

RECOLLECTIONS
OF
BERNARDSVILLE
NEW JERSEY

1871-1941



ALLISON WRIGHT POST

BERNARDSVILLE, NEW JERSEY

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY J. J. LITTLE & IVES COMPANY, NEW YORK

TO MY WIFE

*Who for many years has been my companion
in making our home and through whose
help and inspiration these recollec-
tions have been written*

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My Earliest Recollections of Bernardsville

MY father, George B. Post, became a resident of Bernardsville, New Jersey, about the year 1872. He was at that time an architect doing business in New York City, where he had an office and lived during the winter. For a few months of the summer he went to Long Island, usually to the south side of the island, renting there.

Dr. Edgar W. Voris, the well-known doctor and cousin of my father, owned a farm on the Mendham Road about a mile and a half from Bernardsville. He was our family physician and advised my father that he thought a change to the inland during the summer would be most desirable and beneficial to my mother who was suffering from rheumatism. He suggested consideration of Bernardsville as a home in the summer near enough to Morristown, New Jersey, for a business man to commute daily to and from his business in New York. At that time there was no railroad to Bernardsville.

After a visit with Dr. Voris at his farm, my

father decided to follow Dr. Voris' suggestion and buy at Bernardsville. Dr. Voris' house was occupied as the residence of Mr. George H. Gaston, Vice President of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company for many years from about 1900. The house was burnt to the ground by fire some time ago.

About the year 1871, we went to Bernardsville as a family, renting rooms in Mr. Oliver's Boarding House, subsequently the site of the Somerset Inn, located not far from Dr. Voris' farm, spending the summer there. Our family then consisted of my father and mother and three small boys, of which I was the youngest.

The climate proved most beneficial to my mother.

In 1871 my father bought what was then known as the Eliza Ballentine Farm of about 104 acres. It was located on high ground, about 750 feet altitude, on a farm road from Bernardsville to the Mine Mount district, now known as Claremont Road, receiving its name from the fact of our homestead being called "Claremont Farms."

The name was selected from our ancestral home on the River Side overlooking the Hudson River in New York City, known as "Claremont," which property was on the old Bloomingdale Road (now Broadway) and with the adjoining property to

the south, known as "Monte Alta," extended from 117th Street to 129th Street.

In 1829 Mr. Joel Post purchased "Claremont" and he acquired "Monte Alta" a few years later. A large part of this property was purchased from the Post family by the City of New York many years ago. When the Riverside Drive was built the dwelling house was substantially altered over for its present use as the well-known Claremont Restaurant on Riverside Drive. Grant's Tomb is also on what was formerly the Post property.

The Ballentine Farm which my father purchased, I well remember, had an old farm house and some red barns on it. After the house was extensively altered it became my father's residence, and a happy home it was for our family, which included besides my father and mother, five children, another son and a daughter having been born at Bernardsville.

For many years my father drove to and from Morristown daily during the spring, summer, and autumn months that we spent at Bernardsville, commuting from Morristown to New York to attend to his business there until the railroad was regularly running to Bernardsville about the year 1875 when the Passaic and Delaware branch of the railroad was taken over by the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western Railroad. The extension of the rail-

road from Bernardsville to Gladstone (its present terminus) was made in the year 1890, and the building of the extension was largely due to the influence of Mr. Grant B. Schley, who has done so much for Far Hills as to be known as its greatest benefactor.

In the year 1872 there were only a few business men from New York who had acquired farms as their homes at Bernardsville, of which Mr. George I. Seney and Mr. Andrew V. Stout, and my father were the most prominent.

Mr. Seney occupied a house on a farm on the Mendham Road, the residential property now of Mrs. Francis G. Lloyd. Mr. Stout lived on the other side of Mendham Road, not far from the Seney place, now the Guy G. Gabrielson Home and opposite where was formerly the Oliver Boarding House and later the Somerset Inn, which unfortunately burnt to the ground many years ago in the spring of the year when the Inn was being cleaned preparatory to its opening for the season.

The Great Blizzard

DURING the year 1888 the great blizzard occurred.

I went to Bernardsville for an outing with my father for a week end at our homestead.

I was, at the time, a sophomore at Columbia College, now Columbia University.

Sunday evening, March 11th, we dined at Bernardsville with a lifelong friend of my father's, Mr. Samuel Borrowe, at his house, which was only a short distance from our home. He was one of the highest officers of the Equitable Life Assurance Society.

I well remember that evening, for it was very mild weather for that time of the year. I had seen signs of spring that day, and as we returned home in our carriage, driven by horses, of course, a drizzling rain commenced.

The next morning the snow storm was at its height and the snow was drifting.

Strong wind and very cold. Soon roads were impassable. The rain had changed to snow in the night. For three days it continued to snow as

hard as I ever remember seeing it, and with scarcely any intermission.

We were confined to our house. Fortunately our place was self-supporting as we had our coachman, Thomas Day, and farmer, David Reid, living on the large farm my father then owned. The farmer daily brought us chickens, eggs, milk, and cream on the farm sleds.

There was no communication with New York, for trains stopped running on Monday from New York beyond Summit. There was no telephone then and telegraph wires were down, so that no communication was possible over them.

On Thursday we received word that the trains were running to and from New York and Summit on fairly regular schedule.

We determined to try to get to New York and started on Thursday with farm sleds drawn by farm horses for Summit, about 17 miles away. David Reid and Thomas Day, farmer and coachman, respectively, went with us to use shovels, axes, and so forth as might be necessary.

The drifts of snow made the roads at times impassable, but we felt we were justified to obtain our ends to drive around the drifts when necessary through the fields.

We reached Summit after considerable difficulty and finally New York that evening.

I remember I was much concerned about my absences from college and how I could be excused, but to my surprise I found there were no cuts counted for absences as there had been so many absent students and even teachers who were unable to reach the college.

Origin of Somerset Hills Country Club and Somerset Lake and Game Club

DURING the year 1894 the growth of the community at Bernardsville seemed to justify an effort to form a Country Club, and several public-spirited men joined in an enterprise to buy what seemed to them was real estate, especially suitable for development for such club purposes, with a view of offering it at cost for use by a Club if one could be organized and sufficient money raised.

Messrs. J. Herbert Ballantine, George B. Post, Robert L. Stevens, and Edward T. H. Talmage each subscribed eight thousand dollars as a fund to purchase several farms on the North Branch of the Raritan River, partly in Bernards and partly in Bedminster Townships, Somerset County, located between Bernardsville and Peapack, New Jersey.

As I was a lawyer and had just formed a firm to transact a general real estate and insurance business under the firm name of Post and Reese, I was em-

ployed to carry out the necessary purchases of farms for the proposed plan, which resulted in acquiring 364 781/1000 acres of land at an average cost of about \$80. per acre.

I acknowledge the valuable assistance of my friend, Mr. Abraham Smith, in obtaining options on many of the farms. He was the patriarch of the large Smith family which had its annual Smith Family reunion and picnic on the North Branch of the Raritan River, formerly on part of what is now the home property of Mrs. Arthur Turnbull. Mr. Smith lived at Peapack and was a most respected and worthy citizen. He appreciated the benefits which would accrue to the community by the accomplishment of the proposed plan for forming a Country Club. It was essential that all the land be purchased at a fair price, and he did much in helping me procure the necessary land.

It was a part of the plan to build a dam across the North Branch of the Raritan River and thereby build a lake of about a mile in length where the hills on each side came quite near one another with a stream winding between, then known as Hub Hollow because of a hub mill that was once in existence there. By construction of such a lake, swimming, boating, and fishing would be given the community, and it was thought it would be an added inducement for membership in the Club,

beside offering tennis courts, and golf links for which there was an existing demand.

I quote the following from a Prospectus of The Ravine Association, a real estate corporation that was formed in the year 1896 to hold Real Estate, of which a part was to be leased to a Country Club.

“During the autumn of the year 1894 several of those owning Country residences at Bernardsville, New Jersey, united in purchasing 364 781/1000 acres of land, considering the property peculiarly suitable for improvements of a public character which might add to the personal enjoyment of the summers to come by residents of Bernardsville, Far Hills, and Surrounding Country.”

Thus an opportunity was offered the community and it was made possible by a generous response of money by its public-spirited residents.

In order to obtain a plan for the organization of the corporation and running a Club, I examined what had been done at Tuxedo Park, and as a result The Ravine Association, a real estate corporation of New Jersey, was formed in July 1896 to hold title to the land, and in 1899 The Somerset Hills Country Club was formed and became tenant of The Ravine Association's lake and such portion of its real estate as was developed and suitable for use of the club.

From the time that title was acquired by Messrs. Ballantine, Post, Stevens, and Talmage in 1895 until 1896 when all the real estate thus acquired was conveyed to The Ravine Association, there was an active solicitation to procure subscriptions.

Mr. Richard V. Lindabury, the distinguished lawyer of Newark, New Jersey, who had recently become a resident of Bernardsville, incorporated The Ravine Association and became its counsel, which position he continued to hold until his untimely death on July 15, 1925. He fell from his horse while out riding early in the morning before going to his business.

A Subscription Committee was formed composed of Richard V. Lindabury, Henry R. Kunhardt, and Charles W. Ide to solicit subscriptions to stock of The Ravine Association. On September 13th, 1897, the Subscription Committee reported that they had secured sufficient subscriptions to enable the Association to take steps toward the improvement of its property and that an agreement had been made between the Subscription Committee representing the subscribers to the capital stock of the Association and a Committee composed of George B. Post, Edward T. H. Talmage, and Robert L. Stevens, representing The Ravine Association whereby George B. Post, Edward T. H. Talmage, Robert L. Stevens, Charles W. Ide,

and Henry R. Kunhardt were appointed a Committee to carry out improvement to property of the Association, according to the written proposals upon which subscriptions were obtained; namely,

A. Construction of Golf Links and Tennis Courts

B. Construction of Suitable Club House

C. The Building of a Lake

D. The making of suitable drives and pathways along the Lake and between the same and the Club House.

And the subscriptions should be called, and payable as follows:

25% at once

25% Oct. 15th, 1897

25% Dec. 1, 1897

25% July 1, 1898

George B. Post, the distinguished architect, became chairman of the above committee known as the Building Committee.

On formation of The Ravine Association the following were its officers and directors:

Edward T. H. Talmage, President

A. Wright Post, Secretary and Treasurer

Board of Directors

J. Herbert Ballantine

George B. Post

A. Wright Post
Robert L. Stevens
Edward T. H. Talmage

The Ravine Association was formed in the year 1896 and in the year 1897 with sufficient money in hand work was begun on erection of a Club House on the side of a hill overlooking the lake. Golf links, tennis courts, roads, etc., were all under construction so that during the latter part of the year 1898 the Association's improvements were sufficiently advanced to consider the rental of its property for club purposes.

At the same time as the Association was making its other improvements, the lake commonly referred to as "The Ravine Lake" was being built.

Under the guidance of the Building Committee and Mr. Lindabury as counsel a careful report was received from Mr. George W. Howell, Civil Engineer, of Morristown, New Jersey, as to plans and cost of building dam, and specifications for constructing the dam were obtained from him.

Mr. George W. Howell was employed as Consulting Engineer to carry out his plans that were approved and accepted. Mr. Frank S. Tainter was employed as Contracting Engineer.

There was a rumor at that time of an injunction by some residents down river from the proposed

site of lake that might be applied for to prevent the proposed construction of the lake, and Mr. Lindabury was consulted as to the possibility of such an injunction being obtained. He wrote an opinion for the Association to the effect that an injunction could not be obtained to prevent building the dam, which opinion was concurred in by the well-known Jurist, Judge John F. Dillon, who was then living at Far Hills, New Jersey.

The Somerset Hills Country Club was organized in the year 1899 and obtained a lease from The Ravine Association on a year-to-year basis at an annual rental sufficient to cover the cost of the Association for its yearly charges. The lease included the Club House and grounds with a nine-hole golf links and three grass tennis courts and also the lake and boat house with floats, etc., as part of bathing facilities.

The following were the officers of the Club and its Board of Governors on its organization and for the year 1900. The Committees were for the year 1900.

President, C. Ledyard Blair

Vice President, Edward T. H. Talmage

Treasurer, Charles W. Ide

Secretary, Richard V. Lindabury

Board of Governors

C. Ledyard Blair, Charles M. Chapin, Charles W. Ide, Henry R. Kunhardt, Richard V. Lindabury, Clarence B. Mitchell, George B. Post, A. Wright Post, Percy R. Pyne, Grant B. Schley, Robert L. Stevens, Julius A. Stursberg, and Edward T. H. Talmage.

House Committee

Edward T. H. Talmage, Chairman
Charles M. Chapin and Edward A. LeRoy, Jr.

Lake and Game Committee

George B. Post, Chairman
Frank S. Tainter and Julius A. Stursberg

Golf Committee

A. Wright Post, Chairman
Grant B. Schley, Jr. and Ernest Lloyd

Committee on Subscription Members

Richard V. Lindabury, Chairman
Grant B. Schley and Robert L. Stevens

From the year 1899 until the year 1917 the Somerset Hills Country Club continued in the same location as when organized.

The golf course was only of nine holes and there was no adjoining land available and suitable for extension of course to one of eighteen holes. For some time previous to 1917 many members thought a change by the Country Club should be

made if better property suitable for construction of an eighteen-hole course was available and funds could be obtained for providing such a golf course and buildings suitable for use by the Club.

During the year 1915 the property of Frederic P. Olcott, deceased, was carefully examined and found to be capable of development for the purposes of a Club.

The necessary money was raised largely through the efforts of Mr. C. Ledyard Blair and the able assistance of Mr. Dean Sage and Mr. Walter P. Bliss and others. Subscriptions to stock were obtained for a new company to be formed to acquire the land from heirs of Frederic P. Olcott and to build a new Club House, eighteen-hole golf course and tennis courts and other improvements required by the Somerset Hills Country Club.

The Mine Mount Land Company was formed during the year 1916, a New Jersey Corporation which took title to about 210 acres of land purchased from the heirs of Frederic P. Olcott, about one mile from the village of Bernardsville.

The land was then improved by building a Club House, eighteen-hole golf links, and six grass tennis courts besides making a pond and creating a system of water supply for the golf course in cooperation with Col. Anthony R. Kuser, who owned adjoining property and made most generous ar-

rangements for using the excess water beyond what was needed on his own place to supplement the Club's own water supply.

The property of the Mine Mount Land Company was then leased to the Somerset Hills Country Club about January 1st, 1918, at first on a yearly basis and at rental fixed by the amount of operating cost of the Mine Mount Land Company; and since the year 1924, a long lease for a term of years was arranged between the land company and the Club.

During December 1917 the Somerset Lake and Game Club was organized by incorporating under the laws of the State of New Jersey, and about January 1918 leased from The Ravine Association the Ravine Lake and boathouse, floats, etc., for bathing, boating, fishing, skating, and conservation of game, and is still tenant of that property and is giving these sports to its members.

The following is quoted from a letter to members of the Club from Mr. Arthur Turnbull, dated January 23d, 1918, who was then Secretary of the Somerset Lake and Game Club.

"Following the removal of its Club House site to the New Golf Links, the Somerset Hills Country Club gave up its connection with the Ravine Lake and boathouse. In view of the interest taken by many members in the facilities afforded by the

Lake, a new Club was formed which has leased the Lake properties for fishing, boating, and skating, and conservation of game. The name of the New Club is 'Somerset Lake and Game Club.' "

For the year 1923 and for some time before the following were officers, governors and committees of the Club.

President, William H. Page

Vice President, George D. Cross

Secretary and Treasurer, Arthur Turnbull

Board of Governors

C. Ledyard Blair

Morgan Cowperthwaite

George D. Cross

G. Hermann Kinnicutt

Anthony R. Kuser

Clarence B. Mitchell

William H. Page

Percy R. Pyne

Frank S. Tainter

Arthur Turnbull

Lake Committee

William H. Page, Chairman

Arthur Turnbull, Vice Chairman

Anthony R. Kuser

G. Hermann Kinnicutt

Clarence B. Mitchell

Game Committee

Frank S. Tainter, Chairman

George D. Cross, Vice Chairman

George B. Post

Francis Stevens

Owen Winston

St. Bernard's Episcopal Church

A NOTABLE event for Bernardsville took place on November 8th, 1898, when the St. Bernard's Episcopal Church was dedicated by Bishop Scarborough.

The first Board of Trustees was composed of Messrs. George B. Post, Jr., Haley Fisk, Robert L. Stevens, Richard V. Lindabury, Zachariah Belcher, and Kenneth Mathieson.

The first Rector was the Rev. J. C. Hall, who was elected November 15th, 1897. He served until June 1899, when he resigned, and the Rev. Thomas A. Conover became Rector on November 12th, 1899.

St. John's Chapel at Mine Mount was opened for first service on October 27th, 1907.

At the time of the fortieth anniversary in October 1938, Mr. Conover announced that he would resign the following year, at which time he would complete forty years of service as Rector. He is much beloved, and we all regretted that he felt it best for such a change to be made. He had not

been well for some time and thought it advisable not to serve any longer.

On October 16th, 1938, the Rev. John Malcolm Haight was elected Rector to commence his term of office on November 15th, 1938, and is still so serving most acceptably.

Mr. Conover, beside attending to his work as Rector of St. Bernard's Church, founded St. Bernard's School at Gladstone, New Jersey, thus carrying out a dream he wished for during his early years of missionary service near Trenton. He is a graduate of St. Paul's School and hoped he might establish a farm school for boys as nearly as possible like St. Paul's School. This he succeeded in doing.

St. Bernard's School was started in the year 1900, and from a small beginning it has developed into a well-known school of considerable size and prominence.

I remember attending a gathering of gentlemen during the summer of 1900 at the residence of Mr. Robert L. Stevens to discuss the purpose and future of the school. At this meeting a committee was formed to assist Mr. Conover in carrying out his plans, and the gentlemen on that committee when the school was incorporated became the first Board of Trustees.

The names of Messrs. Robert L. Stevens and

Charles M. Chapin will long be remembered in connection with the formation of St. Bernard's School and their financial support during its early days. They did much to assist Mr. Conover in bringing about the splendid work being done at St. Bernard's School.

The Borough of Bernardsville

DURING the latter part of the year 1900 was the first intimation I had that certain persons in our community were considering the advisability of forming a borough to divide the Township of Bernards so that residents of and around Bernardsville and to the north thereof should form a separate government and rule themselves rather than through the existing government of the Township.

I received a letter from Mr. Charles F. Squibb, dated December 12th, 1900, concerning the matter of formation of a Borough, and enclosed was a map of the Township of Bernards with a suggested division for the Borough that Mr. Squibb wrote was prepared to promote discussion by Mr. Frederic P. Olcott with his characteristic interest in township affairs.

Nothing apparently came of any such movement at that time.

A few years before 1908 the Road and Improvement Society of Mine Mount was formed.

Mr. Ramsay Turnbull was largely responsible for this organization being formed. He gave almost his entire time to its work. He was head of the organization and chairman of its executive committee during its existence, which continued for many years.

The roads of Mine Mount were in very poor condition when this organization was formed, and almost all the mountain residents gave money to aid in the good work Mr. Turnbull was doing to keep the roads in better condition than was being done by the Township of Bernards with its meager appropriation for road repairs on Mine Mount. On October 8th, 1908, a meeting of the Road and Improvement Society of Mine Mount was held at the Club House of the Somerset Hills Country Club.

Mr. Percy R. Pyne was appointed as chairman, pro tem, and I as secretary, pro tem, of the meeting. Present were: Percy R. Pyne, Julius A. Stursberg, Ramsay Turnbull, John A. Bense, Palmer Campbell, Henry Young, Jr., Anthony R. Kuser, Charles M. Chapin, Frank S. Tainter, George D. Cross, Schuyler S. Wheeler, Edward T. H. Talmage, J. William Clark, Richard V. Lindabury, Frank Bergen, and A. Wright Post.

The subject of Borough Government was generally discussed, and a committee composed of

Messrs. John A. Bensel, Ramsay Turnbull, and J. William Clark was appointed to consider the question of forming a Borough Government.

Certain action taken the winter before by the Village Improvement Society of Bernardsville, looking toward the formation of a Borough Government, and reports of its committee on the subject, together with the map of boundary proposed, were brought up and considered at the meeting.

Thus it can be seen that the question of the formation of a Borough was considered from time to time for many years before 1920.

After the November elections of 1920 because of certain questions that had arisen with reference to allotment of funds on roads in the Township that many claimed were unjust to the Mine Mount District, there was a determined effort made to form a Borough.

Meetings were held during June 1921 in many parts of the Township, and there was a full discussion of the subject at those meetings.

The principal objection was that it would be unfair to the outlying districts of the Township, around Liberty Corner especially, to have the more built-up part of the Township and consequently having larger tax receipts separate as a Borough. I remember Mr. Richard V. Lindabury very eloquently setting that forth as his view.

At a special election of the Township held June 9th, 1921, there was a referendum given the residents to vote on the question, and the proposition was rejected by a majority vote of 207. There were 731 ballots cast, of which 256 were for the Borough and 463 against its formation, and 12 were rejected.

The matter was again brought up in the year 1924, and by act of the New Jersey legislature on March 6th, 1924, the Borough of Bernardsville was formed; and on April 29th, 1924, a referendum of voters was held and was carried by a majority vote.

There was no organized resistance and few meetings were held in opposition to the plan as there had been previously. One person, I remember, to whom I spoke and whose opinion I valued highly, said that if on mature thought a Borough was wanted, it should not be opposed.

In January 1931 the formation of a New Borough to be known as the Borough of Mine Mount to include within its boundaries parts of the Boroughs of Bernardsville, Peapack-Gladstone, and Far Hills was agitated.

On February 2d, 1931, an application was made to the New Jersey legislature, then in session at Trenton, for the passage of a bill, the general object of which should be to create, establish, and

incorporate a Borough to be called the Borough of Mine Mount.

The petitioners stated the principal reason for desiring to form a New Borough was to preserve the natural beauty of the Mountain Colony. They wished to withdraw from the existing Boroughs of Bernardsville, Far Hills, and Peapack-Gladstone. February 5th, 1931, the bill was left in committee and the plan was abandoned.

While this movement did not have a very strong backing and there were many opposing the plan, it may have been beneficial in bringing about a stronger desire by the Borough Government to preserve our beautiful residential section from the encroachments of unsightly uses and business by creating zone laws that have since been established to the advantage of our community.

Changing Conditions Automobiles Coming into Use

ABOUT the year 1905, the new railroad station of the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western Railroad was built, replacing the old wooden station that had been used since the time the railroad was extended from Summit to Bernardsville.

The old building can still be seen near the Square at Bernardsville, it being now used as office of the Bernardsville News, a weekly paper to be truly proud of, well edited by Mr. Carl Trumbull. The old station well served its purpose during the early days of the development of Bernardsville, but in 1905 the railroad recognized the growing importance of the place and its requirements demanding a new railroad station which was then built.

For some years before 1905, the number of owners of carriage and saddle horses, thoroughbreds of the finest kind, made Bernardsville remarkable.

The sight on the arrival of trains at Bernardsville to meet the business men coming from New York did not fail to attract attention. Horses and carriages of all descriptions were here on a summer afternoon. The women met their husbands with their phaetons, a fringed canopy shading their flowered hats and bright gowns, and a groom standing at the heads of the horses. A spiked team of three horses, I well remember, of my father's driven to a wagonette, a carriage holding eight persons; Mr. Walter P. Bliss with his three beautiful horses abreast; the tandems of Mr. Charles M. Chapin and Mr. J. Edward Davis driven by their owners; Miss Malvina Appleton in her phaeton and canopy with her pair of piebald ponies. Also the horses and carriages of the Messrs. C. Ledyard Blair, Edward T. H. Talmage, Frederic and Seymour Cromwell, Percy R. Pyne, Clarence B. Mitchell, Robert L. Stevens, Richard Stevens, Grant B. Schley, Richard V. Lindabury, Joseph Larocque, Charles Pfizer, George B. Post, Jr., Mrs. Archibald Alexander, Dean Sage, and many others.

At that time there were at least five four-in-hands to be seen driven by their owners at Bernardsville; a large number for so small a community.

A pleasant trip I remember making to Princeton for a football game with my wife as guests of

Mr. C. Ledyard Blair on his brake with a relay of horses at Harlingen, where the grooms quickly changed horses for the second part of the drive to the old Princeton Inn.

About the time the new railroad station was built, one began to notice a decided change from the use of horses and carriages to automobiles. Soon one was no longer conspicuous if he drove or was driven to the railroad station in an automobile.

About the year 1905 the automobile was coming to be considered a necessity. Among some of the owners of cars at Bernardsville were the following: Mr. and Mrs. Robert D. Graham with their Locomobile, Mr. and Mrs. J. Magee Ellsworth, who had recently purchased the Col. Edwin A. Stevens place, had a "Leon Bollee," as did also Col. Anthony R. Kuser and Richard V. Lindabury.

Mr. Grant B. Schley had a "Renault." Mrs. George Bliss, who had leased from Mr. Henry R. Kunhardt his country place for the summer, had a "Packard."

Anecdotes Connected With the Lives of Some of Bernardsville's Distinguished Residents

I WANT to acknowledge with appreciation and record as a matter of historic interest certain incidents in the lives of and conversations I had with distinguished residents of Bernardsville, all of whom are now dead.

RICHARD V. LINDABURY

One day during the summer of 1919 I joined Mr. Lindabury in the club car on the railroad train as we were returning home to Bernardsville from the day spent at our offices.

During the day I had discovered among some old papers at my office a copy of an opinion, previously referred to, that had been given by Mr. Lindabury to the Ravine Association as to whether an injunction might be obtained and prevent the Association from building a dam on its property.

It was years since the opinion was given, and Mr. Lindabury carefully read the copy, and then said: "It is many years ago that I wrote that opin-

ion but I now agree with every word I then wrote."

Mr. William H. Page, President of the Lake and Game Club, had told me that that Club was arranging to put a tablet on the dam of the Ravine Lake and had asked me to furnish some information as to who were the officers and building committee, etc., of the Ravine Association at the time of its organization and when the Lake was built.

I asked Mr. Lindabury if I could suggest having his name mentioned on the tablet as counsel. He hesitated and I reminded him of his many services given without recompense in aiding what he thought was so important in the best development of country life in our community, and he consented. He had not only attended to all legal matters in incorporating the Ravine Association and Somerset Hills Country Club, but drew all contracts for building the dam while serving on the building committee and gave much of his time to giving legal advice of the greatest importance.

I was much pleased that the many services to the Ravine Association of this great man should be thus perpetuated in our memories and to those to come after us.

I once asked Mr. Lindabury why he had never run for any political office. I knew he had been asked to be a candidate for the Governorship of

New Jersey. He said he had never been willing to run for any political office, and continued, "if I can earn the esteem and friendship of those about me in my Home Town and State, I will be pleased and I only wish to be known as Lawyer Lindabury."

CALVIN McMURTRY

Surrogate McMurtry, who for many years served so acceptably to the residents of Somerset County at Somerville, New Jersey, as Surrogate, I was well acquainted with.

During the years when I was often at Somerville in the early '90's working as a lawyer searching titles of real estate for my clients, I often met and talked with the Surrogate. Mr. McMurtry was repeatedly elected as Surrogate and served continuously until, because of his ill health in the year 1932, he was unable to run again for the office. He died in the year 1937. Because of his remarkable popularity, he received the votes not only of the Democrats, of which he was one, but of nearly all the Republicans as well and he was never beaten in an election.

One day Surrogate McMurtry spoke to me of his early days when he lived at Bernardsville and Basking Ridge when he knew my father well. He asked me if I remembered the two large greyhounds my father once owned, one gray and the

other tan colored, named Ajax and Climax. Often, he said, he had seen them following my father's carriage as he drove to and from the Bernardsville railroad station with his fast pair of trotting horses along the then winding road, parts of which follow the line of what is now known as the upper part of Claremont Road and then passing through the land of Catesby L. Jones, then down the Mine Mount Road, passing the present entrance of the Somerset Hills Country Club. The old winding country roads gave place to the present highways as the inroads of time and trend of improvements did away with the old days of better scenery which however became out of date for better convenience.

It certainly recalled vividly my childhood recollections of those days and my father coming and going to his business from our Bernardsville home.

JOHN F. DRYDEN

Senator Dryden took a conspicuous part in Bernardsville life for many years beginning in 1899 until his death on November 24th, 1911.

He purchased the Thatcher M. Adams property at Bernardsville during the year 1898 and made his summer home there after having made alterations to the dwelling house.

He was one of the best U. S. Senators New

Jersey ever had. He was administration's spokesman in the U. S. Senate for the bill which created the Panama Canal. A friend of President Theodore Roosevelt, Senator Dryden with his great business ability, devoted to the bill both in its preparation and in procuring its passage by the Senate, did much to bring about that great accomplishment for his Country. I have in my possession a copy of the speech he made in the U. S. Senate supporting the measure, which he gave me.

Mr. Dryden will also be remembered as the first president of the Prudential Insurance Company of Newark, New Jersey, which he founded and of which he was president for many years.

The Republican Party wished him to run for the U. S. Senatorship. There was some opposition at the time because of his lack of experience as a politician and the belief that such an office should be held only by one having had previous service in politics.

I supported Mr. Dryden as a man of the utmost honesty and integrity and with such a wonderful business ability that he would be a worthy representative of the State of New Jersey, and conspicuous for his ability among the United States Senators; and so it proved.

I think the fact that Senator Dryden was willing to give up his position as president of the Pru-

dential Insurance Company to give service as Senator to his Country was most praiseworthy.

That it was possible to obtain such a man's service, makes it well worth while considering whether or not the old convention system of making nominations for the U. S. Senate is not preferable to the present direct primary system. It increases the cost to tax payers because of special elections being necessary and sometimes results in less satisfactory nominations being made than could have been obtained by the convention system.

I remember I once talked of this matter with the well-known Statesman Col. Edward M. House, who became a close friend of mine for many years before he died in the year 1938, and he seemed to think there was a decided question as to whether the present system of direct primary was any improvement over that of the conventions.

CAPTAIN ANDERSON AND ROBERT ABEL

Captain Anderson and Mr. Robert Abel are associated in my mind with the war stories I heard them discuss with my father when I was a boy.

My father had served in the Civil War with the Twenty-second Regiment of New York. He started as Captain during the war and became Colonel after the war.

Captain Anderson was in the U. S. Cavalry. At

the time I knew him he was visiting his parents at their house at Bernardsville which is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frederic Bull. He would come to see Col. George B. Post, and they would talk over the old war days, much to my delight.

Mr. Robert Abel, who served so long and faithfully as station agent at Bernardsville for the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western Railroad, was another old soldier, a veteran of the Civil War who used to talk most interestingly with my father of the war times.

I can almost see him now as I write, telling the well-known story of President Lincoln when asked if he knew that General Grant was fond of whisky, and his reply was that he would like to know the brand so as to send some to the other Generals. He, Abel, would chuckle with delight when telling this story.

Mr. Robert Hanna, when I was a boy, was my father's farmer; and he too was a Civil War veteran.

FREDERIC P. OLCOTT

Mr. Olcott, who was a benefactor to Bernardsville in so many ways, including making possible the large high school building of which we are justly proud, moved to Bernardsville from Rumson, New Jersey, about the year 1890.

He was the president of the Central Trust Com-

pany at that time, and was among the most prominent bankers of his day.

I remember calling upon him during the year 1895 when I was trying to raise money to form our Country Club. Mr. Olcott said he liked the stream country better than the country around Rumson with so much water and its many Clubs where he formerly lived and that he did not favor a lake being built. While not being successful in obtaining a subscription, I enjoyed my talk with him at that time.

He showed much interest in his horses and had his private race track in sight of the house which he had just finished building on his Bernardsville property.

GRANT B. SCHLEY

Mr. Schley, to whom I have referred as the great benefactor of Far Hills, was a large-hearted, generous man. He did much for the development not only of Far Hills but also of Bernardsville, and the whole neighborhood. I served with Mr. Schley as Governor of the Somerset Hills Country Club, and his advice always was most valuable.

Some of the organizations in the neighborhood of Far Hills that owe their existence largely to Mr. Schley's influence were The Far Hills Agricultural Society, organized about the year 1910, with its grounds used for the Annual Horse Show.

Formerly for many years was held annually there the Far Hills Fair with its attractive show of vegetables, fruits, etc. On the same grounds the Far Hills Athletic Association hold their games of baseball and other sports of all kinds.

Annually during October at "Froh-heim," the former home property of Mr. Grant B. Schley, and now of Mr. Evander B. Schley, is held the well-known Race Meet including the Far Hills Steeple Chase, which attracts entries from all over the country. The Farmers' Day Race, also held annually, is a feature of these races.

Another sport, to which Mr. Schley contributed so generously is the Essex Fox Hounds with their Club House and buildings at Peapack, New Jersey. I remember when Mr. Kenneth Schley and Mr. William A. Larned were joint Masters of the pack of celebrated American Fox Hounds.

Polo is another of the sports of Far Hills in which Mr. Grant B. Schley was much interested. At Burnt Mills have been established several beautiful polo fields while there is the polo ground at Bedminster, near Far Hills, known as "Schley Field" on which during the autumn there are games played with many well-known Clubs that attract large crowds of people, including many farmers.

Perhaps no one person has done so much for this development of polo near Far Hills as Mr.

Thorn Kissel, and he deserves the credit that is due him for his splendid services. He brought about the playing of the Junior Championships on the grounds at Burnt Mills, New Jersey.

Mr. Kissel is always to be seen at the games of polo. Often I have enjoyed his company at these games, appreciating his explanation of the finer points of the play with which he is so conversant as he is an expert player himself.

J. COLEMAN DRAYTON

When I was at Columbia College, the adjoining house at Bernardsville to ours was owned by Mr. J. Coleman Drayton than whom I never knew a finer gentleman and sportsman.

Mr. Drayton was very fond of shooting and, in fact, of all kinds of sport. He owned a number of dogs, principally setters and terriers of all kinds; but he was especially fond of Irish terriers. The Irish terriers were trained to fight woodchucks, of which he thus destroyed many.

After the year 1890, Mr. Drayton and my father decided to start a kennels. My father had a large farm house and barn on a farm he had purchased some time before from the Whitenack family, now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Catesby L. Jones, and he donated use of those buildings for kennels to be known as The Somerset Kennels.

I undertook the management of the kennels with the assistance of my brother, George, who was too busy to be the head of the management because of his activity in business, having only recently formed the stock brokerage firm of Post and Flagg.

Mr. F. C. Phoebus of Frederick, Maryland, was employed as kennel superintendent.

Mr. Drayton had some interest in beagles, but as I have said before, his preference was for setters and terriers.

It was my brother, George, who took the initiative in forming a pack of beagles which later under his ownership, when the joint kennels of my father and Mr. Drayton were given up, became the well-known Somerset Beagles. The origin of that pack of beagles was a purchase of a few beagles, two of them named Punch and Judy, from Mr. Pottinger Dorsey of Frederick, Maryland.

After many years when my brother George found it difficult to continue running with the beagles, and he always liked to handle his pack himself as far as possible, he fortunately arranged with Mr. Richard V. N. Gambrill of Peapack, New Jersey, to take over his beagles and consolidate them with his own pack; and as a result Mr. Gambrill's present pack at Peapack is known as the Vernon Somerset Beagles.

I am indeed thankful that the old pack's name

is thus in part preserved, and that the sport is still being carried on as it was by my brother, and by so fine a sportsman as Mr. Gambrill.

During my life at Bernardsville I have seen many changes take place and it is to note some of my observations that may be of interest to others who have not been so long a time a member of our community that I have written this sketch of some of my recollections and most cherished memories.