was viciously attacked. The cow knocked her down and was going and trampling her body for some time before her cries were heard by Elmer Hill, who was working in the adjoining garden of Mr. Fred Ballentine. Mr. Hill fought the enraged animal off and rescued Mrs. Dunster. Dr. Sutphen who was called to attend the injured lady, declared her condition serious.

### WATCH THE JUNKMEN.

Some people in this place are having a lot of trouble from a gang of city junkmen from Morristown and Madison who vault fences like greyhounds to get into dooryards, and steal anything that can be hidden into their catch-bag. Look out for them, and leave no valuables where they can be picked up.