

## **Email Conversation About the Hansen House and Oakland in the 1930s and 1940s by Those Who Lived It**

My name is Sonya Hansen. I just found your wonderful article about Oakland. I was especially excited to see the picture of the Neilsen house. Alf Neilsen was my uncle. My parents Dagny and Hans Hansen brought life into an old building that was about to be torn down. They were able to purchase it for 3,000 dollars for back taxes. We had wonderful neighbors, Pulis, Boone, and Bredimus. Frank Ahlers ran the gas station across the street from us, but I never cared for him. Grumpy, mean old man as far as I was concerned, but I digress.

There are five of us, that used to live right there, the part of Oakland that was not mentioned in any detail that are very interested in learning more about our history. After reading your article, I couldn't help but feel, "What about our end of town?" I have been in touch with our neighbors, not any Ahlers, and we're all excited and interested in finding more about our end of town.

Bradford Boone, Evelyn Hansen Sensale, Cean Bredimus, Nick Bredimus and myself. We have many questions that you might be able to answer, We also have information that I'm sure with your interest in Oakland you'd be pleased to know. I will forward some of the correspondence we have had so you will know get a better idea as to what information we would so much enjoy having...and memories we have.

They moved the Dutch Reformed Church from my corner to up-town where it became the Community Building. Now the library. I graduated from Oakland Grammar School in 1944...and have such wonderful memories of our town.

I'll bet you didn't know that on Thursday's Bush's market sold chopped meat, two pounds for 35¢? Everyone in Oakland had either meat loaf or hamburgers on Thursday night. Of course we Hansen's had Norwegian meat balls.

Would so appreciate hearing from you. Sonya Hansen Huhn

Hi Sonya,

Thank you for sharing this wonderful letter. You've captured Captain Hackett's essence with your words. I saw him only occasionally after I married 'though Evelina always kept me enthralled with his activities and his accomplishments. How we loved him. He would take us on adventures regularly. He would treat us to hamburgers and vanilla malts at the Oakland drugstore. He laughed with us and consulted with us on our reading choices. It meant so very much to me because I was always being teased for my bookworm tendencies. I believe we came to call him Captain Hackett because he taught at the Oakland Military Academy when we met him. I never outgrew addressing him as such. Evelyn eventually called him Charlie. I remember one time we

girls took the pennies from his change jar and stuck them all on his wall. He had the grace to find this hilarious! I also think we two felt that you and "Charlie" would make a perfect couple. That would guarantee that our well-loved hero would always be family. I think we all have dozens of tales to share.

The Pulis family were also very much part of my childhood. My Mom would send me over to do chores for Margaret Pulis. I have an indelible memory of walking into their home and Mrs. Pulis was sitting at the typewriter stark naked and not at all uncomfortable to have a small girl vacuuming and doing dishes. Since she was so poised and business like so was I. When I got home my Mom explained that they were nudists like she would say they're Dutch. In the forties most of us didn't have any knowledge of the health arguments for nudity. It was all a great mystery. I never did become accustomed to the sight of adults without clothing!

I also vividly recall Mrs. Pulis making professional chocolates. They were beautifully decorated and displayed. The Pulis family hosted neighborhood Easter Egg Hunts. Adults and kids of all ages would gather. We would start with a cleverly written clue. (Years later my Mom told me the clues were both erudite and specific) The clue would lead us to edible treasures and the next clue. And so it went and finally led to the Pulis home, wonderful food and the glorious chocolates!

More later  
Love, Cean

Hansen gals,

Nick is joining the Oakland conversation. He is a wonderful source. He is adept at finding little known gems hidden in Cyberspace. Nick remains in contact with his childhood buddies and their Oakland memories.

Love

**Sonya Huhn**

Mar 5 (11 days ago)

to me

You've learned a little bit about my mother....I think it only fair that my father get equal time...

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Attachments area

*A Father's Day Tribute*

*My father wore spats and a gray Fedora, not all the time mind you, but for special occasions. He was very handsome. People said he looked like Clark Gable. He had a mustache, he was tall and had a certain charm, and a wonderful sense of humor. He had many trophies and medals. Several for skiing and ski jumping, speed skating, Soccer, Ping Pong, Tennis, Bridge and Golf. The last trophy he won was in his late 60's. It was the Apawamis Golf Club trophy. He won it three times over the years. The rule was that if you won it three times the silver trophy was yours to keep. For many years we kept it on the mantle, now my mother has it in her China cabinet.*

*He played the mandolin. He danced the Viennese waltz with me. When we danced I felt just like Cinderella at the palace ball. He loved all sports; he really should have had two sons rather than two daughters. I remember when he took me to Macy's and bought me skis. There was a lot more snow in Norway than in Oakland, New Jersey, but he had plans and high hopes for me. He talked to me about the Olympics and how with practice I could be a champion.*

*There was that Christmas when all the girls were getting figure skates, all except me that is. I opened the box and there was a pair of racing skates. You know the kind, the ones with the long blade out in front. He took me out on the big pond in our backyard and taught me how to speed skate. He showed me how to lean forward, hands clasped behind my back and go like the wind. That was such fun. I remember how proud he was when I picked up speed.*

*I have a wonderful memory of he and I skating cross hands gliding across our frozen pond. You can just imagine how wonderful I felt. When I was a teenager he built a cement tennis court in our backyard. He taught me the game. He taught me so well that I beat all the boys in my high school's tennis club. My father was born in Norway and left when he was just 16. He went to sea. Norway had the second largest Navy in the world at that time. His plan was to travel the world ending up in America. When I was older he took me back "home" as he called it. Proudly showing me where he lived, where he went to school and where he skied. Norway is such a beautiful country I couldn't help but wonder why he ever left.*

*When I asked him he told me that of all his subjects in school he loved American History best of all. What could be more exciting to a young boy than cowboys and Indians? Rumor also had it that in America the streets were lined with gold.. He just had to come. How could you not love a man that held you when you cried, played the mandolin for you. Taught you how to ski and to skate cross hands? And on occasion would dance the Viennese waltz with you. Every now and then if I close my eyes I can still see him in his spats and gray Fedora. Daddy died in 1978, and every now and then I think of him, and when I do I miss him so.*

*Sonya Huhn*

*June 2003*

Hi Cean,

It is very nice to be remembered by Sonya. The author of the article, Kevin Heffernan, also wrote a book on the history of Oakland which I bought several years ago. The Oakland of my youth no longer exists and I enjoy these remembrances. Mr. Kestler's given-name was Sebastian and he was born in Germany. I suspect his nickname was Seb which would sound like Zeb with a German accent. I'd love to know where Seb went with his suitcase. Perhaps Terry can write a mystery. Carl passed away in 2006 so there is probably no one around to solve it.

Please thank Sonya and tell her I wish I was still a thin little boy running around like in the attached photo. I still wear shorts with no shoes, so I'm lucky to live in Hawaii. It is great to cross paths with Sonya and to share a little history.

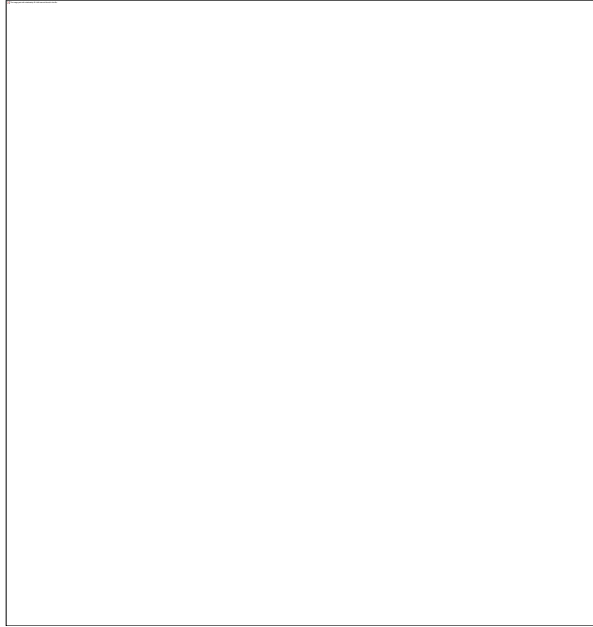
Thanks for keeping me informed, dear sister.

Love,  
Nick

You have no idea how much I appreciated the article suggested by Nick...Please thank him for me. In it was a picture of the Neilsen house....My uncle's....the house right next to Kestlers....I forwarded it to cousins that will also have a fond memory of it.

Next to Unkie's driveway is a bough of branches....under-which I remember I was first kissed....It wasn't Carl, I have no recollection of who it was....bit I remember it was my very first.

Thank you Nick..... I remember you as a thin little boy in shorts...running around without shoes...Who would ever dream our paths would cross. How lucky am I ?  
Thank you Nick..... I remember you as a thin little boy in shorts...running around without shoes...Who would ever dream our paths would cross. How lucky am I ?



Aloha Sonya, Evelyn and Cean:

I have very fond memories of your end of town. Our family moved to Oak Street when I was born, but I spent time at the Hansen House and even washed a few dishes.

As a teenager, I helped to reopen the Carriage Barn at Muller's Park and also swam and attended concerts at Pleasureland.

Yes, I do remember the Lilac hedge and the Library. I've attached some visuals including the Mural in the Library, the Old Pond's church, aerial photos from 1953 and 1979 with the Hansen House in the center of the frame, and a page from Kevin Heffernan's history of Oakland. I hope you enjoy the memories.

Love,  
Nick (barefoot in Hawaii)

Please forward last email to your brother .

I forgot to mention, I loved the picture, it's just how I will always remember him...barefoot

**From:** Sonya Huhn <[shuhn2000@gmail.com](mailto:shuhn2000@gmail.com)>

**Date:** March 2, 2018 at 9:58:30 AM EST

**To:** [nick@amhaga.com](mailto:nick@amhaga.com), Cean <[CeanM@aol.com](mailto:CeanM@aol.com)>, Evelyn <[sensaleeh@gmail.com](mailto:sensaleeh@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** Our end of town.

So happy that Nick has joined our reunion.  
I think it is high time that Kevin Heffernan devote some of his time to our end of town. I do so appreciate all his research But what about our feelings ?

What does anyone know about the Pond's Reformed Church ? Here's what I think. It stood on the corner of our end of town. Sure, there was Pleasure land...but I always maintained that Oakland ended at Ahler's gas station and my house. Evelyn has a picture of it...  
I do know the church was moved up the street next to the Grammar School. It became the Oakland Community building, which eventually became the Library. My 1944 graduation was held in that building.

Nick, Cean do you remember the wonderful hedge of Lilac's?

I just decided I'm going to invite Bradford Boone to join in our memories...He has many recollections of our end of town. He lived in my house, then moved to the one the Pulis's lived in. Don't know if he ever lived in your house. He was a much younger brother of Margaret Pulis. Do you and Cean remember the stump in the pond that I remember standing on and crying out, " King of the Mountain." It was one of three ponds. The other two had trout in them. The big pond, with the wooden bridge was for fishing.

I'm curious about the Hansen House....Three stories, five fireplaces....a ceiling painting that rumor has it that a very wealthy owner of the HH commissioned to come from Italy to paint. A mansion in it's day....and there was reportedly a big and fancy hotel down the road a ways up on a slight hill. I remember playing there where only small parts of a foundation remained.

Do you remember the stage coaches in Muller's barn?

Enough for now..... Think I might contact Kevin Hefferman and ask him to do look into our end of town...

**From:** Inger Pye <[ingerpye@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ingerpye@yahoo.co.uk)>  
**Subject:** Tante Dagny  
**Date:** March 5, 2018 at 4:17:03 PM EST  
**To:** Sonya Huhn <[shuhn2000@gmail.com](mailto:shuhn2000@gmail.com)>

Dear Sonya,

My mascara is running, my face is a mess, and I am running out of tissues. That video in memory of my wonderful tante Dagny, accompanied by one of my favourite songs.....

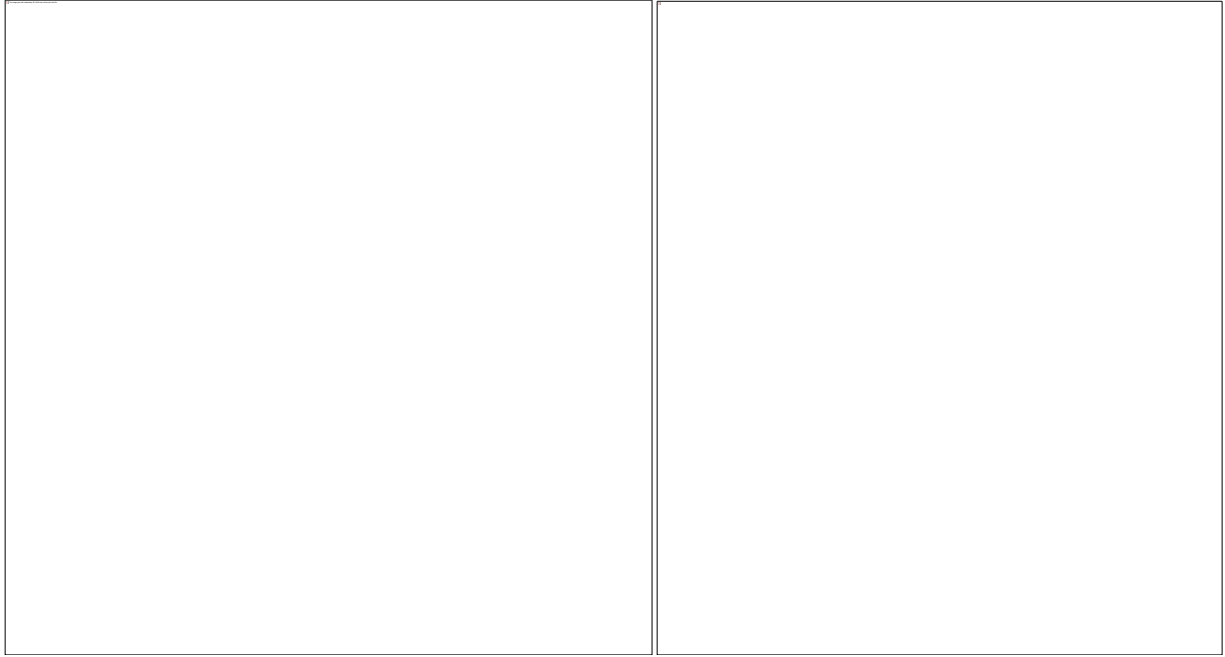
I wonder if you realize how much she meant to me - the person who saved and changed my life.

It all started in 1945, the Germans had just left our country, we had very little of everything, and then the 'America parcels' started to arrive. It was like Christmas and Birthday in one! I tasted things I had never heard of, and the clothes! She sent things you had probably grown out of, and as my mother was an excellent seamstress, she made them into wonderful dresses etc. for me. My classmates from grammar school still tell me that I always had such nice clothes, different from theirs. I was the first one who ever wore something in pink! You could not buy anything here in pink, even if you had the ration card. Pastel colours as we called it, did not exist. Then in 1954 I received a pair of dongeries (jeans) with a leather patch on the back pocket saying Wrangler. We had only seen those in Western movies. The boys in school were green with envy and I felt as proud as a peacock! Then there was the time I received a pair of your roller skates! You should have seen me trying them on the road outside the house! There was no tarmac only rough shingle and I ended up skating around in the cellar where the floor was made of cement. Not much room! Did you ever know that a lot of your things ended up in Norway?

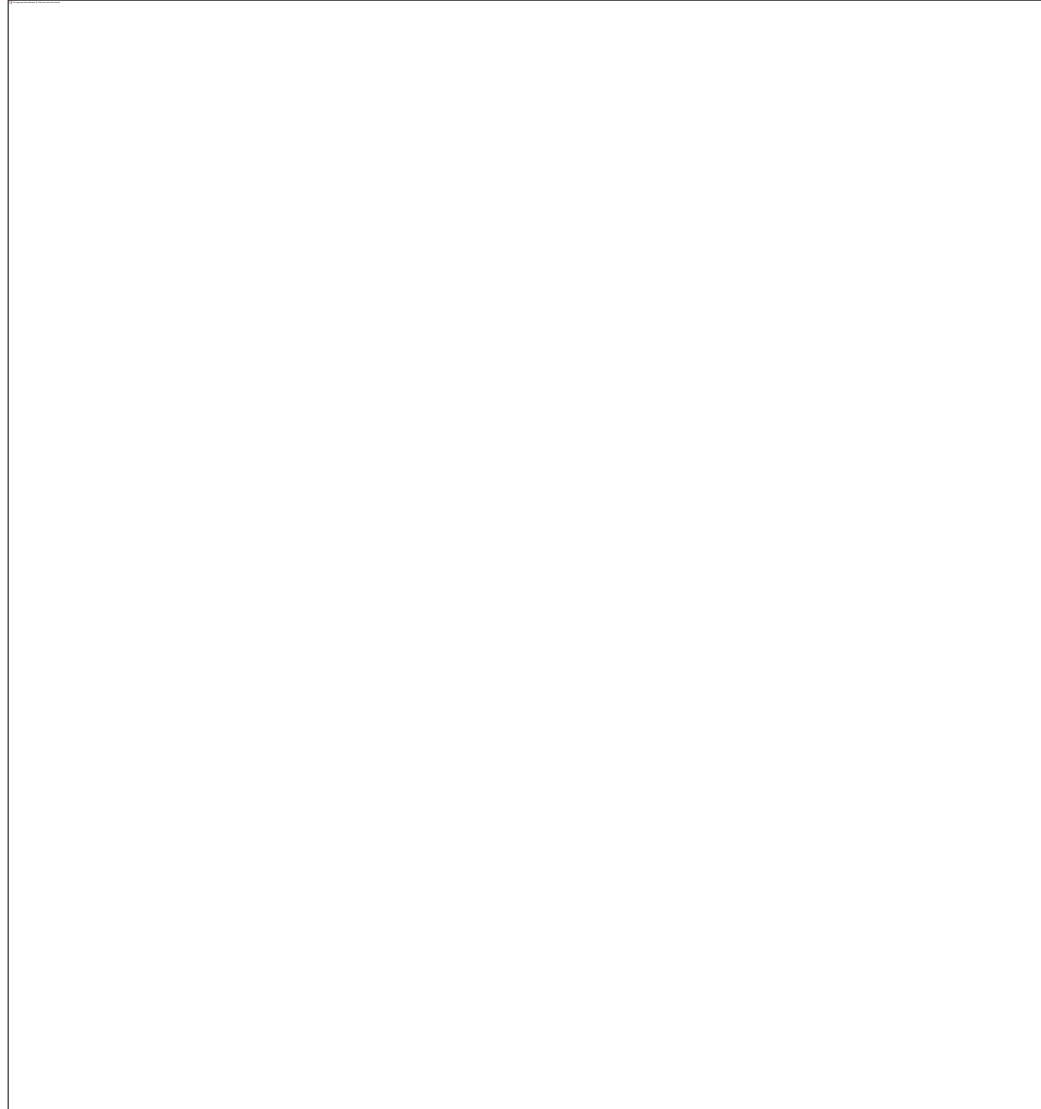
All I wanted was to go to America which seemed like Paradise. My mother (who was a sensible woman) said I could go when I had finished school and learnt English. So I finished college and was ready to go, but my mother said I did not have enough education to get a decent job. She persuaded me to take a secretarial course to learn typing, stenography and office work. After finishing that, I was again ready to go, but as you had to wait approx. a year to get a visa /your mum and dad would have to guarantee that I would not be a financial burden on the State, she told me to get a job to get some experience - and then finally in March 1959 I set out on the journey .....

I am now back in 'the old country' still alive and kicking with all those wonderful memories of my time in 'Paradise'

Love Inger







**Sonya Huhn** <shuhn2000@gmail.com>

Mar 2 (3 days ago)

to me

I often times write stories for my daughters. I been blessed with a very good and often times exciting life. I want them to know about their family. This is one of them.

Mr. Kestler

Everyone should have a Mr. Kestler in their lives. I was lucky, I did. He lived next door to Unkie. You won't believe this but Mr. Kestler's first name was Zep, Yup it was Zep. I remember hearing Mrs. Kestler call Zep in for dinner. She was a nurse, the only one in town.

We lived with Unkie for some time, I don't remember how long it was I was about seven or eight. My father was busy fixing up what was to become our home and the Hansen House. It was in no condition for us to move in when my folks bought it. He had to fix it up.

So in the meantime we lived with Unkie. My mother and I. My father still worked as a superintendent in New York during the week. Remember he was earning \$125 a month? Good money those days.

The house we eventually lived in was about one mile from Unkie's. I loved living at Unkie's, it was a great house. It had a big grate in the floor, and I could stand on that and the heat coming up from the furnace would blow my skirt up so that I felt like a ballerina. It's a wonderful thing when a little girl feels like a ballerina. You never forget it.

It had a breakfast nook....nobody has them anymore. It had a dirt cellar. A coal furnace, and a steep steps to get down there. I went down there once. It was scary.

It had a lovely porch that ran the length of the house, that looked out on Oakland Ave. and the Oakland Military Academy field, that had a big hill for sleigh riding. What memories...

Getting back to Zep. He was old and kinda bent over. He wore frayed dirty looking overalls . He had several children and a chicken coop. Unkie had a chicken coop too.

Speaking of Zep's children, I only remember Carl, we were in the Oakland Grammar School graduation class of 1944. I remember at graduation how in unison we all said Rudyard Kiplings "If." I still remember it .

In the Kestler back yard there was a small wired in area. In the middle of it was a pretty large tree stump...it was a little higher than the seat of a kitchen chair. Stuck right in the middle of it was an bloody ax. You guessed it. Zep would stand there in his overalls ,ax in hand. and then he'd catch one of the poor innocent chickens grab 'em by their legs, swing them on the stump and just as fast as lightning down the ax would go and cut the chickens head off. It was then the fun started. Did you ever see a chicken run around with his head cut off. Well, Carl and I did.

Beside his butchering skill Zep obviously had another one. Once a month there was a big transformation in him. He would get all dressed up in a shirt tie and you'd see him carrying a suitcase walking toward the train station..You could tell he'd even shaved.

Everyone in town, there were only 500 of us at that time, wondered and talked about Zep. Where was he going all dressed up? What did he have in his suitcase ? He didn't have a job, how did they live. Must have been something in the suitcase that was profitable.

Most of the people guessed he had a still inside his chicken coop. It was an average size suitcase, not big enough for lots of bottles, but it was the only solution anyone ever came up with. No one bothered with Zep and he never bothered with anyone. It was just the way things were.

As I mentioned earlier, I was lucky to have had a Mr. Kestler in my life.

2/25/18  
memories

**Sonya Huhn**

12:01 PM (11 hours ago)

to me

I can't begin to tell you how much I appreciate all you do and all you have done for myself and Oakland. I was so excited when I came across your writing....The picture of Ponds Church with my home in the back I had never seen before.

I got faclemt and had tears in my eyes....I immediately forwarded the picture to my children and even to cousins in Norway.

I was about 5 years old when we moved in that old house, it is very special to me. I have written stories about the experiences my parents had in restoring it. You should know, it was my parents, that breathed life into that old house.

I apologize for having you think for one minute that I was saying, "Shame on you for forgetting about my end of town."

It was done in jest, and only in hopes you might have some information that you hadn't yet gotten to. I certainly understand not being able write about something when there is no information.

I now live in Monroe NJ. Even though it's a ride every second month I visit my house. I attend a high school reunion with some of my classmates from the 1948 Pompton Lakes High School graduating class. We meet at Portabella's. I visit my house and then always stop by to say hello to my parents that are buried right next door in the Oakland cemetery. The same cemetery that I once stole flowers from thinking I'd delight my mother with a lovely spring bouquet; only to

learn I'd committed a sin. She made me return them to the grave. I don't ever remember being that scared ever again in my life.

I will do as you suggested and look up the articles you recommended.

I would love to meet you and personally thank you for all your work...Perhaps if your around on April 11th when I'll be up there for a reunion, we could meet.

**Bradford Boone** <banjoi@aol.com>

Mar 2 (3 days ago)

to me

Found your article re the demise of laid back Oakland following WWII interesting. I left Oakland before most of those changes took place. The attached .pdf document tells of the depression era Oakland I left behind.

My father was pastor at the Ponds Reformed Church prior to its move from the intersection of Long Hill and Rt. 202.

Attachments area



**Kevin Heffernan** <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

11:45 AM (12 hours ago)

to Bradford

Brad,

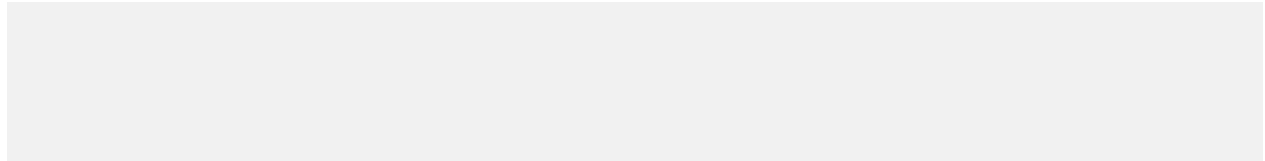
Thank you very much for your article as it certainly augments our understanding of Oakland's past so sadly lost to 'modern' times.

Previously I had written an article in the Oakland Journal regarding the history of the Ponds Church and I discovered your dad in the course of my research. Well, it seems that he was a somewhat controversial figure in both the Ponds Church and in Oakland which were effectively the same during that period. He was also controversial in America at the time as well for the same reasons.

As an aside, I have a copy of the obituary for your mother dated May 19, 1960 published in a local Oakland paper. I'd be delighted to send it to you if you wish.

Again, thank you for your article.

The Best,  
Kevin Heffernan



**Bradford Boone**

12:31 PM (11 hours ago)

to me

Kevin:

Have been following a lot of the Oakland references found online since reading your article. I'm still somewhat puzzled by what happened to the large pond that existed just off 202 near the Hansen House - that water that might have served to inspire the name Ponds Reformed Church. And yes, if not too much trouble, would appreciate having the obit re my mother.



**Kevin Heffernan** <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

2:45 PM (9 hours ago)

to Bradford

Hello Brad,

The pond at the side of the Ponds Church is now a parking lot for a 2 story office building and the brook that fed it is now a stream separating the office building from what was the Hansen House. However, the remains of the original dam still exist as I checked it out last year. That stream had been historically known as Oakland Brook which began in the sand pits between Grove Street and Long Hill Road. I have lived on Grove Street for the last 40 years and am very familiar with it.

While I do not know if you are aware, there is the Historic Oakland, New Jersey Facebook group of which I am a co-founder and administrator. There is a lot of old Oakland history on it. Also, I have written extensively about Oakland's history in The Oakland Journal.

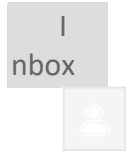
Below and attached are a few pictures that you might enjoy, The picture below seems to fit the description of the film storage building that you describe in your fine article. It was originally part of the Wilkins Brush factory which morphed into Mullers Park / Pleasureland. It still exists today and is the last remaining building of that complex.

Lastly, I must tell you that I completely enjoyed reading your article about Oakland in the 1930s and have read it several times. While I do not know if it is possible, would you object to your article being published in The Oakland Journal? Please let me know.

Talk to you soon.

The Best,  
Kevin Heffernan

**The other end of town.**



**Sonya Huhn** <shuhn2000@gmail.com>

Mar 3 (3  
days ago)

to me

You started something.....several of us old timers that are still around are protesting that we didn't get equal coverage in you article...It's been so much fun comparing memories. Thank you.

My main interest is a selfish one. I want to know the history of the Hansen House....It must have been some very wealthy person that built... I know my parents were very poor in 1938 when they salvaged it...I enjoyed a charmed childhood growing up in Oakland and having a bedroom on the third floor....



**Kevin Heffernan** <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

10:09 AM (13  
hours ago)

to Sonya

Hello Sonya,

First, my apology for not getting back to you sooner but we suffered a power outage here in Oakland for a couple of days due to a storm which knocked out my computer. Also, thank you for your emails. But, I do take a bit of umbrage with regard to the notion that I have not written about Oakland history with equal coverage, etc. I have lived in Oakland only since 1979 and was not a beneficiary of growing up in the Mayberry that it was during past times. And regarding the Hansen House, please consider that I can only write about what I have information and documentation. That said, I do have a small file on the Hansen House but not enough for an historically accurate or complete article.

I have written and published extensively about Oakland's history generally and have written several articles about Pleasureland, the Doty Bridge, the Ponds Church and the Ramapo Sanitorium. It just may be that you are simply not aware of these. Check the files of The Oakland Journal and you might find them there. Also, you may want to join and review the Facebook page, Historic Oakland, New Jersey of which I am both a co-founder and administrator.

Attached are 2 files pertaining to the Hansen House that you might find interesting. The first is that of a photo from about 1910 depicting the 1829 Ponds Church with a private residence in the background to which you refer. That private residence ultimately became the Hansen House. The second attachment is a short video dedicated to Mrs. Dagny Hansen who passed away in 2014.

Cordially,  
Kevin Heffernan

**nick antaga**

5:14 PM (6 hours ago)

to me

Hello Mr. Heffernan,

Sonya sent me a copy of your correspondence below plus your recent comment about Inger Pye's message.

The Hansen family and my family both lived in Oakland in the 1940's and continue to stay in touch since leaving at various times in the 70's.

I had emailed Sonya the link to your article "What happened to Oakland's downtown" and she loved the memories you evoked. We've been exchanging more information in recent days.

I'm pleased to note that you included a copy of my YouTube video about Sonya's Mother, Dagny. <https://youtu.be/ZXt2mlvuAnI>

I produced the video for my sister, Cean, and published her story on the blog I maintain for her

Sonya has written some wonderful stories about her parent's business, The Hansen House, and I'll encourage her to share them with you. Bradford Boone also has written beautifully about his

boyhood at that end of Oakland and I'll ask him to provide the details to you directly. I agree with Sonya and Bradford that more research into that location and era is warranted.

My perspective is a little different than theirs because I actually purchased your history of Oakland several years ago and have been corresponding with several others from the era. I agree with your opinions on suspicious transactions. Mayor Potash was corrupt according to my parents. We called him Mayor Ash Pot in our home.

I'll close by attaching some image files you might like for your research. Good luck with your important work. Thank you.

Best,  
Nick

P.S. I have very fond memories of that end of town. . Mrs. Hansen gave me my first job at age 12 washing dishes in the kitchen of her restaurant. It was a rite of passage in our large family, since all my older siblings had worked there. Our family moved to Oak Street when I was born, but I spent time at the Hansen House and the surrounding attractions.

As a teenager, I helped to reopen the Carriage Barn at Muller's Park and also swam and attended concerts at Pleasureland. I recall Ahler's service station opposite The Hansen House and an Ahler girl was a classmate. Otto's Floral Manor was still there in my youth and quite picturesque, but I don't know how they made any money.

My father frequented a bar on that corner and they would sell him carry-out beer on Sunday in large paper cups.

He would buy me a hot dog at Nash's. If I recall correctly, Nash spent winters in Florida so the Dogs were a seasonal treat.

In the sixties, Johnny and Norm's opened an Oakland location across from the cemetery. It was a classic drive-in with burgers and shakes, but the Texas Weiner and French Fries with chili sauce were unique to Northern NJ. Further up the hill towards Town was Le Duc's nursery run by Dick Le Duc. I worked in his greenhouse on weekends while in my early teens. There were never any customers.

Ruins of an old beach park were on the river behind his greenhouse. Tiny cabins and a snack bar were all that was left.

The Dimmick family owned the Oakland Diner further down the road towards Pleasureland. It was a typical pre-fab diner car popular all over NJ. One of the few spots in Oakland open late at night.

**From:** Inger Pye <[ingerpye@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ingerpye@yahoo.co.uk)>

**Subject:** Tante Dagny

**Date:** March 5, 2018 at 4:17:03 PM EST

**To:** Sonya Huhn <[shuhn2000@gmail.com](mailto:shuhn2000@gmail.com)>

Dear Sonya,



My mascara is running, my face is a mess, and I am running out of tissues. That video in memory of my wonderful tante Dagny, accompanied by one of my favourite songs..... I wonder if you realize how much she meant to me - the person who saved and changed my life. It all started in 1945, the Germans had just left our country, we had very little of everything, and then the 'America parcels' started to arrive. It was like Christmas and Birthday in one! I tasted things I had never heard of, and the clothes! She sent things you had probably grown out of, and as my mother was an excellent seamstress, she made them into wonderful dresses etc. for me. My classmates from grammar school still tell me that I always had such nice clothes, different from theirs. I was the first one who ever wore something in pink! You could not buy anything here in pink, even if you had the ration card. Pastel colours as we called it, did not exist. Then in 1954 I received a pair of dongeries (jeans) with a leather patch on the back pocket saying Wrangler. We had only seen those in Western movies. The boys in school were green with envy and I felt as proud as a peacock! Then there was the time I received a pair of your roller skates! You should have seen me trying them on the road outside the house! There was no tarmac only rough shingle and I ended up skating around in the cellar where the floor was made of cement. Not much room! Did you ever know that a lot of your things ended up in Norway?

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I am now back in 'the old country' still alive and kicking with all those wonderful memories of my time in 'Paradise'  
Love Inger

**nick antaga**

5:38 PM (6 hours ago)

to me, Sonya, Cean, Bradford, Evelyn

Hello all,

Inger also left a comment under the video: *"I am sitting here, tears in my eyes, full of happy memories, having watched the wonderful tribute to "Mrs. Hansen" by Cean Molinari. It made me realize again what a tremendous influence she has been through my whole life. When I was*

*a small girl in war-torn Norway she seemed like a fairy godmother in a magic place called America, sending wonderful parcels. It was a place I desperately wanted to visit and a person I desperately wanted to meet. When I did both, it was like a dream come through. Tante Dagny was everything I had expected. I don't think she could have treated me any different had I been her own daughter. She had a gentle way of guiding and correcting you. She was a real lady and I admired and loved her dearly. I think we all know that if it had not been for her 'pulling strings' about doctors and hospitals, I probably would not have been here today. I am very grateful that you were willing to share her with me to some degree. All my love Inger"*

I've just emailed Mr. Heffernan with more information about your part of town. I'm sure he would appreciate all of Sonya's stories about The Hansen House, the men at dinner, the gas station, etc. Also, Bradford Boone has some amazing details about the area predating The Hansen House and he drew some very accurate maps. Mr. Heffernan could certainly use that material.

Thanks again to all of you for bringing my boyhood Oakland back into focus. Gone but not forgotten.

Nick

**From:** Kevin Heffernan <[kheffernan555@gmail.com](mailto:kheffernan555@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 5, 2018 11:35 AM  
**To:** Sonya Huhn <[shuhn2000@gmail.com](mailto:shuhn2000@gmail.com)>  
**Cc:** Cean <[CeanM@aol.com](mailto:CeanM@aol.com)>; nick antaga <[nick@antaga.com](mailto:nick@antaga.com)>; Bradford Boone <[Banjol@aol.com](mailto:Banjol@aol.com)>; Evelyn <[sensaleeh@gmail.com](mailto:sensaleeh@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: Tante Dagny FYI



**Kevin Heffernan** <[kheffernan555@gmail.com](mailto:kheffernan555@gmail.com)>

9:10 PM (3 hours ago)

to nick, Sonya, Cean, Bradford, Evelyn

Nick,

Thank you for the courtesy in referring to me as Mr. Heffernan. However, please note that my name is Kevin and that there is only one Mr. Heffernan and he is my father.

I must tell you that I truly appreciate being included on the periphery of your select group of former Oakland residents while both learning of and permanently documenting your experiences here in the former Mayberry. It is a privilege and thank you all. Please permit me to make an offer that perhaps none can refuse. I have been collecting and cataloging Oakland history for well over 25 years obtaining it from any and all sources available without a scintilla of shame. Hence to date I have over 48 GB of old Oakland movies, photos, maps, post cards and

documents representing 7,369 items contained in 401 folders. And I would like to make the entirety of my files available to each of you. Just let me know of your interest and I'll send whatever I have to you.

In return, I would like to request a favor. Specifically, I would very appreciate copies of any photos or documents that you may have of old Oakland, the Oakland of your youth and memory such that I can further permanently augment my files. Also, you should know that I make DVD sets of my entire files and donate them to the Oakland Library, the NJ Historical Society and Rutgers University among others. This is to make a permanent record of old Oakland available to future generations. It is also done under the aegis that I am not the owner of Oakland history information but rather, merely the custodian of the memories of others who have preceded here.

Thank you all again.

Kevin Heffernan

**Evelyn & Bernard Sensale**

2:42 PM (21  
hours ago)

to BredimusNick, Molinari, Sonya, Boone, me

Dear Nick,

My most sincere apologies for not responding until now. This is my first opportunity in days.

Thank you for sharing your history, affection, information, and very significant and personal photos with me. It is thrilling to be a part of our interesting and exciting little Oakland history sub group. My Oakland roots, beginning in 1941, are dear and cherished. Our nine year age difference give us a different experience and perspective but we obviously have the same emotional attachment. Our generation is perhaps the last to have consciously experienced this period in history; thus it is right to share what we can. The world changed in 1959 and so did Oakland.

Thank you for introducing us to Kevin Heffernan !!!!! I have many of the old Oakland History publications but his contributions are beyond extraordinary! When I return to New Jersey in May, I plan on gathering my many photos, Hansen House memorabilia, and Oakland souvenirs to share with Mr. Heffernan. It's comforting to know that as we have to scale down, some of my treasures may find a new home.

It is so good to hear from you. You do realize, I am a Bredimus. From 1945 to 1950 I was in the first Bredimus house every day. You were born very soon after the move to Oak Street. I wasn't there every day - but most - and was always happy and excited

with you and then Bitsy and Lynne, the new babies. I vividly remember that DuMont television set and how special it was. Thank you. We're family.

It looks like we'll be in touch for a long time. I look forward to your posts. Please give my best to Kyong.

Love,  
Evelyn



**Cean**

3:57 PM (20  
hours ago)

to Evelyn, BredimusNick, Sonya, Boone, me

Hello all,

I believe we've found our tribe! It is exciting indeed whenever like-minded souls connect. Nick is a deft hand at research. Kevin has a way with words that is delightful. Sonya has been "writing down the bones" of the 30's and 40's memories. Bradford brings a unique perspective as part of the Boone family that owned the three homes where we met as children. Our various ages expand the timeline. At first the changes to our beloved hometown were subtle. Then like the proverbial snowball changes sped ever faster down through the years. More is the loss. It is worthy of note that most of us were educated in the Oakland school system. As my brother Nick has noted we have , one and all, embraced our early installation of good manners as an art form.

More later  
Love,  
Cean



**Kevin Heffernan <kheffernan555@gmail.com>**

4:03 PM (20  
hours ago)

to Cean, Evelyn, BredimusNick, Sonya, Boone

Does any one of this select tribe know Connie Monks?. Her maiden name is Connie Williams. I know her and she still lives in Oakland. Been here since the 1930s.



**Kevin Heffernan** <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

4:43 PM (19  
hours ago)

to Cean, Evelyn, BredimusNick, Sonya, Boone

And does anyone know or remember Dorothy Bisnette? I have her contact info.

---



**Sonya Huhn**

5:55 PM (18  
hours ago)

to me

I do know Connie Williams. ....About three years ago I got her address from Bill Potash. Contacted her and reminded her of the times we used to sneak up in back of the Nielsen chicken coops and smoke. Carl Kestler somehow managed to steal a Wings cigarette. Up to the coops we'd go and each of us would take a few puffs. Then we'd cough.

One time, and Connie remembered this also, we all spotted a very low flying plane . We started screaming " Do a Tail Spin" over and over. Much to our delight he heard us and did a tail spin. You don't forget something like that.

Connie had a brother Bert. He and I went dancing a few times at the Windbeam in Pompton Lakes . It was on top of a mountain.

About the Potash's. Eleanor was my best friend for several years in grammar school... I remember we had sleep overs at my house. My parents never let me sleep over her house because she had too many brothers. Ed, Butch, Jimmy and Billy....She had a younger sister Tidily. I hope that was her nick-name.

Went to Sunday school at Ponds Reformed Church for years. Marie Terhune played the organ. Rev. Charles Stoneton was the minister...I remember several of my classmates were Catholic, but that didn't matter, they went to Ponds Dutch Reformed Sunday school too. The Catholic church was in Pompton Lakes, which was much too far away. This was during gas rationing times. I do remember clearly that when we kids were in church we'd spend all of the time wondering if Reverend Stoneton's wig would fall off rather than learn about the Gospel..

There was no Doctor in town....Break an arm....had to go to Pompton Lakes...Dr. Chilton.

Ahler's. had three children. Frank, Bobby and a girl...He had a gas station...and a restaurant and bar.



**nick antaga**

5:58 PM (18 hours ago)

to me, Cean, Evelyn, Sonya, Boone

Hi Kevin,

Amazing she still lives in Oakland.

I was in elementary school with Bill Monks and knew his Mother. It would be unusual to know the first name of some kid's mother, so I called her Mrs. Monks.

They lived on Oak Street at that time, next to the new Ponds Church. She was different than the other Moms: younger, prettier, and friendlier. I really liked her and enjoyed going to their home even though our home was just down the street. Perhaps I'm confused, but that's what I recall of Mrs. Monks.

Best,  
Nick

**From:** Kevin Heffernan <[kheffernan555@gmail.com](mailto:kheffernan555@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, March 7, 2018 11:03 AM

**To:** Cean <[ceanm@aol.com](mailto:ceanm@aol.com)>

**Cc:** Evelyn & Bernard Sensale <[sensaleeh@gmail.com](mailto:sensaleeh@gmail.com)>; BredimusNick <[nick@antaga.com](mailto:nick@antaga.com)>;

Sonya Huhn <[shuhn2000@gmail.com](mailto:shuhn2000@gmail.com)>; Boone Bradford <[Banjo1@aol.com](mailto:Banjo1@aol.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Oakland, New Jersey



**nick antaga**

6:14 PM (18 hours ago)

to Evelyn, Molinari, Sonya, Boone, me

Dear Evelina,

Of course you are like family to me. Here is a photo to prove it. My arm is around you then my sister, Cean, and my brother Mike next to Cean.

I'm glad to learn you have many photos to share. Both of our fathers owned expensive cameras and hopefully Mr. Hansen took some great photos.

Do you know if he ever recorded home movies? We have an 8mm color movie from 1950 in Oakland.

I'll find the link and share it because color movies from that ere are very rare.

Yes, Kevin is miles ahead of us in documenting and writing about Oakland. We can only enlighten him on what it was like to grow up there.

Say Hi to Bernie.

Love,  
Nick

---

Attachments area



**nick antaga**

6:35 PM (17  
hours ago)

to me, Cean, Evelyn, Sonya, Boone

I don't think I knew Dorothy. Sorry.

The link to the 1950 color video is: <https://youtu.be/SckFNZFU WI>

Sorry, the original had no sound.

Cean, Robert, Mike and Poppy open the scene. Our Mother, Elsie, appears with me. I'm the baby. These days I am Poppy to my own grandchildren.

The kids run down into the gully behind our house and up the field to the elementary school.

Sister Nancy, makes an appearance and steals the show. Our father, Robert, was the cameraman.

I recall Dad borrowed the 8mm camera which is probably why this is the only surviving home movie. Did he borrow it from Hans Hansen per chance?

Enjoy.

Best,  
Nick

**From:** Kevin Heffernan <[kheffernan555@gmail.com](mailto:kheffernan555@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, March 7, 2018 11:43 AM

**To:** Cean <[ceanm@aol.com](mailto:ceanm@aol.com)>

**Cc:** Evelyn & Bernard Sensale <[sensaleeh@gmail.com](mailto:sensaleeh@gmail.com)>; BredimusNick <[nick@antaga.com](mailto:nick@antaga.com)>;

Sonya Huhn <[shuhn2000@gmail.com](mailto:shuhn2000@gmail.com)>; Boone Bradford <[Banjo1@aol.com](mailto:Banjo1@aol.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Oakland, New Jersey

And does anyone know or remember Dorothy Bisnette? I have her contact info.

---

Attachments area

Preview YouTube video Bredimus Family 1950 with Poppy



**Evelyn & Bernard Sensale**

12:19 PM (6  
minutes ago)

to BredimusNick, Molinari, Sonya, Boone, me

Hello All,

Re: Old Movies

My father, Hans Hansen, had quite a few, both long and short, 8mm films. My friend helped me to record them all onto VHS a long time ago. They should probably be rerecorded from the originals on a more current format. Not for Oakland, but Sonya's father-in-law had home family movies/films of the George Washington Bridge under construction and one of the early Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parades. I put these on VHS as well.

This is so exciting!!!

Love,  
Evelyn



Kevin Heffernan <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

2:35 PM (2 hours ago)

to Bradford

Hey Brad,

The 1922 8th grade graduating class of PS 1 in Oakland contained 2 members of the Boone family, William Boone and Barrett Boone. Any relationship? Attached is the documentation and the graduation photo for your viewing enjoyment.

2 Attachments

### 2 Attachments



Bradford Boone

3:16 PM (2 hours ago)

to me

Kevin:

Can't relate to William Boone despite thinking there must be some sort of family connection with him (the odds of an unrelated Boone in the town seems unlikely). Now Barrett was my half brother (born of dad's first wife). After graduating from Oakland, he attended the Mt. Hermon School in Northfield, MA, as did my half sister Margaret (later Margaret Pulis). Much later, my full sister Nancy and her husband James Curley were teaching at a school in North Carolina and were approached by the Mt. Hermon people to relocate to Northfield. They held out for two years, but finally gave in and joined the Mt. Hermon staff. Nancy let Margaret know they be going to Mass. for a tour of the school grounds, and Margaret told Nancy to go to a certain dorm, check in to a given room and go inside the closet and look above the door jam. When Nancy followed instructions she saw Margaret's name above the door.

As of now, I live in Warwick, MA, a mere ten miles from the Mt. Hermon School.



Bradford  
Boone

3:16 PM (2 hours ago)

Kevin: Can't relate to William Boone despite thinking there must be some sort...



Kevin Heffernan <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

5:27 PM (0 minutes ago)

to Bradford

Brad,

What a wonderful story and I'm delighted that I found and shared a piece of your family history. As an aside, the genesis of this discovery of both the picture of the 1922 class roster and the group photo in front of the school was due to an email exchange between Nick Ataga and me. Nick sent me a photo of his 4th grade class in PS 1. That triggered a question in the back of my mind regarding the school itself resulting in a detailed search of my 'Oakland School' folder at which time I found the material I sent to you. Who knew?

---

nick antaga

1:12 PM (4 hours ago)

to Evelyn, Molinarii, Sonya, Boone, me

Evelyn, I was hoping your Father made films of Oakland. I'll bet they are amazing. Costco Wholesale clubs offer a VHS conversion service. They convert to DVD plus they upload to the Internet for sharing. Not all clubs offer the service.



nick antaga

5:30 PM (22 minutes ago)

to Bradford, Sonya, Evelyn, Cean, me

Sonya,

What a remarkable memory you have. I hope I will remain just as sharp. I'll write some more here now just in case. Reverend Stoneton was still the minister at Pond's when I attended Sunday School. Later, Reverend March took over. Ruth Paxton played the organ. Dr. Davy moved to Oakland and set up his practice when I was quite young. I still recall the odor of carbolic acid and my fear of the Doctor. Dr Davy made house calls when someone was very sick. He came to see me when I had the Mumps. We lined up for polio shots at the Library and that was just as scary. The glass syringe and needle looked huge not like the disposable ones used today. I got a lollypop after the shot and tried not to cry. Don't recall at what age we were inoculated for small pox but it was itchy and I couldn't scratch it.

The Duggins man delivered our bread to the house. Heating oil was delivered to the house. If we forgot to order oil, we'd wake up to a freezing house. Milk was also delivered. The milk, in glass quart bottles with paper caps, had the cream on top. It often froze in the winter, losing the cream. Sometimes the cream was lost because a young thief would sip it out of the bottle.

Speaking of sipping, the Pulis home had a water fountain installed indoors. I could be wrong but I swear it was next to Mr. Pulis's easy chair. The Pulis daughter married Mr. Shapiro and they had a daughter, Dee Dee. When I was told they were nudists, I wondered why these unshapely people would want to be naked in public. They built a mid-century modern home in Oakland, the first I had ever been inside. In contrast, there was a castle of sorts on the Ramapo Mountain. It also had a tall tower with a view. I may be confusing two properties because we kids hiked there from Oakland and trespassed. The owner supposedly designed and built landing craft during WW II.

As kids we used to play in two abandoned structures. One was in the Heights area and looked like an old fort or church. The other was a home or cabin filled with old papers and broken furniture. The papers might have been important but we were too young to care.

Our telephone service was on a party-line shared by several families. If you needed to call someone you might hear a conversation and need to ask permission to make your call. If I think hard enough I might recall our Federal 7 number.

I learned to swim in the Ramapo River near the Trestle. Each summer, a wooden crib was placed in the river where kids could swim without floating away. A raft was anchored in the deeper water for diving. Later, I swam at Muller's where I learned to dive.

Here is an interesting history of Muller's and a slide show: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/jeffs4653/6520473815>

Best,  
Nick

**From:** Sonya Huhn <[shuhn2000@gmail.com](mailto:shuhn2000@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 8, 2018 7:03 AM  
**To:** Evelyn <[sensaleeh@gmail.com](mailto:sensaleeh@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Oakland, New Jersey

nick antaga

7:09 PM (4  
hours ago)

to me

Kevin,

You're incredible! Brad's family was very close to ours from the days at Trout Pond Lane.

Did he send you his story? It begins: "Memories of Oakland may be slightly shaded these days. What remains, however, are a multitude of impressions treasured by a young man who lived through the depression era in a quaint, bucolic village cradled in the Ramapo Valley..."

Best,  
Nick

**From:** Kevin Heffernan <[kheffernan555@gmail.com](mailto:kheffernan555@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 8, 2018 1:18 PM  
**To:** nick antaga <[nick@antaga.com](mailto:nick@antaga.com)>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Family Relationship?

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Kevin Heffernan <[kheffernan555@gmail.com](mailto:kheffernan555@gmail.com)>

7:59 PM (3 hours ago)

to nick

Nick,

It's both my honor and privilege to augment whenever possible the wonderful memories of those who lived in and contributed to this former Mayberry called Oakland.

And, yes, Brad sent his recollections to me and I have arranged it so that they WILL be published in The Oakland Journal and will also be promoted on 4 key Oakland Facebook pages. I have completed the promotional piece (See attached) and Brad has approved it. I am adding the appropriate time sensitive photos for visual interest. I expect to send the link by Monday. When available, I will send the link to every member of this wonderful, select tribe.

BTW, where exactly was Trout Pond Lane relative to a current map of Oakland?

---

Attachments area



nick antaga

9:03 PM (2 hours ago)

to me

Hi Kevin,

You don't waste any time jumping on a story! Great promotional piece. I will include a little more about Brad below.

Trout Pond Lane follows the lilac hedge in Brad's map attached. It can also be seen in the attached aerial from 1953 running from Route 202 to the Pond. Let me know if that description is not obvious.

The Pond and the Lane seem to have been swallowed by the parking lot of Portobella. Pave Paradise...

Here is the only recorded mention in our family history:

The Des Moines Register from Des Moines, Iowa · Page 5 Saturday, November 17, 1945

MRS. ROBERT BREDIMUS and children, (Cean, Robert, Jr., and Michael) have left join Mr. Bredimus in the east. Mr. Bredimus has a position with United Rubber Co. at Passaic, N. J., and the family will live at Trout Pond lane, Oakland, N. J.

Sonya wrote to us that Bradford Boone is Margaret Pulis's brother and Boone Pulis's uncle. He is the son of the famous Reverend Ilesley Boone. Bradford, his brother and sisters, and parents lived in the Hansen House (I believe the house was named Linden) until 1929, when they lost it due to the crash (Stock Market). They moved to what we know as the Pulis house. I'm not sure about the Bredimus house but I think they owned that too. The bank later owned it and it was abandoned until 1938 when the Hansen's bought it and the Hansen House.

Ilesley Boone was a colorful character well beyond Pond's Church. In my youth, it was well known that Oakland was a center for Nudists. Our family was not involved nor the Hansens. The Pulis family was apparently. One of the Oakland Tourist Courts was supposedly nudist.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilesley\\_Boone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilesley_Boone)

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1933/07/08/nekkid>

I'm not sure if Brad is one of the children mentioned in this 1933 New Yorker article. Check with Brad before writing anything about Nudism.

Fascinating history, Huh?

Best,  
Nick



---

**From:** Kevin Heffernan <[kheffernan555@gmail.com](mailto:kheffernan555@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 8, 2018 3:00 PM  
**To:** nick antaga <[nick@antaga.com](mailto:nick@antaga.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: Family Relationship?

2 Attachments

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Kevin Heffernan <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

10:54 PM (51  
minutes ago)

to nick

Hi Nick,

Let me begin with a somewhat scandalous aspect of Oakland's Mayberry history....The Rev. Lisley Boone....One of the skeletons in the Ponds Church closet.

I am well aware of the nudist activities of Brad's father as about 4 years ago I wrote a brief history of the Ponds Church and it's critical importance to Oakland in every aspect imaginable. During my research, I came across the good Reverend Boone and, in the interests honest journalism, dutifully reported it in my article. Below is an excerpt from my article in addition to 2 of several photos used for visual interest. It's intentionally a bit tongue in cheek as is my style of writing.

#### **A Naked Truth**

**The Ponds Church has through its history been blessed with many outstanding pastors that led it and this community. While each sought to expose the congregation to the wonders of God, there was one who sought to expose a bit more. The pastor's name was Rev. Lisley Boone and he as the pastor of the Ponds Church in the early 1930's. Well, it seems that he had a particular fondness for nature and all things natural in that he had a small nudist colony on his property which, as noted above, was church property. It didn't take too long for his lifestyle to be exposed to the conservative Dutch congregation and it took less time for them to react. The Elders very strongly suggested (demanded) that he immediately cease his naked ways whereupon he made a series of counter demands in order for him to peacefully resign. Their response was swift: He was fired with the prayer that the church door wouldn't hit his naked butt on the way out. He went on to found the American Nudist Society and was indicted by the US Post Office for sending pornography, his American Nudist Magazine, through the mail.**

However, out of sheer respect for Brad, I have never either mentioned his father's personal history to him or even approached him on the topic. If Brad wants me to know, he'd tell me with the appropriate parameters, Otherwise to me it's not a topic of discussion and I will not further approach it. I am quite certain that Brad is not aware of my article. And, BTW, Otto's Floral Manor on Franklin Ave. was also a nudist colony. Gotta be something in the water.....People come to Oakland and immediately want to take their clothes off to run around naked. Hmmm.

Back to the Hansen House...The known succession of ownership and development of the Hansen House, originally known as Linden with builder/owner unknown, is followed by Lisely Boone and family in 1929, lost it to the bank and then it was purchased by the Hansen family to ultimately become the Hansen House (restaurant and hotel) until the 1960s or early 1970s. That's where Sonya and family lived and worked. When I came to Oakland in 1979, the Hansen

House had become Molly's until the late 1980s. Then it became Portobello's. The owner of Portobello's ultimately purchased the Phoenix Diner and build a great restaurant upon it's foundation while turning the original Portobello's into a banquet hall. Did I get it right?

To be candid, I feel the stirrings of a new article for The Oakland Journal about the Hansen House. If I dare such, I will definitely involve Sonya and Inga lest they kill me for any unintended inaccuracy. And, no, I will not type it while being naked.

Talk to you later.



nick antaga

1:23 PM (4 hours ago)

to me, Cean, Sonya, Evelyn, Bradford

Hi All,

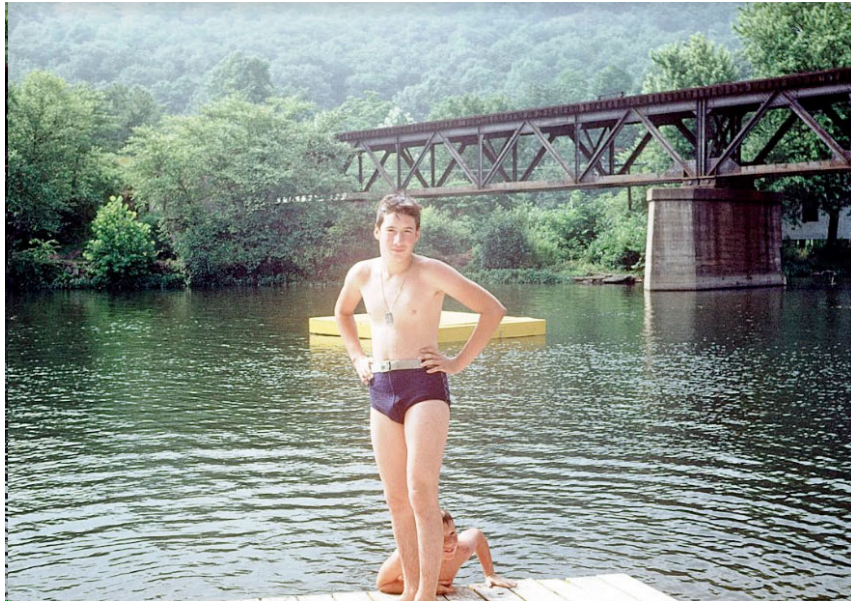
Further to my tale of swimming in the Ramapo River, here is a photo of my older brother, Robert, with that raft shown behind him. As a child, swimming to the raft was a rite of passage comparable to swimming the English Channel. I can recall hoisting myself onto the raft then basking in the warm sun after the chilly swim. It was challenging to dive back into that frigid river water. It was also a challenge to wade to shore due to the muck on the riverbed.

We often thought about diving from the trestle, but never did, It was rumored that there was a submerged wreck in the river under the trestle. We guessed it was a push trolley, certainly not an entire railcar or engine. Kevin's brother is a railroad "nut" so he might know something about this. Anyway, I'm glad we had a reason to avoid that dare of a dive. It didn't stop us from walking on the tracks to cross the river. Once across, it was only a short distance to undisturbed forest and miles of hiking. Just look at those mountains beyond the river. They have been completely destroyed.

I don't remember the white building seen to the right of the trestle. It is dangerously close to a river known to flood. There were some boat houses for canoes as I recall.

Best,  
Nick

Attachments area



**Cean**

8:51 AM (8 hours ago)

to shuhn2000, Evelyn, Banjo1, me, Nick

Hello all,

I well remember the drinking fountain in the Pulis's Living room. Milton Pulis was in charge of the Oakland Water works. I always believed that he had the fountain handy for water testing. Oakland had legendary water. Margaret and Milton did possess great humor. My mother did as well. They remained in touch all theirlives.

June Pulis Shapiro and her husband Manny were very civic minded. They traveled by bus as Freedom Riders. They marched for Martin Luther King. Their daughter Dee stayed with my family when her parents were out of town.I was her babysitter. June and Manny took me with them to Manhattan. They loved the ballet and music of all kinds. They also loved food. We went to the Stage Deli Szabo's, The Russian Tearoom and other foodie haunts! They also introduced me to cooking with sour cream. (Not a pantry staple in Oakland at the time) They drove a Volkswagen Beetle, perhaps the first one in Oakland. Wonderful people!

More later,  
Cean



nick antaga

Mar 8 (1 day ago)

to me

Hello Kevin,

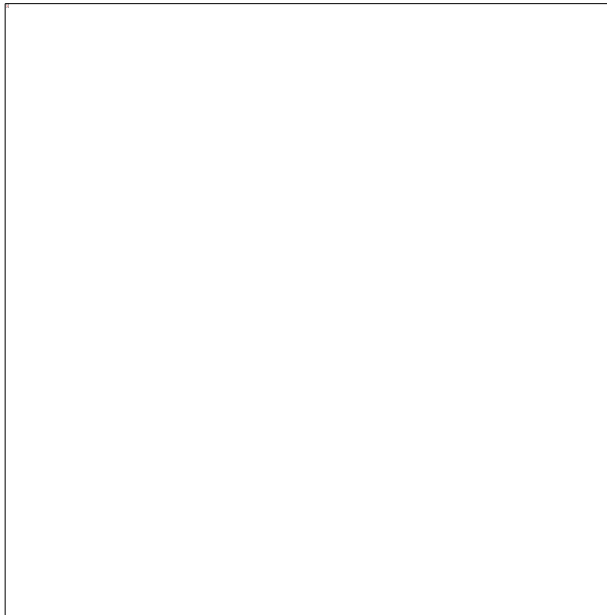
Thanks for history. I remember that school as if it was yesterday. Here is a photo of me in my classroom. That's me in the 4<sup>th</sup> row to the right. The year was 1958 for sure because another photo showed a calendar. The classroom was in the very front of the structure. Note the view of Pond's Church out the window and the brick portico of the school. Speaking of windows, they had transoms on top to keep the rooms cool. That's also the purpose of the high ceilings. The hot air would rise and go out the transom. The teacher had a long pole with a hook on top to operate the transom. The ceiling was tin.

The teacher taught us to sew and we made Easter bunnies; I doubt they do that anymore.

I hesitate to attack Mayor Potash publicly. My parents though he was corrupt and my Mother worked part time at the Boro Hall. They also alleged that Police Chief Joe Woods was a crook. I recall a few accusations and will write more later.

Best,  
Nick

**From:** Kevin Heffernan <[kheffernan555@gmail.com](mailto:kheffernan555@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 7, 2018 7:35 PM  
**To:** nick antaga <[nick@antaga.com](mailto:nick@antaga.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: Potash 1949





**Cean**

12:11 PM (2 hours ago)

to shuhn2000, Evelyn, Banjo1, Nick, me

Hi everyone,

A Brownie Hawkeye camera shot. Who is diving?

Love



Attachments area



**Sonya Huhn**

1:06 PM (1 hour ago)

to Cean, Evelyn, Banjo1, Nick, me

I don't recognize who is diving....Must have been one of the Bredimus boys....What I do remember vividly is.

# The Stump

I know Brad does....We would stand on it and shout,  
“King of the Royal Mountain...”

Bradford Boone

10:00 AM (5 hours ago)

to me

Hi Kevin:

That list of graduates referring to a William Boone is a puzzlement. I'm not particularly savvy when it comes to online research, but wonder if you might be in a better position to track down this person. I know of no family member who would have had a connection to a William Boone, so it's most curious that another branch of the Boone tree would show up in Oakland. Is there any way you can shed light on this mystery?



Kevin Heffernan <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

1:59 PM (1 hour ago)

to Bradford

Hi Brad,

Based upon your note I did a bit of research. Specifically, I checked the 1920 and 1930 Federal Census for Boone hoping to find either William associated with your family or to find an additional Boone family with William as a member living in Oakland.

Unfortunately, I was not successful in finding any William Boone with either census database. Nonetheless, here's what what I found for your family.

- Your family lived on Lake Ave in Oakland in 1930 as of April 1, 1930, but did not live in Oakland in 1920.
- There were 6 members of the Boone family living here in 1930: Lley (head-51), Ella (wife-39), Irene (daughter-18), Alice (daughter-15), Bradford (son 10 mos) and Agnes (mother-81)
- The Boone family lived in a private home and owned a radio.

It is also interesting to note that Barrett Boone is not listed in the 1930 census either. Being in the 8th Grade graduating class in 1922, he would have been 13 or 14 years old at the time. Perhaps by 1930 at age 21 or 22 he married and left Oakland. I'm going to check with the Oakland Board of Education to see if they have school records for 1922 to see if they can provide any additional information such as William's address, etc.



to me

Somewhat enlightening . . . .

To the best of my knowledge, the place the Boon's lived was the house that became Hansen House, on Rt202. In the early '30's my mother and dad, me, my sister Nancy, my aunt Adeline lived there until dad apparently lost the house and we had to move across the upper pond to a smaller house (about where that office building stands today). Lake Avenue . . ? Where's that (don't see it on MapQuest)?



Kevin Heffernan <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

3:35 PM (23 minutes ago)

to Bradford

The reference to your home on Lake Avenue comes directly from the 1930 census. Your neighbors on Lake Avenue preceding your address then included (in near to far order) Pulis, Muller, Conway, Banoud, Gerth and Herbert families. The next families in the census starting from your home are the Ahlers, Gallagher, Bush, Garrison and Skutt. That sequence would follow going North along Oakland Avenue aka the current Ramapo Valley Road.

If I apply a bit of deductive logic, I know where the Muller house once stood just after the Pulis house. That street is now called Ramapo Valley Road and leads down the mountain terminating on the current Hamburg Tpke. in Pompton Lakes. And the Ahler family lived across the street from you on the corner of Franklin Ave. Therefore, if I am correct, Lake Avenue has been renamed Ramapo Valley Road and your residence listed in the 1930 census was indeed the pre-Hansen House.

I think this solves the mystery.



Kevin Heffernan <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

3:47 PM (11 minutes ago)

to Bradford

Was this the Pulis House? It's literally next door to the right of the former Hansen House further down Lake Avenue.



Kevin Heffernan <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

3:57 PM (1 minute ago)

to Bradford

Another bit of deductive logic....Lake Avenue was probably named as such because there is a view of Pompton Lake to the right while going down the mountain. The Ramapo River flows directly into it. Hence, Lake Avenue was the name of your street prior to it being renamed Ramapo Valley Road (Rt. 202).

Bradford Boone

4:08 PM (17 minutes ago)

to me

Kevin:

Could very well be. Refer to the attached. There was a lane a little bit off 202 (just beyond the Hansen House) that led across an old wooden bridge. Just before the bridge a short drive to the right led to the Pulis house. If you crossed the bridge and made a hard left you'd be headed along the north side of Muller's swimming pool and their concession stand. Actually, just before you got to Pulis's, about half way down the lane, there was a small shack like structure where Muller's staff collected the entry fee and helped get visitors to a suitable picnic spot. A short time later, a horse drawn wagon would come down the hill onto the lane and deliver a picnic table and benches to the newly arrived. All this would probably make sense if you checked the attached map.





---

**Bradford Boone**

4:41 PM (3 minutes ago)

to me

Seems to be right. In the late 30's or early 40's, after the church was moved off the corner, there was a Sunoco gas station where the church once stood, put there by Mr. Hansen. It wasn't always manned, but there was a pressure actuated hose across the pump area that rang a bell inside Hansen House. Sonya tells of running out to pump gas for customers. If they needed oil, she called her dad!.

Kevin Heffernan <[kheffernan555@gmail.com](mailto:kheffernan555@gmail.com)>

4:41 PM (2 minutes ago)

to Bradford

Brad,

This is the best and oldest photo of Muller's Pond that I have. I think that it dates to about 1920 due to the existence of Lilac Manor which was destroyed apparently in the early 1920s. That's the Muller house in the upper center.





*The natural ponds with the "big house", the well house, two cars, and part of "Lilac Manor", across the street. Updated*

And this photo of the concrete bridge would be where the old wooden bridge was.



**Bradford Boone**

4:48 PM (2 minutes ago)

to me

Seems right on target, though I would have guessed it more like 1928 - 1932. In any case, view is from the small wooden bridge down the lane past the Pulis house. A bit later there was a foot bridge spanning the stone arcs in the middle of the picture.

Kevin Heffernan <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

7:35 PM (1 hour ago)

to nick, to:, cc:, Evelyn, Sonya, ingerpye

Hello Tribe,

I was recently digging through my Oakland history files and came upon some old newspaper reports about a robbery at the Hansen House in 1964 and how the perp was ultimately apprehended by Oakland's finest. The articles are attached here.

The Best,  
Kevin heffernan  
3 Attachments

**nick antaga**

10:25 PM (3 hours ago)

to me

Aloha Kevin,

My wife is out shopping so I did some browsing. Some of the results might be of use to you. Others, you probably already have.

Best,  
Nick

Mullers land offered for sale in 1921: New York Herald March 6, 1921 Real Estate Section (see attached screen capture)

I used this free research tool to discover the article:

[https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/#tab=tab\\_advanced\\_search](https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/#tab=tab_advanced_search)

<https://livingnewdeal.org/projects/library-oakland-nj/>

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/378583912418270013>

<http://www.oaklandfd.org/content/department/>

<https://newjerseyhistory.wordpress.com/2013/02/27/the-tainted-history-of-a-summer-pleasure-land/>

<https://www.pinterest.com/guitarsandsuch/les-paul-the-man-and-mary-ford/>

Kanouse Bottling Co.

<http://njbottles.com/index.php?topic=5098.0>

<http://www.thehistorygirl.com/search?q=oakland>

<http://www.triptaker9.com/oakland/>

<http://mapmaker.rutgers.edu/MAPS.html>

<https://fineartamerica.com/profiles/jim-delillo.html?page=2>

Dec. 20, 1963 photo, Les Paul repairs one of the many control boards in the control room at his Oakland, N.J., home. Paul, a guitarist and inventor changed the course of music with the electric guitar and multitrack recording. (AP/Dan Grossi)

<http://cd1077fm.com/news/030030-photos-the-legendary-career-of-les-paul/>

Let me know if the links aren't obvious.

3 Attachments



Kevin Heffernan <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

2:09 AM (0 minutes ago)

to nick

Nick,

Thank you very much for the research resources. They are fantastic! As of this writing, I have 40.6 GB of indexed Oakland history on my computer all of which is double backed up by 2 separate off line hard drives. All this is a product of 35 years or so of simply gathering and scanning everything about Oakland's history that I could find from any source. I must confess that I have gathered our history without even of scintilla of shame as to the source. And worse, I was a gatherer of Oakland history, not a researcher. How my involvement with Oakland history came about is the subject for an email at another time.

It's interesting as to how some things come full circle. Two items cited in your email are things that I had done. I wrote the history of the Oakland Volunteer Fire Department 10 years or so ago at the request of a friend who is a lieutenant. And I procured the movie of the Oakland Military Academy about 12 years ago from Andrew Penny, the nephew of John Sacka. After much digging, I found Penny living in Orange County, NY and visited with him several times. He was gracious and provided me with the film and access to all his OMA files resulting in almost 3 GB of scans and conversions.

Sarka was the founder and head of the Academy. Originally it was 2-3 reels of 8mm film which I had digitized. A few years ago, I gave a copy of Pete Emmons, a lifetime resident and the co-founder with me of the Historic Oakland, New Jersey Facebook page. He posted it on YouTube in 2 parts while I posted it as a single 18 minute video.

The net is that the massive and still growing files of Oakland history I was able to gather over the years is a resource for future generations. As previously mentioned, I am a mere custodian who makes and donates boxed, labeled and indexed DVD sets of our history to universities, libraries and historical societies. Additionally, it would be virtually impossible to replicate these files given the diversity and number of sources over the years.

Thanks again for the resource material'

The Best,  
Kevin

# BANDITS GET \$15,000

## Masked Men Get Receipts at Hansen House Proprietor, Wife Handcuffed by Five Intruders

OAKLAND — Five masked men, all armed, got away with \$15,000 early today, when they robbed the owners of the well-known Hansen House Restaurant at their Thanksgiving week-end receipts.

The eating place, said throughout North Jersey for its management, is located on the corner of Route 202 and Long Hill Road.

Hans Hansen, the proprietor, a man in his sixties, told police that he and his wife were in their bedroom asleep at 7:30 p.m. when the five intruders burst in and demanded the money.

After taking the money, the heavily armed bandits took the leg of a table and Mrs. Hansen in a dark room.

Hansen and the robbers made their getaway in a big crowd headed toward Pumpkin Lane.

Police were alerted within half an hour. Chief Joseph Wood was in the area with Detective Morrissey.

At 7:30 p.m. Patricia C. McGovern, 35, of the Grand Ave. apartment house, advised on

## Oakland Book Orders Being Taken

OAKLAND — The new book "The Year of the Women" is due from the printer in about three weeks. It will be published by the University of California Press, which is conducting a subscription drive to raise the pre-publication price of \$150,000 in force.

The first edition numbers 1,000 copies and approximately half the number has been sold. Orders will be taken at the publisher's store, or will be received by

Little, Brown, or can be sent to the publisher, 1000 Broadway, New York 10003.

## Three Accidents In Oakland

OAKLAND — Three accidents on a busy street occurred on Saturday. No personal injuries were reported.

At 5:30 p.m. Charles J. Hinkle, 50, of the Grand Ave. Road, Oakland, driving south on

Route 202, collided with a car driven by James A. Farnsworth, 34, of the Grand Ave. Road, Oakland.

The accident occurred at the intersection of the two streets. Farnsworth was making a left turn into

the Grand Ave. Road. The Farnsworth car was damaged.

At 7:10 p.m. Patricia C. McGovern, 35, of the Grand Ave. apartment house, advised on

## Oakland to Hear Island Plan On Thursday

OAKLAND — The Planning Board on Thursday at the Valley School will consider an application to create a lake and recreation area. A public hearing of 6 p.m. will be continued.

The applicant, James R. C. Edwards and William A. Smith, want to create a small island in the Hansen River. The project involves the filling and

they want the project to proceed and the city to purchase the land.

The applicant has discussed the proposal with the State Department of Economic Development and have their statement that the project will not affect flood conditions in the area.

The project is subject to review by the State Water Control Board. An application was filed with the State Water Control Board on

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Tues., Dec. 1, 1964

# Several Leads Being Investigated In \$15,000 Robbery at Oakland

OAKLAND — Tight-lipped investigators from the Bergen County Prosecutor's office are conducting an intensive search for the five masked and armed men who robbed the Hansen House restaurant Monday morning of \$15,000 in cash and an undisclosed amount of jewelry.

The officers, under the command of Lieut. Raymond Morrissey, would only say: "We are investigating several leads" when asked questions by the Paterson News.

The robbery took place a short time before Hans Hansen, who

operates the restaurant with his wife, was to meet Police Chief Joseph Wood for a round of golf.

The masked men entered the house, at the corner of Route 202 and Long Hill Road, through a basement window and surprised Hansen as he was coming down from the third-floor bedroom. He was roughed up and threatened by the men, and brought back to the bedroom where he and Mrs. Hansen were questioned about their money.

The Hansens were forced to reveal the location of a safe in

a second-floor office and then both were handcuffed, Hansen to a table and Mrs. Hansen to a stair railing.

The couple was released when Chief Wood, who was waiting for Hansen in a nearby parking lot, heard the owner call for help.

Assisting Lieut. Morrissey are Lieut. Gary Garabedian, Detectives Albert Ahlmers and Joseph Dodd, all members of the prosecutor's office, and the Oakland Detective Bureau under the command of Chief Wood.

Mon., April 5, 1965

## Trio Arrested in \$15,000 Oakland Restaurant Holdup

OAKLAND—The \$15,000 holdup of the Hansen House last November 30 may have been solved with the arrest of three unidentified men in New York, Police Chief Joseph Woods said today.

He said the trio will be arraigned here shortly and be charged with the robbery of cash and jewelry.

Police said the unspecified amount of jewelry New York police found on the suspects when they were arrested there on March 21 included some of the pieces stolen from Mrs. Hans Hansen, wife of the restaurant owner, last November.

The trio's cache also included rare coins stolen from a Plainfield doctor on March 14, the police said.

In the Hansen House robbery, Hansen and his wife were aroused from sleep by three masked men at 7:30 a.m. on November 30. Hansen was forced at gunpoint to open an office safe where he had put the proceeds, \$15,000, of the Thanksgiving and weekend holiday. Before making off with the loot and some valuable jewelry belonging to Mrs. Hansen, the gunmen handcuffed Hansen to a table leg and Mrs. Hansen to a stair rail.

Hansen was able to drag himself to a third floor window where his calls for help were heard by Chief Wood who had come by for a golfing date. A black car used by the gunmen and later found to be stolen, was at first the only clue.

Chief Wood credited Det. Sgt. Donald Hasenbaig and members of the department for breaking the case. Oakland police also

received valuable cooperation from the prosecutor's office, Pompton Lakes police, Plainfield police, New Jersey State police and members of the Police Department in New York City.

## Cub Pack 312 Holds Space Derby

OAKLAND — A space derby was held by Cub Pack 312 at Ramapo Valley Baptist Church. First place was won by D'Errico and second place by John Hall.

Others who made a good showing included Bark Bellagay, Kenneth Dimmick, Brian J. William Bradford, Nicholas Lino and Thomas Hendrick.

Rockets made by the cubers and their fathers were launched by John Sullivan, assistant district commissioner, retiring cubmaster Richard Menzer, chairman William Bradford, Fred Merfeldt and George Austin.

A new bobcat, Mark Gamba, was inducted. Newmaster Robert Schick presented arrows of light and graduation certificates to Keith Kretz, George Ziehl, Mark Donlay, Scott Davidson. Awards were made by advancement chairman Emil Trapani to the following: Robert Rust, Keith Kretz, Brian Long, Mike Kummer, George Ziehl, Christ Gludski.

Den 8, Mrs. Doris Long, mother, led the opening ceremonies. Dens 3 and 5 tie for most parents in attendance.



Bradford Boone

8:55 PM (25 minutes ago)

to me

Am a bit amazed . . . Sonya never mentioned the robbery to me. Now I doubt you're aware that an art treasure left the house when the Hansens moved out. The dining room has a large dome like indentation (like the Sistine Chapel) and some itinerant artist had painted a scene reminiscent of Michelangelo's work there. When the Hansens

left, one of the daughters climbed up and found the art work was actually done on a piece of canvas, which she removed. I understand she still has (and treasures) that painting. I'm sure the art was in place when the Boon's moved in but the artist's ID is still a mystery.



**Kevin Heffernan** <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

9:13 PM (6 minutes ago)

to Bradford

Nick,

Thanks for art info. It certainly adds a rich texture to the history of the Hansen House and wonderful color to the article I'll likely write about it shortly. Could it be that Llsley Boone authorized the painting as he was a minister? We might never know as Brad was born in 1929 and his family was forced to move in the early 1930s to the North side of Muller's Pond. Separately, I'm going to try to research the Bergen County records for the historical ownership of the Hansen House to the owners and dates of Linden prior to Llsley Boone's ownership.

BTW, who exactly were the Hansen daughters? While I know Sonya is, I'm uncertain of the others. I ask as I want to involve them in the review and editing of my pending article about the Hansen House in addition to Brad.

Bradford Boone

9:34 PM (4 minutes ago)

to me

The name is Brad . . .

Yeah, the art work leads me to wonder if any other house in Oakland had similar treatment. I have already tried to reach the "other" daughter, but I seriously doubt she's mind if I shared her email address with you. There were two daughters, Sonya and Evelyn. Evelyn's last name is Sensale



**Kevin Heffernan** <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

9:38 PM (0 minutes ago)

to Bradford

My apologies.....

And thank you but I already have Evelyn's email.

nick antaga

1:24 PM (7 hours ago)

to me

Hi Kevin,

Glad to be of service to you. A scintilla of shame is not warranted because of the good work you do for the community and old-timers like me. At some point I'll help you establish a Cloud based platform for all your research if you wish to make it more accessible. Speaking of old timers, when I was in elementary school in Oakland, Old Man Potter was the most ancient resident we knew. He lived in an old house on the corner of Oak Street and the municipal road. He was probably close to 90 in 1960. If you search for his heirs, they might possess memorabilia useful to your efforts.

The photo of Les and Mary with Carmine Parete brought back memories. I haven't thought of Carmine in more than 50 years. He was quite a character. I will read the fire department material now that I know you are the author. I can almost taste the delicious food at the fire department summer carnival.

Regarding Mr. Penny, I played Little League baseball with Timothy Penny who lived across from Rexall Drugs on 202. Shockingly, Timothy passed away for reasons unknown to me. Some time later, his parents invited me to their home. They asked me to take any of Timothy's toys from his room. I chose the Lionel Train set. It was the larger scale and the engine was so heavy. Smoke came out the stack as the train sped around my bedroom floor. It was the best gift of my childhood and provided me with hours of enjoyment and education. I've never forgotten the Penny family, their terrible loss, and their amazing kindness.

Here is a photo of the Academy from around 1958.

BTW, did you notice the article about William Potash on the same page as the Hansen robbery? Potash was attempting to destroy an Island in the Ramapo River to dredge for sand and gravel.

Best,  
Nick





Kevin Heffernan <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

9:30 PM (0 minutes ago)

to nick

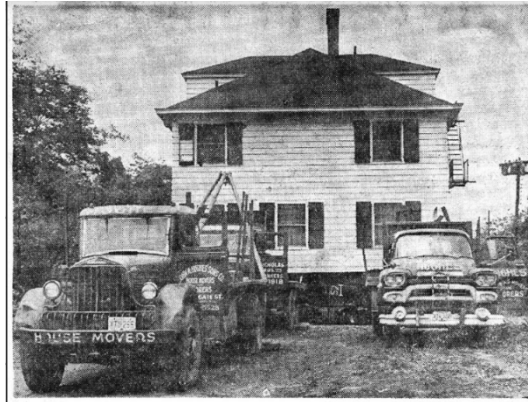
Nick,

.  
Thank you for the pic. It further enriches my Oakland Military Academy files.

Like father like son....The Potash family succeed in removing the island with the Potash Mining Company. Where the island WAS is now called Potash Lake! The balls of him! It was called the Potash Mining Company, a soil mining company established to mine the sand on and below the island. Such BS as Potash still infuriates me to this day. And BTW, big Al was singularly responsible for the demise of the Oakland Military Academy. It was 'coded' to death...one code violation after another to the extent that John Sarka, its owner, just couldn't keep up and moved to Orange County, NY after being in Oakland for 30+ years. Al wanted to build a shopping center and the Academy was in the way. That fact comes directly from Andrew Penny to me as he heard it directly from Sarka. My problem is that I cannot kill the dead. Maybe a wooden stake in Al Potash's heart might do. Maybe.

Attached are a few pics that you might appreciate. Ah, the good old days in Oakland when I wasn't here....

The Best,  
Kevin



**ON THE MOVE**—The new home of the Oakland Veterans of Foreign Wars arrived at its destination, one-quarter mile from its original location Tuesday after two days of moving. The old Alonzo Williams house was donated to the VFW. It was originally located at Terhune Street and Valley Road and is now on Chapman Drive behind the old VFW home and the First Aid Headquarters. It was moved two miles out of its way in order to avoid telephone wires and low viaducts. Before getting to the end of Terhune Street it fell into a gully twice and had to be pulled out. The house is two and one-half stories.

## The Burglary

nbox



Cean

9:34 AM (12 minutes ago)

to shuhn2000, Evelyn, Banjo1, Nick, me

Hello all,

This still is a painful memory. For some of us it was a loss of innocence. We had felt safe in our small town. Crime seemed only associated with cities. For harm to come to the Hansen's was unimaginable. I remember that these criminals hurt Evelina's dog "Mr. Bentley" as well. Rumors flew around town. Many people didn't accept the official explanation. Time hasn't faded this memory.

Kevin Heffernan <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

11:38 AM (1 hour ago)

to Cean, Evelyn, Boone, Sonya, nick, bcc: Caron

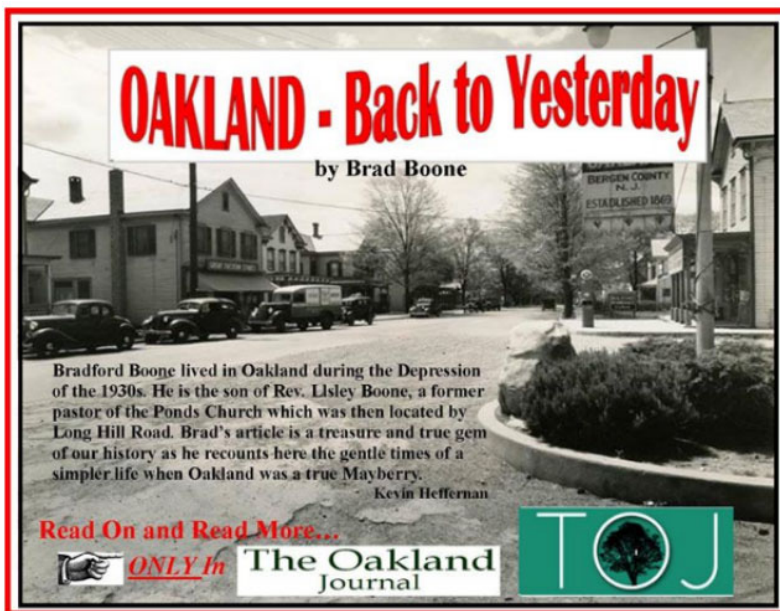
Hello Tribe,

As you may be aware, Brad has written a wonderful piece that recounts his memories and life in Oakland at a time when you lived it. And, he has given me permission to publish it in The Oakland Journal, a wonderful, well-read online community newspaper. Accordingly, I have developed a promo for it and posted the promo on 5 major Oakland Facebook pages: Historic Oakland, New Jersey, Oakland New Jersey, You Know You Grew Up in Oakland if..., Great Oak Park and I Grew Up in Pleasureland. The combined membership of these facebook pages is 8,493.

Below is the Facebook promotion published today. I will share with you any comments made by the readers. Also, here is the link to Brad's article in The Oakland Journal. Just click on it and you will be taken there.

<http://theoaklandjournal.com/local-events/oakland-back-to-yesterday/>

The Best.  
Kevin



Sonya Huhn

12:49 PM (31 minutes ago)

to Bradford

I loved your article...so glad he was able to get it into the Oakland Journal. I wonder how many of us that can remember it have a computer....Most of my classmates from PLHS 1948 don't have one.

For those of us that were there, a million thanks.

The lilac hedge

The cement mixer boat. Our own ocean liner . Hours spent traveling the oceans of the world.

The punks, some called them Cat a Nine Tails....

Mr Pulis gutting the trout.

Tinker always getting in trouble with his Dad. Why did he get that name? I sure there was a good reason.

The horse drawn carriages in the barn..... That wonderful barn. We were instantly transported to the wild west. Our imaginations ran wild. Every time we rode in them a new adventure. How lucky we were.

Mrs. Pulis 's brownies. She liked to bake.

The time my parents were going to New York to a party; so I decided to have a party. I was baby sitting Evelyn. I imagine I was about twelve, she was one. I knew it wouldn't be a good if I didn't have an older person there to chaperone so I asked June Pulis to keep us legitimate. She was happy to do it. The party went well and best of all my folks had no idea. That is until Mrs. Pulis wrote about my party and it was published in the Oakland News where they read all about it. Obviously not too much going on in Oakland at that time. Any idea what the name of the newspaper was...She always had a column.

**gratitude**



**Sonya Huhn**

3:32 PM (8 minutes ago)

to me

Thanks so much for stirring up and allowing us to share golden memories. Sonya



Kevin Heffernan <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

3:40 PM (0 minutes ago)

to Sonya

It's my pleasure, Sonya

Kevin Heffernan <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

4:18 PM (1 hour ago)

to Bradford, nick

Brad,

If I'm connecting the dots correctly, this is a photo of your home after your family moved from the future Hansen House. It was on the North side of muller's Pond and was destroyed in 1982 when the office building was built on the remains of the pond. The structure matches the pic of the pond with Hans Hansen standing on the side. Am I correct about this house?

Kevin



nick antaga

4:42 PM (48 minutes ago)

to me, Bradford

That's the way I recall the home from my childhood. When I first read about Hobbit homes, I remembered this one because it seemed so low to the ground as you approached from the Lane.

Nick

**Bradford Boone**

7:36 PM (1 hour ago)

to me

Kevin:

Where in the world do you come up with all the dots? Yes, that's the house the Boone's moved into after having to leave the old big house (later Hansen House). You can also see it in the extreme right side of the attached pic of the big house which also shows part of the old Pulis house that shows under the porte cochere.

Attachments area



**nick antaga**

9:05 PM (25 minutes ago)

to Bradford, me

Hi Brad,

Built into the rise. That explains it. Frank Lloyd Wright would have approved and he used the same approach with his famous Taliesin in Wisconsin. He said a home should never be “on a hill”, rather “of the hill”. It must have felt special living in your boyhood home. Like a Hobbit, perhaps.

Glad your story was published by the renowned Oakland historian.

Best,  
Nick

**From:** Bradford Boone <[banjoi@aol.com](mailto:banjoi@aol.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 13, 2018 1:41 PM  
**To:** [nick@antaga.com](mailto:nick@antaga.com)  
**Subject:** Re: Your Old Home

Nick:

Probably because it was built back into a rise in the ground. The lane in from Rt202 stayed to the right at what I'd call then first floor and descended on the far side of the building.

**Cean**

9:21 PM (23 minutes ago)

to shuhn2000, Evelyn, Banjo1, Nick, me

Hello Tribe,

This wonderful collection of memories deserved to be shared. Thank you Bradford and Kevin. I am happy to report that the Oakland of the 40's and 50's was much the same as that of the 30's.

The gorgeous lilacs stood along the larger pond. That pond was the source of many a lesson. We were introduced to all the fresh water inhabitants. Frogs, tadpoles, turtles and ducks lived among the Rainbow Trout. Less enticing were the water snakes. Every year Milt Pulis and his friends would take to the pond and the pool with their rifles. After the great noise of the shooting the men would rake the snakes up to the lawn. All of us wee kids would shiver at the sight of dozens of bloody serpents. It is a great wonder that any of us ever braved the pool to learn to swim.

We too would pole around the pond in the old cement tub. It seemed as wide as a lake. The water was freezing even at the heart of summer in my memory. Our mother taught us the names of all the bushes, flowers grasses and trees. Muller's barns still stood. They were still filled with the notable treasures that Sonya and Bradford enjoyed. These survivors of earlier times were an education to all the children. We felt that we

“discovered” this abundance.

Then Boonie Pulis showed us the immense collection of “Sunshine and Health” magazines. We were enthralled. Nudity was not typical in our young world. People were doing ordinary tasks and exercises, all without clothing.

What a revelation.

So many of the memories that Bradford and Sonya have of their young lives were repeated by Evelina and our buddies 10 years later.

Thank you one and all. It’s a pleasure to look back at our formative years.

Go well,  
Cean

Kevin Heffernan <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

9:58 PM (0 minutes ago)

to Cean, Sonya, Evelyn, Boone, Nick

Cean,

No, thank you! I am incredibly privileged to be associated with such an august and distinguished group of former residents who have such incredibly rich and wonderful memories of this former Mayberry. Your collective recollections of the Oakland of then have enriched me and will equally do so for future generations. My role as an outsider is simply to augment this wonderful conversation with photos where possible and to ask questions to spur your memories. I'm an Oakland newbie after having lived here only since 1979.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

### 7 photos of early Hansen House

nbox



**Evelyn & Bernard Sensale**

3:48 PM (6 hours ago)

to me, Sonya, Boone, Molinari, BredimusNick, Pat





*Hansen's House*

This lovely country home of twenty rooms is your summer vacation home to enjoy for a weekend, a week or a month at very reasonable rates.

The first floor of the house includes a spacious living room for Saturday evening dances and informal parties, a large room especially designed for your enjoyment of television, a new enlarged open dining porch, completely screened in, a modern kitchen where delicious American and Scandinavian foods are prepared.

Sleeping accommodations are limited to forty people with large, airy rooms for singles, doubles and family groups.

The enclosed reservation card is for your convenience or please us, Oakland, New Jersey 8-5801

*Hans Hansen*  
1958



The Swimming Pool and Giant Shade Trees form a perfect setting for delightful vacation days at

*Hansen's House*

Route 202  
Oakland, N. J.

In the Heart of the Ramapo Mountains

One hour from New York City by car, train or bus.  
See enclosed card for detailed description.



Two popular corners of the main living room.

*Hansen's House*  
Famous for Fine Foods.



INDOOR SPORTS

- Television
- Dancing
- Bagatelle
- Billiards
- Cards
- Table Games

OUTDOOR SPORTS

- Tennis
- Swimming
- Horseshoes
- Shuffleboard
- Ping-pong
- Darts
- Croquet

On the picturesque Ramapo River—5 minute walk from Hansen's House.

- Boating
- Canoing
- Fishing
- Mountain Hiking
- Weeks, Pests, Tents

Spacious Lawns and Tennis Court

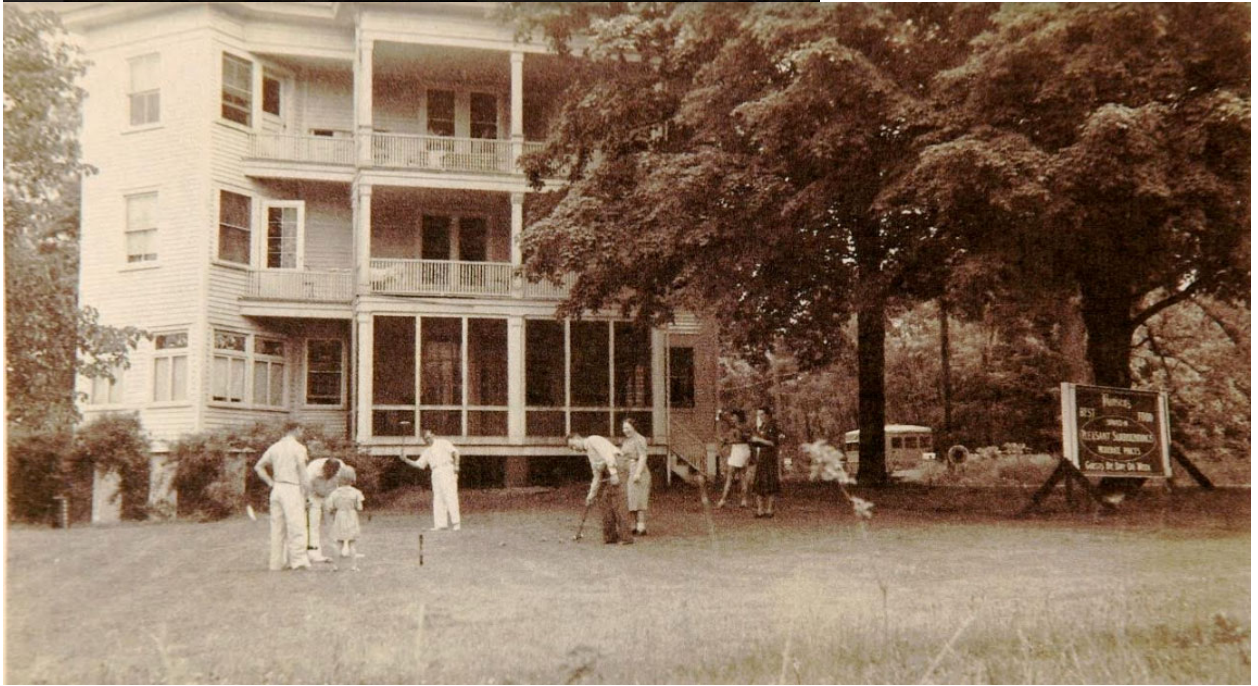


A 5 minute bus ride from Hansen's House will take you to Puttigon Lakes where churches, movies and a modern shopping center are yours to enjoy.

RATES

Meals and Accommodations

per day \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
per week-end \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
per week \$ \_\_\_\_\_



# \$15 Would Satisfy Hansens For Room And Board In The '40's

By Renee Rewick  
 Thirty-five years ago Daggy and Hans Hansen decided to leave New York City and move to a small, almost unheard-of town in New Jersey called Oakland. They chose a home suggested to them by the late Alf Nielsen, Hans' uncle and local realtor, which was large enough to start a tourist town with the prospect of someday being a vacation spot for people living as far away as New York City or even Brooklyn. Last month the Hansen House was sold, and although the new owners, The Liberty Bell Cocktail Lounge and Restaurant have retained the same fine complement of chefs and employees, the Hansens took with them memories of more than three decades of entertaining the public.

"I remember the first time I walked into the living room, the boards from the ceiling were scratching the floor below," recalls Hans' daughter, Sonya Miller. "Gas light fixtures were all around. The five fireplaces were still in working condition, even

though the house was over 100-years-old. The beautiful painting on the ceiling was hardly visible for all the dust. The house had been vacant for many years and the bark was about to tear it down."

This 100-year-old house was the former parsonage of the Ponds Church built on that site in 1770 by the early Dutch settlers. The actual church was found further north, but parts of the original parsonage are utilized in the restaurant.

"My father kept his job in New York, but came up on his days off and pushed the ceiling back where it belonged, painted, plastered, repaired all the plumbing and electrical work...Mother made curtains, gardened, painted...and between them both they breathed life into an old building that was about to die," tells Sonya.

In less than one year The Ponds Tourist Home was opened, named after the old church. "Mother was a fantastic cook," reminisced daughter Evelyn, "and meals were served to any of the overnight guests that requested it. There weren't that many tourists passing through the wilds of Oakland in 1939 so they opened a Sinclair Gas Station in the middle of what now is the parking lot. We had a rule that whoever was the closest to the door when the bell rang for a gas customer had to run out and pump gas. If memory serves me correctly, it was selling for 12.9 cents at that time and

most of the customers would come in for 50 cents worth and request that we 'fill her up'."

In 1940 the name was changed from The Ponds to The Hansen House. Daggy and Hans advertised in "the Nostic Tidse", a Norwegian newspaper published in Brooklyn, that the Hansen House was open for summer vacations. A truly delightful spot was established in the valley of Oakland where swimming, tennis, shuffleboard was available.

A flyer described accommodations for forty people; "a spacious living room for Saturday evening dances and informal parties, a large room especially designed for year enjoyment of television, a new enlarged open dining porch, completely screened in, a modern kitchen where delicious American and Scandinavian foods are prepared." One could enjoy seven days in the country house with three meals a day cooked by Mrs. Hansen for \$15.00.

Business flourished in the summer, but the remaining nine months of the year were quiet. Everyone raved about the Scandinavian cooking prepared by Daggy which was learned in her native town of Kristiansund in southern Norway, so they decided that they would open a restaurant if a liquor license could be acquired. At that time Oakland had a population of 900 people with 11 liquor licenses.

In 1949 the license came through and The Hansen House smorgasbord restaurant was opened. It became one of the best known restaurants in Bergen County. With a seating capacity of 200 in the main dining room and



The Hansen House, a tourist home during the late 1930's informed their visitors that they could enjoy a country vacation in the picturesque Ramapo Mountains area, and also be five minutes away from Pompton Lakes where churches, movies and a modern shopping center awaited them.



The swimming pool and giant shade trees formed a perfect setting for delightful vacation days at the historical landmark.

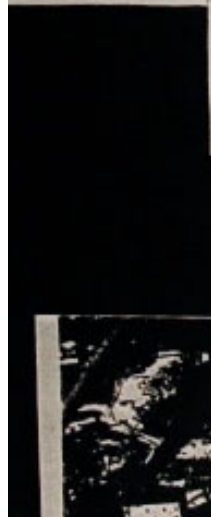
boasting private rooms, the restaurant retained a staff of 30. Sisters Sonya and Evelyn relieved their parents of their duties little by little these past two years so that the Hansen parents could retire.

Aside from their restaurant business, the Hansens have also been active in other ways to help make Oakland an outstanding community. Hans Hansen has served as president of the Oakland Chamber of Commerce as well as the Oakland Rotary Club, the objectives of both of these organizations ever being close to his heart.

After 35 years, Hans and Daggy will have the opportunity

to spend their summers in native Norway and winters in Florida.

It is not without sadness and a deep sense of nostalgia that the Hansens leave behind their life's work and the town they have learned to love so well. They were always aware and appreciative of all the people who helped make their success possible.



Kevin Heffernan <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

10:23 PM (18 minutes ago)

to nick, Bradford, Cean, Evelyn, Sonya, ingerpye

Hello Tribe,

First, I want to thank Evelyn for the photos of the early Hansen House. They are priceless. And, probably to the surprise of none, I'm now collecting material for a new article on the Hansen House to be published in The Oakland Journal. But before I

publish it, I will send io all tribal members for review and accuracy complete with a set of red pencils for savage editing..

An important part of the article will be the history of the Hansen House building itself. To do so, I started with the newspaper article provided by Evelyn. Really good stuff. Then I checked my file on Molly's restaurant, the successor to the Hansen House to see if there was any incremental info. And there was! Then I saw the photo of the folks playing a wild game of croquette and 2 things struck me. First, the shape of the building is different. But that was solved by a blurb in the Molly's article which noted that Lisey Boone enclosed the west side of the building. OK. But who were those olympic athletes and what were they doing there at the time? A partial answer and a larger question is made if one were to look at the sign in the extreme right of the photo. It is isolated below.

Clearly, before Llsely Boone purchased the house, it was a tourist hotel and restaurant with the sign promoting its 'best food' and that accomodations can be obtained for a day or a week. And the name of the tourist home is 'Pleasant ????????' as the last part of the name is indistinguishable. It appears that the photo was taken in the early/mid 1920s.

Now to try to connect some dots.....The article about Molly's tells us that one Countess Vernon greatly expanded a small farmhouse by adding 16 rooms to create the core of what was to be the Hansen House and that Llsely Boone enclosed the porches of the West side of the building. That was not unusual at the time as the Calderwood, aka Oakland Military, went through the same process as did Lilac Manor. The article Evelyn provided tells us that the building was once a parsonage of the Ponds Church which would also explain the religious painting on the ceiling. And note that Countess Vernon also built Lilac Manor on the hill across the street which subsequently became the Ramapo Sanitorium. Since it is known that Ms. Vernon was a very wealthy and generous person, she likely donated her small home (by her standards) to the Ponds Church thereby enabling them to sell the parsonage on 48 Long Hill Road around 1900. However with the photo supplied by Evelyn showing the frolicking with croquette, it appears that the Ponds Church ultimately sold it to become a tourist home and that Llsely Boone purchased it from the tourist home folks.

Sorry, but all of this is a set up for a single question: Does anyone know the name or anything about the tourist home that was Ms. Vernon's home that became the parsonage that became the tourist home that became the Llsley residence that became the Hansen House that became Molly's that became Portobello's? Yeah, I know that it's a lot of becoming.....

Anybody?

Kevin



**Sonya Huhn**

9:16 PM (1 hour ago)

to Bradford, Cean, nick, Evelyn, me

Hold on...there's more to learn about our end of town...

If I looked out of my bedroom window I saw a huge Black Walnut tree. I also saw a mountain, well it wasn't exactly a mountain but it certainly was a very big hill. It was filled with trees and deer and Indian Heads or arrows heads, don't remember exactly what we called them. There were lots of them and we always felt proud when we found one...There was a wonderful Cherry Tree on that hill. I remember climbing up sitting there eating cherries until I couldn't eat anymore

. It's important that you know I didn't do this alone... I did it with the Diamond kids...Johnny, Mildred and an older sister . Mr & Mrs Diamond lived up on that hill/mountain. Their house was directly across from Muller's pool, but you couldn't see it from the road.

There was a dirt road that led up to their house. Before you got to their tiny house you'd pass a large foundation of a very large building.. Probably the Sanatorium or that hotel some of you speak of.

Did the name Diamond ring a bell with any of you...I guess only Brad would have remembered them. Mrs. Diamond's birthday was flag day. You tell me why I remember that, clear as a bell. Think of her every flag day. She was a small woman, and she helped out at the Hansen House frequently.

You all must remember Joe Lewis. Well he trained in Pompton Lakes. and many a morning I would see him run up as far as the Black Walnut Tree then turn around and go back to camp. By the way the walnuts were very hard to crack, almost impossible.

I remember hearing that someone actually bought the tree. The wood from the tree was very special. Maybe the fact that I had such a hard time cracking the nuts meant that the wood was very strong. I also heard they (who ever they were) paid a lot of money for it... I wonder who they paid...Story for another time no doubt.

I always suspected the Diamonds were very poor. There was only one big room . Today they might call it the Great Room...but it was anything but great. There was a sofa against one wall...a stove and sink against the other. There must have been an ice box, but I don't remember it.

A pot belly stove for heating and cooking....I thought it was super. I was allowed to put wood in it or was it coal a few times. The best part of their great room was a large round table right smack in the middle; and in the middle of the table was a Mason jar filled with spoons...It was always there. You don't forget things like that.

There was a flight of stairs, so there must have been an upstairs where they slept. I never went up there. There was an outhouse, with a outhouse moon carved on it.

By the way you all must know that not only is the Black Walnut tree gone but so is the Cherry Tree.

It makes me a little sad.

**Sonya Huhn**

8:07 PM (2 hours ago)

to me

I may have already sent this to you.....but just in case.....

### **There used to be a Gas Station**

*There used to be a gas station right here on the corner. It was a Sinclair station. It was in the late 30's early 40's and the gas station was on our property. Our house was on about an acre and a half of land that wrapped around three sides of Route 202. There was plenty of property so that the gas station didn't look like it was in our front yard.*

*I'm certain the Sinclair company build it. I imagine there was a deal, they would build it on our property and we would man it. We certainly couldn't have afforded to build it.*

*It was a cute little one room house built with an enclosed toilet and sink. Just big enough for an attendant to sit in and wait patiently for the customers to pull up. In those days there weren't that many cars driving by on Route 202 or anyplace else for that matter. We couldn't just sit there all day long. My father came up with a great idea. He put a black hose down on either side of the pumps. When a customer drove in for gas they'd have to drive over the hose, that would cause a*

*very loud ring in the house. Whoever was closest to the door would run out. I was certain my father was a genius.*

*I imagine in my lifetime I've pumped close to 200 gallons of gas. Customers could get three gallons for 50 cents. "Fill her up" meant a three dollar sale. Oil was 50 cents a quart. I couldn't do the oil thing, it was too messy. Either the customer would help me, taking pity on a young girl or I'd jump on the hose several times and Daddy would know that meant he had to come out to take care of the customer. That little house no longer exists ....neither does Sinclair gas. The cute little house was torn down in about 1948 to become the parking lot for the Hansen House restaurant. That was our home. I remember at the entrance of the house/restaurant was a big sign that read, Hansen House....Air Conditioned. There's a picture around here someplace ....*  
1/20/18



**Cean**

10:08 AM (26 minutes ago)

to Evelyn, me, Sonya, Boone, BredimusNick, Pat

Evelina et al,

I'm thrilled to see our childhood world preserved in these photos. Thank you. They are "ekta fine", as we Vikings would say. Seeing the backyard, the porch windows, and the tennis court brought back the vivid picture of us working on a Girl Scout badge. We had a small campfire on the tennis court. We were cooking a robust pot of chili. There in the porch windows the Hansen House guests were dining in style. Outdoors we were easting on chili and somores, dreaming of Girl Scout badges! Good times.

I remember too when your folks bought a television set. It was the first one in our end of town. Pure magic. It was set up in the place of honor in the cocktail lounge. There the neighborhood children would gather in front of this magical equipment. "Howdy Doody" enthralled us all. In the background men in business attire sipped adult beverages. Each group intent on their own pursuit. The generous Hansen's were meeting all of our needs once again. ( our band included Evelina, Cean and Robert BREDIMUS, Boonie Pulis, Wire and Evelyn Haidenger, and Serena Otto as regular viewers.)

These memories are priceless indeed.

Love,  
Cean

## History of the Hansen House Building

nbox

Tribe

x

**Bradford Boone**

11:18 AM (1 hour ago)

to me

A lot of info I never heard before! The history as to how the future Hansen House building came into being is interesting in itself, but I'd be interested in following up on the when, how and from whom my dad acquired the big house. I'm also curious as to how he lost the big house - was he foreclosed, short sale, or simply moved out. Then the question is how did he acquire the smaller house across the pond - again, from when, how and from who. It would seem a search of the Bergen County clerk's office should shed light on such questions.



**Kevin Heffernan** <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

11:33 AM (1 hour ago)

to Bradford

Hi Brad,

Your suggestion regarding a record search at the Bergen County offices is precisely my plan. I will be going there next week to begin digging and will keep you fully informed.

As an aside, I went to the Oakland tax office to see what they had. Well, very little beyond the current the full tax statement which they provided to me. But one element on that statement was very interesting. Specifically, it noted that it was built in 1924. While we know that it is simply inaccurate, the 1924 date might allude to the enclosing of the West side of the building by your dad thereby suggesting the approximate time when your dad first acquired the building.

Again, I'll keep you fully informed as I hopefully acquire more information.



**Bradford Boone**

11:46 AM (1 hour ago)

to me

Cab't wait to find out what you discover there.



**Kevin Heffernan** <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

12:04 PM (1 hour ago)

to Bradford

Brad,



Tracing the origin of the smaller house on the North side of Muller's pond which your family moved into may be more difficult as Trout Pond Lane simply no longer exists. And, it is uncertain if the street name, Trout Pond Lane, was even an official street in Oakland versus it effectively being a simple driveway. Trout Pond Lane does not appear on any historical map of Oakland from 1900 forward.

My instincts would be to trace the deed records of the office building currently on the site to determine prior ownership. And, did your dad own the house or did he rent it?



Bradford Boone

12:24 PM (48 minutes ago)

to me

I assume he bought the smaller house, though how when he had to leave the big house I can't imagine. I know dad and Milt Pulis built a brick fireplace in a corner of the dining room. At days end I was running around the dining room table, lost my footing and slid into the as yet unset cement. A days work to be redone! Dad had a large office on the lower level, and Milt used an adjacent area for gutting and prepping fish for lucky anglers who fished the upper pond. As far as I know, the dirt lane heading into the smaller house from 202 had no name, but it was lined all the way by a magnificent lilac hedge hemmed in between the lane and the pond.



Kevin Heffernan <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

12:39 PM (34 minutes ago)

to Bradford

Brad,

I believe that Sonya noted in one of her emails that her father acquired the big house via a tax lien sale from the bank for about \$3,000 and Hans much spent time and money repairing it as it was in not good condition. .The timing would be the early 1930s and the Depression. Also I believe that In a separate email it was noted that your dad had an educational business for schools that failed due the Depression. It would somewhat make sense to think that your dad may have fallen into dire financial straights during the Depression and lost the house to the bank through foreclosure forcing him to move to the smaller house. It would also follow that he may have rented the smaller house and that the smaller house may have been owned by Milt Pulis, an in-law. Obviously, this is directional speculation. I hope to find out more when in Hackensack.



Bradford Boone

12:51 PM (21 minutes ago)

to me

I have no doubt that my dad's financial troubles were brought about by the New York City public school system cancel his contract to provide visual education services to the city's schools. I have no idea as to how long it was between the Boone's leaving the big house and the Hansens acquiring it, and I'm

not too sure it was in dilapidated condition. More likely Hans spent time and money to re-configure the house to his intended purpose.



Kevin Heffernan <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

1:05 PM (7 minutes ago)

to Bradford

Brad,

Upon reflection the photo provided by Cean showing the people playing croquette also shows that the big house was a tourist home at that time in what appears to be the early 1920s. It also suggests that your dad acquired it from the tourist home owners and enclosed the West side with the porches as reported in the newspaper article. Nonetheless, Sonya does remember and report that the house was in terrible condition when the Hansens got it in a tax sale and the Hansens repaired and remolded it into the restaurant. That would suggest that the house was abandoned for a quite a while as it suffered from the elements without heat, repair, etc. Again, hopefully more, much more when I go to Hackensack.

Kevin Heffernan <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

11:38 AM (1 hour ago)

to nick

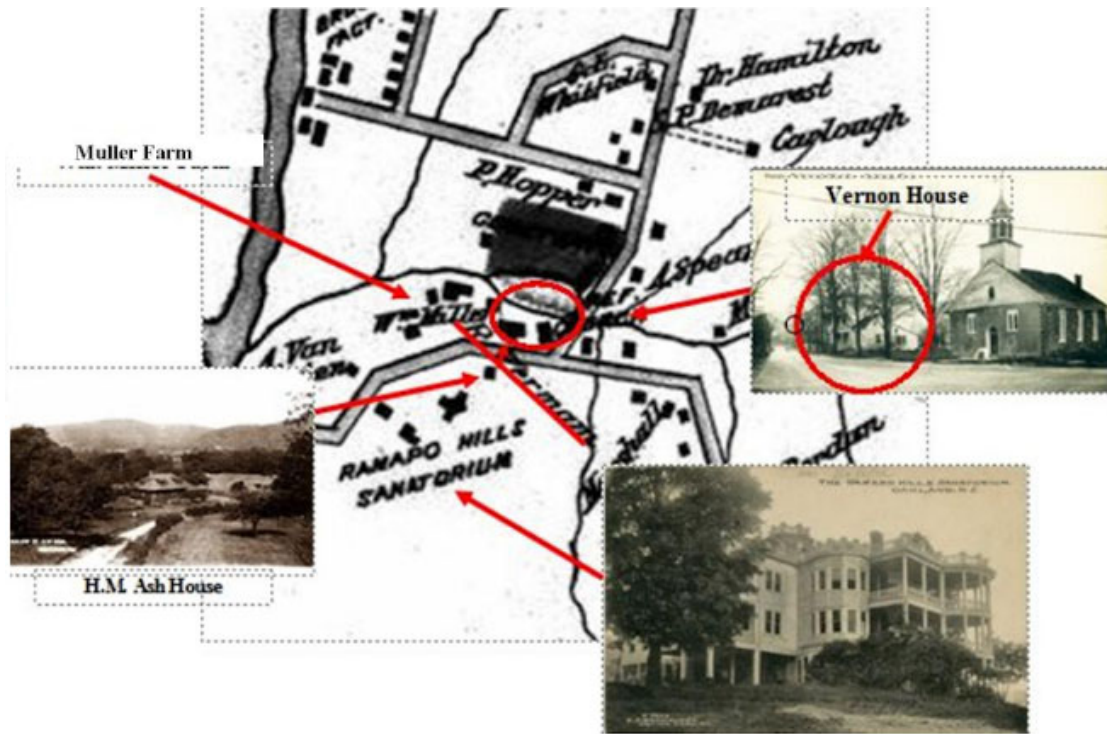
Nick,

I think that you might find this interesting. My last email cites a 1973 article on Molly's Restaurant which followed the Hansen House. It noted that the future Hansen House was developed by Countess Vernon who added 16 rooms to a small farm house. The article also noted that the origins and ownership of the original farmhouse were unknown. And BTW, the correct spelling of the name of the countess is Vernam, not Vernon as reported in the article.

Nonetheless, when the known structures are overlaid on to a 1910 map of Oakland, the source of the original farmhouse becomes apparent.. Specifically, it appears that the original farmhouse was part of the Muller farm and that Countess Vernam bought it from William Muller. That might also explain the origin of the large and later-built Muller house of your youth on Ramapo Valley Road.

It all seems to fit. I plan to go to Hackensack next week to begin a record search for the Hansen House property back to the late 1800s.

Kevin



Kevin Heffernan <kheffernan555@gmail.com>

12:54 PM (1 hour ago)

to nick

Nick,

Further to my prior email regarding the Source of the Hansen House, it should be noted that the Muller House on Ramapo Valley Road burned down on May 6, 1967 and a newspaper article reporting the fire noted that the house "was built more that 60 years ago". That would say that it was built around 1900 in a style that was in vogue at that time. Since the Mullers built their house around 1900, where did they live before they built it? The likely answer is the farmhouse that Countess Vernan purchased from William Muller to expand into what became the Hansen House. Bingo?

Mar 15 (1 day ago)

**Cean**

to Sonya, Bradford, nick, Evelyn, me

Hello tribe,

I well remember that there was a boxer's training camp in Pompton Lakes. Evelina and I watched boxers following the pace car running past the Hansen House. The pace cars were usually in vivid colors. I can picture pink and bright lavender Cadillac's. Our father, Bob Bredimus, was a great fan of the sport, which he referred to as "the sweet science". I remember Rocky Graziano, Rocky Marciano, Ezzard Charles, Jersey Joe Walcott, and the great Joe Louis. It must have been the golden age of fisticuffs. Even as children we knew we were witnesses of something extraordinary.

Eureka,  
Cean



**nick antaga**

1:32 PM (25 minutes ago)

to me

Hi Kevin,

Fantastic research! I've invested in a lot of real estate over the years and learned to read tax maps, deeds, conveyances, and what not. I'm confident that you will complete the puzzle for Sonya, Evelyn, Brad and all of us who fondly remember Oakland in the Hansen House era. They will be delighted to learn that a Countess once owned their home.

Good luck with your sleuthing and let me know if I can help.

Best,  
Nick

**From:** Kevin Heffernan <[kheffernan555@gmail.com](mailto:kheffernan555@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Thursday, March 15, 2018 5:39 AM

**To:** nick antaga <[nick@antaga.com](mailto:nick@antaga.com)>

**Subject:** Source of the Hansen House



**nick antaga**

1:48 PM (9 minutes ago)

to me

Hello Kevin,

I just sent you a response to your prior email. The fire is familiar because I was working for the partners who restored the Muller Carriage Barn around 1967. Bill Nuckle and Frank D'Alessio (spelling) opened the barn as a music and social venue for teens. I was a part-time employee of Frank at his Franklin Lakes Stereo Center at the time and installed the sound and lighting at the barn.

That project is inconceivable in today's environment of fire code, building code, security, etc. It was an important chapter for the 1960's teens along with the Pleasureland Concerts.

Your hunches are always on target, Kevin.

Best,  
Nick

nick antaga

1:42 PM (33 minutes ago)

to Sonya, Bradford, Cean, Evelyn, me

Great stories. Sonya! You must have many more tales to tell us.

I had my own experience with Black Walnuts and Cherries in Oakland. The nuts stained my hands and the brown would not come off, even with soap and water. It would wear off after a few days. The Cherries were very sour, but every so often you'd taste a sweet one. The beautiful Maple trees produced a winged seed pod that, when spilt, would stick to your nose. like a Band-Aid. Wild Honeysuckle blossoms were plucked and the nectar carefully extracted. Mountain laurel bushes were plentiful and the blossom stamens could spring and trap an insect, which we would test with our fingers. Sassafras trees abounded on the mountain and the roots tasted like root beer. Our Mother taught us to cherish Dogwood Trees because the blossom symbolized the Holy Cross. Near the river was the smell of Skunk Cabbage and an occasional real skunk. Many evenings you could catch a whiff of skunk somewhere in Oakland. We'd turn over rocks looking for salamanders and Newts. White Birch trees were stripped of their bark for our Indian games. I carved my initials all over the Ramapo Mountain trees and boulders, probably long gone. I also hunted for arrow heads in the Ramapo Mountains. My Father found an enormous stone axe head when he was a boy and I always hoped to eclipse it. We would chip away at boulders on the mountain and took home shiny pieces of "fool's gold" and quartz crystals. Chickens were kept up Long Hill Road and rooster crowing was a common sound. Cicadas made quite a racket at night, but not every year. I dug for dormant Cicadas underneath the larger mountain trees. The sound of crickets was a nightly experience from spring to fall. Tent caterpillars decorated the trees along 202 and the railroad track. I can still recall the smell of DDT sprayed to eradicate them plus the annual mosquito spraying. Near the railroad tracks we would look for beads of some plastic-like material which had fallen from freight trains. This was before the two plastic factories opened in Oakland. The stuff was probably toxic.

Nick

**Sonya Huhn**

5:08 PM (33 minutes ago)

to me

Kevin asked me to fill him in on some information regarding the Hansen House....

There is no way I can help him without letting him know things about my father and mother...

Here's a little thing I wrote about Mr. Hansen, Pop Pop, Daddy  
mother is coming next...

#### A Father's Day Tribute

My father wore spats and a gray Fedora, not all the time mind you, but for special occasions. He was very handsome. People said he looked like Clark Gable. He had a mustache, he was tall and had a certain charm, and a wonderful sense of humor. He had many trophies and medals. Several for skiing and ski jumping, speed skating, Soccer, Ping Pong, Tennis, Bridge and Golf. The last trophy he won was in his late 60's. It was the Apawamis Golf Club trophy. He won it three times over the years. The rule was that if you won it three times the silver trophy was yours to keep. For many years we kept it on the mantle, now my mother has it in her China cabinet. He played the mandolin. He danced the Viennese waltz with me. When we danced I felt just like Cinderella at the palace ball. He loved all sports; he really should have had two sons rather than two daughters.

I remember when he took me to Macy's and bought me skis. There was a lot more snow in Norway than in Oakland, New Jersey, but he had plans and high hopes for me. He talked to me about the Olympics and how with practice I could be a champion. There was that Christmas when all the girls were getting figure skates, all except me that is. I opened the box and there was a pair of racing skates. You know the kind, the ones with the long blade out in front. He took me out on the big pond in our backyard and taught me how to speed skate. He showed me how to lean forward, hands clasped behind my back and go like the wind. That was such fun. I remember how proud he was when I picked up speed. I have a wonderful memory of he and I skating cross hands gliding across our frozen pond. You can just imagine how wonderful I felt. When I was a teenager he built a cement tennis court in our backyard. He taught me the game. He taught me so well that I beat all the boys in my high school's tennis club.

My father was born in Norway and left when he was just 16. He went to sea. Norway had the second Navy in the world at that time. His plan was to travel

the world ending up in America. When I was older he took me back “home” as he called it. Proudly showing me where he lived, where he went to school and where he skied. Norway is such a beautiful country I couldn’t help but wonder why he ever left. When I asked him he told me that of all his subjects in school he loved American History best of all. What could be more exciting to a young boy than cowboys and Indians? Rumor also had it that in America the streets were lined with gold.. He just had to come. How could you not love a man that held you when you cried, played the mandolin for you. Taught you how to ski and to skate cross hands? And on occasion would dance the Viennese waltz with you. Every now and then if I close my eyes I can still see him in his spats and gray Fedora. Daddy died in 1978, and every now and then I think of him, and when I do I miss him so.

Sonya Huhn  
June 2003  
593 WC

nick antaga

5:28 PM (1  
hour ago)

to Evelyn, me, Sonya, Boone, Molinari, Pat

Thanks so much, Evelyn! What a great article along with all the rare photos. I have captured the text of the article below for Kevin’s use as well as your own.  
The author was a classmate of mine in Oakland.

Nick

Capture of article text:

### **\$15 Would Satisfy Hansens For Room And Board In The '40's**

By Renee Rewiski

*Thirty-five years ago Dagny and Hans Hansen decided to leave New York City and move to an almost unheard of New Jersey called Oakland They chose a home suggested to them by the late Alf Nielsen, Hans’ uncle and local realtor which was large enough to start a tourist home with the prospect of someday being a vacation spot for people living as far away as New York City or even Brooklyn. Last month (1974) the Hansen House was sold, and although the new owners, The Liberty Bell Cocktail Lounge and Restaurant have retained the same fine complement of chefs and employees, the Hansens took with them memories of more than three decades of entertaining the public.*

*“I remember the first time I walked into the living room, the boards from the ceiling were touching the floors below,” recalls Sonya Miller. “Gas light fixtures were all around. The five fireplaces were still in working condition, even though the house was over 100-years-old. (1830s?)”*

*The beautiful painting on the ceiling was hardly visible for all the dust. The house had been vacant for many years and the bank was about to tear it down.” This 100-year-old house was the former parsonage of the Ponds Church built on that site in 1710 by the early Dutch settlers. The actual church was found further north, but parts at the original parsonage are utilized in the Restaurant. “My father kept his job in New York, but came up on his days off and pushed the ceiling back where it belonged, painted, plastered, repaired all the plumbing and electrical work....Mother made curtains, gardened, painted...and between them both they breathed life into an old building that was about to die.” tells Sonya.*

*In less than one year ThePonds Tourist Home was opened, named after the old church.*

*“Mother was a fantastic cook” reminisced daughter Evelyn, “and meals were served to any of the overnight guests that requested it. There weren’t that many tourists passing through the wilds of Oakland in 1939 so they opened a Sinclair Gas Station in the middle of what now is the parking lot. We had a rule that whoever was the closest to the door when the bell rang for a gas customer had to run out and pump gas.*

*If memory serves me correctly, it was selling for 13.9 cents at that time and most of the customers would come in for 50 cents worth and request that we “fill her up.”*

*In 1940 the name was changed from The Ponds to the Hansen House. Dagny and Hans advertised in the Norske Tidene, a Norwegian newspaper published in Brooklyn, that the Hansen House was open for summer vacations. A truly delightful spot was established in the valley of Oakland where swimming, tennis, shuffleboard was available. A flyer described the accommodations for forty people, “a spacious living room for Saturday evening dances and informal parties, a large room especially designed for your enjoyment of television, a new enlarged open dining porch, completely screened in, a modern kitchen where delicious American and Scandinavian foods are prepared.” One could enjoy seven days in the county house with three meals a day cooked by Mrs. Hansen for \$15.00.*

*Business flourished in the summer, but the remaining nine months of the year were quiet. Everyone raved about the Scandinavian cooking prepared by Dagny which was learned in her native town of Kristianland in Southern Norway, so they decided they would open a restaurant if a liquor license could be acquired. At that time Oakland had a population of 900 people with 11 liquor licenses.*

*In 1949 the license came through and the Hansen House smorgasbord restaurant was opened. It became one of the best known restaurants in Bergen County. With a seating capacity of 200 in the main dining room and private rooms, the restaurant retained a staff of 30. Sisters Sonya and Evalyn relieved their parents of their duties little by little these past two years so that the Hansen parents could retire. Aside from their restaurant business, the Hansens have also been active in other ways to help make Oakland an outstanding community. Hans Hansen has served as president of the Oakland Chamber of Commerce as well as the Oakland Rotary Club, the objectives of both of these organizations ever being close to his heart.*



*After 35 years, Hans and Dagny will have the opportunity to spend their summers in native Norway and winters in Florida. It is not without sadness and a deep sense of nostalgia that the Hansens leave behind their life's work and the town they have learned to love so well. They were always aware and appreciative of all the people who helped make their success possible.*

*Captions for photos.*

*The Hansen House, a tourist home during the late 1930's informed their visitors that they could enjoy a country vacation in the picturesque Ramapo Mountains area, and also be five minutes away from Pompton Lakes where churches, movies and a modern shopping center awaited them.*

*The swimming pool and giant shade trees formed a perfect settings for delightful vacation days at the historical landmark.*