

# GREENWAYS

Newsletter of  
Delaware & Raritan Greenway, Inc.  
Volume 3, Number 2  
Spring 1995

## In Perpetuity

### *The Hamilton/Trenton Marsh: A Collective Memory*

#### PART II

(Editor's note: Part I of this story appeared in the Winter, 1995 edition of *Greenways*. Since the initial story appeared, several people called or wrote to add their stories. We continue to share the memories and adventures of those who grew up in the area with special thanks to Clyde Quin, Mayor Jack Rafferty and Richard Switlik, Sr.)

In addition to the abundant wildlife, a whole host of characters lived at the marsh. Two, Bill and Russ Abrams, were legends in themselves. As a kid, everyone looks old, but the years have provided a better perspective, and now those who share the story date the Abrams as being in their late forties or early fifties. Self proclaimed owners of the marsh, they guarded their territory intently, scaring the "living daylights" out of anyone who chanced venturing close. A third brother, Chauncey was involved with theater and music and only occasionally made an appearance in the area.

Bill lived in the Watson House on the bluffs. Russ lived with his common law wife in a house in the woods on the uplands below. Traces of scrap metal and wood among overgrown yews, lily-of-the-valley and vinca are all that is left of the home today.

A big, barrel-chested guy, Russ instilled fear in the hearts of many young boys. His red pick-up truck was the only vehicle that traveled down the lake hill. When they heard the engine they knew it was Russ Abrams.

He used to be a painter; then he got into trapping. At that time muskrats were paying a pretty good price of eighty-five cents per skin. If you got a real thick one or a black one the price escalated to more than a dollar. Every now and then, Russ would pick up a mink and that would be a bonus too.

Russ and his wife lived on nature's bounty. He hunted, fished and trapped at the marsh. He put little wire pens around the nests of the ducks and then his wife would gather their eggs.

When the Lake Hill Road was flooded and Russ couldn't get his truck out, he would pole his canoe across the water to take his wife to get what food they needed to buy at the Acme on New Cedar Lane. He would hide the canoe along the water's edge or stay with it while she purchased groceries at the top of the hill.

In spite of the fear, the sirens of mystery and adventure called, and the boys used to sneak down to the marsh. One time, Bill Abrams caught Clyde crossing his brother's property, pulled out his pistol and took a shot at him. It didn't hit him, and perhaps wasn't intended to, but "it scared the heck out of me", Clyde remembers.

Afterward, Clyde went home and told his stepdad, who helped to settle the score by meeting Russ at Nate's Inn, the local tavern at the corner of Lalor and Reed, where Russ hung out. As the story goes, the normally ornery Russ saw the brighter side of things only after a few drinks.

When the time was right, the father spoke up. "Hey, what the heck's the idea of your brother taking a shot at my son?" he demanded. Russ professed ignorance to the matter and suggested Mr. Quin send the boy down to his house and Russ would give him permission to hunt.

The next day, young Clyde mustered all the courage he could to go to the

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## Inside

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## National Park Service Awards Challenge Grant

Delaware & Raritan Greenway received a \$10,000 challenge grant from the National Park Service to develop and install interpretive and directional signage for the Hamilton/Trenton Marsh and the Abbott Farm National Historic Landmark. PSE&G and the Mercer County Park Commission are partners in the project. In addition to gifts-in-kind already committed, \$10,000 in cash must be raised to complete the project. ☛

## Mary Owen Borden Memorial Foundation supports Land Conservation

D&R Greenway received a \$6,000 grant from The Mary Owen Borden Foundation in support of our land preservation efforts throughout central New Jersey. D&R Greenway's goal is to create greenways along the D&R Canal and the streams throughout the canal's 400 square mile watershed. ☛

## Renew Today!

Membership contributions enable us to continue the important work of land preservation. Land acquisition and management, and public outreach and education programs require time and resources. Now, more than ever, your membership dollars are needed. Please use the coupon on page 7 and renew your commitment to saving central New Jersey's valuable open space by renewing your membership today. ☛

## Common Ground

### Trails Day Planned at McBurney Woods Preserve

On Saturday, June 3, trail and outdoor organizations across the country will be observing National Trails Day. As part of this celebration, Delaware & Raritan Greenway and Eastern Mountain Sports are hosting a trails day event at McBurney Woods Preserve. Volunteers will help clear a new trail and perform maintenance on the existing trail.

The 178-acre McBurney Woods Preserve contains the headwaters to the Stony Brook and is part of D&R Greenway's Stony Brook Greenway project. The woodland trail offers a serene walk with dappled sunlight dancing through the thick canopy of the mature forest. Another part of the preserve offers fields that burst with bloom-

ing wildflowers and fluttering butterflies in late spring and summer. A rare plant, the slender toothwort, can be found on the preserve. Members of Washington Crossing Audubon also confirm a pair of Great Horned owls nesting at the preserve.

National Trails Day is being coordinated nationally by the American Hiking Society to foster the preservation of trail corridors for public use and environmental protection. The goal this year is to have 1,000,000 volunteers working across the nation to create and preserve trails. D&R Greenway and EMS are proud to be participating for the second year in this effort and hope to generate at least

100 volunteers towards the national goal this year.

The activity will begin at 8:30 a.m. and continue through mid-afternoon. Lunch will be provided for each volunteer. Volunteers should wear hiking boots, long pants, and bring along sturdy gloves and tools, including clippers and loppers. A few wheelbarrows, shovels, pitch forks, light ladders and hammers will be needed as well.

The preserve is located in East Amwell and Hopewell Townships. We invite your participation on National Trails Day and encourage you to enjoy the preserve throughout the year. To register, or for more information and a map, please call our office at (609) 924-4646 or John Mullen, EMS at (609) 520-8310. ☛

Dyersburg Fabric Inc. has generously donated \$1,000 in support of the work at McBurney Preserve for National Trails Day.

you may continue to reside on it.

If the donated land qualifies for treatment as a charitable deduction, you may take an income tax deduction for the value of what was actually given up. This value, and your deduction is determined by the Internal Revenue Service actuarial tables based on life expectancies of those who have a reserve life interest in the property. The deduction would not include the reserve life value of the retained life estate. The tax advantages with a retained life estate are less than those advantages with an outright donation but greater than those with a donation by will.

Since all donations need approval prior to acceptance, interested landowners should call or write to Delaware & Raritan Greenway prior to deeding the land. Our offices are located at 570 Mercer Road, Princeton NJ 08540. (609) 924-4646. ☛

This information was excerpted from *The Landowner's Options Handbook* published by The New Jersey Field Office of the Nature Conservancy and The New Jersey Natural Lands Trust.

## Hamilton/Trenton Marsh

New life emerges from the earth in every nook and cranny throughout the marsh. Tiny shoots of plant life unfold into leaves and dot the high marsh along with the bright yellow blossoms of marsh marigolds. These are among the first flowers to bloom each year brightening the brown stubble strewn marshland.

The waterways are filled with life. Muskrat and beaver feed on the emerging soft-stemmed plants. Osprey, heron, geese, and ducks feed along the waterways while red-bellied turtles bask in the warm sun.

On the woodland floor, thick patches of speckled trout lily leaves and mottled may apple umbrellas hide the dead crumpled leaves of last year's glory. Scattered clusters of Spring Beauty, violets, and bluets add color. Throughout the woods, among the treetops and understory, red-winged blackbirds, cardinals, woodpeckers, thrushes, warblers and other songbirds find food and shelter. In cheerful and purposeful melodies they sing to attract mates and claim their nesting territories. In the evening the spring peepers, frogs, and toads take up the musical chorus. The new season unfolds with new life. ☛

### Good Neighbors: PSE&G and Local Scouts Team-up

Among the most colorful of the 234 species of birds seen at the Hamilton/Trenton Marsh is the beautiful Wood Duck. This multi-colored duck nests throughout the marsh where trees line the meandering tidal channels and streams. In the spring, visitors can frequently catch a glimpse of these secretive ducks tucked in sheltered coves along the water's edge. They are easily identified by their bright colors and their 'whistling' call.

The wood duck's habit of nesting in cavities enables it to breed in areas lacking suitable ground cover. However, as dead trees are

cut down and lands along stream corridors and wetlands are developed, adequate nesting cavities are becoming more difficult to find.

Thanks to the employees of Public Service Electric and Gas Company and Jacob Scheimreif, an Eagle Scout candidate, nesting locations are more plentiful this year.

The project began two years ago, when Dick Cramer, a Shift Supervisor in Operations at PSE&G and long-time naturalist, hunter and conservationist, became aware of the shortage of nesting locations for wood ducks and decided to do something about it. Dick discussed his idea with Jim Panacek, the Site Manager at the Mercer Generating Station, who gave the go-ahead. Combining their resources and efforts, PSE&G employees and students at Hamilton High School, worked to make Dick's idea a reality and twenty nest boxes were built and installed in the marsh.

That was only the beginning. The project has now grown to involve other employees and groups, as well. This year PSE&G employees have built nearly one hundred nesting boxes complete with ladder ramps that enable the ducklings to more easily leave the nest. Forty of these boxes will be installed in the marsh.

Jacob Scheimreif, of Tabernacle, NJ and Boy Scout Troop 110 of Burlington County Council led another effort to build and install fifty wood duck nesting boxes as a community service project to earn his Eagle Scout. Jacob secured the lumber and other supplies needed to build the nest boxes and then, working with others, built the nest boxes in his home. Together with other members of his troop and several employees of PSE&G, he oversaw the installation of twenty nesting boxes at the marsh.

Early observations indicate the wood duck nest box project is tremendously successful. On a recent walk along the trail of boxes, a pair of wood ducks flushed from nearby each nesting site. ☛

### June Events at the Hamilton/Trenton Marsh

D&R Greenway is sponsoring several events to enable you to explore nature's abundance at the marsh and learn more about these valuable wetlands. All events are open to the public and pre-registration is required. A nominal fee is charged to cover costs associated with the events. Unless otherwise noted the cost for Greenway members is \$2/person, \$4/family; for non-members cost is \$4/person, \$8/family. For more information or to register, use the form on page 7 or call the Hamilton/Trenton Marsh Hotline at (609) 452-0525.

#### Field Sketching

Saturday, June 3, 1995  
9 a.m. - 12 noon

Local artist, Kathy Shumway-Tunney will help us to capture the marsh on paper. The area offers a diverse setting of creeks, lakes, marshlands, and woodland, as well as abundant wildlife. Bring a sketchbook and pencils and enjoy sketching. Beginners and experienced artists are welcome.

#### Nature Walk

Saturday, June 10, 1995  
10 a.m. - 12 noon

Join us as we explore the marsh in late spring. Our leader, Bob Mercer, is director of the Silver Lake Nature Center in Bristol, PA and is coordinating the breeding bird count at the marsh. Bob will guide us as we explore this diverse habitat of marshlands and woods.

#### Canoeing the Crosswicks

Sunday, June 25, 1995  
1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

This tour of Crosswicks Creek offers a magnificent view of the marsh. We'll launch in Bordentown and ride with the tide as it fills the marsh. After exploring the marsh we will return to Bordentown with the outgoing tide. Registration is limited for this popular event. Please reserve your spot early so you are not disappointed. Cost is \$20/ member; \$25/ non-member to rent a canoe or \$5 registration fee if you bring your own canoe. Maximum per canoe is two adults and two children under 16. Children under 16 are free provided they are accompanied by two adults. We will match singles with partners when possible.

Additional events will be scheduled throughout the summer.

These events are made possible through funding from The William Penn Foundation, Public Service Electric and Gas Company, and Mobil Research and Development.

## Conservation Options

### Preserving Your Land Through Donation

Private landowners often choose to donate valuable open space in order to be sure their land is managed and protected in the best way available and to acquire a tax deduction. There are a number of ways to donate land while protecting its natural resources.

Giving the land outright to a nonprofit conservation organization such as Delaware & Raritan Greenway is one of the simplest ways to protect your land. No financing or negotiations about price are necessary. Depending on the price paid for the land, landowners may receive a substantial tax break for a donation.

If you wish to continue to own your land, but want to see it protected in the future you can consider a second option. You can donate your land or a portion of your land through your will. This entitles you to retain full use of the

land during your lifetime. It's important to discuss your gift prior to including it in your will so you can participate in developing the plan for future care of your land. You retain full control over your land during your lifetime and are assured that it will be cared for when you are gone. Removing the land from your estate also reduces the estate or inheritance taxes associated with your land. You are still responsible for paying real estate taxes and income taxes for the entire property during your lifetime.

To avoid paying real estate or income taxes for the full property during your lifetime, you may donate your property to D&R Greenway, while you and other members of your family retain the use of all or part of the land during your lifetime or their lifetimes. A reserved life estate insures that your land is protected in perpetuity, yet

## Volunteer Spotlight

With this issue we recognize another dynamic duo of Greenway volunteers—Dr.'s Mary and Charlie Leck. Mary and Charlie are well known among nature clubs, environmental organizations, and academic circles in New Jersey. Both guide walks, give talks, lead trips, and otherwise contribute their time, energy and expertise to help others better understand and appreciate the natural world. They are experts on the flora and fauna of the Hamilton/Trenton Marsh. They continue to delight and inspire us with their energy, sharing of knowledge about the natural world and their gentle, joy-filled teaching manner.

### Mary Leck

Mary's love of plants and flowers is life-long. She can remember riding, as a young girl, with her dad on the tractor and asking him

the names of the wildflowers. She pursued an undergraduate degree in botany at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and continued her studies earning a Ph.D. in the same field at the University of Colorado. Today Mary's love affair with plants continues as she conducts research and shares her knowledge as professor of biology at Rider University.

In 1975, Mary began a research project on jewelweed germination at the Hamilton/Trenton Marsh. It was then that she discovered the magic of the marsh. She's been hooked ever since. "I guess the mud got in my veins," she laughs. And perhaps it did. Her findings led to additional questions, and driven by the desire to know the marsh better, Mary continues her research there.

In 1984, with the interstate road construction just underway, she and Charlie began an inventory of plant species diversity. Since then

they have collected plants throughout the marsh recording 625 species. Today, with camera and hat ready, Mary continues to explore new territory in the mitigation site on Duck Island. Together she and Charlie have mapped out the site, naming each of the eight islands and the surrounding marshes.

"It's the fun of the place; the possibility of finding a new plant, a new bird. Everywhere I look—the water reflections, the animals, the plants—there is something so aesthetically wonderful," Mary struggles to find the words to express the feeling. "The little things are so abundant and the diversity so exciting."

Together, Mary and Charlie have participated in the Christmas bird counts. "There is just something about coming out here first thing on New Year's Day, the freshness of the crisp, cold air, the early sunlight," she trails off with her thoughts and comes back with, "And this year we got the only snipes on the Christmas count," which adds to her satisfaction.

"This year we heard the spring peepers on January 13th!"

She continues, "The marsh has been good to me. It's an excellent research site, and fun to do research here. There is a wonderful sense of adventure in getting out in such a unique habitat. Every time you go out it's different—in spring there's a sea of green seedlings underfoot, by midsummer you are buried in greenness." Mary has also made significant contributions to wetland vegetation studies as a result of the research she has undertaken at the marsh.

She loves to share the wildness with her students and others, many of whom are amazed to find it there. "We need to get more kids out to the marsh,

help them to get a feeling for some natural place outdoors. At the marsh you can find great blue heron, beaver, snipe, and an abundance of plants like wampato, yellow pond lily, cattails, and wild rice, that can tie you to the Indian past." In a breath she continues, "Beaver are important in soil development, increasing the diversity of habitat. As new areas flood you have a cycling of habitat which supports new species. It's all tied together so wonderfully."

Her enthusiasm is contagious and she delights those with whom she shares it. She and Charlie have led trips at the marsh for the Torrey Botanical Club and the Philadelphia Botanical Club as well as Rider University students and D&R Greenway.

She sees her work with Greenway as a payback for the wonderful opportunity she has had. Concerned about the natural areas that are being destroyed by development, she feels strongly about the opportunities that shouldn't be lost. "D&R Greenway is moving toward exploring reasonable options for preservation and keeping the marsh as it should be. I hope to help the plan move forward so the potential of the marsh as a tremendous environmental and education resource can be realized."

### Charlie Leck

Charlie Leck grew up in central New Jersey, just east of Princeton. "I've always been interested in the birds of New Jersey, I really like natural history in general." As a young boy and through his high school years, he frequently visited the marsh with the Trenton Naturalist Club, often with Ray Blicharz as leader. They walked much the same paths then, as we do now.

Fond memories of nature discovered, delight Charlie now, as the discoveries did then. "I can still remember where I saw my first Blackburnian Warbler—on the path in the woods. And we used to watch families of otters play at the marsh, sliding down the banks. I have lots of impressions that stick in my mind."

Scouts got him going with

birding and other outdoor activities, including archery. Things didn't go too well with archery though," he explains with a laugh. "I almost hit the instructor—so I decided to stick with birding." Lucky for us!

Charlie went on to study biology at Muhlenberg College and then earned a Ph.D. in ecology at Cornell University. Today as associate professor of Biology at Rutgers University, Charlie teaches undergraduate courses in ornithology and ecology, graduate courses in advanced ornithology and animal behavior, and on weekends in the fall, a course on the natural history of New Jersey.

He stores an encyclopedia of interesting facts and stories which he shares when a sighting of a bird or an animal or a plant calls one to mind. The ruby-throated hummingbird lines its nest with the soft hair at the base of the cinnamon fern. The short-tailed shrew is the only poisonous mammal and can attack animals much larger than itself. Nuthatches pair for life, which is unusual for songbirds. Also, unlike other songbirds, they store food for winter and therefore, don't lose any weight. The hairy woodpeckers we see performing their courtship dance in the tree tops are a month early—maybe its the warm weather.

And so it goes. His quick sense of humor and extensive knowledge of the natural world keep the ears tuned to him. The tidbits of information are interspersed with warblings, trillings and other bird calls. Until one watches, one is never quite sure if it is a call from the wild that the ears have picked up, or a call to the wild from Charlie.

In addition to leading walks at the Hamilton/Trenton Marsh, Charlie and Mary have guided groups to other natural areas in New Jersey and to more distant locales including Alaska,



Jewelweed  
(*Impatiens capensis*)

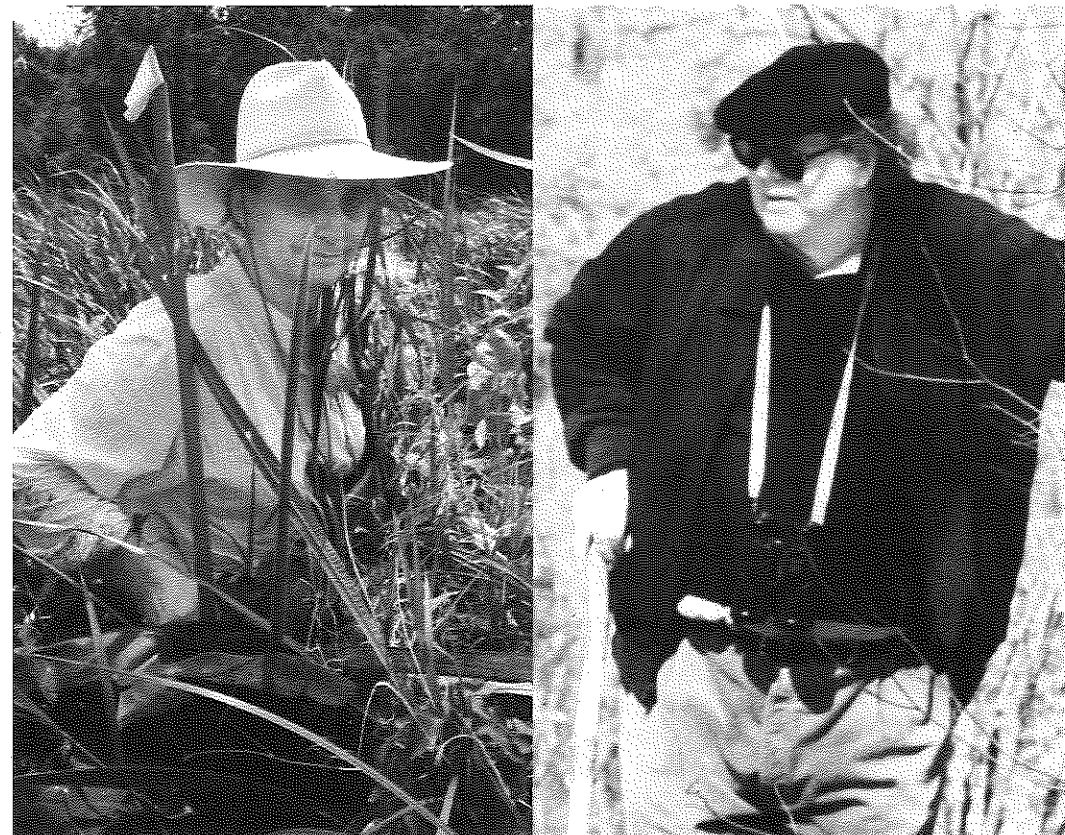
Galapagos, South America, and Africa.

Others love their quiet, gentle, teaching style—and perhaps too their love of nature that they share so well. An entry written in my journal following my first walk at the marsh with Mary and Charlie, still resonates a calm, yet inspiring feeling in my soul. "They are great—both of them are fun and interesting to be with. Charlie's sighs echoed the sentiments in my soul too. Ahhhh. It's just wonderful to be here now."

Thanks, Mary and Charlie for all you do! 🌿

## Calling all Marsh Enthusiasts

Bald eagles, ospreys, red-bellied turtles, beaver, wild rice and mountain laurel are only a small selection of the 234 species of birds, 625 species of plants and many mammals, reptiles and amphibians found at the marsh. D&R Greenway maintains the Marsh Hotline to share sightings of migratory birds, blossoming wildflowers and information about upcoming events. Call (609) 452-0525 today to learn more about these valuable wetlands! 🌿



Mary and Charlie Leck

## Collective Memory

Continued from page 1

house in the marsh and knock on the door. His knock was answered by a gruff voice growling, "Who are you and what do you want?"

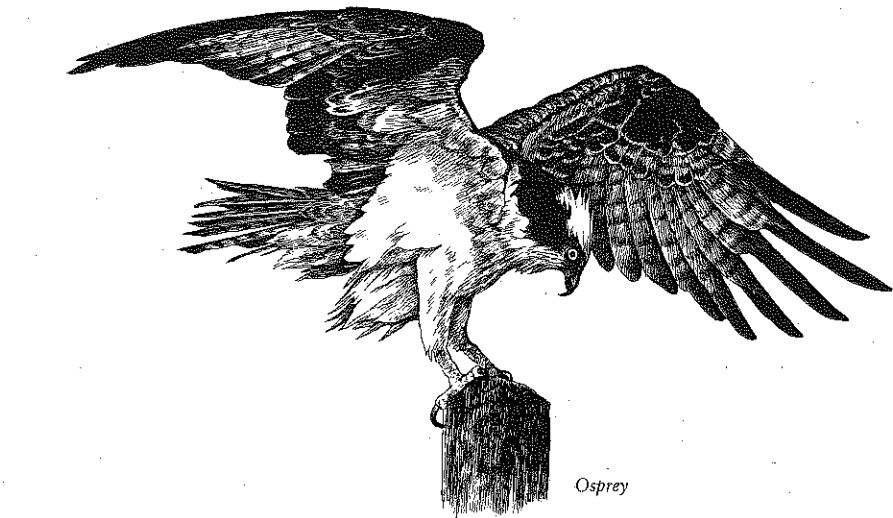
Clyde explained who he was, and sure enough, Russ granted him permission to hunt. "Just knock on the door and let us know when you're down here." Mrs. Abrams protested, but Russ overruled. From that day on, Clyde could hunt in the marsh. He felt like a king.

Russ also allowed his friends to hunt duck. In the fall, the sky would be black with ducks—mallards, wood ducks, black ducks, teals, and geese. The ducks would come in everywhere. Clyde would sit on the bank and watch swirls of ducks in the air, swirls on the water, swirls taking off.

Although not much for duck hunting, Clyde, once shot a duck in the winter. Bill Abrams saw him and came running down, cussin' and hollerin', waving the "real big club he always carried to poke into muskrat huts and such." With his heart racing, Clyde ran and hid, laying as close to a log as his young body could get to hide from Bill. Despite the advantage of a higher elevation from his position on the knoll, Bill couldn't see the boy. Finally, after what seemed like an eternity, the crunching snow indicated the man was leaving. Clyde waited another five minutes after the last crunch, jumped up, and with his duck, went home.

In those days, the marsh ran from Watson Creek all the way over to Sturgeon Pond. The entire area as far as the eye could see, was filled with meandering tidal channels, muskrat huts, wild rice, cattails and grasses. The regulars knew their way through the area, jumping clump to clump. "That's how we used to evade Bill and Russ when they chased us. Sometimes we'd come back a little slopped up," Clyde shares.

Sometimes they'd travel the catwalk and cut across the marsh. Other times they would follow along the bluffs through the woods behind Holy Angels Church and Innocenzi's cinder block yard, all the way around to Lalor School and then drop back down to the marsh.



Some trails were impassible at high tide and the explorers had to use a log to traverse the water. Other times they simply swam across. Anything to follow the call of adventure—perhaps to Duck Island or the brick yard along the canal—or perhaps to escape the wrath of the Abrams brothers.

Occasionally, they walked to Bordentown and the bluffs where Bonaparte used to live. "At that time you could sneak past the brothers of the Divine Word Missionary who guarded the place and get into the tunnels beneath the ground," Clyde explains. "In the tunnels, you could walk on stakes that jutted out along the walls. It was a very narrow walkway and you had to be careful. All along the tunnel you could look out through peep holes and see Crosswicks Creek."

Sometimes on Saturdays the boys would hike through the marsh for a couple of hours. They'd snitch some hot dogs from the freezer and always took a couple of potatoes to throw in the hot coals of their campfires.

Often they hunted Indian artifacts. Both Clyde and Jack have extensive collections which they share with the community at the Ranier/Hamilton Museum in Veterans Park. Still today, both have a trained eye for finding artifacts.

Always, the lure of the marsh would call. Jack relates the following as a common routine with his mother.

"I'd say, 'I'm going down to the lake.'"

"No, don't go down to the lake," she'd answer back.

"Alright, I'd say, and then I'd go down to the lake anyway."

"We built forts and tree houses, and oh! the monkey swings. We used to swing out over the lake hill forty to fifty feet in the air." Jack reminisces, his eyes sparkling. His glee turns more somber as he shakes his head and adds, "My heart would go out if I ever saw my son do what we used to do. How no one ever got hurt or killed, I don't know. We did some crazy things."

Another adventure the boys pursued was frogging. Guided by Gubby Sabo, an old man of 23 or 24 years, the boys would go in search of big bulligans. The water's edge was thick with frogs, and blinded by the boys' hand-held flashlights, the bulligans were an easy catch for even the small fists. When the burlap sack grew heavy, the group headed back to the Patoniak's house at the top of the lake hill on Sewell Avenue. After dressing the frogs, Gubby placed their legs in a frying pan, smothered them in mushrooms picked earlier that day, and sauteed them on the kitchen's coal burning stove.

Just before they were done, Gubby would slip a dime into the pan. If the dime didn't turn black, he pronounced the mushrooms nonpoisonous and the delicacy safe to eat. The feast could begin.

Continued next page

During the summer, another group known as the cowboys also hung down at the marsh. With their purchases from Russo's Saloon, a little bar at the corner of Harrison and Schiller, the "cowboys" camped at the marsh all summer under the thick tangle of vines cascading from the tree tops in front of the old steps that led from White City Lake to the trolley tracks at the top of the bluffs, their whereabouts well hidden from unknowing onlookers.

Today the "cowboys" are colorful and vivid memories. The boys knew them by name—Snapper, Happy Saxon, Sailor Tom, and Frank—and each made their own impression on the young boys.

Jack remembers, a cowboy would occasionally come to the door asking to do yard work in exchange for a sandwich and a glass of milk or coffee. When the work was done, Jack's mother would give them food or a dime. Then they'd get their "sneaky Pete" at the saloon and head back to the marsh.

It was common practice for the cowboys to commit minor offenses just before winter. They would be arrested and sent to the county work house for a few months. There, they would do light work and be fed and sheltered for the winter. In the spring when they regained their freedom, they returned to the marsh.

Sometimes the boys played lookout for the "cowboys", announcing an approaching police car. Sometimes they snuck food from their own refrigerators for them. "We liked them—I guess because of their free style of living," Clyde reminisces.

Along the railroad tracks by Sturgeon Pond, there was a hobo village of tar-papered shacks. A sign, in a language known only to the hobos, indicated the village's location and whether someone was there. No one could get into the village unless they brought food, so the hobos would hop off the train, go up to Stokely Van Camp on Lalor Street, steal tomatoes and other food and then return to the village. They'd stay a few days, share some food (cooking out of paint cans with homemade ladles) and company, and catch another train out.

Winter was a great time to be at the marsh. Then the neighborhood girls and people of all ages came to the marsh. Clyde shares the same

story that many relate.

"Once it snowed, people came from all over to sled down the Lake Hill. We'd start at the top of Sewell Avenue, rock the sled, then belly flop, make the hard turn and go down the hill. If the ice on the lake was hard and conditions were right you could get half way across the lake or more. What a ride you'd get! It was so much fun, we would stay down there all day."

The more courageous also sledged on Devil's Bend or Dare Devil Hill, a run with sharp winding turns that followed a steep ravine down the bluffs before leading out of the woods and onto the path along the water near the southeast corner of the lake.

White City Lake also attracted people from throughout the area to skate.

"Right next to Russo's Bar was a little shop about 10' wide, where you could have your skates sharpened. Everyone went skating. There were springs scattered around the lake that would never freeze and you had to keep away from those areas," Jack shares. "The kids used to link hands forming a line, then run on the ice and whip the line around. People built campfires all the way around the lake."

Winter brought even more adventure.

"Since we had no boats, much of the area was inaccessible until it froze. Then we could walk on it," Jack relates. In winter, they could travel more easily to the far corners of the marsh, access its deeper parts, the untouched, unexplored, unknown reaches. "It was a great thrill! We felt as though we conquered the marsh."

It's not clear who has conquered whom. Today, the marsh has a firm hold on those, who in their youth, explored its mysteries and were captivated by the magic they discovered among the meandering tidal channels. Through rich, vivid memories the spirit of the place has seeped into their being, rooting them in its magic and claiming a warm place in their hearts. ❦

This story was excerpted from an oral history of the marsh currently being compiled. If you would like to participate, contact Patti Quinby at (609) 924-4646.

## Yes! I'd like to help create greenways!

Enclosed is my contribution to help D&R Greenway preserve vital stream corridors and wetlands throughout central New Jersey.

- \$2,500 Greenway Donor
  - \$1,000 Headwater Donor
  - \$500 Tributary Donor
  - \$250 Woodland Donor
  - \$150 Trail Donor
  - \$100 Wildflower Donor
  - \$50 Maple Leaf Donor
  - \$40 Family Membership
  - \$35 Individual Membership
  - \$15 Newsletter subscription
  - Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  - My company will match my gift.
- Enclosed is the matching gift form.

Also enclosed is a gift towards D&R Greenway's:

- Land Acquisition Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Land Management Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Contributors of \$50 and more will receive a set of wildflower notecards designed by Hopewell artist, Heather Lovett. Donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. (According to IRS rules, the value of this gift, \$6, must be subtracted when calculating the tax deductibility of your contribution.) Note: If you do not wish to receive the notecards, please check: \_\_\_\_\_

I'd also like information about:

- volunteer opportunities
- preserving my stream corridor lands
- D&R Greenway footpaths
- Hamilton/Trenton Marsh
- Calendar of Events

## Hamilton/Trenton Marsh Event Registration

Please register me (us) for the events indicated below.

Field Sketching, June 3:

\_\_\_\_\_ people will attend

Nature Walk, June 10:

\_\_\_\_\_ people will attend

Canoeing the Crosswicks, June 25:

\_\_\_\_\_ people will attend

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (area code) \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to D&R Greenway and mail to:

Delaware & Raritan Greenway, Inc.  
570 Mercer Road  
Princeton, NJ 08540

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