



Bring Back the Nail House!

DRIVE, CITY PARK, BRIDGETON, N. J.

Clearly even a century ago Bridgeton knew something about 'placemaking.'

Tucked under towering old sycamores at the entrance to the City Park, the little building called the "Nail House" has just entered its THIRD century.

As home of the City's original startup industry, it makes a pretty good metaphor for the heart of Bridgeton.

Maybe we can all get it beating again!?

Even a century ago, the people of Bridgeton knew this little building was "huge."

This little building



is huge

... COMING SOON !

How the little Nail House made Bridgeton reeeally BIG... and saved the City Park for future generations !
A "Grunge-to-Green" children's book for kids of all ages

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EVER SEE THIS OLD POSTCARD? It's just an artfully retouched early photo of the little industrial office building we call the **Nail House**. But it's utterly magical, isn't it! —those soft pinks and greeny lavenders, the flowers upstanding along the pathway like little red soldiers, the fairyland rusts and golds gently fading to aqua as the road, soft as rosewater, curves into the woods beyond.... **Clearly, even then, there was magic in the transformation of this grungy little former Cumberland Nail & Iron Works office into a portal, luring us toward some romantic adventure along the raceway or out at Jeddy's Pond or Sunset lake. Even then, at the start of its new post-industrial life, someone thought this little building was "huge"—that it stood for something bigger than itself.**

And of course it did. The movement we call "Green" now (and they called "Conservation" then) wasn't just about National Parks. City planners—architects—urban futurists—were being urged to design Nature into the population-exploding brick and concrete towns and cities of the emerging 20th-century.

Bridgeton—a city proud at the time to call itself "progressive"—may have had more than its share of this wisdom. It inspired City officials to buy and protect the lakes and woods and wetlands that had already miraculously survived the rampant industrial and housing booms of the 19th century. Sharing the vision of industrialist Oberlin Smith, they knew that as cities grew parks like these would become the natural factories of health and wellness for generations to come.

Willing Bridgeton City Park into being was transformative. Working to protect and enhance it NOW joins us to a long line of visionaries who understood the crucial importance of 'green' values to city life.

Want to be a part of it?

You can join a NEW movement to help restore Bridgeton's historic Nail House to active public use and deliver on its future as the Welcome & Interpretive Center for the City Park, the Cohanzick Zoo, the Bridgeton Historic District, and the entire Bayshore region!

**Make a contribution. Buy a book.
Volunteer a hands-on skill.**

Educate others in your workplace and organizations.

Any and all these acts of urban kindness will join you to a collaborative that already includes the NJ Historic Trust and the 1772 Foundation, the County C&H Commission, and the NJ Historical Commission, and brings CHABA and the City of Bridgeton and J&M Engineering of Swarthmore, PA (together with many dedicated, skilled volunteers and professionals), to deliver on restoration plans over the next year.



Author, Author!

On Thursday evening, August 31, the Bridgeton Public Library played host to Sociology Professor Robyn Rodriguez (UC/Davis), and the launch of her new Rutgers U Press book—*In Lady Liberty's Shadow*—a study of how immigrants have fared in New Jersey cities. This spirited and well-attended event, jointly sponsored by the New Jersey Council for the Humanities and the Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission, drew attendees from all over Cumberland County. It featured a reading by Rodriguez and a lively discussion of her concluding chapter's focus on Bridgeton as a uniquely welcoming community. Rodriguez also gave special attention to the unusual work of CHABA in encouraging "preservation without gentrification" through hands-on workshops as well as the translation of essential codes and guidelines, thus engaging new Spanish-speaking and largely working-class immigrants in improving (and putting down roots in) their own urban neighborhoods.



Pictured: Far left: Eventgoers wait for Professor Rodriguez to sign copies of *In Lady Liberty's Shadow*. Center & clockwise: Prof. Rodriguez with Margaret (Maggie) Demarco, CHABA project administrator, and Father David Rivera of Bridgeton's Holy Cross Parish, which has a heavily Mexican immigrant congregation; County Cultural & Heritage Commissioners Ron Hayashida and John Garrison discuss the program; Councilwoman Gladys Lugardo-Hemple and DeMarco discuss the new Bridgeton Municipal ID project.

Photos by Flavia Alaya



CULTURAL DIVERSITY RULES THE REGION

COMPLEX HISTORIES OF REGIONAL SETTLEMENT BRING THE BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS TOGETHER:

Renee Brecht of the Cohansey Area Watershed Association (CAWA) and Flavia Alaya of CHABA joined up on Saturday, September 16, to tour the Cohansey Rivershed as part of Bridgeton Main Street's annual Cohansey Riverfest, and share with tourgoers the cultural and racial diversity that has characterized settlement around the Cohansey Rivershed since the 16th century. The tour was wide-ranging, from the complexly layered history of Native and African and European Americans in Gouldtown to the resettlement of Japanese-American US citizens, among many others, at Seabrook during and after World War II. The tour also stopped at the WPA mural by Italian American artist Ezio Martinelli in the Broad Street School auditorium and included a brief comparison of the two artistic takes on Bridgeton history offered by Martinelli in 1940 and Mexican-American artist Cesar Viveros-Herrera in Bridgeton's downtown "Pocket Park" in 2011. Heartfelt thanks to the Bridgeton Public Schools, Seabrook Educational & Cultural Center, and Bob Francois of the Cumberland Co Historical Society who kindly made these facilities open to our tourgoers—and thanks to the tourgoers too!



Tourgoers check out information posted at the Old Stone Church, Fairton, home of an historically multiracial congregation.

Photo by Flavia Alaya



GROWING BRIDGETON's CULTURAL CAPITAL from the ground up.
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