



**RUMSON  
CENTENNIAL  
EDITION  
2007 No. 4**



**A LOOK BACK AT SCOTHIGH FARM**

**STATELY HOMES BY THE SEA  
VNA DESIGNER SHOWHOUSE**

**MAY 1-31, 2007**

Captain William Boardman built this elaborate Victorian mansion for his family in the mid 1800's on his working farm. Dubbed "The Hawk's Nest," it was later inhabited by the Bonner Family and demolished in 1926 by Mr. & Mrs. Manton Metcalf, Jr.

Apple Wynd, the Metcalf Farm, from a family Christmas card photo.



**ALL ABOUT RUMSON**  
**SCOTHIGH FARM**  
**142 Bingham Avenue**

“Stately Homes by the Sea,” The Visiting Nurse Association of Central Jersey Designer Showhouse that began at Scotchhigh Farm on April 23rd and will until the end of May, will bring a multitude of visitors to Rumson. The former Metcalf Farm mansion at 142 Bingham Avenue has been transformed, and professional designers have showcased their talents by decorating the various rooms for the event. The very latest and most innovative styles are being displayed, and attendees are going home with new ideas to translate into their own new looks. Most Rumson residents will visit the showhouse, help on the committees, serve as docents during the thousand plus time-slots or all of the above. (Residents wishing to participate may contact the VNA at 732-224-6970) In the promotional materials for the event, much is being made of the Great Gadsby era and the Roaring Twenties. Although the current mansion was erected during the mid-1920's, Scotchhigh Farm has a much longer history, and it tells a vibrant tale about Rumson that begins with the earliest English Colonists.

The first European settlers came to this area in 1665 when our peninsula was part of the lands purchased from the Navesink Indians of the Lenni Lenape tribe through the Monmouth Patent. Property was divided among the purchasers into river to river parcels. Because of his contribution of four pounds to the purchase price, John Hance (?-1710) received a parcel of five hundred acres from west of what is now Bingham Avenue to near what is now Bellevue Avenue. He and his wife, Elizabeth Hanson Hance (1645-1732) built their farmhouse near the corner of Bellevue Avenue and Rumson Road and raised seven children here. (\*That farmhouse was still standing in 1944 when the History of Rumson was written. Does anyone know what happened to it?\*) John Hance was a farmer who became a local magistrate, deputy and justice, and, upon his death, his son Isaac (1685-1764) inherited the farm. Isaac was married three times and passed the property to his second son in his will. John (1720-1769) was 40 when he married Catherine Waples Hance in 1760 and had five children. He died only five years after his inheritance leaving behind his young family, including Isaac, who was born in the year of his father's passing. His oldest son, seven year old John (1762-1827), inherited the farm upon his father's death and lived there with his mother and siblings and as a bachelor for quite some time before marrying Ann Borden (1778-1856), who was sixteen years younger. John lived and farmed on the property for nearly sixty years until his death in 1827. He and Ann had six children, and at least two of them settled on the property. Borden(1801-1859) and his wife Rebecca Woolley (1816-1892) lived near the corner of Bellevue Avenue and Rumson Road, and Asher (1805-1899) and his wife Ann L. Borden (1808-1892) lived near Kemp Avenue and ran the Hance Nurseries. The Hance Nurseries sold trees and shrubs nation-wide, and Asher was one of the largest peach growers in the state. In 1854, the business

became known as Rumson Nurseries and flourished. At the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, their exhibit received the top awards. The Panic of 1873 caused financial reversals that ruined the business and eventually led to the subdivision and sale of the property. An obituary of Asher's son, Benjamin Hance (1844-1906), calls him one of the first men in the country to work as a landscape architect, and he traveled far from Rumson in the pursuit of this career. The most discernable remnants of the Hance family are trees along the trails of Meadow Ridge Park, once a part of the Hance Nursery. Woods End Road, Woodside Drive, Post Road and Brookside Drive also were (in the late 1960's) carved out of Hance Nursery acreage that was called Lovett's Tract at the time.

Robert W. Hance (1805-1899), son of Borden and Rebecca, married Elizabeth Lovett, lived in the Bellevue and Rumson Rd. house and, eventually, sold what the family still owned of the estate that six generations of Hances had farmed. He opened a store in Red Bank which was called R. Hance and Sons. A similar business was still operating as Hance and Davis in its old frame building near the railroad tracks and behind what is now the Galleria up until the 1970's. He and Elizabeth had four sons and two daughters.

Returning to John Hance and Ann Borden Hance, we find John's sister Rachel. Rachel (1764-1854) married Asher Corlies (1767-1793), and they had two children, Hannah(1790-?) and Asher (1792-1810). Rachel may have brought some of the Hance estate into the Corlies family because, after the untimely death of her husband, a heavily mortgaged section of the property that is now Scotchhigh Farm ended up in the hands of a group of investors and was sold in a sheriff's sale in 1824 after a foreclosure. Oddly enough, Thomas and Benjamin Borden, two of the defendants in the foreclosure, purchased the property. They, in turn, sold it to Aaron Jones in 1826, and he was also forced to sell fourteen years later. (The final resting place of the above named Hance family members is here in town in the old cemetery on Rumson Road.)

This is where Thomas Hunt enters Rumson history. In 1840, he purchased 177 acres of former Hance family lands, and he developed the Port Washington Pavilion Hotel, Bingham Hall and the village of Port Washington, which evolved into Oceanic and then Rumson. In 1853, he advertised lots for sale which created the business section and the surrounding streets. (Washington, Lafayette, Allen, First, Second, Third and Hunt Streets were all part of the Thomas Hunt purchase.) Later, he sold off some of the areas that were beyond the Village. Martinus Bergen farmed 100 acres and canned the produce, mostly tomatoes, at his canning factory on the site of Rogers Park. His home was on the property that is now Victory Park. Later, some of the Thomas Hunt property was sold to Matthew White, and that property was developed in the 1930's by General Howard S. Borden into Old Farm Village (Cherry, Crabapple and Dogwood Lanes.)

Captain William Boardman purchased 25.5 acres from the Thomas Hunt property in 1879; this is the parcel that is now Scotchhigh Farm. This is also the point in the story

where a residence was built where the mansion sits today. Captain Boardman (1817-1891) was a native of Amesbury, Massachusetts who resided in New York City with his wife, Hannah, and their two daughters. He owned the Neptune Iron Works, a successful business which enabled him to finance his alternate lifestyle as “a gentleman farmer.” The Neptune Iron Works was located on the East River at the foot of 8th Street in New York. It was a ship building business that built engines as well as ships such as the Yangste-ke-yang which was 300 feet long, had an oscillating engine and plied the waters between Shanghai and Hong Kong. Other ships to come from the Boardman Holbrook Company were: Ocean Bird, completed in 1854 with engines by Neptune Iron Works, Santa Maria, and Serchil. During the 1840’s and 50’s, Captain Boardman’s company was one of America’s most active producers of steamboat engines, and they employed more than 500 people.

At this point in our history, we were still a part of Shrewsbury Township. Having been an Alderman in New York City, Captain Boardman became interested in local politics and was a member of the Executive Committee of the Republican Club of Shrewsbury Township when the organization was founded in January of 1889. Also serving on the Executive Committee was Tunis C. Buckaloo who appeared in the history of Red Men’s Hall, served the Board of Education as Treasurer of School Monies and was an original member of the Improved Order of Red Men. Captain Boardman was elected a Town Committeeman in a hard-fought political contest during the same year. The newspaper referred to him as being from Oceanic. Nearby, his nephew, Elbridge Henry Boardman, raised his family at 973 River Road in Fair Haven. Many generations of his descendants remained in Rumson

and Fair Haven, and many are still here. The census of 1880 placed Captain Boardman and Hannah on their Oceanic farm being helped by two servants, John Whalene from Ireland and Rebecca Doughty. The Captain built an ornate Victorian style home and a large barn on his working farm, which he enjoyed for only ten years before selling the estate in 1889. Two years later, he passed away at the age of 72.

“Captain William Boardman has sold his property at Oceanic to Robert Bonner’s sons. The property consists of a handsome cottage and 20 acres of land. The price paid was \$50,000.” (New York Times, October 11, 1889) The three Bonner brothers, all partners in business, may have purchased this estate together, but there is no evidence that Robert Edwin Bonner or Frederick Bonner resided here. (Frederick Bonner owned Round Hill, a 22 acre gated estate in Greenwich, CT.) Andrew Allen Bonner (1851-1898) and his wife, Jeanette Fitch Bonner, and their two sons, Lawrence Kip Bonner and Robert A. Bonner, turned the Boardman farm into a whirl of activity. Each week they arrived here on Friday and remained until Monday on what they turned into a stock farm for horses. Either the Boardman family or the Bonners gave the Second Empire house the name “The Hawk’s Nest” perhaps referring to the third floor turret and balcony over the front entry. The Bonners came from a well known family in New York.

Robert Bonner (1829-1899) was the father of A.A., Frederick and Robert E. Bonner, and he was a very famous horseman and founder/editor of the New York Ledger, a popular literary periodical. The New York Ledger was a family oriented paper that prided itself on being neither sectarian nor political. Popular series included regular columns by college presidents and U.S. Senators giving advice to young Americans. Many famous writers of the day wrote for



Mr. Bonner, and their generous compensations were most unusual in this era. Henry Ward Beecher wrote "Norwood" in weekly installments and was paid \$30,000 for it. Alfred Lord Tennyson wrote a short poem for the sum of \$5,000, and Longfellow was paid \$3,000 for one of his poems. William Cullen Bryant was a contributor of translations and poems. For \$5,000, Charles Dickens wrote "Hunted Down," a story that serialized through three issues of *The Ledger*; this was the only time that he ever wrote for an American publication. Mr. Bonner, Sr. was a self made man whose rise to success was often compared to the career of Benjamin Franklin. In 1887, Mr. Bonner retired and left the management of the newspaper to his three sons. What was referred to as their "Seabright estate" was purchased two years later.

Robert Bonner took to horses as a hobby to relieve the stress of his profession after a doctor suggested driving as a relief from overwork. One of his most famous horses was Dexter who trotted in 40 races and only lost 9 during his three year career. He was purchased for \$35,000 in 1867 and had winnings of over \$67,000 during that same year. Rarus, a horse who was inducted into the Harness Racing Hall of Fame, was sold to Robert Bonner in 1878 for \$36,000, and died in 1892 "on Bonner's Farm." When the end of his life came, his stable on Long Island housed 61 horses, most of them famous trotting horses which had been acquired at enormous purchase prices.

The Bonners were trotting horse enthusiasts, and some of the most famous trotters of their day spent time on the Bonner Seabright estate. New York Times articles during the 1880's and 90's have titles such as "Volmer in the Stable of Mr. Bonner", "Brood Mares Sold at Hobart Sale" ("A.A. Bonner will breed Lady Boone out of the dam Nancy Hanks to Kremlin.")

A. A. Bonner was a member of the Suburban Riding and Driving Club with his interest focused on driving, riding, showing and breeding horses. A number of famous horses were raised and kept on the Seabright farm. Among the most well known were Alcantra, King Rene, jr., Triton, Dictator, Alcantur, Alma Mater and Crepe Lisse.

It seems as if A. A. Bonner's life of enormous wealth placed him with a crowd accustomed to high living and a privileged, libertine existence. The following excerpt from the December 30, 1883 NY TIMES places Mr. Bonner at a horse race on a snow covered road outside of the City.

"A Race Over The Snow"

"An atmosphere of gin and geniality pervaded Gabe Case's famous hostelry on Macoumb's Dam Bridge Road yesterday afternoon, where horsemen had gathered from near and far to observe and participate in the free-for-all race.... The men stood three and four and five deep at the bar and kept the whisky bottles so busy that the white-aproned menials never had an opportunity to put them under the counter..."

In January of 1898, A.A. Bonner was sued for \$10,000 in damages by Lemuel Ketcham of Red Bank, a former employee who had recently been in charge of Bonner's horses. He brought suit because he believed that Mr. Bonner had hired

someone to attack him after an altercation between them at Elkwood Park. According to Mr. Ketcham, "a big Irishman in the employ of Philip Daly," a friend of Bonner's, "stole up behind Ketcham and dealt him a terrible blow upon the head, which felled Ketcham to the ground." Bystanders kept the attacker from continuing the assault, and Ketcham claimed that Bonner had hired "the Irishman" and paid him \$100 to attack him. Elkwood Park was the predecessor of Monmouth Race Track, and Mr. Bonner had some of his horses stabled there.

On December 27, 1898, A. A. Bonner died suddenly at the age of 46 from pneumonia. His father passed away less than a year after his son, and his obituary makes the observation that his grief over the unexpected loss of his son may have contributed to his demise. Jeanette Bonner brought a lawsuit challenging Robert Bonner's will, which had bypassed her in favor of her two young sons. During the trial, allegations of A.A.'s infidelity during their marriage were entered into the testimony. The will was upheld by the judge after a case that made headlines in the NY TIMES for several months. Jeanette remained here with her sons at their Seabright farm until after the boys grew up, and she continued to come here until she sold the estate in 1926 to Manton Bradley Metcalf, jr. and his wife Isabella. The following year, her son Lawrence Kip, still recovering from injuries suffered during WWI and severely depressed from the chronic pain, shot himself to death in Jeanette's apartment.

The Metcalfs demolished the Victorian house and outer buildings, and built the beautiful mansion and barns that are on the property today. New York architects J.R. and F.B Hinchman designed the Georgian Revival house which was completed in 1928. The following year, Mr. Metcalf expanded his farm by purchasing a 200 foot wide strip from Dalton Parmley at the north end of the property. At the same time that the Rumson house was being designed, the Metcalfs were building an office building in New York. The same builders as those erecting the commercial building in the City were entrusted with the Rumson home. Fire safety was a primary concern, and the house was built to be fireproof by the use of steel beams, concrete walls and fire doors, unusual precautions for private homes at that time. The attic loft referred to as The Trunk Room is a perfect place to witness how amazing the structure is. Huge steel beams hold concrete fashioned into large sheets. The building is approximately eighty years old and seems as strong as it ever was.





The grounds were designed by Ellen Biddle Shipman, a very famous landscape architect whose work with formal gardens and residential plantings was distinctive. Mr. Metcalf had grown up in New York City and on a ten acre estate in Orange, NJ called Elm Wynd, and he and Isabella named their country week-end, summer and holiday home Apple Wynd. The 11,000 square foot house includes many amenities typical of the 1920's era. Since coal was a standard heating fuel, a 1 ½ story coal storage room was built to keep an ample supply on hand. A telephone room and refrigeration room were included as was a screened sleeping porch with carved summer doors to make nights more comfortable in the years before air conditioning. With Prohibition a fact of life at the time, a hidden liquor vault was created beneath a trap door that was covered by an Oriental rug. Rediscovered in recent years, Cuban cigars and cases of wine and scotch were found including a bottle of port that dated to the coronation of King George V.

Outside, a croquet lawn, vegetable and flower gardens bordered by boxwood hedges, a polo field and stables filled the grounds. Longtime residents will remember seeing formally clad equestrians taking their horses over jumps as we passed by on Rumson Road. Isabel Metcalf rode almost every day well into her 90's. The family loved their horses, sheep and family pets, and there is a cemetery near the stables where generations of loved animals are buried.

Manton B. Metcalf, Sr. passed away while Apple Wynd was under construction. He and his wife, Susan Maude Browning Metcalf, had three sons: Jesse, Rowe and Manton, jr. Mr. Metcalf's brother was US Senator Jesse Metcalf of Rhode Island. In 1862, the Metcalf family founded Wanskuck Mill, a woolen goods manufacturing company in Providence, RI. A dedication to the arts in Rhode Island colleges has endured during all of the ensuing years. At Brown University, a dormitory and a research laboratory are named for the Metcalf family. At the Rhode Island School of Design, the Metcalfs helped to establish the campus museum and donated many items including Chinese porcelains, Greco-Roman artifacts and paintings.

An interesting story about Manton, jr.'s mother, Mrs. Susan Maud Metcalf, appeared in the November 22, 1929 NY TIMES. In the midst of the Great Depression, Mrs. Metcalf of

1060 Fifth Avenue lost a necklace that consisted of 77 graduated pearls and a diamond clasp as she was getting into a taxi. Another taxi pulled up, and the driver found the pearls, put them into his pocket and went on his way. Later in the day, he showed the necklace to other drivers and "learned that it was valuable." An official of the taxi company informed the police and learned of the \$5,000 reward that Mrs. Metcalf had offered. Mrs. Metcalf's jewelry was returned, and the taxi driver, who was supporting his mother, received what was practically a year's earnings as a reward.

Apple Wynd was a place where the Metcalfs were able to indulge their love of horses, and they took part in polo, racing, hunts and horse shows. They helped to establish the Rumson Polo Club and the Monmouth County Hunt. Manton B. Metcalf, jr. won many prizes in shows such as the Monmouth County Horse Show held at Rumson Country Club in August of 1927. On that day, Big Jim took third place in the Middle and Heavy Weight Qualified Hunters category; Romance took a third in the Polo Mounts Regularly Played division and Kiki, Soap Suns and Great Ships won a second in the Polo Mounts Teams of 3 competition. Big Jim won a first place in the Ladies Hunters category. The family also raced their horses, and many of the most famous race horses of their time lived here in Rumson on the Metcalf Farm. The Graf won the Keystone Steeplechase at Pimlico in Maryland. Kennecott won The Mission at Belmont Park in 1943, and Beaupre won at Aqueduct in 1951. "Tres Bon, a veteran steeplechase campaigner, carried the green and orange silks of Manton Metcalf, jr. to victory" in the Deep Run Hunt Club Race at the Curles Neck course in Virginia. ( NY TIMES April 10, 1938) In June of 1955, Beau Sir lost by three lengths at Aqueduct.



Manton, jr. and Isabella had two sons and a daughter, Manton B. Metcalf, III, Richard Goff Metcalf and Patricia, Mrs. George B. Lampton, Jr. Elaborate house party week-ends were the custom, and Apple Wynd was a happy and socially active family retreat where children grew up in idyllic surroundings. On January 5, 1937, the Metcalfs gave themselves a 15th Anniversary party at their East 79th Street home in New York. It was followed by a supper dance at L'Apperitif restaurant, and many of the guests were Rumson neighbors

and friends. They had gala parties here in Rumson as well, and costume parties were very popular at that time. Photographs remain as reminders of the fabulous parties. It was a lifestyle that may never be equaled.



*The Metcalf home seen from the living room and into the entrance hall with its magnificent murals.*



*The formal dining room of the Metcalf mansion*

Manton Metcalf, III was kind enough to give an interview for this story. His memories of growing up here are vivid and happy. Mr. Metcalf married Mary Teresa Peabody in 1944 and resides in New Hampshire and New York.

Manton, Jr. passed away in 1974 at the age of 81. Isabel continued to spend six months a year here and remained active socially in Rumson until she passed away in 1993. The Metcalf children and grandchildren decided against keeping the farm that had been in their family since 1926. Discussions began about subdivisions of this property, the largest single residential parcel remaining in our community. The Mayor and Council and many residents were concerned about seeing this beautiful open area turned into a subdivision of nearly 20 houses. In 1996, John and Nancy Mulheren purchased the property for the purpose of preserving it as a farm.

They have brought horses and cattle here from their farm in Virginia, and Scotchigh is a true working farm. Thanks to the Mulheren Family, Rumson residents are still able to enjoy seeing animals grazing on the former polo field. Mr. Mulheren enjoyed using the house for parties, but, since his sudden passing in 2003, the building has not been regularly used. Mrs. Mulheren has kindly given permission to the Visiting Nurse Association of Central Jersey to transform the mansion for this great Showhouse, an important fundraiser for this organization that contributes a great benefit to the families of our community. This event gives an opportunity for all Rumson residents to tour this elegant mansion, which is a rare remnant of our community's history. What you see at Scotchigh Farm is a look back in time to the Rumson of the past. Mrs. Mulheren has also invited the Borough of Rumson to have our Centennial Gala at Scotchigh Farm on May 19, 2007. The administration and residents of the Borough of Rumson owe a sincere thank you to the Mulheren Family for their generosity to this community and for keeping this part of the original Monmouth Patent much as it was in 1665.

Footnote: Many thanks to Randall Gabrielan, Nancy Mulheren, Susan Bennett, William Boardman, Manton Metcalf III and Dierdra Whitelaw for photos, reminiscences and other information. \*Anyone with input on history articles, please contact editor at [avananda@comcast.net](mailto:avananda@comcast.net).

### **CENTENNIAL Evening at the Farm EVENT**

The Rumson Centennial Evening at the Farm will take place at Scotchigh Farm on May 19, 2007 from 7:30-11:30 pm. Scotchigh Farm is the former Metcalf Estate at 142 Bingham Avenue on the corner of Bingham Avenue and Rumson Road. Thanks to the Visiting Nurse Association of Central Jersey Designer Showhouse, a large tent is in position on the estate, and we have been given permission to hold our party in and around the tent. There will be food, drinks and old fashioned fun for all Rumson residents to enjoy. A live band, The Trend, has been booked, and it is hoped that this will be a party to remember for Rumson residents. Invitations were mailed to all residents and businesses. Anyone interested may call Borough Hall. (732-842-3300)

### **MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONIES**

On May 28, 2007, the traditional Memorial Day ceremonies will be held in Victory Park at 11:00 am. (Rain or Shine) Rumson organizations will place floral tributes at our monuments as they do each year. There will not be a parade on Memorial Day this year. All that goes into our Memorial Day parade and more will be featured in the Founders Day Parade on June 9th.

### **Centennial Parade**

Anyone who has a convertible or antique vehicle is asked to consider taking part in the Centennial Parade on June 9, 2007. Please call Jane Hartman at Borough Hall (732-842-3300) or email Scott Bradley at: [fsbrumson@aol.com](mailto:fsbrumson@aol.com) for more information.

## FOUNDERS DAY PARADE AND PICNIC

June 9, 2007 will be Founders Day in Rumson, and the Mayor and Council along with the Rumson Endowment Fund Committee will be pulling out all of the stops for this celebration. The Founders Day Parade will begin at 1:00 pm, and it will be a huge spectacle. This is such a big event that Rumson Recreation has scheduled all athletic events to be completed by noon to ensure that all of our players and coaches will be able to participate in the parade. It is hoped that all Rumson Recreation teams will be marching along with all of our Scouts and the Rumson School District band. The RFHRHS Marching Band will perform along with the cheerleaders and the Dance Club. Outside musical groups including pipers and Mummers are invited, and Rumson organizations are encouraged to create floats for the parade. The Parade will assemble in front of the high school and march down River Road to Victory Park. Residents who would like to volunteer to participate in the Founders Day Parade should call Borough Hall and speak to Deputy Borough Clerk Jane Hartman. (732-842-3300)

Follow the parade down to the park for the community picnic. Dave Ciambro is co-ordinating restaurant participation and hopes to create a fabulous barbeque with the assistance of all of our Rumson restaurants. Musical groups will be playing, activities will be going on and our superb playground will entertain our youngest residents. The RFHRHS Storytelling Club is planning to read stories that were commonly read to children in Rumson in 1907. We hope to have readings and presentations of historical interest as well as local historians selling their publications. Centennial merchandise will be available for sale including the new borough flag and vintage reproduction post cards at the event. This will be a day filled with fun for our entire community. There is still time to become involved in the planning and creation of these events. Please call Borough Hall for more information.

## VETERANS' DAY

The Veterans' Day ceremonies will take place on Sunday, November 11, 2007 at the Veterans' Monument in Victory Park at 11:00 am. This event is a sincere tribute to Rumson Veterans who have served our nation with pride and distinction. All residents are invited to attend the ceremony.

## HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING

The date and time of the annual Holiday Tree Lighting celebration have not yet been determined, but it will take place early in December at Victory Park. Holiday music and spirited singing by our school choirs will entertain the crowd, and hot chocolate and other refreshments will be served. This event will wrap up our Centennial Celebration in an atmosphere of community camaraderie and festive spirit.



The Metcalf's vintage telephone is in the upstairs hallway.



The Monmouth County Hunt near St. Anthony's Church on Bridge Avenue in Red Bank

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## CENTENNIAL CALENDAR

May 6	Rumson Run
May 19	Centennial Evening at the Farm - Scothigh Farm
May 28	Memorial Day Ceremonies
June 9	Centennial Founders Day Parade and Picnic in the Park • 1:00 pm
November 11	Veterans' Day Ceremonies
December	Christmas Tree Lighting at Victory Park

For information about volunteering to help with the Centennial festivities, please contact Borough Hall at 732-842-3300

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