
Kevin
Heffernan <kheffernan555@gmail.com> Aug 9 (2 days ago)
to Bob

Bob,

Your writing is terrific and comprehensive. May I have your permission to archive it and add it to my 'official' Oakland files? Keep in mind that my ultimate intent is to have all my files permanently available on the OHS web site.

The new book on Oakland, memories of those who grew up here, is inching forward. I'm in touch with Ed Seifert and Ron Romaine and we will be getting together to discuss the 'vision' thingy for going forward once we reach a consensus, obviously we'll share it and ask others with invaluable memories to contribute on something of a loose timetable basis.

Separately, today I sent to you 6 DVDs containing 99% of what I have managed to collect on Oakland history to date. And I know that it's very incomplete and there are many duplicates. Collectively, there are about 25 gigs. Just know that my file system is a wreck as it simply morphed over time. I'm working to solidify and simplify my file structure without losing anything. Again, my intent is to have the OHS permanently host my files for viewing and downloading by all. Previously you had sent me a series of pics that, frankly I didn't have. What a wonderful gift! I began to wonder if you had any more that you might be stashing in the back of your closet. To be blunt, I'd forever be in debt if I could have copies of everything that you have.

Please let me know when you receive the DVD set.

As always, my best and I always look forward to hearing from you and reading your memories.

Regards,
Kevin Heffernan

On Fri, Aug 9, 2013 at 1:30 PM, Bob Spear <flahistorian@gmail.com> wrote:
Recollections



Bob
Spear Aug 9 (2 days ago)

Thank you Kevin (again please excuse the bold print and large type- easier fo...



Kevin
Heffernan <kheffernan555@gmail.com> Aug 9 (2 days ago)
to Bob

Bob,

Thanks for your permission and I look forward to receiving whatever pics, etc that you can send me.

Separately regarding the first Dutch settlers in NYC, it's important to realize that the very first settlers were not Dutch at all! In fact neither were the second wave of settlers. They were Walloons who were French religious refugees living in Holland at the time recruited by a better deal than the Dutch were offering to settle in America versus that of the English. Go figure.

Talk to you soon!

Regards,
Kevin Heffernan



Bob Spear Aug 10 (1 day ago)

to me

The Walloons were from the 3 southern "counties" or provinces of the Netherlands low country. Many were of French extraction but some indeed were Dutch. The low countries at that time were controlled by the Spanish, who the Dutch had been fighting for nearly a hundred years (hundred Years War) After the Peace of Westphalia which ended the 30 Years War in Europe the 10 United Colonies of the Netherlands were formally recognized to be an Independent Nation. In time these three southern Counties continued to side with France and became Belgium. French, German and other languages were common but the Dutch continued to influence their own dialect from their Germanic ancestors. Sweden also played a significant role during this time period, most of the northern counties of the Netherlands were

under Swedish domination. Stadholder Willem, the regent' of the Netherlands, his National color was Orange, of "The House of Orange" which remains today. For a time, The Dutch Navy was the predominant force in Europe, predating the dominance of the English years later. The Brownist sect originated in England but were driven out and fled to the Netherlands and lived for 20 years before departing for the New Amsterdam Colony. Their ship (Mayflower) was blown off course and they landed at Massachusetts Bay instead, and became known as the Pilgrims. The Netherlands after the close of the 30 years War was a huge "melting pot" of many peoples escaping religious persecution in Europe it seems.

Holland; actually was only ONE of the provinces of the Netherlands or "The Low Countries" My grandmother's side X10 was from Overjessel province to the north which was under Swedish domination. Grandfather X10 came from Germany, the small village north of Bremen and east of the Weser River that was called Swanedwede, Thuringia in Lower Saxony. The earliest I have been able to trace there is 1593. The church in that village had been established in 1197 and parts of it are still standing today. It is believed his family finally fled the area around 1630 when Count Tercales of Tilly, the Commander of the imperial forces of the Church of Rome devastated the region.

Tercales died in 1631 from battle wounds but the war continued until 1648. I believe my American ancestor arrived in New Netherlands (New Amsterdam) in 1646 along with Hendrick Bosch,(the ancestor of the Bush family) and the noted jurist, Adrian Van Donck* *he was appointed Sheriff of New Amsterdam but was killed in the Indian attack in 1655, his farm or "bowerie" was burned to the ground by the Indians.

A colonist could "indenture" themselves for Six years to a merchant or tradesman to pay for their passage to America, and most worked for the Dutch West India Company. It is believed my ancestor was a Carpenter or a Metal Smith and had a shop on Stone Street (which is close to the World Trade Center area today) Boch (Bush) was a metal smith and sword maker. He also had come from Germany.

Hendrick Jansen Spier & Magdalena Hans (Helena) Van Swol were married in the Dutch church in New Amsterdam in 1652 as recorded in church records of the time. He was a devote Lutheran and this was perhaps the only time he set foot in a Dutch Church in his life! "Helena" it seems was a very persuasive woman! We regard her with great reverence as the "matriarch of our American family" A depiction of her can still be seen today in the stained glass window of the Dutch Reform Church in Belville NJ that was established by her and others in 1697.

Bob Spear

Aug 4 (7 days ago)

to me

This website contains a history of the New Jersey Midland Railroad which reached Oakland in 1869 it may prove interesting



Kevin Heffernan <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

Aug 4 (7 days ago)

to Bob

Hey Bob,

Here's a few little known facts about the railroad coming to Oakland in 1869. Little known except to you most likely.

Immediately prior to the Civil War, the governor of NJ was a man named Rodham Price who is perhaps best known for his advocacy of New Jersey to secede from the Union and join the Confederacy after he left office. And, he officiated the opening of the RR in Oakland in 1869. Also, his son was the designer of the RR through Bergen County. Pierce ultimately moved to Oakland and died here in 1894. He is buried in the Reformed Cemetery in Mahwah.



Bob Spear

Aug 5 (6 days ago)

to me

I heard of a man named Price as I recollect (faintly) but I did not know the Governor "connection" or the Railroad connection, thank you (more tidbits of history!)

I was able to print out the entire Henry Hopper interview and gave it to my sister to decipher the hand writing. She was amazed at all the details in it and is fascinated by it!

The Al Potash interview (132 pages!) I did not print out but she now has it on her laptop also to look at, many thanks!

My father never much cared for Al Potash- he always said "that new-comer who wants to run everything!" But I always got along well with Mayor Potash, he was one of the

6 people I had to have sign a recommendation for me to enlist in the Navy ! (You had to do that back then to enlist in a branch of Service) Some of the others were Chief Joe

Woods, Arthur "Bud" Vervaet and possibly Frank Scardo/ I remember Mayor Potash's office at the time, He had this huge desk and it was covered with township maps and other

papers!. I enlisted in October 1965 and left for basic training in January 1966 to Great Lakes Illinois. Many years later, I knew Jim Potash quite well, Al's son, his other son "Bob"?

also the boys ran James Construction Company in town and among other things dug out the Island in the Ramapo River creating Potash Lake.

Jim was a large heavy-set guy, with features that reminded me a lot of my Grandfather in Pennsylvania. He was a "gentle-giant" of a guy and I was in the Oakland Rod & Gun Club with

him and many others for years, We held our meetings in the top of the old Yawpaw Fire house. Bob Hopper (unknown if related to Henry Hopper?) was an area Real Estate broker and

builder. He was an "educated man" so to speak and seemed to always "talk over everyone's head!".. But we got along well. He always called me "Bobby" He had his office in the

Annie Meyers house on RVR. He lived in Deer Haven, in Mahwah and when I started my business he was my first lawn customer!.... He often would lament to me how "I wish I had

worked more with my hands growing up so I could appreciate hard work more....!"... He was sort of a "dandy", and had never wanted for anything, but we got along well and I counted

him as a good friend.

A good friend I came to know in a curious way was J. Nevins McBride of Franklin Lakes Urban Farms fame. Many people disliked McBride because he bought up land and was always building

big expensive houses. I came to know Nevins as a friend however, even though I was far from "his station in life!" He would often arrive at my house in a cloud of dust in his big Red Cadillac

convertible wearing his best patent leather shoes and expensive clothes. He would take off up through the woods at a moments notice and I would have to help him as he trotted through

streams, mud, swamps, and woods looking at property! He would look at a piece of land and envision building on it!.. His Driver, Carmine was always chasing after him it seemed and

trying to keep him out of trouble. Nevins was an accident looking to happen!.. It was a strange friendship, "The common man and the Millionaire!"... When I returned from the Navy , i went to work for him and Urban Farms and was there 8 years, A girl who worked in the office was a graduate Landscape Architect from Purdue University- She and I started Urban Farms Landscaping there and together

we designed the new Paterson General Hospital grounds and many expensive homes in Franklin Lakes, Fairlawn, and other places. Lots of memories and I seem to be rambling on here!

I was sad when my old friend Nevins McBride passed away- I always cherished that friendship- being retired in Florida tends to do that I guess!

I learned some things myself in the Henry Hopper interview and many things I also remembered. I also remember Mr. Hopper. I delivered his Sunday newspaper to him ! And I remember him from Valley School also when I was just a kid--- (I'm soon to be 67 now!!!) My old friend Tony Fowler is also on Face book and we relate memories!.. Tony and I went to school together and hung out , rode bikes etc and things kids do!... With all this old stuff here, I have "relighted" my interest in family history again!--- My sister is very involved with it and is always on her genealogy websites researching! Keep up the good (old-fashioned work!)

Part of the interview relates to the Henry Hopper farm at the top of Long Hill & Breakneck roads I remember well. The original road as Hopper relates went through the farm yard and along the back swampy land on a raised section that had a concrete culvert for the water to pass through to the Lily Pond, It continued eastward toward the Hughes property- thence up their later driveway where it became Franklin Lakes road headed towards Colonial road in Franklin Lakes. On a "bluff: overlooking Hoppers Crooked Pond was an old cemetery with many very old stones. I spent one entire summer cleaning it up for Mr. McBride. (Many people did not realize, Nevins McBride also appreciated history and cleaning up areas) I found many old stones there, the earliest dating to 1707 and several Civil War era military markers. There's a new house built there now and I wonder if the owners realize they had built on top of an old burying ground? (scary Steven Spielberg stuff!) I had often contended that was the site of the original 1710 Church that was a log cabin. And it had been known as the "Church of the Pond" (Ponds Church) I have nothing to base that on except my own personal theory- why else would there had been such an old burying ground there? The earliest stone in Ponds Church cemetery dates from 1787. In history I have found, one must "read between the lines" of documented fact, interspersed with personal recollections and known history. and sometimes a more conclusive reasoning comes to why things were that way! Sometimes though it leads to even more confusion! I have yet to read the Potash interview.

The water from that area seeped in a westward direction from Franklin Lake. It passed between low hills and swampy land off Indian Trail Drive in Franklin Lakes, behind the old nursery ground of good friend Jack O'Leary, across Vreeland lane and westward through the Hughes property toward Hoppers farm. There is a low spot in the ground there allowing the water course to continue and drain to the Lily Pond (Hoppers Crooked Pond) There were more springs there that added to it and then it drained westward, again through a "swale' In the low hills behind the old Bill Rose property (where I eventually lived for 14 years!) It then entered a large "oval basin"* surrounded by higher hills. This prehistoric drainage I believed was a "sink" to collect water from the surrounding land. There was no outlet, the water eventually seeped away into the soil and it was full of huckleberries there!. There may have been some sort of very ancient stream at one time that continued westward but was long since filled in by years of erosion and growth. I was always fascinated by land terrain and water courses..

The source of water for the "big Spring" as I called it, Hopper called it the MccEvoy Spring because Clifford F. McEvoy owned the land at one time. It was by 1906 owned by Mrs. Remington

Vernam, who also built the later-day Hansen House and Lilac Manor nursing home and a large house on Long Hill road.

All this I have tried to document in my on going manuscript I still contribute to and hope to get to you some day!

Thanks again for all the great memories!

Bob Spear FFLAhistorian@gmail.com

*this "large oval basin" was later excavated by Oakland Industrial Park aka McBride Enterprises and became a collection point for storm water that was highly polluted by Exide Battery company

and the other Industrial Park occupants through the drainage system. A long pipe line was laid from this "basin" westward down through the old sand pits and exited in the lower swamp behind

what use to be the Hen's Roost (not far from your house on Grove Street!) It broke several times during heavy storms , resulting in repairs and damage to the neighboring woods (It's probably still there yet today?)

Kevin Heffernan <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

Aug 5 (6 days ago)

to Bob

Hey Bob,

I never really knew Al Potash other than by reputation. When I first moved here in 1979, for some silly reason I wanted to trace the deeds of my property as far back as possible. My curiosity also extended to the 4 near-dead peach trees in my back yard. Peach trees? In Oakland? My property research revealed that your grandfather once owned my property and then you told me that he was very progressive in farming and experimentation. Bingo, the dots are connected!

The research about my property then combined with things in Oakland that, to a stranger, did not make sense. Things like the Ramapo Motel...why was it here? Or the RR tracks but no station. Or the Stream House. And so forth. That's when Al Potash's reputation and actions relative to the destruction of so many historic Oakland buildings became into focus.

He had a future vision for Oakland and it's historic treasures were in the way. For example, the Oakland Military Academy was 'coded' to death at his direction forcing it to move so that the Grand Union shopping center could be built. He then cut down the trees along RVR in the middle of the night for 'safety' reasons'. And, he wanted the Ponds Church to move in 1955 because it was interfering with the development of the Sears Shopping Center, then the Grand Union. And, did I mention that it was him that ordered the destruction of the RR station and that while it was being destroyed he remarked to a reporter that "maybe we might have made a mistake here"? Also, there was an 18th Century house where the Exxon gas station presently is on the corner of Powder Lane and RVR. Al secretly bought the property so that he could build the gas station. Although he did lead the charge for Oakland to purchase the Van Allen House, I honestly believe that he did so as an act of penance for prior historically destructive sins. I could go on and on. I guess the point is that I have little use or love for Big Al for what he did to Oakland. I think that he was the inspiration for my two books on Oakland.....salvaging the history and sights of Oakland pre-Al Potash.

I'm not sure that Mrs. Remington Vernam built the either Lilac manor or the house that became the hansen House. The Lilac manor was originally the Ramapo Sanitorium built in the late 1800s and that it was built around a large 18th Century stone house. My research says that she purchased it in 1910 - 1915. And, after the death of her son and sole heir, she continued to live in it until old age. She then decided to donate it to the Newark

Archdioceses for use as a seminary. They declined due to the high cost of repair. Do you know when it was razed, how and by who to make way for the Shop Rite?

Your thoughts about the original location of the original Ponds Church make sense particularly since the pond behind the 1829 church is man made. Unfortunately, most of the original records were destroyed by a fire in the office of Samuel Demarest at the Demarest house in the 1920s. The charred beams are still there.

The new Oakland book idea seems to be moving forward. I'm trying to set up a lunch with Ed Siefert, Ron Romaine and Rich Walker to discuss the direction of the idea. They are willing. Needless to say, I'll keep you and Pete Emmons fully informed. I'm also going to try to 'recruit' Tony Fowler to be a contributor. Looking at it another way, there is almost 3 centuries of collective Oakland memory alone in this small group.

It's been great chatting with you. Let's continue this discussion!



Bob Spear

Aug 5 (6 days ago)

to me

Back to you (excuse my large bold print---eyes aren't as young as they once were!)

I had little or no contact with Al Potash, except as I had previously mentioned going to his office and him putting his signature on my enlistment papers. I only know my father did not have flattering words for him!... His sons seemed to be ok but even they were "all business" oriented. Jim Potash it seemed always had a little smirk on his face if he talked to you- (as if a wolf would do, licking his chops!) As a kid I only ventured as far as I could ride my bike but I can still recall the wind in my face pedalling down Oakland Avenue on my shiny red

"English Racer" Oakland as it was, a great place to grow up, I had good upbringing- my dad was a hard worker who supported his family and we lived very humbly and unassuming in our little house off Long Hill road. I loved the woods around our home and spent my boyhood there like "Huck Finn"...I took an early interest in Historic stuff, and I was always amazed at Nature, big trees, plants, wildlife- the "bigger world" I only saw through our tiny black & white TV set or reading a newspaper. When I went in the US Navy it was a life-changing event for me- I suddenly was thrust into the World as it really was. After recruit training at Great Lakes, Illinois I was assigned to the USS Independence, a giant aircraft carrier that at the time

was in the 6th Fleet in the Mediterranean Sea! Talk about an introduction to adventure! That was front and center for a kid from Oakland NJ>

While there our ship engaged Libyan Air Force Mirage fighters and shot down eight of them, (a fact that was never reported by newspapers!)

played catch tag with Russian destroyers and once nearly cut a Russian light cruiser in half. We nearly went to war oddly enough with Israel itself when it was learned Israeli patrol boats had fired on a US ship The USS Liberty off Port Said Egypt, 47 US sailors were killed.

My dad passed away when I was on my Second 6th Fleet deployment and it took me a long time to fly home, it was a very sad time for me.

I arrived back home just before Christmas and visited Ponds Cemetery to pay my respects..the air was still- it was a starry late afternoon I recall and the Church bells were ringing. I could not help but break down but strangely I did not feel embarrassed.

I had to report back to Norfolk, Virginia Naval Base and was in barracks there until my ship returned from deployment. It would be more than another year and a hasty cruise to Southeast Asia, and a 4 month NATO deployment to England and the North Sea, yet before I ended by enlistment and came home to Oakland. I had travelled many miles !

Our old Speer (Spear) property covered a number of parcels; the first was called "The Homestead Lot" containing about 160 acres + -

A 2nd was called "The Pasture and Woods lot" containing 55 acres including Henry I Speer's saw mill on the stream from the big Spring.

a 3rd was "A lot of hillside pasture lands about 65 acres" on the west side of Long Hill Road (above where the Shoprite was built) This tract was given to my Uncle; Jacob Speer, brother of my great great grandfather John H. Speer. he was said to raise goats and was a bee keeper. He later ran a General store in Saddle River. My great grandfather and my father's namesake; David H. Speer was a proficient agriculturalist of the day and his council was said to eagerly be sought by others. He was a rather impressive looking gentleman, distinguished with white whiskers and always

dressed impeccably it was said. John H. Speer had been his father. He built the large Victorian style home on RVR that later was turned into the Jewish Community Center (the name most people associated with it) A large barn out back had horse stables and room for hay storage. You can just barely make the house out in the famous Ponds Church 1878 sepia photo.

Us kids would badger Dad around the supper table to "tell us a story!".... and he never let us down.....I can still remember some of them today!

My mom would scold him at times for being too blunt with his language!....

I remember picking peaches at the old Valley Road house as David Sr had orchards also and no doubt those peach trees you mention were some of the remaining ones! David H. had two children; Andrew Irving and Anna Francis (our beloved Aunt Annie!) Her and D.C. Bush were married in 1900 and brother Andrew saw to it that she received David Sr's victorian house as a wedding gift. Andrews Spear married Lyda Elizabeth Bush from Crystal Lake NJ (my father's mother) She passed away in 1925 and my dad went to live with our Aunt Pearl in Crystal Lake. My dad and his father didn't get along well together and Aunt Pearl saw to it he got an education- sent him to Kansas City Kansas to a Mechanics School there. It was there he taught himself how to fly airplanes ! and helped fly the air route from Kansas City to Omaha, Nebraska and Witchita. He bought a World War One D4 "Jenny" and flew it for many years doing acrobatics out of the old Franklin Lakes Airport. My dad had joined the Oakland Fire Department very early and also the Police Department in town where he made Captain under Chief John Johnson in the turbulent 30's. Rough times! He remained on the Police force with Chief Lester Merrian whom I remember also. Charlie Meredith was the State Section Forest Fire warden then and the fire department fought many large mountain fires in the 1930's, one in which 15 firefighters were killed in Mahwah. tough times!

My dad worked at Wrights Aircraft Company before World War 2 and then as a Guard at Dupont DeNumoires explosives plant in Pompton Lakes.

He use to say he had been "too young for World War One (13) and too old for World War 2 (37)and by then had a family to support.

I only know what I recall from my father's stories about Mrs Remington Vernam- I knew she opened a water bottling company at the Big Spring and that my Grandfather Andrew had rented out the top floor of the saw mill to the Kanose Water Company later. I knew about the Martin family who lived in that area. The young Martin boys and my dad were great boyhood chums and he often recalled Mrs Martin's penchant for flowers and plants.

The younger Martin boy went back to France with his family prior to World War One and my dad got a few letters from him- he said " things were very grim in olde France- not like his fond memories of Oakland" The Spring was a place of fascination for me, it's super cold waters eased the muggy heat of mid summer, It was years later I discovered my GG grandfather & GGgrand Uncle raised trout there for market! in the 1870's.

The "Sanitorium" grounds was a place where towns folk would also gather for Sunday picnics and somewhere near there had been the 1740 stone house of worship of the Ponds consistory. I only recall my father as saying it had been Mrs Vernam's house at one time but I know little else of the details.

My mother and family moved to Oakland in 1920 from Marshall's Creek Pennsylvania. They came by horse drawn wagon with the furniture and a big old car she use to say. Oakland Avenue from Pompton to the Valley Church was being paved and the rest of the way to Mahwah was still a wagon road. Her father; George Featherman was a wood cutter who cleared land under contract and hauled timber to saw mills. (Rough work!)

He was a rough old codger! but had a "pixie devilish twinkle" in his eye! He was bent over from a life of hard work I recall even when some of the family moved back to Pennsylvania. His father; also George Featherman Sr was a tall gentleman who was very kindly my mother said. Our great great grandmother lived a long life, (98) and use to stay with us from time to time. Her father had been "the soldier" Jeffrey Smith as he was known.

A veteran of the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863. He had been one of only 5 men in his calvary troop that survived the 3rd day's battle. He was later captured in Maryland and made a prisoner of War and sent to Belle Island in Richmond where he nearly died. (rough times!)

I sat down one day with my mom across the breakfast table and she launched into a colorful re telling of her early life in Pennsylvania and coming to Oakland and marrying Dad in 1936 in Analomink, Pennsylvania.

As can be seen I enjoy talking about old times!

Going back to Lilac Manor, sriry I don't have any details- it was long gone when I was a boy but I do recall a jumble of old foundation stones there

in an overgrown pile? That had to be in the 1950's or early 1960's One of my mother's first homes they stayed in, coming to Oakland was Mrs. Pulis's house that was behind what later became the Hansen House. A man by the name of Burt Harrison lived there in my day and he was a lawn cutting customer.....got to go!--- time for dinner here---- more laterz!!!

Bob Spear

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The "Sanitorium" grounds was a place where towns folk would also gather for Sunday picnics and somewhere near there had been the 1740 stone house of worship of the Ponds consistory. I only recall my father as saying it had been Mrs Vernam's house at one time but I know little else of the details.

My mother and family moved to Oakland in 1920 from Marshall's Creek Pennsylvania. They came by horse drawn wagon with the furniture and a big old car she use to say. Oakland Avenue from Pompton to the Valley Church was being paved and the rest of the way to Mahwah was still a wagon road. Her father; George Featherman was a wood cutter who cleared land under contract and hauled timber to saw mills. (Rough work!)

He was a rough old codger! but had a "pixie devilish twinkle" in his eye! He was bent over from a life of hard work I recall even when some of the family moved back to Pennsylvania. His father; also George Featherman Sr was a tall gentleman who was very kindly my mother said. Our great great grandmother lived a long life, (98) and use to stay with us from time to time. Her father had been "the soldier" Jeffrey Smith as he was known.

A veteran of the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863. He had been one of only 5 men in his calvary troop that survived the 3rd day's battle. He was later captured in Maryland and made a prisoner of War and sent to Belle Island in Richmond where he nearly died. (rough times!)

I sat down one day with my mom across the breakfast table and she launched into a colorful re telling of her early life in Pennsylvania and coming to Oakland and marrying Dad in 1936 in Analomink, Pennsylvania.

As can be seen I enjoy talking about old times!

Going back to Lilac Manor, srroy I don't have any details- it was long gone when I was a boy but I do recall a jumble of old foundation stones there

in an overgrown pile? That had to be in the 1950's or early 1960's One of my mother's first homes they stayed in, coming to Oakland was Mrs. Pulis's house that was behind what later became the Hansen House. A man by the name of Burt Harrison lived there in my day and he was a lawn cutting customer.....got to go!--- time for dinner here---- more laterz!!!

Bob Spear

Aug 4 (7 days ago)

to me

Bob Spear
18 Postman Lane
Palm Coast, Florida 32164

Now I remember your address ! It;s been so many years ago, and much has happened in between. I use to cut your lawn when I was attempting to fix up the old DelMar house behind your place.

That had been a "lost cause" from the beginning and I guess I knew it as soon as I stepped inside the old place. McBride had purchased that tract and expected to be able to rent it out at a

"blown out" monthly price that was just unimaginable. At the time it was getting too expensive to live where I was and my aged mother was still living with me so I had to find a place to live

I could afford; As it turned out, McBride had a "new roof" put on the place and they attached shingles right on top of the rotted roof! It was a total loss and never worked out. I put a lot of effort

into trying to make something there and it was all for nothing. The water supply in the basement as I recall was a natural spring in the floor that wasn't more than two feet deep with an ancient

pump!..... The house had originally been built by my grandfather Andrew I Spear in the early 1900's and used as a "fishing sport camp" My dad always referred to it as "the Fish house". In my

youth I only ever recalled Judge DelMar living there and his wife. "Mrs DelMar" was a real "scare-crow" of a person to all the kids in the neighborhood. They apparently didn't have any children of

their own and apparently disliked kids on their property. She would patrol her land with a nasty little black dog as I recall. The "Judge" became a great friend of Bob Hopper, a local real estate developer, (partly because Bob wanted the Judge's land!) Many years afterward when McBride became the owner he allowed the place to disintegrate into saw dust and grime. I took great pains to paint as much

as possible and re landscape and clean up the grounds but it was just too much and in the end- I eventually moved to the old Sidney Kingsley property along the Ramapo river.

Kingsley's property

as it turned out had once been own by another of our family ancestors "Samuel Bush" who built the original house before the Revolutionary War and had his farm there. That was unknown to me

when I and my mother finally moved there, I had my good friend Frank Scardo to thank for securing the place for me and my mother to live there. Times were hard then. I loved living at the old

River House as I called it. There was so much history there. I had worked for Mr. Kingsley at one time landscaping his place and had met his wife, Silent screen Star Madge Evans; I lived there for

nearly a year after my mother passed away and eventually moved to Wantage in Sussex County with my niece. Eventually I came to live with my sister in Hamburg, NJ in Sussex County. A lot of

water under the bridge since those times has passed!

My interest in History always centered around the lesser known things about Oakland and it's environs. As a kid I wandered all over the woods there and hunted and fished and camped and generally

had a great boyhood "Huck Finn" kind of life! I was never one for getting involved in big social events in town or politics or any of that. I marched in many parades in town with my family and friends

and that was about the biggest Social events I recall! I attended Valley School up to the 7th grade and then the new Heights School was completed- where I graduated and went on to Ramapo

Regional in Franklin Lakes. Indian Hills had yet to be built then. My brother went to Pompton Lakes High in Passaic County as that was the nearest High School at the time he was young. Later- in

the interim both he and my sister went to Eastern Christian High School in Hawthorne (before Ramapo Regional was built) In Contrast- my father had graduated from Valley School in 1919 and for a time

had to ride the train each day to Hackensack High School! I believe he finished at Butler High School, education was tough in those days!

He often told me his remembrances of IVY HALL, PONDS CHURCH, and all the old-time homes, stores and people of Oakland, It was a facinating story and one I still occassionally write about.

His father; Andrew I Spear was very active in town, and County affairs, he was Supertindentdant of County roads like his grandfather had been (David H. Spear Sr) and a County free holder for many years.

He had saw mill and timber businesses and an active Soil mining pit on his property. His great great grandfather; Henry I. Speer had bought the first tracts of his large farm holdings on Valley Road in

1828 from the Ryerson family (other family relations as it turns out!) Nearly all the old families in the area were related in one way or another since the `1600's. My great grandfather times (X11) came from

Archworden, Germany and was born in 1593 there as far as I have discovered. Their story is typical of all the old Dutch-German ancestors who came to America and I never cease to wonder at the

hardship and fortitude those early people had! My sister has traced other branches of our family tree in Europe to well before the year 1000 A.D. ! Genealogy is a great past time of hers!

My good friend Dave Fleming and I had re discovered many of the old homestead houses in the Montclair,Nutley and Bellville area. (known as Speertown back then)

Dave's own family had been from North Arlington, on the east bank of the Passaic River (Tory-Country during the Revolutionary War) We often chided each other that my grandfathers had probably shot at your grandfathers back then !

Bringing us now to 2013 ! I expect to make a trip to northern Maine in Mid-September (hopefully) to do some fly fishing and would stop as I pass through old Oakland and perhaps we could have lunch again somewhere and talk over old times?... Ed Seifert should be back here in Florida before much longer, as we do exploring around here when he comes.

Perhaps at that time I can bring a copy of my unpublished dissertations...

As always I am enjoying all your old photos you post and the comments they receive from others- many of these I have not seen myself. Ed is a great person to "get things done" He enjoys taking photos and I would urge you to meet with him if you haven't already. I think you two would enjoy it!.. He is a District Firewarden and Engine Boss with the New Jersey Forest Fire Service and is very active.

Thanks again Kevin and we will certainly keep in touch!

Bob Spear

3:29 PM (1 hour ago)

to me

Received the package of DVDs just now in the mail- arrived ok it seems! thank you

Attached: my pdf story of Private Jeffrey Smith "Company M" 18th Pennsylvania Volunteer Cavalry; Civil War

Jeffrey Smith was my great grandfather X3 from my mother's side of the family (Featherman-Smith) of Marshalls Creek & Middle Smithfield PA

The "Vetterman ancestors" originated from the German Palatinate Region and arrived in America in the early 1700's, settled in the Stillwater area

of later day Warren & Sussex Counties after earlier places along the upper Hudson River. The Emery family also part of- were Scotch-Irish and

going way back in Scottish Highlands history were related to the very ancient Clan of Ross who's ancestors had come from Brittany and Normandie.

At some point the Featherman's moved to western Monroe County, Pennsylvania, called "The West End" (meaning the west end of Mon-roe' County)

Some then moved eastward again settling in the East Stroudsburg, and Smithfield, Marshalls Creek area where my mother was born and raised (1909)

The Featherman family is every bit as interesting to research as the Spier's/Speer/Spear's of Oakland it seems!

In a strange visit one year to the Gettysburg Battlefield National Military Park I and another gentleman found myself very near the Battlefield of the 3rd day

near the Peach Orchard and Devils Den, below Little Round Top. While reading an information sign I had an over-powering sense of remorse, so much so

that a tear came to my eye! My older friend who is quite spiritual himself cautioned me " We must be careful- there are people still here....and then asked ...

did you have someone here?" as he noticed my emotion. My response was (at the time) I did not know- but something has really affected me? ..

Little did I know then- that I was standing not more than a couple hundred feet perhaps from where my GrandfatherX3 had fought at the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863!..... Call it what you will, but I believe there was some sort of "force there" that shook me up. more than just my interest in history!

Returning home- I was to discover the facts of my grandfatherX3's participation in the Civil War. During that visit- I climbed up Little Round Top to the position the 20th Maine took against the 33rd Virginia Regiment and attacked with their famous bayonet charge- for which General Chamberlain received the Medal of Honor.

I look forward to viewing your research on the dvds
Thank you Kevin