

GLEN ROCK HISTORY

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WORLD WAR I ERA IN GLEN ROCK

2017 marks the 100th anniversary of the U. S. A.'s entry into World War I, "the Great War". Glen Rock was in its infancy as an independent borough at that time, having incorporated less than 25 years before in 1894. Federal census statistics show that Glen Rock was still sparsely settled in 1910 with only 1,055 people living here, although life was changing rapidly for the sleepy town. In 1908, the Smith-Singer Realty Company - Glen Rock's premier early developer - began buying up farm land to create planned neighborhoods with modern amenities. The population would double by 1920, and then double once again to a robust community of 4,369 by 1930.

In 1912, the Smith-Singer Hall was erected on the corner of Rock Road and Main Street and this three-story building quickly became the hub of borough activity. For an annual rental fee of \$400, the borough government leased an office in the building for its administration and an additional room on the ground floor for the part-time Glen Rock Police Department (including a small jail). Later, space would be added for the public library. In October 1913, the Mayor and Council hired Martin A. Jensen as the Chief of Police (and, in fact, as the entire police force). Chief Jensen had to provide his own bicycle for patrolling the streets until an official police bike was purchased by the Council in January 1914. Chief Jensen's son, Frederick, would become one of Glen Rock's five casualties of World War I; Fred was declared MIA following the Battle of Ormont Wood, north of Verdun in France, and later confirmed killed.



During the War Years, the Smith-Singer Hall was also the headquarters for the Glen Rock Home Guard and the Glen Rock Branch of the American Red Cross. These two organizations were vital to the local war efforts. Company E of the Home Guard was formed early on; the men drilled, learned how to handle ammunition, went on wilderness treks and helped to protect the town. The Red Cross ladies organized sewing and knitting teams to make garments for the men in service and for refugees, and rolled bandages for the wounded. Both groups sold War Bonds.

The Smith-Singer Hall, circa 1915, stands alone at the corner of Rock Road and Main Street. The top floor would be lost to fire in 1973.

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MEMORIAL PLAQUE

After the Armistice was signed on November 11, 1918, Glen Rockers got down to business to decide upon an appropriate memorial for the men who had served from the borough. Ideas ranged from a large monument in Triangle Park (with a price tag of \$4,000), a bronze plaque on The Rock, or construction of a Memorial Hospital/Memorial Building. A Memorial Commission made a presentation to Mayor Garrabrant and the town council in 1920 and it was decided to affix an Honor Roll plaque to the face of the landmark Rock.

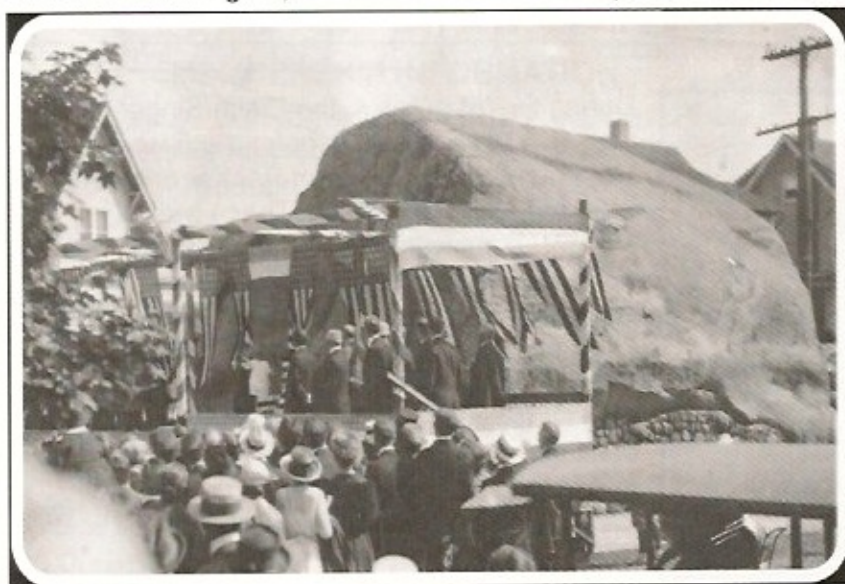
The Honor Roll lists the five men from Glen Rock who died in the conflict, followed by the names of 87 local men who served and returned home.



THOSE WHO SERVED

Glen Rock men served in many capacities, both stateside and overseas, during World War I. Here are just a few of their stories:

Fred Simonsen saw action with the Dental Corps of the Sanitary Train of the 110th Artillery; he was mistakenly reported as missing in action after his family had not heard from him for a number of weeks. **Stanley Elwood** was wounded by shrapnel from a "whizz-bang" device while working as a musician with the Ambulance Corps of the 105th Field Artillery of the 27th Division. **Walter Nally**, a sergeant with the 114th Infantry of the 29th Division, was also mistakenly reported as missing in action; he had left the Front with a transport of trucks, after four weeks of sustained fighting during the final offensive, and did not return to the Front before the Armistice was signed. Walter's brother, **John Nally**, was a private in the 9th Engineers, and handled clerical work while in Bordeaux, France. **James Wilkie** was cited for gallantry by the British government; he volunteered with the Canadian forces before the U. S. entered the War, serving in field ambulance work. **Leslie White** also served with the Canadians in their Aviation Service. **Everett Hoffmire** served in Washington, D.C. with the Dental Corps at Walter Reed Hospital.



The Honor Roll plaque was unveiled on Veterans' Day, 1921 by toddler Catherine Ebbert (in white dress), daughter of Glen Rock's first casualty.

Glen Rock deeply mourned the loss of five of its own. **Captain Peter Ebbert** was killed in France on August 7, 1918. His daughter Catherine was born after his death. **Mortimer Kerr**, an enlisted wireless operator with the U.S. Navy, died on September 28, 1918 of burns aboard the USS Celebes, a Dutch freighter pressed into service as a transport ship. **Frederick Jensen** also died on September 28, 1918, in France. **Jacob Phillips**, of the 114th Infantry, 29th Division, died in France of pneumonia on October 30, 1918; he served in the same regiment as fellow Rockers Fred Jensen and Walter Nally. **Frank Squires**, serving with the Canadian forces in France, died November 2, 1918 of influenza.

FRANK SQUIRES' LETTER FROM THE FRONT

The Glen Rock Home Guard published a local newspaper, *The Glen Rocket*, from 1918-1919. This newspaper reported on town happenings as well as updates on the local men engaged in service, including occasional letters home from the soldiers.

Some of the most engaging letters were written by Frank Squires to his wife, Hilda, living on Bradford Street. Squires, who was born in England, enlisted with the Canadian Forces (Hamilton Mounted Rifles) and served, and died, in France. He had been wounded, then recovered only to be struck down by influenza just nine days before the Armistice. He was survived by his wife and their infant daughter, Peggy. In civilian life, Squires was a leather salesman for a New York company. Here is one of his letters (undated) home:

"It took a year of soldiering for me to reach the front line. We were on a listening post - a hole out in No Man's Land, and after you have peered across it for ten minutes, you are liable to see anything, while when you have finished your two hours, you could swear the whole German army was coming over. Machine gun bullets whistled around us at times, or struck the wire under which we stood, with a twang, while one morning Fritz put on a little strafe, and one shell passed so close we could feel the heat from it. We were relieved in the front line about seven one evening, and were marching from then until 2 a.m., which on top of very little sleep was quite a test. We then had a whole night in motor buses, and for the four following nights we were marching, one night covering about twenty-five miles, part of the way in a pouring rain. I now know what fatigue really is, as one night when we halted for the usual ten minutes' rest I fell asleep as soon as I dropped by the roadside. All this night marching, of course, was to bring success to the operations, and after seeing the results obtained, I, for one, am not inclined to growl over the hardships. Only wish I had the New York papers for the last three days to see what has been accomplished on other fronts, because if what we hear is true, Fritz has taken a fearful walloping.

The night before the big push we got about two hours' sleep in a wheat field, being awakened by the opening of the barrage. Maybe I wasn't wet and cold with dew - all we were carrying in the way of protection being a rubber sheet - though the rum which was issued that morning soon stopped my shivering. We had breakfast and then started off. When we reached the road, walking wounded and prisoners were coming in, ambulances were dashing back and forth, while troops and tanks were going forward. After a time we reached what had been the front line, and saw something of what war means, though on the whole the sights were not so bad as I expected, but some, of course, were far from pleasant. We kept moving forward slowly, prisoners still coming in, and seeing some of the guns which were captured. By the way, it wasn't so very long before some of them were turned on their former owners. At last we reached the jumping off point, and it was our turn to be the front wave, so we fixed bayonets and got into extended order, and went forward. Had imagined there would be trenches ahead of us but such was not the case, so we were practically in open warfare. Soon after, we were amazed to learn that we had reached our objective, as nothing had happened at all. One thing we didn't have to contend with was shell fire. Fritz either had very few guns on this front, or he had withdrawn them. Still, when another of our companies leapfrogged us to be on the front wave, we acting as supports, it was quite a different matter, for in front of us was a group of small woods, every one a machine gun strong point, and the way those bullets whizzed around your head (even though we had good cover, as the grass was fairly tall) was decidedly uncomfortable. Tanks were ahead, but apparently were working to the road to head off Heinie when he tried to escape. But our luck was surely in that day, as only a couple of our fellows were hit. However, sooner or later, Heinie gives up, usually just before the last rush is to be made, and then it is "Mercy, Kamerad!" and the beggar expects that after keeping up a perfect stream of bullets at you. We stopped in one wood for the night, while another battalion wnet through us to take up the attack. The wood had been his [the enemy's] horse lines, so we had good salvaging. His canteen was stocked with cigars, cigarettes, ginger cake and any amount of wine, all of which we sampled. At one cook house we found a freshly killed chicken, which will give you some idea as to how fast he had to retire. All morning prisoners were coming in. Tried to talk with one, but he didn't speak English; though when I asked him if he were Prussian, he proudly slapped himself on the cheek and said "Me Prussian", and then in a voice of contempt pointed to another chap and said, "Him Saxon".

G.R.H.P.S.

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The GRHPS Mission Statement:

To heighten the public's awareness of, and appreciation for, the history, growth and development of Glen Rock, Bergen County, New Jersey

Meetings are held on the THIRD Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m., September through June, at the Main Line Station

Please support us through the Amazon Smile program
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THE GRHPS IS A 501(c)3 ORGANIZATION. DONATIONS ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE.

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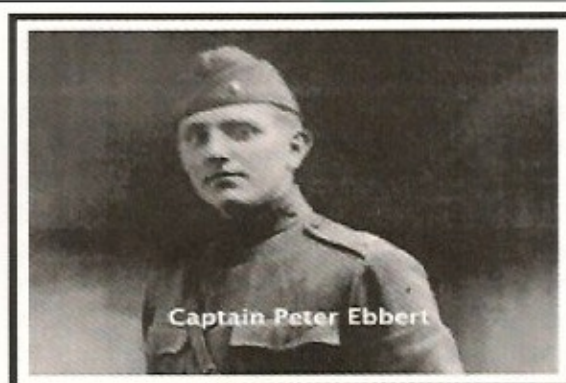
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Captain Peter Ebbert

Come visit us-
MUSEUM AT THE STATION SCHEDULE
We will be open from 1 - 3 pm on the
following dates:

Mar. 26, 2017

Apr. 30, 2017

May 28, 2017

June 25, 2017

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, May 20, 2017

WORLD WAR I CENTENNIAL BAZAAR



Sponsored by the NW Bergen History Coalition

On the grounds of The Hermitage, 11 am to 5 pm

Plan to join us as we step back to a momentous time in our history — the entrance of America into World War I — at our Centennial Bazaar on the beautiful grounds of The Hermitage in Ho-Ho-Kus. It will be an event you don't want to miss.

Highlights of the Day Include:

PERFORMANCES BY:

Woodrow Wilson from the American History Theatre • Joyce Kilmer Society of Mahwah
Waldwick Band • Centennial Flag folding ceremony by Saving Hallowed Ground
Ramapo College Canta Nova Chorale • Suffragist Harriet Stanton Blatch
World War I Color Guard stopping by on their way to Camp Merritt

ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG AND OLD:

Games, clowns, a fortune teller, WWI Era Food plus a Soldiers' Canteen serving coffee & donuts, Vintage cars, Vintage Music, WWI Uniform Displays, Afternoon Tea at The Hermitage • 1917 era clothing • Local musical groups

BOOTHS & DEMONSTRATIONS:

National Guard Military Museum of NJ • War Gardens, Hermitage Gardeners • Lace Making • World War I Knitting
Suffrage Movement, Ridgewood League of Women Voters • Rutherford World War I Centennial Committee

IN THE HERMITAGE'S JACQUA HALL:

Displays by Coalition members of World War I artifacts from their collections as well as by organizations that were part of the WWI war effort, such as the American Red Cross, the Boy Scouts and Girls Scouts, the VFW and more.

Corporate Sponsors & Volunteers for the Day Are Welcome:

We are soliciting Corporate Sponsors. Your names will be in a brochure to be handed out and on signage that day. Volunteers are also needed. To be a sponsor or a volunteer, please contact Sheila Brogan at 201-652-7354.

Sponsoring NW Bergen Coalition Museums:

The Hermitage, Ho-Ho-Kus	The John Fell House, Allendale	The Schoolhouse Museum, Ridgewood	The Mahwah Museum
Waldwick Signal Tower	Hopper-Goetschius House Museum, Upper Saddle River	The Museum at the Station, Glen Rock	The Zabriskie House, Wyckoff
Van Allen House, Oakland		Waldwick Museum of Local History	The Old Stone House, Ramsey