

Just Write

Gloucester County Library System

Logan Township Branch

Writers Group

Selections

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Freeholder Director, Robert M. Damminger | Freeholder Library Liaison, Lyman Barnes



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STOVE

Jane Harre

It seems to be past time to do this bit of catch-up writing. I have been hearing a rumbling complaint and there is now a smell of smoldering....

A while ago a friend asked me to recount a short history of her life. She had been part of our family for much longer even than I, and I was glad to tell of Fork's adventures. Nevertheless, as word got out, some others felt slighted.

So, I will begin my tale by saying, Stove is a rather old fellow, especially for one of his group. Of late, his family is known for many other talents and skills but longevity is not one of them. In truth, he had lived many years in the home of a friend and her family before he came to live with us. My husband had grown up in a home where Stove's brother resided happily and very usefully, leading my husband to wish for a similar server. When circumstances led to Stove being relegated to the back burner, so to speak, we were able to put in a good word (plus a little green) and bring him to live more productively in our home. He has been with us now for over thirty years. I admit, he shows his age in some ways, but not so much that we think of retirement. Rather, I hope he outlives me, as I doubt I could get along without him.

Bringing Stove to live in our family took a husky crew; in the 1930's stoves were made of cast iron, thick porcelain and agate. His chrome controls, complete with easily removable sections for child safety, no doubt add some weight. No sense in comparing these to present day plastic controls which usually last less than five years. Stove is proud of his weight and he boasts about some of his other features as well. Being elderly, his functions do lack some of the more modern innovations such as electronic ignition; instead, he never truly sleeps, but keeps a light on for me, night and day. His main pilot light sits centered in the cook top, not really visible, but always discernable by its warmth. For the kitchen folk this has endless uses from melting butter to keeping my waiting coffee cup warm. He has another pilot, which brings us to another of his bragging points: Although there are only three burners, the fourth spot is occupied by a deep-well. Under a two-inch-thick insulated cover is a lidded aluminum pot. It rests on a grid over the pilot which is there to ignite its personal burner. Stove's publicity called this and another feature, "Cooking with the gas turned off," which works this way: Meat, a chicken for example, is placed in the afore mentioned pot, along with celery, onion, carrot (you get the picture), and a couple of inches of water or other liquid. With the lid and clamps in place, all can now be lifted by the lid's handle. This whole unit is placed into the matching cavity in the back corner of the stovetop, where the cover fits into the cavity as well, creating a level surface. A control on the front of the stove is turned and the pilot fires the interior burner with a soft "whoosh". In five or ten minutes, steam will begin to escape around the cover's edges. At this signal, the burner control is turned off and Stove is left to work his magic. In a few hours, with

plenty of leeway, the cook retrieves the pot and its aromatic contents, all of which cooked without any energy other than those first moments. Commonly, I have put a chicken in at bedtime, turned the fire off, gone to bed and arisen to the food cooked and ready to be cooled and prepared as chicken salad or some other savory dish.

Despite Stove's signs of aging (such as occasional rusty drooling under his oven door), his demeanor is still so noble that newcomers are literally stopped in their tracks at first sight. Just recently a visiting friend suddenly took notice of him. She was quite smitten and full of delighted comments (and even a few squeals). In the same week, while I was out and others in the house were entertaining, a younger husband in the family network saw Stove for the first time. I'm told he investigated all of Stove's openings with great interest. He discovered a 10" by 20" griddle residing comfortably to the side, which, when raised on its hinge by its larger chrome control, revealed Stove's hidden broiler in the cavity below, with one burner serving either purpose.

At the moment, Stove is faithfully tending a beef roast, with all of the attendant aromas. Shortly, I will open his well and retrieve his inner treasure.

No life in the fast lane for Stove, Fork or me.

Miami Bridge

By Marian M. Fay

Give us your homeless tweens, and hopeless teens
We fed, clothed, and sheltered them
We provided counseling and then
They waited and waited until the courts and the social workers decided
Where they should be placed

Sometimes they went to overcrowded group foster homes
Where sometimes they were cared for and other times neglected
Then they would split and run to us again
Only to be put into a system that seemed to cycle with no end

Then there were the lucky few that only needed a free bus ticket home again
Living on the streets had become too much for them
Or sometimes a family was down on their luck and in need
So their kids stayed with us until they got back on their feet

Give us your beaten and broken children of the streets
For some we were the first clean bed and hot meal they'd had in weeks
They needed to stay sober and follow house rules
And then all of them needed to attend our school

Our house parents were there because they cared
You see their pay was very spare
They kept the kids safe and kept them fed
But it was up to the kids to make their beds

Assigning daily housekeeping chores was a must
Compliant behavior would gain our trust
That went just so far and with supervision
They still needed guidance; at least it was friendlier than a prison

The kids felt safe when there were consistent boundaries for all
We had to be diligent lest those boundaries fall
That is when panic, anxiety, and fear would take over
When that would happen we all would suffer

Sometimes the police were called in to calm the house down
They were our last resort and not very effective I found
When teens were crying and everyone was upset
Even the police thought the staff was our best bet

The director would be called in and then all were bedded down
When order was restored he'd head back into town.
We showed them love by being consistent and firm
Trips and treats had to be earned

We kept them safe from their abusers
Who could be family or friends
We could bandage their bodies
But their souls took longer, if ever to mend

Thrown To The Lions

By Marian M. Fay

United States of America a multicultural country

United States of America a religious tolerant country?

United States of America where people are killed because they are Christian

United States of America land of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness?

United States of America where does our gun toting militant tolerance end?

United States of America where does killing people because of their differences end?

United States of America stop giving murderers fame and glory

United States of America listen to the victims' stories

United States of America let freedom from religious persecution reign

United States of America let there be no room for crimes of hate

United States of America One Nation Under God pray for healing

United States of America justice, not fame, is for all not just a privileged few

United States of America don't let these murders go unanswered

United States of America just how blind are you?

SIGNS OF OUR TIMES

It was the middle
Of a non-work day.
The construction workers were
Gone with their pay.

Left on site at the corner
Of William and Main\
Sat a behemoth tractor and crane.
Along with sitting katty-corner in front
Was a “johnny” shed very plain.

I was not the only sole perplexed
Others at their Stop Signs
Sat at rest, laughing at the jest.
Pointing at/you see as was me.

The sign some reality seller had set
To the left of the “johnny” shed
White letters on red – read:
“House for Sale”.

And to the shed’s right
A white on red arrow
Read “Open”.

Almost as “bobbleheads” nodding,
We each waved the other on.
Allowing others our view.
Laughing in song!

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General John A. “Black Jack” Logan

Namesake of Logan Township, New Jersey

Conclusion/Continued from *Just Write*/July 2015

By Ben Carlton

Just prior to the fall of Atlanta, Major General James McPherson blundered into Confederate lines and was shot and killed by the Rebels. He was replaced by the grieving General Sherman with General Logan as interim commander of the Army of the Tennessee. It was the pinnacle of Logan’s military career: A citizen soldier rising from Colonel of a regiment to command of an army. His elevation firmly established his reputation as the Union’s foremost civilian combat general. Alas, his promotion was to be only temporary. Sherman, who distrusted political generals, soon replaced Logan with West Point-trained General Oliver O. Howard, despite Sherman’s own admission that Logan was “perfect in combat.”

Logan reverted back to corps command but forever retained his animosity for the Military Academy and the professional army clique that had snubbed him. (Ironically, Logan would seek and secure an appointment to West Point for his son, Manning, in 1883.) Determined to see the war through to its conclusion, Logan continued to lead his troops from Savannah, Georgia, on the march north through the Carolinas until the surrender of General Johnston’s Rebel army near Durham, North Carolina, on 26 April 1865.

After the termination of the war, Logan resumed his avocation as statesman, but now as a Republican. Having successfully switched parties, the former Democrat served as a congressman or senator almost without pause until his death in 1886. Logan’s political career included an unsuccessful run for Vice President on the James Blaine/Logan ticket in 1884. Some political pundits believed that had the candidates’ roles been reversed, with John A. Logan as the

presidential nominee, Logan might have been elected President of the United States.

Logan became a successful author, writing several books, including, *The Volunteer Soldier of America* (posthumously published in 1887). He helped to organize the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), serving as the organization's president for three terms. He had always been active in veterans' affairs, tireless in his efforts to award pensions for Union soldiers and sailors. Logan's most enduring legacy, however, was his conception of the idea of a Memorial Day as a national observance, which was officially inaugurated on 30 May 1868. Logan died in Washington, D.C., on 26 December 1886, and is buried in the capital's Rock Creek Cemetery.

News of Logan's death "stunned the nation," according to Gary Ecelbarger, a Logan biographer. An Illinois newspaper proclaimed, "Since the death of Abraham Lincoln, the people of the whole country have not received such a shock as that caused by the brief message which flashed over the wires yesterday afternoon: 'Logan is dead'.... no one asked 'What Logan?'"

For all the many reasons enumerated above, Logan Township, New Jersey, was named in honor of John A. Logan – lawyer, politician, and war hero – a fact that should not be forgotten.

(For more information on General Logan, see Boatner, Mark M. III. *The Civil War Dictionary*. New York: David McKay Company, Inc.; 1959. Warner, Ezra J. *Generals in Blue: Lives of the Union Commanders*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press; 1992. Ecelbarger, Gary. *Black Jack Logan: An Extraordinary Life in Peace and War*. Guilford, Ct.: The Lyons Press; 2005. [A copy of Ecelbarger's book may be found in the Adult Biography section at the Logan Library.]

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Just Write

Meetings Held 2nd & 4th Wednesdays @

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