



# Newsletter of the Middletown Township Historical Society

Vol VI No. 4

August 1990

## THE LAMARCHE FAMILY NAVESINK RIVER ROAD PIONEERS

The highest peak on the Navesink River and a dramatic decline to the shore mark the physical make-up of the Lamarche tract on the eastern stem of Navesink River Road. Its origins, sale to the Belgian industrialist Hyacinthe Lamarche, and break-up for contemporary estate housing span three centuries. The history is best reflected in the original Lamarche house, now the home of J. Sheppard and Lee Poor.

Hyacinthe Joseph Lamarche born in Liege, Belgium, was the progenitor of the American family. He arrived in New York with his brother, Edouard, around 1847. They issued a circular letter in 1849 offering their services to European firms as importing agents. The two brothers married two daughters of Henry Francis, a Hartford Connecticut carriage manufacturer, Edouard in 1850 and Hyacinthe in 1851. Edouard's wife died after a year of marriage and he returned to Liege. Hyacinthe continued in business in New York City, representing the large zinc mining company indicated on his business card, illustrated herein. He also represented the Pieper firearms company, an important Liege manufacturer. Lamarche is known to have resided in Brooklyn, New York, by 1855, the year his eldest son, Henry J. Lamarche was born there.<sup>1</sup>

Hyacinthe Lamarche brought twenty-two acres on both sides of the then new Navesink River Road for \$16,000 on November 17, 1877.<sup>2</sup> The seller was Laura Frances Matson. The maps of the time give a good picture of the land prior to an important phase of its and the Township's development. An earlier deed for this property included a sketch of bounds that began on the north by a no longer extant Grandview Avenue<sup>3</sup> (Figure 1). The street parallel to the Navesink River pre-dated Navesink River Road and was closer to the shore.

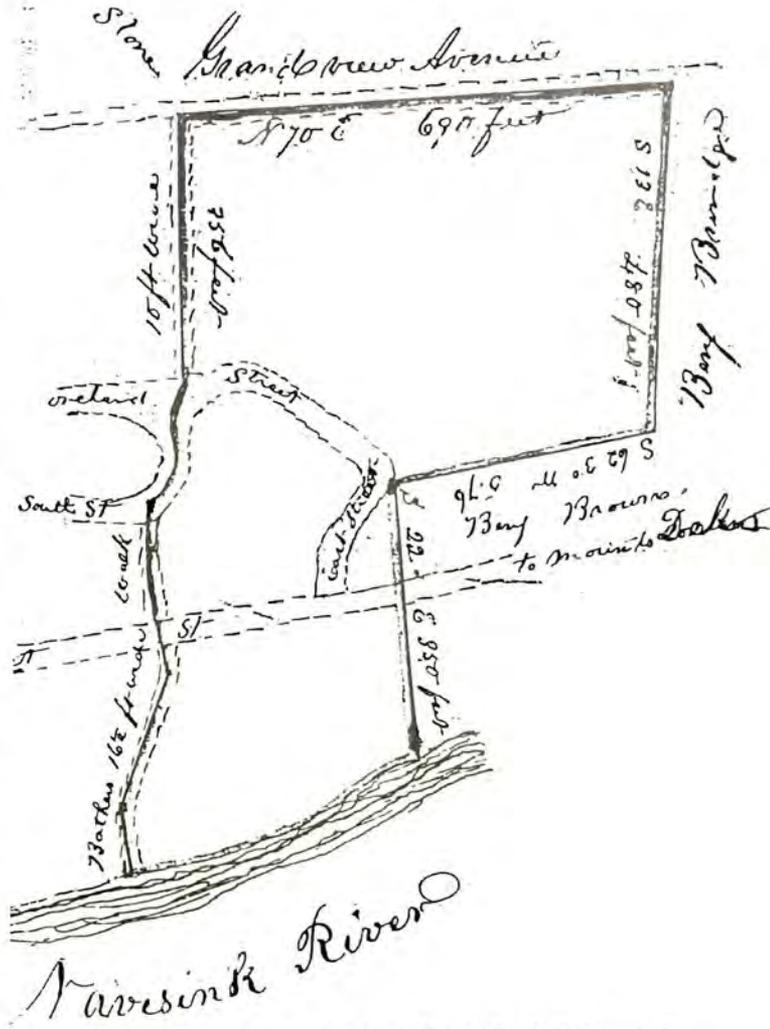


Figure 1. Map from Deeds Book E-6, page 9

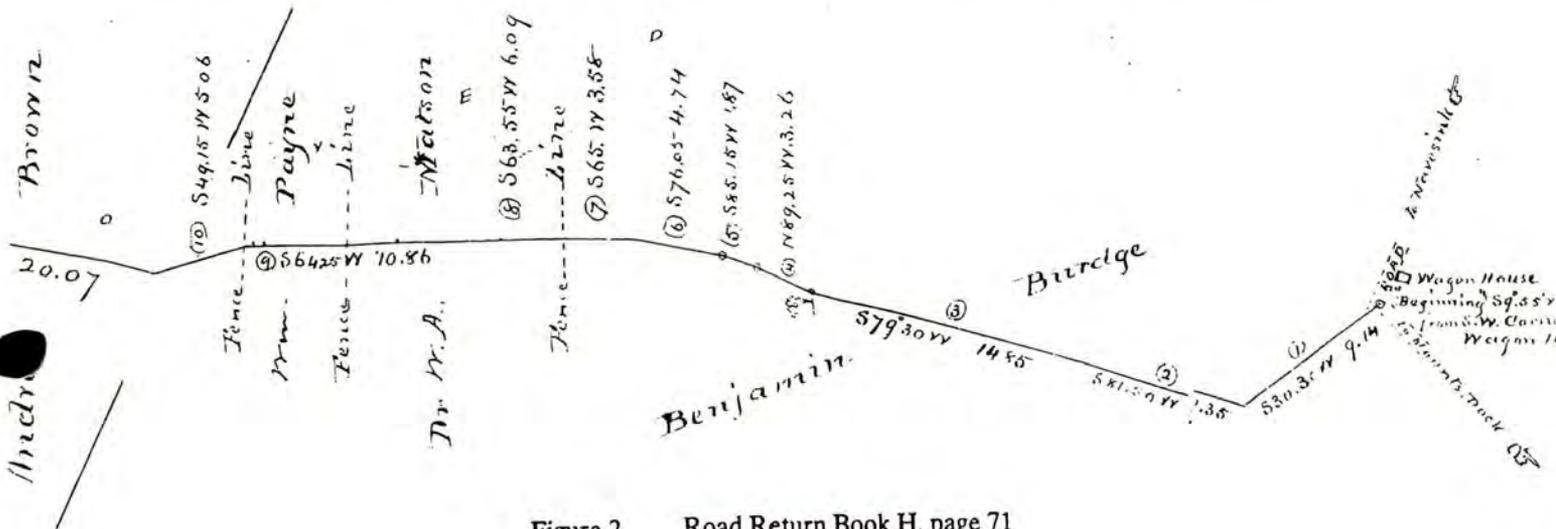


Figure 2. Road Return Book H, page 71

There are three other abandoned streets named Orchard, South and East. The distinctive outlines of these paths are still visible on aerial photographs. Public access to the shore was gained through charmingly and descriptively named Bathers Walk.

Navesink River Road was laid on November 10, 1870, surveyed by Ezra A. Osborn<sup>4</sup> (Figure 2). This segment of his map indicates property owner Andrew Brown, whose Brown's Dock was an important shipping point for local farmers and Dr. William A. Matson, husband of Laura, the aforementioned seller. Benjamin Burdge had extensive holdings on the east. It once included the Lamarche land. Burdge family property was old and vast, dating from carpenter David Burdge's purchase of 685 acres at the Navesink River and Clay Pit creek in 1715.<sup>5</sup> From the beginnings of nineteenth century topographical mapping of New Jersey, the area was known as Burdges<sup>6</sup> (Figure 3).

Late nineteenth century mapping gives a clearer, if not precise, view of the land. The 1873 Beers, Comstock and Cline Atlas (Figure 4) shows the Matson house and

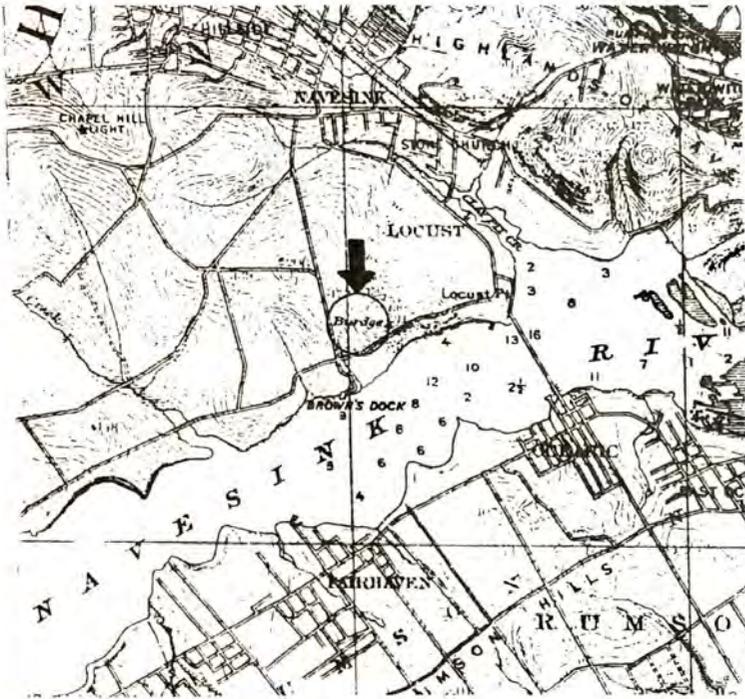


Figure 3. Geological Survey of New Jersey, part of Atlas Sheet Number 29



Figure 4. 1873 Beers Atlas, part of plate 53

apparently one other structure. The road between the buildings follows the direction of a since re-directed driveway. B. Brown and D. Burdge are indicated as neighbors on the east. The previously cited Matson to Lamarche deed bounded on the east the land of both Benjamin Brown and Benjamin Burdge. The 1889 Wolverton Atlas (Figure 5) reflects a family compound.

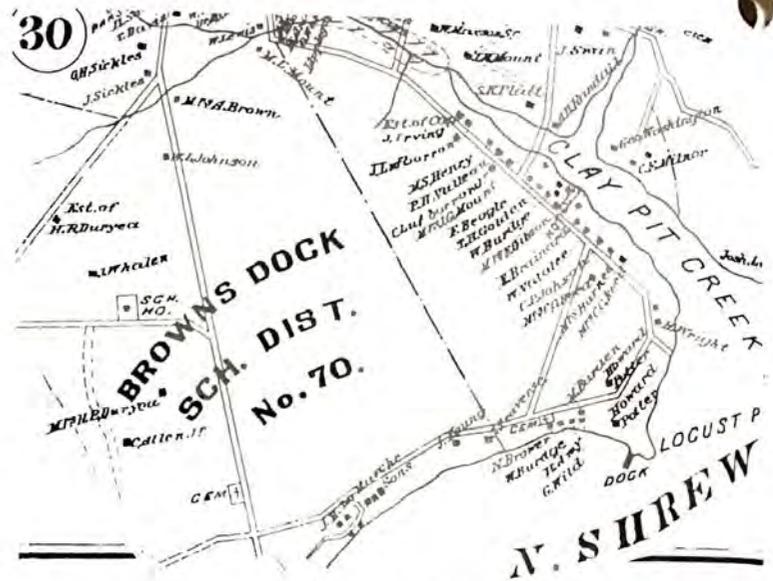


Figure 5. 1889 Wolverton Atlas, part of plate 31

The Lamarche-Werlemann-Poor house (Figure 6) was built in three sections. The oldest and most recent have been significantly altered. The oldest section on the east dates from the second half of the eighteenth century. When built, the house may have consisted of a single, all-purpose keeping room on the ground floor and a single bedroom on the upper level.

It has been extended twice towards the south. The first was built over an old porch; the second expanded a large room towards the river. A large open space adjacent to the kitchen includes an eating counter, sofa, chairs, a table near the front river-view window, a desk and TV. One could spend an extended informal day in this area, varying ones surroundings and not feeling cramped. A fireplace surrounded by Dutch tile adds to the room's warmth. The east wing resembles a colonial style keeping room, expanded and equipped to create contemporary comfort. The second story of the east wing likely once slept the entire family. It was later a maids room and is now the principal guest room, containing access to a second story porch over one of the extensions. The center section was built c. 1800. Its boundaries are clearly marked by wide floor boards. Its rooms clearly separate household activities, a marked advance from the colonial-era older part. The dining room is the largest space, having been enlarged by the removal of a partition. A steel beam now supports the ceiling. A fireplace is no longer working, but its chimney is connected with the furnace (Figure 7).

A "tea room" overlooks the river west of the dining room. Its bookcases and associated memorabilia create a warm setting for smaller gatherings. A half-bath behind the "tea room" was once the only one in the house.

The wing on the west, the newest section, is dated by the Poors stylistically and from a receipt for materials found in the attic dated 1875. The south or river front side includes a reception hall and living room. A substantial hall Dutch door once led to the driveway which wound around the house. A pudding stone living room fireplace has been boxed in with new brick. A portrait of Judge Benjamin Howard Ward of New York, 1797-1848, is a reminder that the family ties are at least as old as the house. His daughter is Shep Poor's maternal great-great grandmother. The ceilings, which were



Figure 6. The Lamarche House, c. 1890s

dropped slightly during re-wiring, are an indicator that the house is altered for modern living. Five double-hung six-over-six windows emit light through the heavily planted grounds.

The library fills the northwest corner of the 1875 house. Bookcases added by the Poors are their only changes.

The second floor of the 1875 house contains the masters bedroom. This unaltered large room permits installation of office facilities, in the southwest corner and many bookcases without crowding. A former passageway and bedroom behind it were converted to a bathroom and closet creating a bedroom suite. A spare bedroom is on the north side of the 1875 house.

The second story of the c. 1800 house is two steps lower than the 1875 house. A full-length center corridor separates bedrooms on the north and south sides of the house. The rooms have been enlarged and bathrooms installed to reflect current standards of comfort.

The relocation of the driveway redirected traffic and made the north elevation (Figure 8) the "front" of the house.



Figure 8. The Lamarche/Poor house, north elevation



Figure 7. Dining room of the c. 1800 house

A new doorway was added, designed by the distinguished architect Alfred Easton Poor. (Figure 9)

Lamarche's neighbor and local builder, Nehemiah

**H. LAMARCHE,**  
 Importing & Commission Merchant,  
 No. 80 John Street, New York.  
**METALS,**  
 SHEET ZINC, SPELTER, LEAD, IRON, GUNS, NAILS,  
 FRENCH WINDOW GLASS, &c., &c.  
 AGENT FOR THE  
*Vteille Montagne Zinc Mining Co., and others.*

Hyacinthe Lamarche's business card

Brower/ began work there in July 1881, near the end of Hyacinthe's life. His journals did not always describe his work, so the first thirty-eight and one-half day project by Nehemiah and his son Arthur are unknown. He built the



Figure 9. The Alfred Easton Poor doorway



Figure 10. The Barn



Figure 11. The dock, a contemporary reconstruction

barn in 1883<sup>8</sup> (Figure 10) and a dock (Figure 11) in May, 1887.<sup>9</sup>

Hyacinthe Lamarche died December 18, 1881. His will was admitted to probate in Kings County, New York, January 4, 1882. A copy was filed with letters testamentary in Monmouth County, December 13, 1890. Provisions for his Navesink River estate are quoted in a deed dated October 5, 1892 to Henry J. Lamarche, executor, recorded in Monmouth Deeds Book 509, pages 55-69. This lengthy document also recites Hyacinthe's land acquisition transactions, including riparian grants from the State of New Jersey.

Emily Lamarche, his widow, died March 1, 1891. Hyacinthe's will provided that on her death, all his estate, real and personal, be divided into equal shares for his children living at the time and to the children, if any, of Hyacinthe's deceased children. The Lamarches had six sons and one daughter. The previously cited Book 509 deed specified that the children had agreed to the partition and that Marie Therese's share be held in trust by two of her brothers. Her husband, Henri Werlemann, was also a party to the agreement.

*Continued*

1. *Red Bank Register*, February 5, 1913
2. *Monmouth Deeds*, Book 295, page 238.
3. *Monmouth Deeds*, Book E-6, page 9, from Henry Moore to John Beyer, dated December 7, 1853, recorded January 3, 1854.
4. *Monmouth Road Returns*, Book H, page 71.
5. Burdge, Howard Griffith, *Burdge and Allied Families*, a typescript n.d, apparently compiled in the 1930s.
6. *Geological Survey of New Jersey*, Atlas Sheet No 29.
7. See *M.T.H.S Newsletter* Volume V, Number 3, June 1989 for a description of Brower's career.
8. *Nehemiah Brower's Daybook*, Volume II.
9. *ibid.*



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DEDICATED TO RESEARCHING, COLLECTING AND EXHIBITING THE HISTORY OF MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP.

Museum: In the main building at Croydon Hall on Leonardville Rd. between Chamone and Bellevue Aves. in the township's Leonardo section. Open Saturdays & Sundays.

Meetings: 8:00 PM at the museum, generally on the fourth Monday with occasional exceptions for major holidays.

Donations of historical materials: Please see a museum guide or write to the Society.

MEMBERSHIP DUES  
PER CALENDAR YR.

Individual — \$5.00  
Family — \$10.00

Dues for new members joining after Oct. 1 include following year.