COUNTY OF BERGEN

James J. Tedesco III
County Executive

BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS

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Chairwoman

Steven A. Tanelli
Vice Chairman

John A. Felice
Chairman Pro Tempore

Maura R. DeNicola
Tom Sullivan
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Bergen County is the most populous county of the state of New Jersey. As of the 2000 Census, the population was 884,118, growing to 905,116 as of the 2010 Census. It is part of the New York Metropolitan Area. The county seat is Hackensack. In 2009 Bergen County ranked 16th among the highest income counties in the United States, in terms of per-capita income.

History

At the time of first European contact, Bergen County was inhabited by Native American people, particularly the Lenape groups of the Tappan, Hackensack and Rumachenanck (later called the Haverstraw). Today, some of the Ramapough Mountain Indians who reside in the northwest of the county trace their ancestry back to the Lenape and Munsee peoples.

The area comprising today's Bergen and Hudson counties was part of New Netherland, the 17th century North American colonial province of the Dutch Republic. It had been claimed after Henry Hudson (sailing for the Dutch East India Company) explored Newark Bay and anchored his ship at Weehawken Cove in 1609.

Early settlement attempts by the Dutch included Pavonia (1633), Vriessendael (1640) and Achter Col (1642) but these settlements were repelled in Kieft's War (1643-1645) and the Peach Tree War (1655-1660). Settlers again returned to the western shores of the Hudson in the 1660 formation of Bergen, which would become the first permanent European settlement in the territory of the modern state of New Jersey.

During the Second Anglo-Dutch War, on August 27, 1664, New Amsterdam surrendered to the English Navy. The Province of New Jersey was then formed in 1674. In 1679, Bergen was included in a judicial district with Essex, Monmouth and Middlesex counties, while the territory was called East Jersey, a proprietary colony (as opposed to a royal colony). In 1683, Bergen (along with the three other counties) was officially recognized as an independent county by the Provincial Assembly.

Initially, Bergen County consisted of only the land between the Hudson and the Hackensack Rivers, extending north to the border between East Jersey and New York. In January 1709, the boundaries were extended to include all the current territory of Hudson County (formed in 1840), and portions of Passaic County (formed in 1837). The 1709 borders were described as follows:

> "Beginning at Constable's Hook, so along the bay and Hudson's River to the partition point between New Jersey and the province of New York; along this line and the line between East and West Jersey" to the Pequaneck River; down the Pequaneck and Passaic Rivers to the sound; and so following the sound to Constable's Hook the place of beginning."

The line between East and West Jersey here referred to is not the line finally adopted and known as the Lawrence line, which was run by John Lawrence in September and October, 1743.

It was the compromise line agreed upon between Governors Coxe and Barclay in 1682, which ran a little north of Morristown to the Passaic River; thence up the Pequaneck to forty-one degrees of north latitude; and thence by a straight line due east to the New York State line. This line being afterward objected to by the East Jersey proprietors, the latter procured the running of the Lawrence line.

Bergen saw several battles and troop movements during the American Revolutionary War. Fort Lee's location atop the New Jersey Palisades, opposite Fort Washington in Manhattan, made it a strategic position during the war. In November, 1776 the Battle of Fort Lee took place as part of the Continental Army's attempts to keep British forces from sailing up the Hudson River. After these defensive positions were hastily abandoned, the Continental forces staged a retreat through present-day Englewood and Teaneck, and across the Hackensack River at New Bridge Landing; one of the few sites where the river was crossed by a bridge. With the British in pursuit, this retreat allowed American forces to escape capture and regroup for subsequent successes against the British elsewhere in New Jersey later that winter. The Baylor Massacre took place in 1778 in River Vale, resulting in severe losses for the Continentals.

In 1837, Passaic County was formed from parts of Bergen and Essex counties. In 1840, Hudson County was formed from Bergen. These two divisions lost roughly 13,000 residents (nearly half of the previous population) from the county's rolls.

In 1852, the Erie Railroad began operating major rail services from Jersey City on the Hudson River to points north and west via leased right-of-way in the county. This became known as the Erie Main Line, and is still in use for passenger service today.

In the late 19th century, state law was changed to allow easy formation of municipalities with the Borough form of government. This led to the Boroughitis phenomenon where many new municipalities were created in a span of a few years.

On January 11, 1917, the Kingsland Explosion took place at a munitions factory in what is today Lyndhurst. The explosion is believed to be an act of sabotage by German agents, as the munitions in question were destined for Russia, part of the U.S.'s effort to supply allies before entrance into World War I. After the U.S. entry into the war in April 1917, Camp Merritt was created in eastern Bergen County for troop staging. Beginning operations in August 1917, it housed 50,000 soldiers at a time, staging them for deployment to Europe via Hoboken. Camp Merritt was decommissioned in November, 1919.

In 1931, the George Washington Bridge was completed, linking Fort Lee to Manhattan. This connection would spur development in the post-World War II era, developing much of the county to suburban levels. A second deck of traffic on the bridge was completed in 1962, expanding its capacity to 14 lanes.

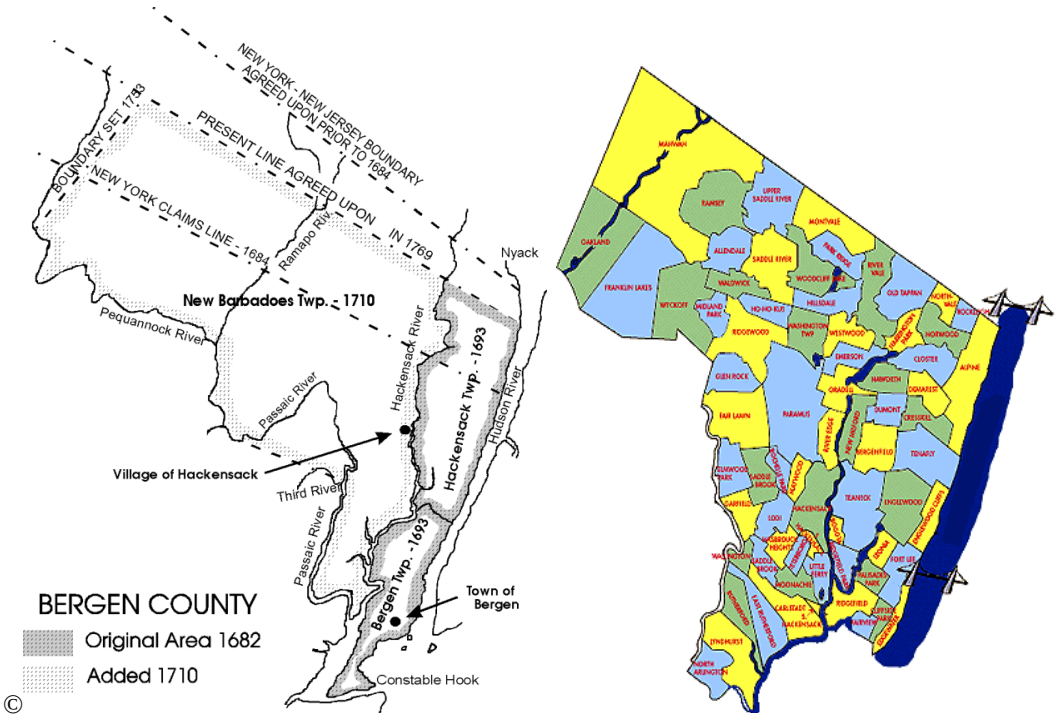
In 1955, the U.S. Army created a Nike Missile station at Campgaw Mountain (in the west of the county) for the defense of the New York Metropolitan Area from strategic bombers. In 1959, the site was upgraded to house Nike-Hercules Missiles with increased range, speed and payload characteristics. The missile site closed in June 1971.

Meaning of the Name “Bergen”

The origin of the name of Bergen County is a matter of debate. It is believed that the County is named for one of the earliest settlements, Bergen, settled in 1660 in the area known today as Jersey City Heights in Hudson County. Several earlier sources attribute the name to Bergen, Norway, while others attribute it to Bergen op Zoom in the Netherlands. Still others attribute it to the Dutch word meaning "hill" or "place of safety". Some sources say that the name is derived from one of the earliest settlers of Nieuw Amsterdam (now New York City), Hans Hansen Bergen, a native of Norway, who arrived in New Netherlands in 1633.

The name “Bergen,” originally derived from the word for “hill” in Norway, Belgium and the Netherlands, was applied to towns located on hills. New Jersey’s Bergen was originally a settlement on a hill. Therefore, the currently accepted theory is, that the geographical location of the original town is the most likely reason it was called Bergen.

The name “Bergen” was later applied to the County, which was established in 1683.

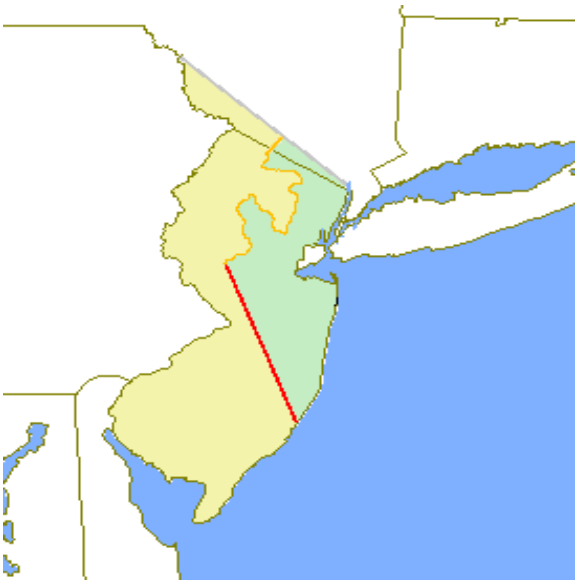


Evolution of Bergen County*

1676-1702

PROPRIETARY NEW JERSEY divided into two distinct and separately governed provinces: East Jersey and West Jersey.

EAST JERSEY's Original Counties:
BERGEN (1683)
Essex (1683)
Middlesex (1683)
Monmouth (1683)



WEST JERSEY's Original Counties:
Burlington (1681)
Cape May (1685)
Gloucester (1686)
Salem (1681)

March 7, 1683

BERGEN COUNTY established within the territory of East Jersey.

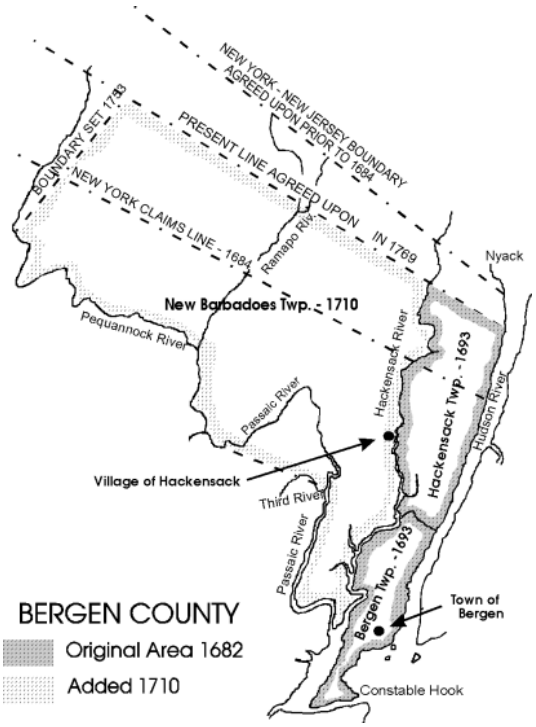
1693

BERGEN COUNTY divided into
Bergen Township
Hackensack Township

**Most of the information and maps are from "Bergen County's Townships & Municipalities" by Arnold Lang and the Genealogical Society of Bergen County: http://njgsbc.org/*

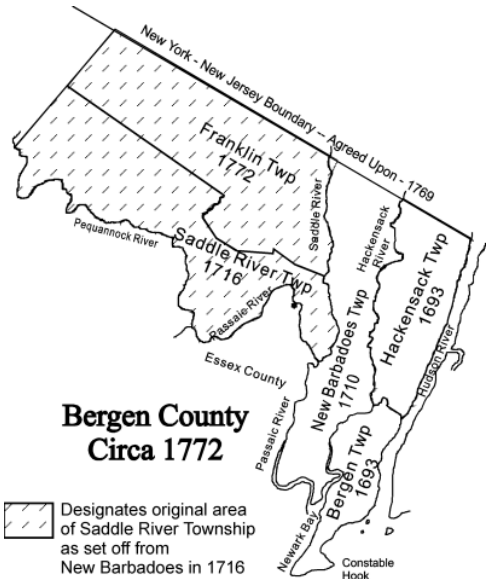
1710
BERGEN COUNTY
Bergen Township
Hackensack Township
New Barbadoes Township separated from Aquackanonk Township in Essex County, greatly expanding Bergen County.

[Community of Hackensack was made the County Seat]



1716
BERGEN COUNTY
Bergen Township
Hackensack Township
New Barbadoes Township
Saddle River Township breaks off of New Barbadoes Township

1772
BERGEN COUNTY
Bergen Township
Hackensack Township
New Barbadoes Township
Saddle River Township
Franklin Township breaks off of Saddle River Township



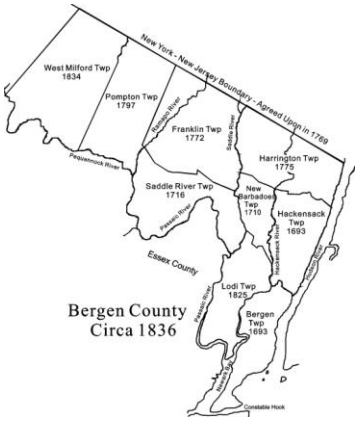
1775
BERGEN COUNTY
Bergen Township
Hackensack Township
New Barbadoes Township
Saddle River Township
Franklin Township
Harrington Township formed from parts of Hackensack and New Barbadoes Townships
[Revolutionary War Period]

1797
BERGEN COUNTY
Bergen Township
Hackensack Township
New Barbadoes Township
Saddle River Township
Franklin Township
Pompton Township formed from parts of Franklin & Saddle River Townships
Harrington Townships

1826
BERGEN COUNTY
Bergen Township
Hackensack Township
New Barbadoes Township
Saddle River Township
Franklin Township
Pompton Township
Harrington Township
Lodi Township formed from part of New Barbadoes Township

1834

BERGEN COUNTY
Bergen Township
Hackensack Township
New Barbadoes Township
Saddle River Township
Franklin Township
Pompton Township
West Milford Township formed from Franklin & Saddle River Townships
Harrington Township
Lodi Township



1837

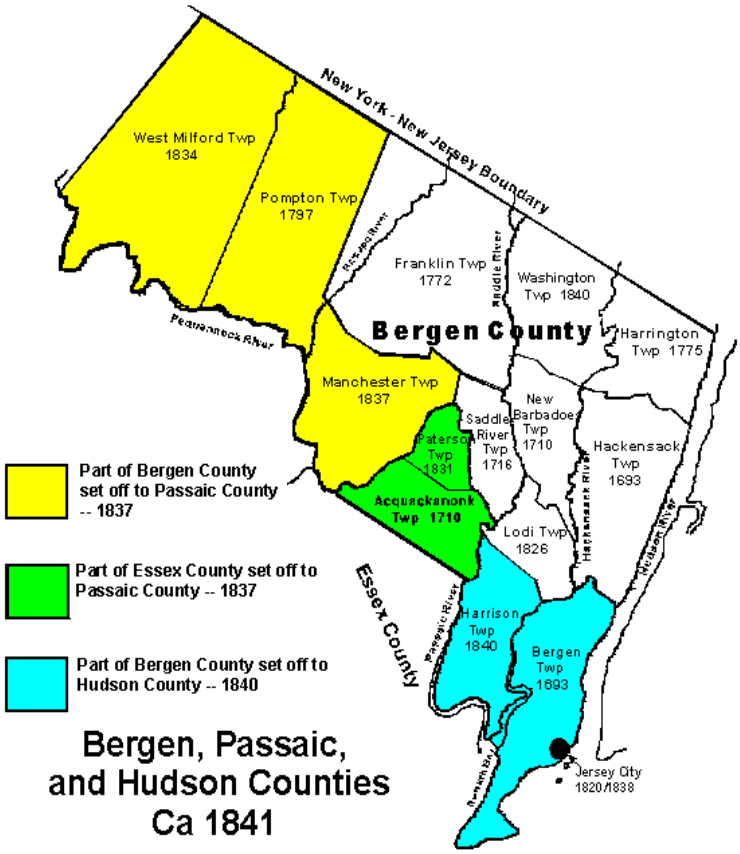
BERGEN COUNTY
Bergen Township
Hackensack Township
New Barbadoes Township
Saddle River Township – part to Passaic County
Franklin Township
Harrington Township
Lodi Township

PASSAIC COUNTY
Entire western section of BERGEN COUNTY - Pompton Township, West Milford Township, part of Saddle River Township – and Township of Acquackanonk in Essex County, are annexed to form Passaic County.

1840

BERGEN COUNTY
Hackensack Township
New Barbadoes Township
Saddle River Township
Franklin Township
Harrington Township
Washington Township formed from part of Harrington Township
Lodi Township – part to Hudson County

HUDSON COUNTY
Southern part of BERGEN COUNTY - Bergen Township, part of Lodi Township - broke off to form Hudson County.
Bergen County was left with less than 50% of its previous population after formation of Passaic and Hudson Counties.



1849
BERGEN COUNTY
Hackensack Township
New Barbadoes Township
Saddle River Township
Franklin Township
Ho-Ho-Kus Township was set off from the northern part of Franklin Township
Harrington Township
Washington Township
Lodi Township

1852 - 1860
BERGEN COUNTY
Hackensack Township
New Barbadoes Township

Saddle River Township
Franklin Township
Ho-Ho-Kus Township
Harrington Township
Washington Township
Lodi Township
1860 - Carlstadt Village formed within Lodi Township
1852 - Union Township formed from areas that had been transferred to Hudson County in 1840
(and added back after people petitioned to be returned to Bergen County)

1871
BERGEN COUNTY
Hackensack Township was divided into 3 townships and ceases, in name, to exist:
Englewood Township, Palisades Township, Ridgefield Township
New Barbadoes Township
Saddle River Township
Franklin Township
Ho-Ho-Kus Township
Harrington Township
Washington Township
Lodi Township
Carlstadt Village
Midland Township set off from New Barbadoes Township
Union Township

1876-1881
BERGEN COUNTY
Englewood Township
Palisades Township
Ridgefield Township
New Barbadoes Township
Saddle River Township
Franklin Township
Ho-Ho-Kus Township
Ridgewood Township formed from Franklin Township
Harrington Township
Washington Township
Lodi Township
Carlstadt Village
Midland Township
Union Township
1881 - Rutherford Borough in 1890 fully separates from township form of government.

1886
BERGEN COUNTY
Englewood Township
Palisades Township

Ridgefield Township
New Barbadoes Township
Saddle River Township
Franklin Township
Ho-Ho-Kus Township
Orvil Township set off from parts of both Ho-Ho-Kus & Washington Townships
Ridgewood Township
Harrington Township
Washington Township
Lodi Township
Carlstadt Village
Midland Township
Union Township
Rutherford Borough

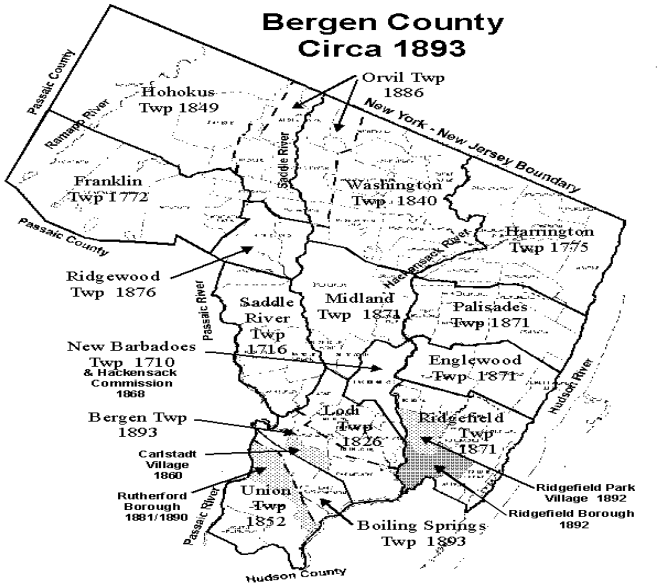
1889

BERGEN COUNTY
Englewood Township
Palisades Township
Ridgefield Township
New Barbadoes Township
Saddle River Township
Franklin Township
Ho-Ho-Kus Township
Orvil Township
Ridgewood Township
Harrington Township
Washington Township
Lodi Township
Carlstadt Village
Midland Township
Union Township
Rutherford Borough
Boiling Springs Township set off from Union Township (later became East Rutherford)

1890-1893

BERGEN COUNTY
Englewood Township
Palisades Township
Ridgefield Township
1892 - Ridgefield Borough
1892 - Ridgefield Park Village
New Barbadoes Township
Saddle River Township
Franklin Township
Ho-Ho-Kus Township
Orvil Township

Ridgewood Township
Harrington Township
Washington Township
Lodi Township
Carlstadt Village
1893 - Bergen Township
Midland Township
Union Township
Rutherford Borough
Boiling Springs Township



1894

New Jersey legislature passed a school act that made each township a separate school district. Under this act, “boroughs, towns, villages and cities” would be exempted from the obligation to pay, pro rata, existing debts of the old districts in addition to all future debts of the townships for school purposes. The rush was on to create new boroughs.

January 23 – December 18, 1894
"BOROUGHITIS"
26 boroughs were carved from the early townships.

1895 – PRESENT
The formation of municipalities continued until 1924 when the number reached 70.
Today Bergen County consists of:
(With original dates of incorporation or formation)
3 Cities
Englewood (1899), Garfield (1898), Hackensack (1921)

2 Villages
Ridgefield Park (1892), Ridgewood (1876)

9 Townships
Lyndhurst (1917), Mahwah (1944), River Vale (1906), Rochelle Park (1929), Saddle Brook (1955), South Hackensack (1935), Teaneck (1895), Washington (1840), Wyckoff (1926)

56 Boroughs
Allendale (1894), Alpine (1903), Bergenfield (1894), Bogota (1894), Carlstadt (1894), Cliffside Park (1895), Closter (1904), Cresskill (1894), Demarest (1903), Dumont (1894), East Rutherford (1889), Edgewater (1894), Elmwood Park (1916), Emerson (1898), Englewood Cliffs (1895), Fair Lawn (1924), Fairview (1894), Fort Lee (1904), Franklin Lakes (1922), Glen Rock (1894), Harrington Park (1904), Hasbrouck Heights (1894), Haworth (1904), Hillsdale (1898), Ho-Ho-Kus (1905), Leonia (1894), Little Ferry (1894), Lodi (1894), Maywood (1894), Midland Park (1894), Montvale (1894), Moonachie (1910), New Milford (1922), North Arlington (1896), Northvale (1916), Norwood (1905), Oakland (1902), Old Tappan (1894), Oradell (1894), Palisades Park (1899), Paramus (1922), Park Ridge (1894), Ramsey (1908), Ridgefield (1892), River Edge (1894), Rockleigh (1923), Rutherford (1881), Saddle River (1894), Tenafly (1894), Teterboro (1917), Upper Saddle River (1894), Waldwick (1919), Wallington (1895), Westwood (1894), Woodcliff Lake (1894), Wood-Ridge (1894)

Types of Municipalities in Bergen County

BOROUGH

A Borough (sometimes abbreviated Boro on road signs) in the context of New Jersey local government refers to one of five types and one of eleven forms of municipal government. Though it is now the most common form of government in New Jersey, as of 1875, only 17 boroughs had been created, all by special acts of the legislature.

The Borough Act of 1878 allowed any township (or portion thereof) with a land area of no more than four square miles and a population not exceeding 5,000, to establish itself as an independent borough through a petition and referendum process on a self-executing basis. As enacted, a borough would be governed by an elected mayor (serving a one-year term) and a six-member council (elected to staggered three-year terms). The mayor would preside at council meetings, but had no vote except to break ties. Waves of boroughs were incorporated by newly-minted municipalities to allow for home-ruled school districts.

The Borough Act of 1897 amended the original Act, eliminating the self-executing incorporation feature of the earlier legislation. Henceforth, newly incorporated boroughs (or those seeking to dissolve or increase or decrease in size) required approval of the legislature. The elected mayor and six-member council were retained, with the mayor now serving a two-year term.

The Borough Act of 1987 was created to streamline borough law and clear away amendments, changes and contradictory rules that had accumulated over the century of the Borough's existence as a form of government. The 1987 Act allowed for the delegation of executive responsibility to an appointed administrator.

Traditionally, voters elect a mayor and six council-members at-large in a partisan election. The borough system has a weak mayor and the council performs most legislative and executive functions. This form of local government is used by 39% of the municipalities in New Jersey.
Boroughitis

Boroughitis was a craze that swept through New Jersey in the late 19th century, which led groups of residents to unite to form Boroughs from within and among the many Townships that were the prevalent form at the time. This wave of municipal formations was fomented by legislation that allowed a Borough to be created by a referendum with no further legislative approval required. By 1875 only 17 boroughs existed, but with Boroughitis the prevalence of Boroughs exploded, so that they are now the most common type of municipal government in New Jersey, accounting for over 200 of the 566 municipal governments statewide.

CITY
A City in the context of New Jersey local government refers to one of five types and one of eleven forms of municipal government.

Despite the widely-held perception of a city as a large, urban area, cities in New Jersey have a confused history as a form of government and vary in size from large, densely populated areas to much-smaller hamlets.

The 1897 and 1899 city charter laws applied only to areas with a population under 12,000, and provided for a directly-elected mayor, who served a two-year term and had strong executive powers. Both featured a council elected from wards to staggered three-year terms, plus one councilman elected at-large for a term of two years. The Mayor had veto power, which could be overridden by a two-thirds vote of the Council. The two acts differed in a number of ways, including the process for selection of a Board of Education (1897: elected; 1899: appointed by Council).

By 1987, there were only eleven cities under these City Acts (including East Orange, which effectively operated under a special City charter). As in other forms, many amendments, revisions and changes had been made over the years, leading to confusing and often conflicting legislation.

The City Act of 1987 provides for a directly-elected mayor who serves a four-year term and for a council that consists of seven members; six elected from two wards for staggered three-year terms and one elected at large for a four year term. There are three councilmen in each ward with

one councilmember from each ward up for election every year. The mayor is the chief executive and votes only to break a tie. The Mayor has veto power over all or portions of any ordinance, subject to override by a two-thirds vote of the Council. The Act also provides for the delegation of executive responsibilities to a municipal administrator.

Those cities operating under pre-1987 charters could retain the characteristics of their structure of government regarding terms of office, number of positions and other powers. Provisions of the 1987 Act can then be adopted through a petition and referendum process by the electorate.

TOWNSHIP

A township, in the context of New Jersey local government, refers to one of five types and one of eleven forms of municipal government. It is a political entity as any typical town, city or municipality, collecting property taxes and providing services such as maintaining roads, garbage collection, water, sewer, schools, police and fire protection.

However, townships in New Jersey differ from townships elsewhere in the United States. In most states, townships are an intermediate form of government, between county government and municipalities that are subordinate parts of the township, with different government responsibilities allocated at each level. In New Jersey, there are no subordinate municipalities located within a township, as a New Jersey township is a form of municipal government within a county, equal in status to a village, town, borough, or city, all of which may coexist within a county.

Municipalities in New Jersey may be classified into one of five types. This has little bearing on which of eleven forms of government that the municipality may adopt.

Historically, a variety of legislation has been passed by the state legislature that has defined and refined the township form of municipal government:

The Township Act of 1798 was the first state legislation to incorporate municipalities. The government defined was a form of direct democracy, similar to the New England town meeting, in which the vote was available to all white males, at least 21 years old, who were citizens of New Jersey, and residents of the township for at least six months; and who paid taxes in the township, or who owned land, or rented a home in the township for a rent of at least five dollars a year. A group of five freeholders was elected to one-year terms on the Township Committee, which was responsible to oversee the expenditure of revenue in between town meetings.

The Township Act of 1899 abolished the town meeting and strengthened the role of the Township Committee, which was initially set at three and amended to allow for expansion to five members. Members were elected for staggered three-year terms.

The Home Rule Act of 1917 legally defined the term "municipality" and recognized five types of government: borough, township, city, town, and village and granted each equal legal standing.

The Township Act of 1989 simplified the much-amended Act of 1899. It retains a three or five member township committee serving staggered terms, whose members are generally elected at-

large. The committee elects a mayor from among its members to serve a one-year term. Partisan elections are allowed under this law. Voters may initiate a referendum to change the membership to consist of either 3 or 5 members. While many township committees directly supervise the operation of their municipality, the revised act allows the committee to delegate all or a portion of its responsibilities to an appointed municipal administrator.

VILLAGE

A Village in the context of New Jersey local government, refers to one of five types and one of eleven forms of municipal government.

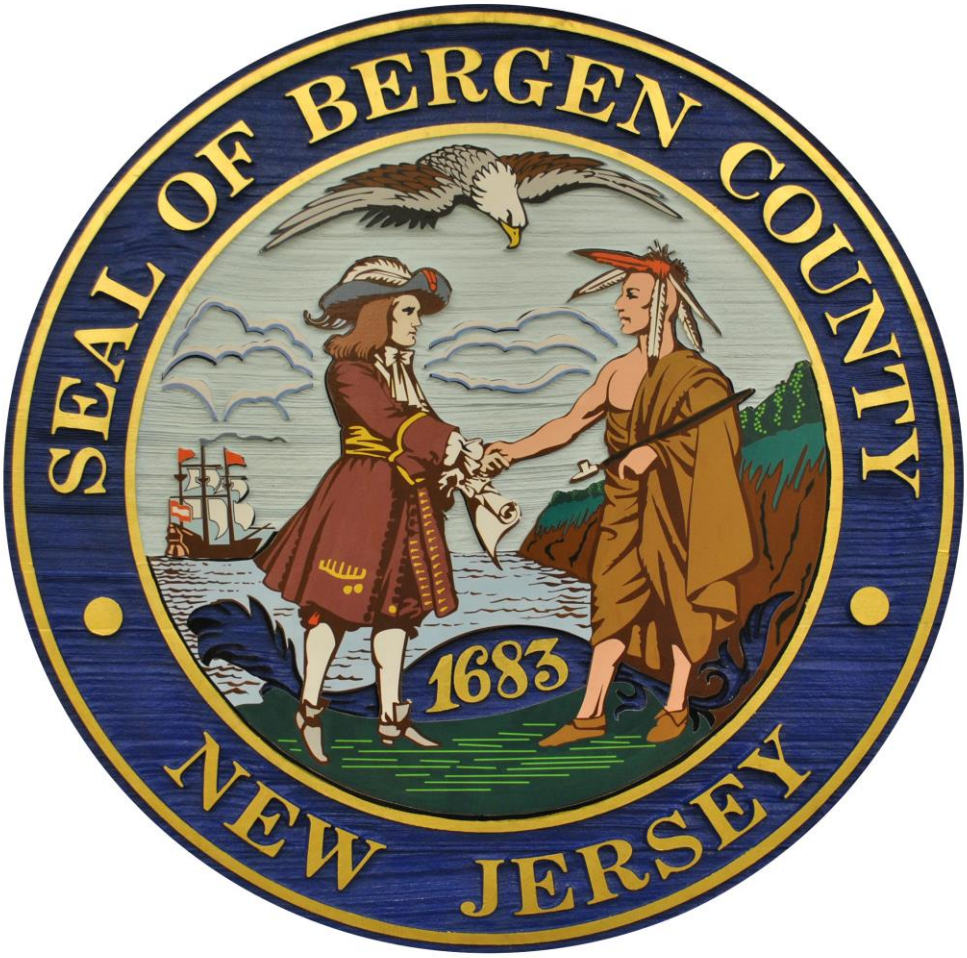
The Village Act of 1891 defined the form of government to consist of a five member board of trustees to be elected to three-year staggered terms. One member serves as president, one member serves as treasurer. This act was repealed by the State Legislature in 1961.

The Village Act of 1989 changed the essence of the Village form of government, essentially eliminating it in all but name. As of January 1, 1990, every village operating under the Village form of government had to operate according to the laws pertaining to the Township form. Essentially, the Village form of government is now identical to the Township form, except that the Township Committee and Mayor in the Township form correspond to the Board of Trustees and the President of the Board in the Village form.

Seal of Bergen County

In 1983, in celebration of the County's tri-centennial, a new seal of Bergen County was created. George Woodbridge, an artist from Brooklyn and a Revolutionary War buff who has illustrated books on uniforms and weaponry, drew it. This seal accentuates the county's founding year, 1683, in scrollwork between a Dutch settler-trader and Indian shaking hands on the banks of the Hudson beneath the Palisades. The Dutchman's ship is anchored offshore. Perched above them is an eagle.

These same elements were also in the old seal, which had been in use since 1910. That seal contained two dates (1617 and 1910) of no particular significance to the county's history. The original design was fairly amateurish. In the new seal, the Dutchman's musket has been removed and he is now portrayed as a settler, an explorer and trader. The Indian has been given a peace pipe and portrayed more historically accurate as eastern woodlands Indian. The original seal had him in western Indian headdress.



Geography

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 247 square miles (639.7 km²), of which 234 square miles (606.1 km²) is land and 13 square miles (33.7 km²) (5.12%) is water.

The highest elevation is Bald Mountain near the New York state line in Mahwah, at 1,152 feet (351 m) above sea level. The lowest point is sea level, along the Hudson River, which in this region is more of a tidal estuary than a river.

The sharp cliffs of the New Jersey Palisades lift much of the county up from the river along the eastern boundary with the Hudson River, but then relief remains relatively minimal across the county as much of it is in the Hackensack River valley. Only in the northwestern portion of the county are any serious hills found, leading to the Ramapo Mountains

The damming of the Hackensack River and a tributary, the Pascack Brook, produced three reservoirs in the county, Woodcliff Lake Reservoir, Lake Tappan and Oradell Reservoir, which provide drinking water to much of northern New Jersey. The Hackensack River drains the eastern portion of the county through the New Jersey Meadowlands, a wetlands area in the southern portion of the county. The central portion is drained by the Saddle River and the western portion is drained by the Ramapo River. Both of these are tributaries of the Passaic River, which forms a section of the southwestern border of the county.

Bergen County is bordered by Rockland County, New York to the north, by Westchester County, The Bronx, and Manhattan in New York, across the Hudson River to the east, Hudson County to the south, a small border with Essex County also to the south and Passaic County to the west.

Climate

Bergen County lies at the edge of the humid subtropical climate zone according to the Koppen climate classification because its coldest month (January) averages above 26.6°F / -3°C. In part due to its coastal location and low elevation, it is milder than cities further inland such as Chicago.

Law and Government

In November 1986, Bergen's form of government changed. Instead of nine Freeholders, voters chose a County Executive and seven Freeholders. The current County Executive is Kathleen A. Donovan, the first and only female County Executive in the State of New Jersey. The Executive, along with the Board of Chosen Freeholders, administer all county business.

The seven Freeholders are elected at-large to three-year terms in office on a staggered basis, with either two or three seats coming up for election each year. As of 2014, Bergen County's Freeholders are:

- **Chairman David L. Ganz**
- **Vice Chairwoman Joan M. Voss**
- **Chairman Pro Tempore John A. Felice**
- **Maura R. DeNicola**
- **Steven A. Tanelli**
- **James J. Tedesco, Jr.**
- **Tracy Silna Zur**

Bergen County also elects three Constitutional Officers, separately from the County Executive and Freeholder Board. They are Sheriff Michael Saudino, Surrogate Court Judge Michael R. Dressler, and County Clerk John S. Hogan.

There are eight Departments that are part of county government:

- **Department of Administration and Finance** includes the Offices of Information Technology, Fiscal Operations, Personnel, Purchasing and Treasury. This department ensures maximum efficiency, cost-effectiveness and quality service for the County's taxpayers.

- **Department of Health Services** promotes optimal health, disease prevention, and protects the environment. Its divisions and programs include Addiction Recovery Program, Animal Control, Animal Shelter, Behavioral Health, Center, Bergen County Health Care Center, Environmental Health, Hazardous Materials Response Program, Health Counseling Center, Health Promotion, Public Health Nursing, Special Child Health Services, and Spring House for Women.

- **Department of Human Services** provides services to support individuals and families. A skilled professional staff works within eight divisions to provide services that include clinical, residential, and correction services for youth, coordination of child care, assisted transportation, domestic violence intervention, information and referral, counseling, and assistance. The Department also contracts with over 50 community-based agencies to provide specialized services.

• **Department of Law** is led by the County Counsel. There are two divisions. The County Counsel's Office is legal counsel to the County Executive, the eight departments and the offices of the Sheriff, County Clerk, Surrogate and Prosecutor. The Adjuster's Office is the liaison between the courts and the psychiatric institutions of the state, performs investigations and assists in the processing of gun applications.

• **Department of Parks** is in charge of the recreational and cultural services of the county. Bergen County boasts an excellent park system where residents can ski, skate, jog, cycle, golf, picnic, and camp overnight, tour a zoo, visit a Revolutionary War battle site, take a guided nature hike, swim, and play softball and tennis. Some of the county's facilities include a nationally accredited zoo, five golf courses, 19 parks, two stables, an environmental center and nine historic sites. Other divisions under Parks are Cultural & Historic Affairs and Multicultural Community Affairs.

• **Department of Planning and Economic Development** is charged with shaping the county's environmental and economic future. Its divisions include Community Development, Engineering and Administration, Land Use & Development Review, Open Space, Public/Private Partnerships, Data Resources & Technology, Regional Planning & Transportation and Master Planning. It also encompasses the Bergen County Planning Board and the Construction Board of Appeals.

• **Department of Public Safety** provides public safety services for the county. Included in this department are the County Police and the divisions of Consumer Affairs/Consumer Protection, Emergency Management, Medical Examiner, Public Safety Education, Weights and Measures, and the Office of Highway Safety.

• **Department of Public Works** maintains the county's 452 miles of roads, 173 bridges, and more than 1 million square feet of county buildings. Its five divisions are Administration, Engineering, General Services, Operations and Mosquito Control.

• **The Constitutional Officers** of the County are the Sheriff, the County Clerk, and the Surrogate.

The Sheriff is responsible for the Bureau of Criminal Identification, Court Security, the Bergen County Sheriff's Detention Center and the Detective Bureau.

The County Clerk's responsibilities include the recording, filing and maintenance of many public records including those effecting property and business ownership. In addition, the County Clerk's office keeps Naturalization Records, processes Passport applications, Notary Public Oaths, Physician and Veteran's Peddlers Licenses, Veteran's ID Cards and is responsible for one third of the Election process along with the Superintendent of Elections and the Board of Elections. The County Clerk is historically known as the "keeper of records" and is one of the oldest offices in the State of NJ. Many records in the Bergen County Clerk's office are over 300 years old.

The Surrogate admits wills to probate, appoints guardians, and issues certificates of authority to executors of estates. These Constitutional Officers are elected by the voters of Bergen County.

Bergen County's government provides services for its residents which local governments are too small to provide and, in addition, acts as liaison to the state and federal governments.

The Bergen County court system consists of a number of municipal courts handling traffic court and other minor matters, plus the Bergen County Superior Court which handles the more serious offenses, including Civil, Criminal and Family Court matters.

State Representatives

The seventy municipalities of Bergen County are represented by seven separate state legislative districts. Three of these districts (the 37th, 38th and 39th) are situated entirely within the county, the others cross county boundaries.

Congressional Representatives

Two federal Congressional Districts cove the county, with the northern portion of the county in New Jersey's 5th district, represented by Scott Garrett (R) and the southern portion of the county in New Jersey's 9th district, represented by William Pascrell (D).

Transportation

Bergen County has a well-developed road network, including the northern terminus of the New Jersey Turnpike (a portion of Interstate 95) and the Garden State Parkway, the eastern terminus of Interstate 80 and a portion of Interstate 287. US Highways 46, 202, 9, 9W, and New Jersey State Highways 4, 17, 3, 120, 208, and the Palisades Interstate Parkway also serve the region.

The George Washington Bridge, connecting Fort Lee in Bergen County across the Hudson River to the Upper Manhattan section of New York City, is the world's busiest motor vehicle bridge. Access to New York City is alternatively available for motorists through the Lincoln Tunnel in Hudson County. Train service is available on three lines from New Jersey Transit: the Bergen County Line, the Erie Main Line and the Pascack Valley Line. They run north-south to Hoboken Terminal with connections to the PATH train. New Jersey Transit also offers connecting one-stop service to New York Penn Station via the Secaucus Junction transfer station. Connections are also available at the Hoboken Terminal to the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail and New York Waterways ferry service to the World Financial Center and other destinations. There is one airport in the county, Teterboro Airport in Teterboro, which is operated by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. Most commercial air traffic is handled by nearby Newark Liberty International Airport in Essex County, which also serves as a major airport for the City of New York.

Demographics

As of the census of 2010, there were 905,116 people, 333,002 households, and 236,574 families residing in the county. The population density was 3,868 people per square mile (1,458/km²). There were 352,388 housing units at an average density of 1,506 per square mile (560/km²). The racial makeup of the county was 71.90 % White, 5.80% Black or African American, 0.20% Native American, 14.50% Asian, 0.025% Pacific Islander, 5.00% from other races, and 2.50% from two or more races. 16.1% of the population were Hispanic or Latino of any race.

Out of the 333,002 households there are 26.2% with children under the age of 18 living with them, 56.2% were married couples living together, 10.8% had a female householder with no husband present, and 29.0% were non-families. 25.6% of all households were made up of individuals and 10.8% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.66 and the average family size was 3.20. In 2010, there were 332,388 households with an average household size of 2.69 and an average family size of 3.27.

In the county, the population was spread out with 5.6% under the age of 5, 24.8% under the age of 19, 5.2% from 20 to 24, 25.9% from 25 to 44, 29.0% from 45 to 64, and 15.1% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 41.1 years. The male population is 435,962 or 48.2%; the female population is 469,154 or 51.8%.

The median income for a household in the county in 2010 was $81,350. The estimated 2010 per capita income for the county was $39,409. About 4.1% of families and 5.8% of the population were below the poverty line, (poverty line is estimated at a yearly total household income of $22,350. or less for a family of 4[i]).

Bergen is the most populous county in New Jersey, with approximately 95,258 more residents than Middlesex County (the second-ranked county in 2010), accounting for 10.29% of the state's population.

One of the largest immigrant groups in Bergen County is the Korean American community, which is concentrated along the Hudson River – especially in the area near the George Washington Bridge – and represents over half of the state's entire Korean population. As of the 2010 Census, persons of Korean ancestry make up 6.3% of Bergen County's population, which is the highest of any county in the United States; while the concentration of Koreans in Palisades Park in Bergen County, is the highest of any municipality in the United States, at 52% of the population. Palisades Park is also residence to the highest total number (6,065) of individuals of Korean ancestry among all municipalities in the state, while neighboring Fort Lee has the second largest cluster (5,978) and third highest proportion (17.18%, trailing Leonia's 17.24%). Eight of the nation's top ten municipalities by percentage of Korean population are located in Bergen County, including Palisades Park, Leonia, Fort Lee, Ridgefield, Closter, Norwood, Edgewater, and Englewood Cliffs. Overall, sixteen of the top twenty communities on that list are located in Bergen; virtually all are in the eastern third of the county near the Hudson River. However, Ridgewood has emerged as a new Korean American nexus in western Bergen County.

In addition, the commercial districts of several communities — including Palisades Park, Fort Lee, Cliffside Park, Ridgefield, Leonia, and to a lesser extent Englewood Cliffs, Edgewater, and Fairview — collectively function as a sprawling suburban Koreatown for northern New Jersey, drawing shoppers from throughout the region. There is also an entrenched Korean population in the Northern Valley, especially in Tenafly, Cresskill, Demarest, Closter, Norwood, and Old Tappan, as well as in several inland boroughs, including Paramus, Rutherford, and Little Ferry. Broad Avenue in Palisades Park's Korean immigrant enclave has been described as the center of Korean culture in Bergen County, while nearby Grand Avenue houses the headquarters of The Korean-American Association of New Jersey. According to *The Record* of Bergen County, the U.S. Census Bureau has determined that the county's Korean American population – 2010 census figures put it at 56,773 – has grown enough to warrant language assistance during elections.[ii]

Indian Americans represent the second largest Asian ethnic group in Bergen County, with slightly larger numbers than the Filipino and Chinese communities. Although the Indian American population in the area is widely dispersed, its biggest clusters are located in Ridgewood, Fair Lawn, Paramus, Hackensack, Bergenfield, Lodi, and Elmwood Park. Within the county's Indian population is a prominent Malayali community.

Bergenfield and, to a lesser extent New Milford, Dumont, and Teaneck, have become a hub for Filipino Americans, with Bergenfield becoming the first municipality on the East Coast of the United States to elect a mayor of Filipino descent in November 1999. Taken as a whole, these four adjacent municipalities contain over 40% of Bergen's entire Filipino population, although there are small numbers of Filipinos in many of the county's communities.

The Chinese American population is also spread out, with fairly sizable populations in Fort Lee, Paramus, and Englewood Cliffs. Fort Lee and Paramus have the highest total number of Chinese among Bergen municipalities while Englewood Cliffs has the highest percentage (8.42%).

The small Japanese community, which mainly consists of foreign businessmen and their families, has long had a presence in Fort Lee, with over a quarter of the county's total Japanese population living in that borough alone. The remainder of Bergen's Japanese residents are concentrated in the towns surrounding Fort Lee as well as in a few northern communities such as Ridgewood.[iii]

Meanwhile, Italian Americans have long had a significant presence in Bergen County; in fact, Italian is the most commonly identified first ancestry among Bergen residents (19.1%). Overall, 173,199 Bergen residents were recorded as being of Italian heritage in the most recent census. To this day, many residents of the Meadowlands communities in the south are of Italian descent, most notably in South Hackensack (36.3%), Lyndhurst (33.8%), Carlstadt (31.2%), Wood-Ridge (30.9%) and Hasbrouck Heights (30.8%). Saddle Brook (29.8%), Lodi (29.4%), Moonachie (28.5%), Garfield, Hackensack, and the southeastern Bergen towns were Italian American strongholds for decades, but their numbers have diminished in recent years as immigrants have taken their place. At the same time, the Italian American population has grown in many of the affluent communities in the northern half of the county, including Franklin Lakes, Ramsey, Montvale, and Woodcliff Lake. [iv]

Irish Americans and German Americans are the next largest ethnic groups in Bergen County, numbering 122,323 (13.5% of the county's total population) and 81,568 (9.0%), respectively. As is the case with Italian Americans, these two groups established sizable enclaves long ago and are now firmly entrenched in all areas of the county. Polish Americans are also well-represented throughout Bergen, with 61,638 residents of Polish descent as of the last census. The community's cultural and commercial heart has long been centered in Wallington, where 45.5% of the population is of Polish descent; this is the largest concentration among New Jersey municipalities and the seventh-highest in the United States. In recent years, the adjacent city of Garfield has also become a magnet for Polish immigrants, with 22.9% of the population identifying themselves as being of Polish ancestry, the third highest concentration in the state. And while Polish Americans are the fourth-largest ethnic group in Bergen County, Poland is also the second most common place of birth (after South Korea) for foreign-born county residents. [v]

Many towns in the county have a significant number of Jewish Americans, including Fair Lawn, Teaneck, Tenafly, Englewood, Englewood Cliffs, Fort Lee, Woodcliff Lake, Paramus, and Franklin Lakes. Teaneck, Fair Lawn, and Englewood in particular have become havens for the Conservative and Orthodox Jewish communities, while Fair Lawn, Tenafly, Alpine, and Fort Lee are well-known as hubs for Russian Americans, including a substantial proportion of Russian Jews. Closter and Tenafly also have the largest Israeli communities in Bergen County and two of the three largest in the state. Altogether, 92,500[vi] Bergen residents identified themselves as being of Jewish heritage in the most recent study done in 2001.

Greek Americans have had a fairly sizable presence in Bergen for several decades and according to census data the Greek community currently numbers 13,147 (1.5%) county-wide. The largest concentrations by percentage are in Englewood Cliffs (7.2%), Alpine (5.2%), Fort Lee (3.7%). and Palisades Park (3.5%).[vii] Similarly, the *Armenian American population in Bergen (8,305 according to the 2000 Census) is dispersed throughout the county, but its most significant concentration is in the southeastern towns near the George Washington Bridge. Cliffside Park (3.6%), Englewood Cliffs (3.4%), Oradell (3.1%), Ridgefield (2.4%), Fairview (2.4%), Demarest (2.3%), and Emerson (2.2%) have the highest percentage of Armenians among all municipalities in the state, and in fact are all in the top 20 nationwide. Furthermore, the top 25 New Jersey communities on that list are all Bergen County communities.

Bergen also has a moderately sized Muslim (Arab) population, which numbered 13,217 as of the last census. Its most notable Muslim enclaves are centered in Teaneck and Hackensack, two of the most diverse communities in the entire county. Bergen's Muslim population primarily consists of Arab Americans, South Asians and African Americans, although it should be noted that many members of these groups practice other faiths. The overwhelming majority of Bergen's Arab American population (64.3%) is constituted by persons of Lebanese (2,576), Syrian (2,568), and Egyptian (2,417) descent. [viii]

The county's African American community is almost entirely concentrated in three municipalities: Englewood (8,845 residents, accounting for 32.58% of the city's total population), Teaneck (11,013; 27.69%), and Hackensack (10,511; 24.44%). Collectively, these three areas account for nearly 58% of the county's total African American population of 52,473, and, in fact, blacks have had a presence in these towns since the earliest days of the county. In sharp contrast, African-Americans comprise less than 2% of the total in most of Bergen's other municipalities.

In Englewood, the African American population is concentrated in the Third and Fourth wards of the western half of the city, while the northeastern section of Teaneck has been an African American enclave for several decades. Hackensack's long-established African American community is primarily located in the central part of the city. [ix]

*The diverse Latino population in Bergen is growing in many areas of the county, but is especially concentrated in a handful of municipalities, including Fairview (37.1 %), Hackensack (25.9%), Ridgefield Park (22.2%), Englewood (21.8%), Bogota (21.3%), Garfield (20.1 %), Cliffside Park (18.2%), Lodi (18.0%), and Bergenfield (17.0%). Traditionally, many of the Latino residents were of Colombian and Cuban ancestry, although that has been changing in recent years. Currently, Englewood's Colombian community is the largest in Bergen County and among the top ten in the United States (7.17%); Hackensack, Fairview, Bergenfield, and Lodi also have notable populations. The Cuban population is largest in Fairview, Ridgefield Park, Ridgefield, and Bogota, although the Cuban community is much larger in Hudson County to the south.

*Since 1990 an increasing number of immigrants from other countries have entered the region, including people from Mexico, Guatemala, EI Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Peru, and Ecuador. The diverse backgrounds of the local Latino community are best exemplified in Fairview, where 10% of the overall population hails from Central America, 7% from South America and 9% from other Latin American countries, mainly the Caribbean.

NOTES:

* *Percentages given for the Latino population of the towns mentioned are from the 2000 census. Updated figures from the 2010 census were not available at the time of printing.*

[i] Poverty level guidelines: aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/11fedreg.shtml

ii Korean American demographic information and percentages gathered from Bergen County Planning & Economic Development Dept. and Wikipedia.org.

iii Indian American, Filipino American, Chinese American & Japanese American demographic information and percentages gathered from Bergen County Planning & Economic Development Department and Wikipedia.org.

iv Italian American demographic information from the U.S. Census Bureau 2010 American Community Survey

[v] Irish, German & Polish American demographic information from the U.S. Census Bureau 2010 American Community Survey

[vi] Berman Institute – North American Jewish Data Bank.

[vii] Greek American demographic information from the U.S. Census Bureau 2010 American Community Survey

[viii] Arab American and Muslim demographic information from the U.S. Census Bureau 2010 American Community Survey

[ix] African American demographics for Englewood, Hackensack and Teaneck gathered from 2010 Census Interactive Population Search at http://2010.census.gov/2010census/popmap/ipmtext.php

Education

Bergen has several colleges and universities:

- Bergen Community College – Paramus
- Berkley College – Paramus
- Dover Business School – Paramus
- Fairleigh Dickinson University – Teaneck and Hackensack
- Felician College – Lodi and Rutherford
- Saint Peter's College – Englewood Cliffs
- Ramapo College – Mahwah

Bergen has some 45 public high schools, and has at least 23 private high schools.

Bergen County Academies, the county's public magnet high school in Hackensack, is recognized by U.S. News & World Report as one of the best high schools in the United States. Newsweek considers Bergen County Academies to be an "elite" high school, while Bloomberg Businessweek cites Bergen County Academies as New Jersey's best high school.

Educational and Cultural

- New Jersey Naval Museum, Hackensack – There, the *USS Ling* is moored in the Hackensack River and is available for tours as a museum ship.
- Aviation Hall of Fame and Museum of New Jersey, Teterboro Airport
- Bergen Museum of Art & Science, Hackensack
- Meadowlands Environment Center, Lyndhurst
- Tenafly Nature Center, Tenafly
- The Puffin Foundation, Teaneck
- The Maywood Station Museum, Maywood

Commercial and Entertainment

- MetLife Stadium, which replaced Giants Stadium, East Rutherford
- Izod Center, East Rutherford (formerly known as the Continental Airlines Arena and the Brendan Byrne Arena)

- Meadowlands Racetrack, East Rutherford
- Westfield Garden State Plaza, Shopping Mall – Paramus
- The Shops at Riverside, Shopping Mall – Hackensack
- Paramus Park, Shopping Mall – Paramus
- The Outlets at Bergen Town Center, Shopping Mall – Paramus
- Fashion Center, Shopping Mall – Paramus
- H Mart, Korean shopping plaza and supermarket – Ridgefield
- Mitsuwa Marketplace, Japanese shopping plaza and supermarket – Edgewater

COUNTY PARKS

- Belmont Hill County Park – Garfield
- Campgaw Mountain Reservation – Mahwah
- Dahnert's Lake County Park – Garfield
- Darlington County Park – Mahwah, Ramsey
- Hackensack River County Park – Hackensack
- James A. McFaul Environmental Center – Wyckoff
- Overpeck County Park – Leonia, Palisades Park, Ridgefield Park, Teaneck
- Pascack Brook County Park – Westwood, River Vale
- Ramapo Valley County Reservation – Mahwah, Oakland
- Riverside County Park – Lyndhurst, North Arlington
- Saddle River County Park – Paramus, Glen Rock, Rochelle Park, Saddle Brook, Ridgewood
- Samuel Nelkin County Park – Wallington
- Van Saun County Park and Bergen County Zoological Park – Paramus
- Wood Dale County Park – Woodcliff Lake

County-owned Historical Sites

Baylor Massacre Burial Site

Rivervale Road & Red Oak Drive, River Vale, NJ

After midnight on September 28, 1778 during America's Revolutionary War, the brutal surprise attack by British forces on the sleeping men of the 3rd Continental Light Dragoons began. Today this is known as the Baylor Massacre. Now a County-owned historic park and burial ground, the Baylor Massacre Site is located along the Hackensack River in River Vale in northern Bergen County.

In the autumn of 1778 British General Cornwallis occupied southern Bergen County with a force of about 5,000 soldiers. Their purpose was to gather forage, or food, to feed the army that would be garrisoned in New York City during the coming winter. Bergen County, with its fertile land and industrious Jersey Dutch farmers, was a major source of food for both armies during the Revolution.

The 3rd Continental Light Dragoons, under the command by Lt. Colonel George Baylor, was one of four regiments of dragoons authorized by the Continental Congress. On the 27th of September, these 104 officers and men were dispatched to watch the bridge over the Hackensack River at the intersection of modern Rivervale and Old Tappan Roads and to support General Wayne and his men at Tappan.

The British forces were led by General Charles "No Flint" Grey, who earned his nickname in the 1777 battle with General Wayne's Pennsylvania troops when he ordered his men to remove the flints from their muskets to prevent an accidental gunshot and to use bayonets to insure the surprise of a nighttime attack. These tactics were used again in River Vale.

Grey's men used their muskets to club, and their bayonets to stab, the sleeping dragoons. Eleven were killed immediately. Three more, including 2nd-in-command Major Alexander Clough (Washington's chief of intelligence for the Hudson Valley), died of their wounds in Tappan the following day. Records indicate that as many as 22 men died, some several weeks later. Two officers and 37 men, most of who were wounded, escaped into the night. One British soldier was killed when shot by a dragoon.

Grey's men quickly gathered their prisoners and captured American equipment, and continued north. Fortunately, General Wayne had been alerted of the movement of the British and had evacuated Tappan.

The next day a detachment of the Bergen County Militia was dispatched to River Vale to locate any survivors; finding six of the dead patriots at the bridge, and fearing the possible return of British troops, they hurriedly buried them in three abandoned leather tanning vats by the river.

The burial's location was passed on by word of mouth for many generations. The only physical marker was the abandoned millstone from the tannery. Abram C. Holdrum removed the millstone from the site around 1900. For many years it was displayed in front of the local Holdrum School.

In 1967, a local resident became alarmed that a new housing development would destroy this historic burial site. Through careful research the approximate location of the burials was identified. County Freeholder D. Bennett Mazur was contacted and as a result, the County sponsored an archaeological dig that located six sets of remains. The County eventually acquired the site and dedicated it as a County park. In 1974, the patriots' remains were re-interred in the park and the original millstone was donated to serve as their gravestone.

In 2003, the county dedicated new interpretive panels and accessible pathways at the Baylor Massacre Site.

Camp Merritt Memorial Monument

Intersection of Knickerbocker Road & Madison Avenue, Cresskill, NJ

Camp Merritt Memorial Monument marks the center of an important World War I embarkation camp, where more than one million U.S. soldiers passed through on their way to and from the battlefields of Europe.

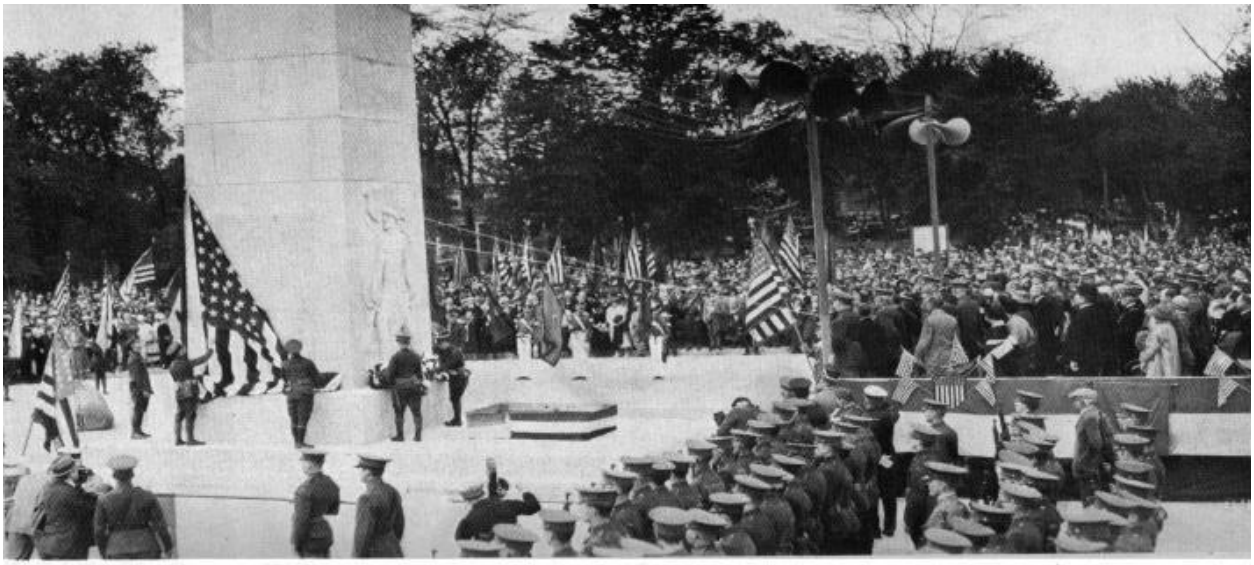
In August 1919, the Bergen County Freeholders purchased land for the monument from what was the approximate center of the camp at the intersection of Madison Avenue and Knickerbocker Road in Cresskill. In 1922 work on the shaft commenced. Modeled on the Washington Monument, the memorial is a 65' high granite obelisk. On the base are the names of the 578 people who died in the camp, mostly as a result of the 1918 worldwide influenza epidemic. A large Art Deco style carved relief by the sculptor Robert Ingersoll Aitkin (1878-1949) shows a striding "doughboy" with an eagle flying overhead. Set into a large boulder is a copper plaque with a relief of the Palisades, illustrating that Camp Merritt was used as an area for embarkation, designed and made by the local artist Katherine Lamb Tait. In the ground is a three-dimensional stone carving of the map of Camp Merritt.

The Camp Merritt Monument was dedicated on May 30, 1924 by a number of state and federal dignitaries. General John J. "Black Jack" Pershing gave the dedicatory address to a crowd of 20,000 people.

Camp Merritt, located midway between Cresskill and Dumont and 12 miles from Hoboken, received its first soldiers in October 1917. Originally called "Camp Tenafly," and covering an area that included Cresskill, Demarest, Dumont, Haworth and Tenafly, it was eventually named for General Wesley Merritt, a gallant Civil War officer who was in the service of his country from 1855 to 1900. Little publicity surrounded the camp as it was deemed vitally important to keep troop movements a secret. The soldiers would march with their heavy packs and supplies to the trains or over the Palisades to the Hudson River to board boats that would take them to their European-bound ships docked in Hoboken. The last soldier passed through in the beginning of 1920.

The camp was 770 acres in size and had a capacity of 42,000 men (two thousand of them officers). It was strategically built near major rail lines, facilitating the transport of soldiers to the camp. It contained 1,300 buildings of all varieties. The base hospital alone was composed of 93 buildings. A staff of 300 nurses treated 55,000 sick men. 8,000 men representing 40 different nationalities were nationalized in the Camp and made citizens of the US. Camp Merritt had its own newspaper, the Merritt Dispatch, established and edited by Charles Philip Barber, which was the only printed record of the camp's activities. The editor and staff of the Merritt Dispatch were the first to promote the idea of a monument.

After the camp was sold, it suffered three suspicious fires while the buildings were idle, each one worse than the last. The second fire in March of 1921 destroyed a hundred buildings. The third fire was the most spectacular, destroying almost all of what was left of the camp and detonating two stores of dynamite that had been stored for demolition purposes. Eighteen fire companies (including three from New York City, which came by way of the Dyckman Street Ferry) struggled to prevent the fires from spreading to adjacent homes. Other fire companies came from Tenafly, Closter, Bergenfield, Cresskill, Demarest, Teaneck, Hackensack and Palisades.



THE CAMP MERRITT MEMORIAL SHAFT BEING DEDICATED IN PRESENCE OF A HUGE CROWD BY GENERAL PERSHING, MAY 30, 1924.
(DUMONT STUDIO)

Campbell-Christie House, Historic New Bridge Landing

1201 Main Street, River Edge, NJ

The Campbell-Christie House, and 18th century sandstone structure, is located in Historic New Bridge Landing State Park, River Edge. This historic building originally stood at the intersection of Henley Avenue & River Road in New Milford. In 1977, in order to save it from demolition, Bergen County purchased and moved it south to this site next to the Hackensack River.

Sandstone houses were built continuously from the Dutch colonization of the 17th century through the founding of the Republic and the early years of the 19th century. The Campbell-Christie House, an outstanding example of this early regional architecture, is a 5-bay, 4-room center hall building with two rooms to either side or two interior chimneys. This stone house form seems to have been built mainly after the Revolution and up to the turn of the century. The front wall is built out of well-dressed local sandstone with inset wooden trapezoidal lintels and sides composed of roughly coursed sandstone.

Jacob Campbell, at the time of his marriage in 1774, built this house along the road (now Henley Avenue) that led from Old Bridge to the Schraalenburgh Church. Historical evidence records that Campbell, a mason by trade, also ran a tavern in his household. In 1795, the house was sold to John Christie, a blacksmith, who continued as tavern keeper. Jacob Brinkerhoff Christie, manager of the Comfort Coal & Lumber Co, eventually inherited this large valuable homestead farm property along the Hackensack River. His son John Walter, born in the house in 1865, was a famous inventor who built and raced cars (at one time holding the world's speed record), invented the automotive front-wheel drive and is known as the "father of the modern tank."

Historic New Bridge Landing State Park is located at the narrows of the Hackensack River. Because of its strategic site along a tidal waterway it has been an active area of settlement, trade, and commercial activities for thousands of years.

The construction of the New Bridge in 1744 accelerated development of the area. Around 1764 Jan Zabriskie doubled the size of his sandstone house on the west bank near the bridge, creating what has been referred to as among the five “great houses” of Colonial Bergen County. Now called the Zabriskie-Steuben House, it is owned and operated by the NJ Division of Parks and Forestry as a historic house museum.

Because of its nearness to Manhattan, New Bridge Landing was a principal base of operation during the Revolutionary War and considered an important strategic route, guarded by troops from both sides at different times. General George Washington, who made his headquarters in Zabriskie’s house, led his soldiers in retreat across here on Nov. 20, 1776, saving his troops from entrapment by advancing British troops.

The third stone house at Historic New Bridge Landing is the 18th century Demarest House, one of the oldest houses in Bergen County. In 1955, it was moved here from New Milford and is owned by the Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation. This site also contains the County-owned 1888-89 Pratt-type, “pony” truss, iron swing-bridge, the oldest highway swing bridge in NJ.
The Campbell-Christie House, along with the other two houses and the bridge, is on the State and National Register of Historic Places. It is the headquarters of the Bergen County Historical Society and is furnished with the furniture and collections owned by the Society.

Easton Tower

Red Mill Road, Route 4 & Saddle River Road, Paramus, NJ

Easton Tower is a unique historic site in Bergen County. This stone and wood frame structure was built along the Saddle River in 1900 as part of a private landscaped park in the Arcola area of Paramus. Surrounded by busy NJ roadways, it is now adjacent to the County's Saddle River Bikeway.

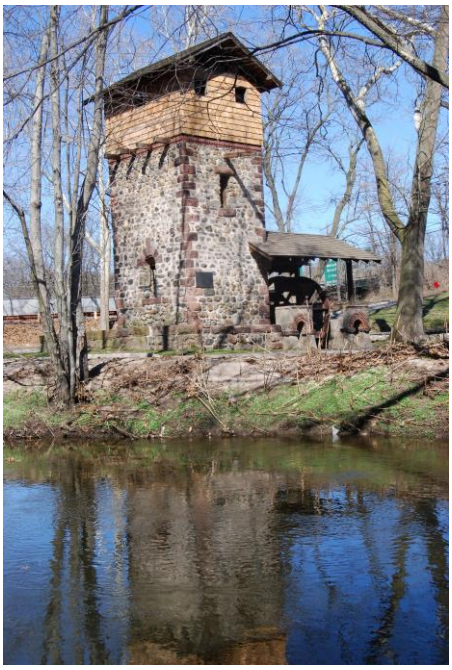
Once used to pump water to irrigate and provide a scenic setting for the estate of Edward Easton, it is a 20-ft rectangular, stone-masonry tower topped with a wood-frame structure and a wood-shingle, gabled roof. On the side is a large wood water wheel, which is under a wood-shingle roof. The architect Henry Ihnen designed it.

In the 18th century this area along the Saddle River and near the heavily used Albany post road, was the location of many mills. Jacob Zabriskie, a Bergen County Freeholder during the Revolutionary War had leased the 80-acre mill site around 1766 and in 1771 acquired the mill that had been built in the1740s. Revolutionary maps identify it as "Demarest's and Zabriskie's Mills." Over time it was rebuilt or expanded and in the early 1800s painted red by its owner Albert Westervelt. It is at this time it acquired the "Red Mill" name often mistakenly applied to Easton Tower. By the late 1800s the mill had fallen into disrepair and was demolished circa 1894.

In 1899, Edward D. Easton (1856-1915) bought this almost 48-acre site, which included the mill pond and dam. The area was called "Arcola." Easton's father, a teacher, had originally brought his young family to this area and suggested the name for the new settlement after a town in Italy. Edward Easton was a notable figure in American technological history. He started out as a stenographer, reporter and then a court stenographer in Washington DC covering many famous trials in the 1880s. After the 1886 patent was granted for the method of engraving sound by incising wax cylinders, Easton went on to make his fortune in the recording industry. He was a founder and eventually president of the Columbia Phonograph Company, which became one of the three major recording companies at the turn of the twentieth century.

After opening an office in New York City, Easton relocated his family from Washington DC to Arcola. He had a large house built on his property and commissioned the design of a landscaped park. The tower, to be built near the site of the old Red Mill, was a functioning structure pumping water to the several fountains. There were also rustic bridges, lakes and expansive lawns. The tower was a favorite of photographers and appears in many contemporary postcards. People came from miles around to this beautiful spot to take boat rides and walks, and, in the winter, ice-skate near the tower. Sources list the Easton house and park as having been used in early silent films.

After Easton's death in 1915, the property went through various owners. In 1931, construction of the Route 208 connection with Route 4 at "the Old Mill at Arcola" provided access to the recently opened George Washington Bridge. This destroyed sections of the landscaped park and isolated the tower. In 1940 the 1.26-acre site was sold at a sheriff's sale to Clyde A. Bogert. The County acquired the tower from the Bogerts and the Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation in 1956. In 1967 the Bergen County Park Commission dedicated the tower. Easton Tower was placed on the State and National Register of Historic Places and in 2008 was completely restored by the County.



Garretson Farm

4-02 River Road, Fair Lawn, NJ

Garretson Farm near the Passaic River in Fair Lawn is one of the oldest homesteads in Bergen County. The stone house and farm were occupied by six generations of the Garretson family, from 1720 through the middle of the 20th century.

It is one of the oldest houses in Bergen County that reflects over 200 years of architectural changes. The original pre-Revolutionary War wing may have been built c.1720. In 1800, the main section was built and then altered from a steep gable to a gambrel roof structure with dormers in 1900. A large, front porch was also added at this time. Today it is a furnished historic house museum containing a reconstructed jamb-less fireplace and brick beehive oven. In addition to the stone house, the site contains several outbuildings including a barn and carriage shed, and an extensive heirloom garden.

Peter Garretson, who was born in 1684, owned a large tract of land on the Passaic River and was probably the builder of the oldest wing of this stone house. The first member of the family to settle in the New World was Peter's grandfather Gerrit Gerritse who had emigrated in 1660 from Wageningen on the Rhine. The house continued to be occupied by Garretson descendants up until the death of Mary Garretson in 1950.

The property serves as the headquarters of the Garretson Forge and Farm Restoration, Inc. The society's volunteers conduct house tours and special events throughout the year, including the Harvest and Sheep-to-Shawl Festivals, and the Dutch Christmas celebration. The heirloom gardens are maintained by the Master Gardeners of Bergen County. Due to its historic significance, this sandstone house is officially listed on the New Jersey and the National Register of Historic Places.

Gethsemane Cemetery

(Between) Summit Place & Liberty Street, Little Ferry, NJ 07643

Gethsemane Cemetery is a 1-acre sandy hill located west of the Hackensack River in Little Ferry. This historic cemetery was entered onto the National Register of Historic Places in 1994 because of the significant role it played in the enactment of New Jersey's early civil rights legislation, as well as containing evidence of West African burial customs. In 1860, a deed of sale to three prominent white Hackensack residents states that this acre was to be used as a "cemetery or burial ground for the colored population of the Village of Hackensack…" In 1901, the Gethsemane Cemetery Association was incorporated and the "Colored Cemetery" was passed from white to black trusteeship. The seven trustees appointed determined that the name was to be Gethsemane Cemetery.

There are few written records for burials dating before the 1870s. Fewer than 50 gravestones are extant and the death dates carved on the remaining stones range between 1878 and 1911. The graves of over 500 people have been documented, including that of Elizabeth Dulfer who was born a slave c1790, freed in 1822, and died in 1880. She was one of the areas wealthiest businesswomen and landholders. Two Civil War veterans, Peter Billings and Silas M. Carpenter, were also buried here. The last documented burial occurred on December 14, 1924.
Gethsemane Cemetery figured prominently in the controversy surrounding the burial of Samuel Bass, sexton of Hackensack's First Baptist Church. As reported in the January 31, 1884 The Hackensack Republican, when he died he was denied burial in the all-white Hackensack Cemetery. Instead, his family and church buried him in Gethsemane. New Jersey's Governor Leon Abbett protested the denial and in a strong statement to the State Legislature said:

> "The regulation that refuses a Christian burial to the body of a deceased citizen upon the ground of color is not, in my judgment, a reasonable regulation…The Legislature should see that the civil and political rights of all men, whether white or black are protected...It ought not be tolerated in this State that a corporation whose existence depends on the Legislature's will, and whose property is exempt from taxation because of its religious uses, should be permitted to make a distinction between a white man and a black man."

In March 1884, legislation dubbed the "Negro Burial Bill" was passed.

Over time, this cemetery was neglected and vandalized. When its existence was threatened, members of the African American community and other concerned citizens began the fight to save it. By 1985 title passed to Bergen County and work started on its restoration. A comprehensive survey and inventory was conducted. In 1988, restoration began on some of the stones and non-intrusive Ground Penetrating Radar surveys were completed determining burial placements. The book "Gethsemane Cemetery in Death and Life" was published in 1992.
In 2003, the County celebrated the dedication of new meditation areas and historic panels that tell the story of the historic cemetery and list the names of 515 people who were buried here.

Hackensack Water Works

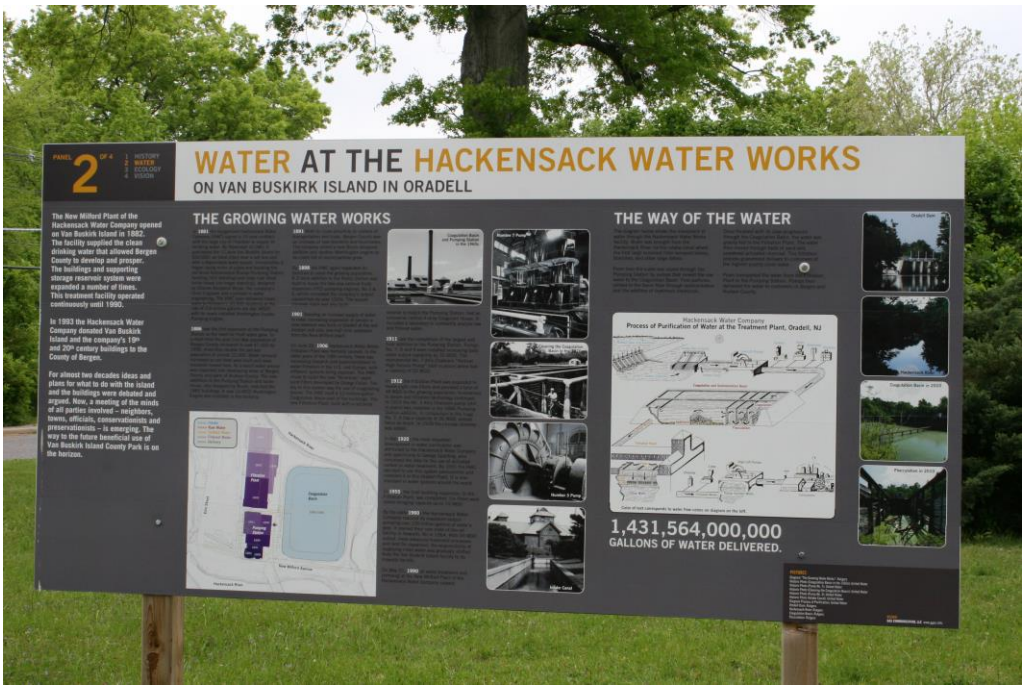
Van Buskirk Island County Park, Elm Street, Oradell, NJ

On an oxbow in the northern reaches of the Hackensack River is Oradell's Van Buskirk Island, a man-made island that did not exist until 1802. Created by the dams built for the local mills, this stretch of the Hackensack was the highest point of navigable water on the river where schooners regularly carried goods to and from New York.

Now a part of the Bergen County Parks system, this almost 14-acre site contains the historic Romanesque brick buildings of the Hackensack Water Works. This is the oldest surviving representative of a water purification and delivery system from the late 19th and early 20th century period, crucial to the development of a modern, safe water supply that was critical to turn-of-the-century metropolitan and suburban growth.

The Hackensack Water Works, in continuous operation from 1882 to 1990, is a rare example of late 19th and early 20th century water works architecture and engineering. The historic buildings include the 1882 Pumping Station, expanded five times from 1886-1911, and an innovative 1905 Filtration House, expanded in 1912 and 1955. The Pumping Station contains a unique collection of steam pumping equipment representing over four decades of development of steam technology in the early 20th century, including a 1911 Allis Chalmers Vertical Triple Expansion Pump and a 1915 Allis Chalmers Centrifugal Pump. The plant also contains the 1905 coagulation basin and gatehouse and the 1911 intake and waste gates.

This Bergen County Historic Site, with its open space and park-like setting, is a living 100-year timeline of technology from steam to electricity as well as a river site that represents the evolution of Bergen County from its pre-Revolutionary War saw and grist mills to the creation of pioneering water filtration technology so vital to the 20th century development of towns and cities all over America.



Washington Spring Garden

Van Saun County Park, Forest Avenue, Paramus/River Edge, NJ

Washington Spring, a ½ acre area located within Van Saun County Park, is associated with General George Washington and the movement of his Continental Army through this area of Bergen County during the Revolutionary War.

This hollow between hills was known as "Slukup" until it was changed to the more pleasant-sounding "Spring Valley" in 1832. In the Dutch Frisian language "slukup" described a boggy area. The local Banta family was from Friesland in northern Holland and one of the area's earliest settlers. Natural springs feed the streams in this area that flow through Van Saun Pond and eventually into the Hackensack River. The park's land was part of 300 acres owned by Albert Zabriskie in 1686. In 1695 he sold 224 acres to Jacob Van Saun of New York City.

The road to Slukup, now Howland Avenue, served as the border between Jacob Van Saun's farm to the south and son-in-law Christian Dederer's farm to the north. Hendrick C. Banta, who owned a cider mill in the Steenrapie area (River Edge), lived west of the Mill Creek that flows through the park.

On September 4, 1780, General Washington moved the troops of the Continental army, numbering approximately 14,000, into a strategic encampment west of the Hackensack River between New Bridge in the south and Kinderkamack to the north in Steenrapie. They were part of the defense to challenge the British military stronghold on Manhattan and prevent any intervention with the landing of allied French troops in Rhode Island. Hendrick Banta reportedly sold a barrel of cider to these troops "every other day." His 10-year old son Cornelius reportedly saw Gen. Washington on his horse three times. During one these sightings the General was watering his horse at the spring, giving rise to the name "Washington Spring."

On Sept. 17th, Washington, General Knox and the Marquis de Lafayette, who was headquartered at the northern end of the encampment in the area now known as “Soldier Hill” in Oradell, left for Hartford, Connecticut to meet the recently arrived French commanding officers. The rest of the Continental Army decamped on Sept. 20.

The Bergen County Park Commission was created in November 1946 and in 1987 became the Division of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs. Van Saun Park, whose 140 acres include Washington Spring, was created in 1957. Also within the park is the Bergen County Zoological Park.

Wortendyke Barn

13 Pascack Road, Park Ridge, NJ

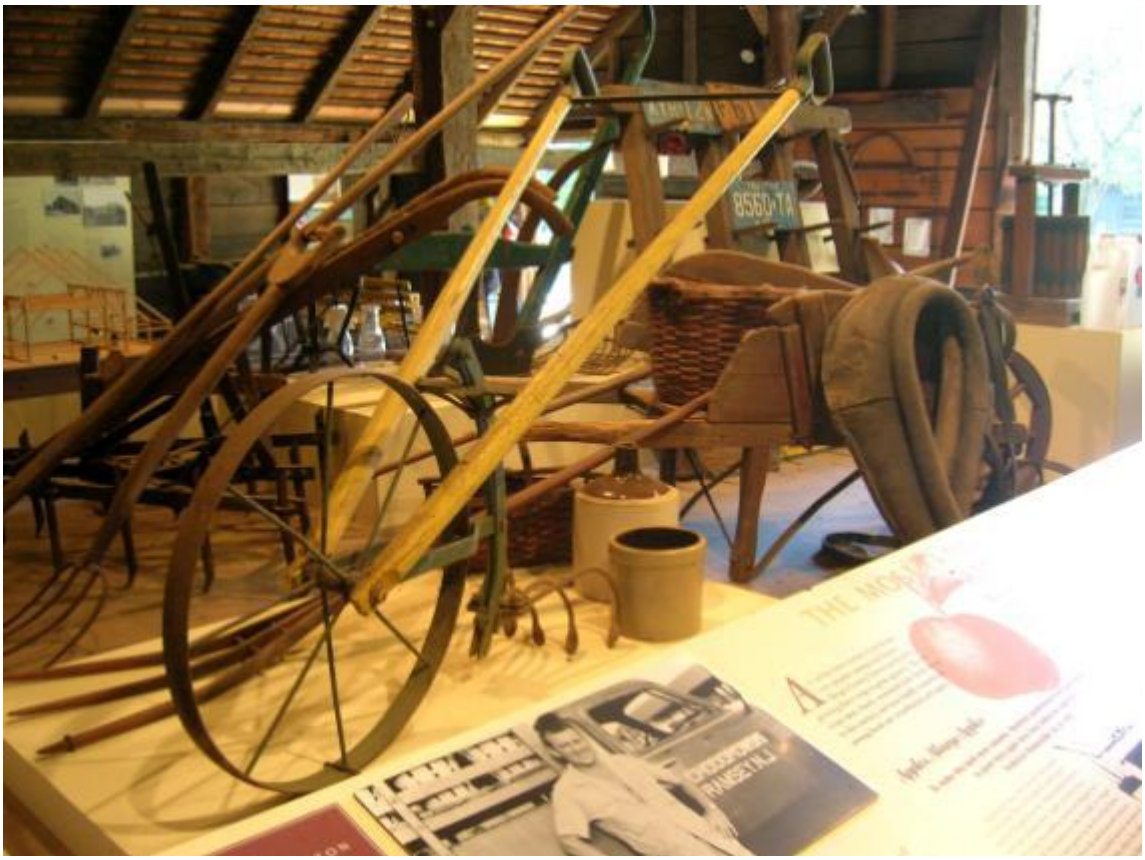
The Wortendyke Barn Museum, a National Register landmark, is all that remains of the original Wortendyke family farm. The barn, built circa 1770, is an outstanding example of the vernacular architecture referred to as a "New World Dutch Barn" which could be found throughout 18th and 19th century Bergen County. Most were built between 1624 and 1820 wherever Dutch farmers settled along the Hudson, Hackensack, Passaic, Raritan and Mohawk rivers. Today there are probably fewer than 100 of these barns left in various states of use and repair.

The main feature of the museum is the barn building itself. It was made completely of local wood, down to the nails called trunnels. Massive anchor beams, supported by posts creating an H-frame, support the entire structure. These barns tended to be wider than long with very steep, sloping roofs that allowed for the large storage area. The barns were built to store diversified crops with the side bays used for keeping a variety of animals and hay stored above in very large, roomy haylofts. The large entrances on both gable ends allowed for the efficient unloading of the wagons. Because the floors were raised off the ground on a sill the wood plank floors could last for decades.

The Wortendyke Barn Museum's exhibits include handmade 18th and 19th century farm implements and tools, the history of the Wortendyke family farm, and exhibits showing the agricultural history of Bergen County from the first settlers through the 20th century.

At the time the barn was built, most of the families living in the Hackensack Valley were independent farmers, some owning hundreds of acres of fertile farmland. People of Dutch ancestry were numerous in Bergen County, speaking Dutch in their homes and churches. The Wortendyke family settled in this area in 1735 when Frederick Wortendyke Sr. moved from Tappan, NY and purchased some 465 acres in present day Woodcliff Lake and Park Ridge. The family home, a sandstone house originally built around 1750, still stands directly across the street from the barn.

From 1735 to 1851, from before the French and Indian War until nine years before the start of the Civil War when the farm was sold, the land was maintained by the Wortendyke family as a working farm. After 1851, the land was sold several times but the barn remained in use as a barn until well into the 20th century. From 1960 until the middle of the 1980s, the Pascack Historical Society displayed some of their collections in the barn showing it on occasion. After restoration was completed in 1997, Bergen County opened the barn as a museum and county historic site.



State Parks

- Ramapo Mountain State Forest – Mahwah
- Palisades Interstate Park – Fort Lee, Englewood Cliffs, Tenafly, Alpine

State-owned Historical Sites

- New Bridge Landing – New Milford, River Edge and Teaneck
- The Hermitage – Ho-Ho-Kus
- Steuben House – River Edge (at New Bridge Landing)