



The Black River JOURNAL

Exploring New Jersey: Yesterday and Today



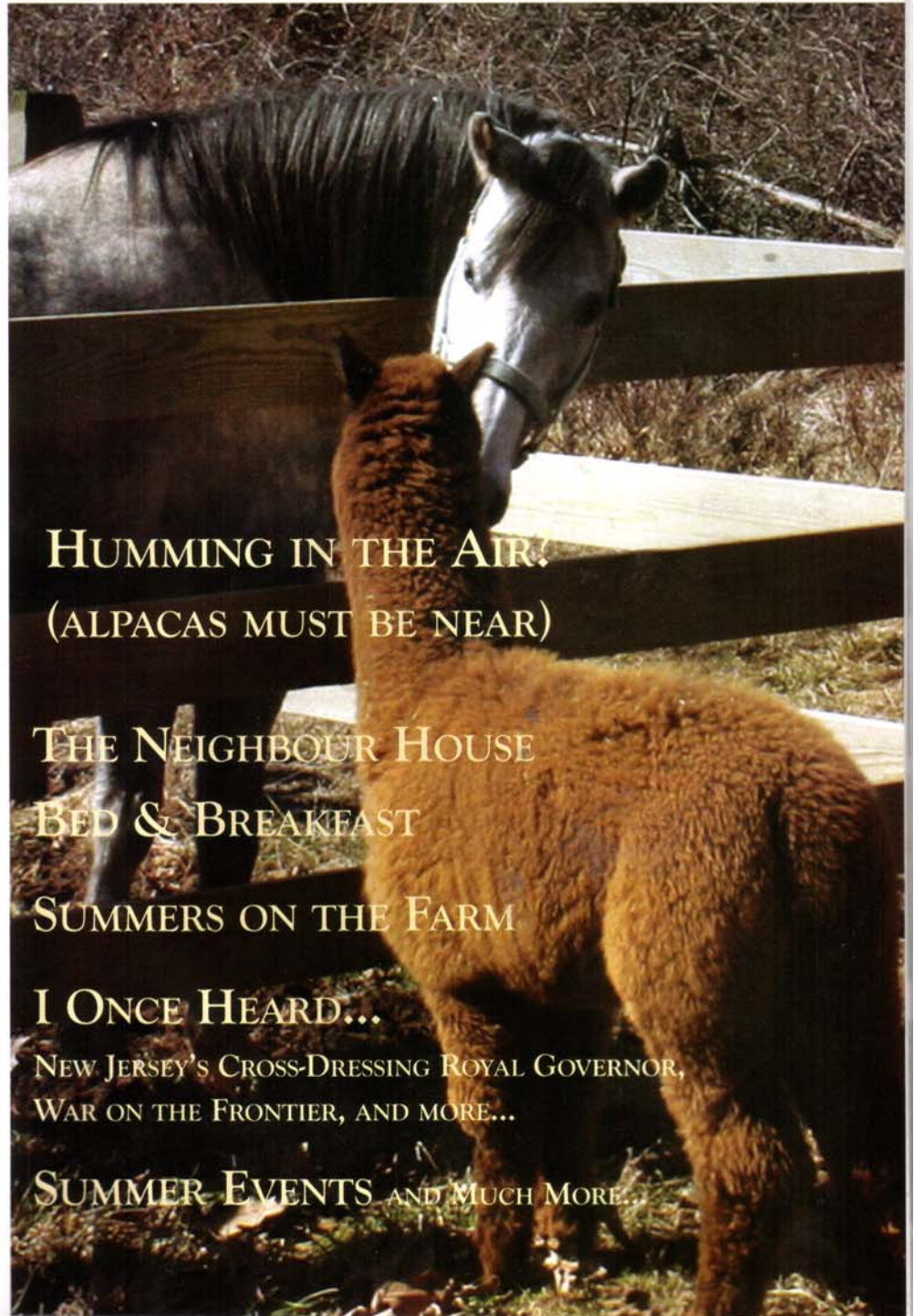
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HUMMING IN THE AIR!
(ALPACAS MUST BE NEAR)

THE NEIGHBOUR HOUSE
BED & BREAKFAST

SUMMERS ON THE FARM

I ONCE HEARD...

NEW JERSEY'S CROSS-DRESSING ROYAL GOVERNOR,
WAR ON THE FRONTIER, AND MORE...

SUMMER EVENTS AND MUCH MORE...

We Love this Place

The History of the Neighbour House Bed & Breakfast

For two immigrant families, each from different parts of the world and separated by almost two and a half centuries, the American dream led to a farm in Long Valley, New Jersey.

By Christian and Lee Wolfe



The Jacob Neighbour House (Lee Wolfe)

The sailing ship “Robert and Oliver” (or “Robert and Alice”) set out from Rotterdam, Holland in the late summer of 1738 with 320 passengers bound for the New World. Among them were 40-year old, Leanhart Nachbar (Leonard Neighbour), his wife Maria, and their three daughters. They were traveling

with a group of 38 immigrants (6-8 families) who were fleeing religious intolerance and economic devastation in the war-torn Rhenish Palatine, an area in southwest Germany between Luxembourg and the Rhine River that was ravaged by the troops of French King Louis XIV during the “War of the Grand Alliances” (1689-1697).

That summer an epidemic swept through the throngs of immigrants awaiting passage to America, killing many before they left the docks. Others brought the disease on board the ships and died out at sea. Philip Dufford, whose family was among the group of 38 Palatines bound for the colony of New York, may have lost three or four of his children and his wife Anna, before reaching the other side of the Atlantic.

Disease was common on the cramped voyages to the colonies but it was only one of many hardships that passengers might have to face on a grueling journey that could last months. Samuel Swachhamer (Swackhammer), who may have inspired the 38 German colonists

that followed in his course, made a similar voyage in 1731 on the ship “Love and Unity” and described his ill-fated cruise in a letter which was later published in the Pennsylvania Gazette.

“...We have seen in the last eight weeks no bread at all, and in four of these eight weeks, a pint of Grouts was the allowance of five persons one day, and a quart of water a person one day. Our time from Rotterdam to land here at Homes Holes Martha’s Vineyard...has been four and twenty weeks, and of 150 persons, more than 100 are died and perished...the hunger was so great, that we have eat rats and mice, so that one rat cost eight pence, and two shillings; and a mouse three pence and four pence, and a quart of water four pence, that some of us have let others have for their children’s-sake...in one night seven persons are miserably starved to death and thrown into the sea...”

Weather however, was probably the biggest obstacle to overcome on a trans-Atlantic crossing, as the passengers of



(Neighbour House)

the “Robert and Oliver” discovered when strong winds forced them to land in Philadelphia instead of their intended port of New York.

It’s not clear whether Neighbour and the rest of the group on board the “Robert and Oliver” had originally set out for New Jersey or whether they were heading for one of the Dutch settlements in New York, but either way they now had to find a different route there.

According to legend, Samuel Swackhammer sent Native American warriors, procured from his friend Chief Tammenud, to guide Neighbour and his friends to the “Long Valley” where either by design or fate, they decided to stay and make their homes. Leonard Neighbour built his cabin on 310 acres on what is now West Mill Road, and in 1749 he legally purchased the tract from William Logan for \$352. It was also around this time that Nachbar was changed to Neighbour.

Shortly after settling in what became known as “German Valley” (it was changed to Long Valley due to anti-German sentiments in WWI), all of Leonard’s daughters were married and



(Neighbour House)

Fred Neighbour (left) and his brother Leonard (right) circa 1905.

he and Maria had a son, Leonard II. As the decades went by and the area became populated with Neighbours, Trimmers, Welshes, and Schenkels, all of whom could trace their lineage to Leonard, he became known as “the Father of German Valley” but like some

early European settlers he was really a grandfather to a new and rapidly expanding nation. According to Chambers’ *Early Germans of New Jersey* (1895, Dover, NJ), two of Leonard’s grandsons, Nicholas and David Neighbour brought their anglicized



(Neighbour House)

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names to Ohio in 1815, where they helped found the settlement of Newcomerstown. Their descendents moved west with the country, settling in Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, and eventually California.

In 1830, Leonard Neighbor III, who now owned his grandfather's farmstead, divided the property and sold each half for \$5,000 to his two sons, Leonard IV, and Jacob Wise (J.W.). Jacob's half of the estate included a distillery, where Leonard III had been making "apple jack" or "Jersey Lightning" as it became known. Later that year Leonard III and his wife attended a local church temperance lecture and were so moved by the oration that Leonard III went home and destroyed the distillery. A judge and a member of the state legislature, Leonard III was considered a fair and just man, and to make up for the loss he paid Jacob the distillery's cash value. Leonard III lived to be 91 (a testament to clean living?). His obituary listed eight surviving children, 66 grand children, 63 great-grandchildren, and three great-great grandchildren.

It is believed that Jacob Neighbour began construction of what is now known as the "Neighbour House" sometime in 1830, on the site of Leonard Neighbour's original log cabin. Built in the Greek revival style, the wood over brick construction, with its pillared front porch and shining copper roof (the copper roof was removed and donated to the war effort during WWI) wasn't your typical New Jersey Dutch farmhouse and reflected the family's prosperous beginnings in Long Valley.

Jacob seemed to spare no expense and according to the Neighbour House website, "The house is surprisingly sophisticated for such a rural location." Distinguishing details include full-length windows on the first floor and frieze band windows on wide flush boarding on the second floor. Classical moldings and door surrounds, faux-

Egyptian marble fireplace mantles, interior window shutters, and a mahogany handrail and newel post built from wood that was brought by horse and wagon all the way from Trenton.

In 1852, Jacob sold the house to his brother David. Two years later, David's son Silas "set up housekeeping" there with his new bride Ann (nee Apgar). Silas and his wife raised three children in the stately home and in 1888, they invited their son Stewart and his wife Kate to share the house with them. Built with two kitchens, the homestead had more than enough room for both families. In 1904 Silas and Ann celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. More than 80 guests spilled out onto the porches of the house, inside laughter and the sound of fiddle music filled the rooms and halls, which were festooned with fresh flowers and garlands of white and gold. According to tradition Stewart and Kate's 25th wedding anniversary was just as festive.

By the 1920s, many local farmers had fallen on hard times. In 1929, Stewart Neighbour, like so many of his contemporaries, was compelled to sell the house and what was left of the original farm to the new "landed gentry," who were acquiring vast estates in Somerset, Hunterdon, and Morris counties. For a while the Neighbour House was a home to tenants and farmhands but when it was sold again, the new owners let the house go empty. The once prominent Greek revival manor was now a haven for "hobos" and transients, who burned the shutters for firewood and added the scars of vandalism to the damage from age and neglect.

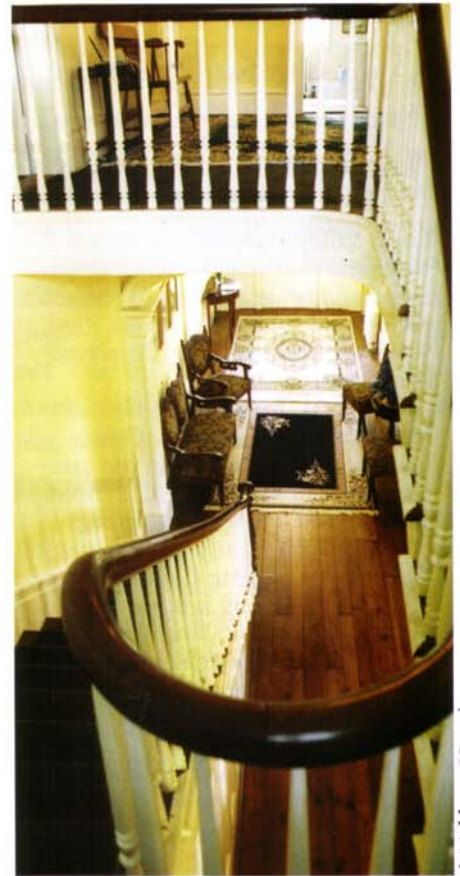
Fortunately, in 1941, Joseph and Marion Decker, who "had a strong interest in preserving the architectural history of the area," purchased the Neighbour House. They lived there almost 50 years, raising a family and gradually restoring the home to its former glory. Throughout the house, the

“degrees of detailing and workmanship” that “distinguish the Neighbour House from other rural farmhouses of the period” were given new life. Many of the doors and most of the original hardware are still in working order, and the “random width heart-pine floors” are intact. The folding shutters, which once kept the house cool in summer, can still shut out the heat on the first floor and the kitchen still has its original fireplace “complete with Dutch oven and wrought iron crane.” The Deckers even managed to locate and restore the custom mahogany banister (pictured right) which had been saved by one of the Neighbour descendants and was being stored in the loft of a local barn.

In 1990 the Deckers’ dream was finally realized when the Jacob Neighbor House was nominated for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. Later that year Jack Borgenicht, who owned the surrounding acreage, pur-

chased the Neighbour House from the Decker estate and the two original Neighbour properties that had been split up by Leonard III in 1830, were finally “rejoined as they had been over 250 years ago when Leanhart Nachbar first settled in German Valley.” Today the house is surrounded by 800 acres of preserved farmland.

In 1992 Jack Borgenicht, who would also restore the 18th century Trimmer dairy barn, transforming it into a brew pub (now the Long Valley Pub and Brewery), decided to open a bed and breakfast in the historic Neighbour House. Once again the old home would be filled with the laughter, chatter, and even the tears of guests, family and friends, including those of a young couple from Demona, Israel who, like Leonard Neighbour almost two and a half centuries earlier, left their native land to seek adventure and opportunity in America.



(Neighbour House)

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Myhelan Cultural Arts Center - Infusing the arts into life in the community. Schooley's Mountain Road, 908-876-5959 or www.myhelan.org.

Obadiah LaTourette Grist and Saw Mill - The 1750 mill is being restored by the Washington Township Land Trust. Tours are given most Saturdays from 10 am to 4 pm 908-876-4478 or www.WILT.org.

Ort Farm - You'll find tomatoes, sweet corn, snap peas, and other produce throughout the summer at Ort farms. 25 Bartley Road, 908-876-3351.

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Washington Township Historical Society Museum - Housed in an 1830 stone schoolhouse, a collection of "photographs, local artifacts, farm tools, and clothes and books" are on display. 6 Fairview Avenue. Open Sundays from 2 pm to 4 pm 908-876-9696



From left to right: Iris, Neeve, Sagi, and Rafi Kadosh offer family hospitality at the Neighbour House Bed and Breakfast in Long Valley, New Jersey (Photo courtesy of the Neighbour House Bed and Breakfast)

Iris and Rafi Kadosh are "Sabras," first-generation Israelis whose parents, who were from Morocco, returned to Israel after World War II, as thousands of Jews did from around the world, creating a "melting pot" of languages and cultures. Rafi experienced this melding of cultures when he met Israelis from all over the country during his three years in the military, which is compulsory for both men and women.

After their hitch in the army, the couple (as is custom for many Israelis after they are discharged from active service) spent some time abroad, before attending school and settling down to married life. Rafi became a school teacher and Iris was a corporate accountant. But according to Iris "everyone around the world is dreaming of America" and though they love Israel, they decided to immigrate to the United States. In 1987 they crossed the Atlantic and like Leonard Neighbour centuries before, they landed in Philadelphia and fate soon led them to place called Long Valley, New Jersey.

Rafi and Iris heard through friends that Jack Borgenicht was looking for someone to live in the Neighbour House (law requires that an occupant must be in the house overnight if there are guests) and they decided to take up the challenge. They fell in love with the house as soon as they saw it, a feeling of "wow" that Iris reminds herself of whenever she starts taking the house for granted.

They moved to Long Valley in 1990 but life in rural New Jersey wasn't what they expected. Used to having a lot of family around and an active social life, they now felt isolated. "I cried for three months," Iris admitted. "I didn't see anybody...just birds and squirrels." "For us it was shocking," Rafi agreed. "We are more like city kids. But slowly we made friends and slowly we got used to it." Now they feel fortunate to be raising their two sons, Sagi (born in 1994) and Neeve (born in 1999) in Long Valley and "love the area." "It's like living in a fairy tale," Rafi said.

In 1992, even though they had no

experience as innkeepers, Rafi and Iris took up Jack Borgenicht's offer to manage the Neighbour House full-time and eventually formed a partnership with him. "We grew into it," Iris explained and "we got stronger with every guest," Rafi added. "Now it has become a way of life. We don't even think about it," Iris said.

According to Rafi, the key to their success, besides hard work and dedication, has been Iris's welcoming nature. "Iris is very hospitable," he said, "and guests feel like they are coming home. We want guests to feel like this is their home or their grandma's home." The house, though elegantly adorned, "isn't decorated like a museum." "I don't want guests to feel like they can't touch anything," Rafi said. "The only rule is no smoking, otherwise they are free to use the house as if they were at home."

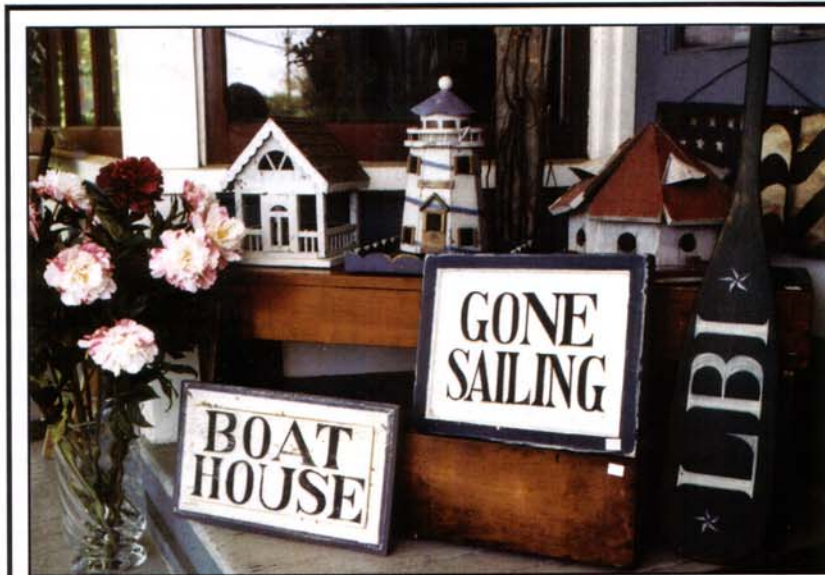
For Iris and Rafi Kadosh, the most enjoyable part of running a bed and

breakfast is meeting new guests, welcoming returning guests, and getting a chance to socialize with them. A typical lodger could be a family member returning to Long Valley for a holiday or family event, urbanites looking to escape the city, business people, fishermen, antique hunters and crafters, or seasonal guests who have brought their kids for pumpkin picking or hay rides. "Bed and breakfast guests are unique," Rafi explained. One visitor was bicycling from Brooklyn, NY to the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania and stayed overnight on his ride west and then again on his trek back to Brooklyn.

Every guest is special and "we try to make their experience richer," Rafi said. Because of their hospitality they receive letters, cards, birth announcements, pictures, etc. from guests as far away as Japan, Germany, and Australia, who want to stay in touch. Rafi and Iris admit that they miss their family in

Israel and visit whenever they can but Rafi also feels that "now our guests are our family." In 2000 the Kadoshs purchased the Neighbour House and continue "the passionate tradition of preserving the history of this beautiful home." They hope to expand on the success of their bed and breakfast and still have dreams for their future and the future of the Neighbour House. "We put our hearts and souls into this house," Rafi said "and we love this place."

To contact Rafi and Iris for reservations or to find out more about the Neighbour House Bed and Breakfast, please call (908) 876-3519 or email them at neighbourhouse@comcast.net. You can also visit the Neighbour House website at www.neighbourhouse.com. The Neighbour House Bed and Breakfast is located at 143 West Mill Road, Long Valley, NJ, 07853.



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