

Getting to Know You

Wayne's Historic Residents

February 7th, 2024 to March 31st, 2024

Out of the thousands of people who have called Wayne 'home' throughout the centuries, only a handful have made it into the history books.

One of our goals here at the Wayne Museum is to uncover the stories of the township's lesser known residents.

Who are Wayne's historic residents?

**What sources can we use to learn about
them?**

Here are a few examples....

The Mead Family

Wayne's line of the Mead family descends from John Meet/Mead, a weaver, who was part of the eight-man colonial delegation that negotiated with indigenous Munsee speaking people for the right to 5,500 acres of land.

This paved the way for European colonization in the region.

Mead descendants settled throughout Wayne in the following years. Objects owned by family members can help us to recreate the material world of the Mead family and other historic residents of Wayne.

Isaac and Sophia Mead owned several sets of flatware, ranging in material and use.

Sterling silver was the most expensive and would have been shown off to guests.

Silverplate, made from metal with a thin coating of silver, resembled sterling silver but was a much cheaper option.

The wealthiest households could afford a range of specialized flatware: serving spoons, dessert forks, soup spoons, sugar spoons, and so on.

All four utensils are engraved with the initials 'ISM'. According to Mead family history, this refers to Isaac Henry Mead (1784-1867) and his wife, Sophia Merselis Mead (1789-1857). Isaac Henry Mead was the great-grandson of John Mead/Meet.

Flatware was often engraved with the owners' initials. This made the items identifiable in case of theft and served as a status symbol; directly stating that Isaac and Sophia were able to afford fine flatware. Personalized flatware was also commonly given as a wedding gift.



1. Spoon, ca. 1840
Silver



2. Fork, ca. 1850
Metal, Silverplate



3. Sugar Spoon, ca. 1850
Silver



4. Spoon, ca. 1850
Silver

Emily Walker

(1893-1987)

Emily Walker was born in Jersey City, then lived in Elmhurst, NY before moving to Wayne, where she lived for the rest of her life. She and her husband, Frederick Walker Jr., ran Walker's Department Store in Mountain View. They offered everything from flashlights to tennis shoes to mosquito netting.

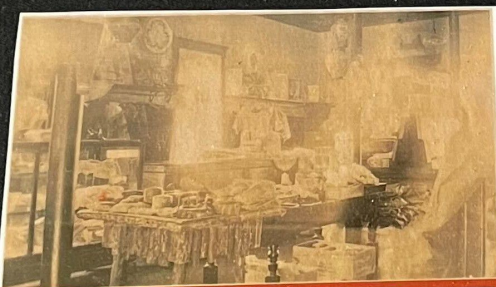
The Wayne Museum's photo collection includes a scrapbook put together by Emily. With photos from the 1920s and 1930s, it documents the development of the store and Mountain View area.



Left:
The first
photograph
in the
scrapbook,
taken ca.
1920-1930.
Labelled by
Emily,
"Mr. and Mrs.
(Emily)
Frederick W.
Walker, Jr."



Right:
The couple
several years
later, in 1943.
They are
standing in
front of their
department
store.



The interior of the Walker Department Store,
photographed in the summer of 1922.



Labelled by Emily,

"After Highway was Finished and Before Mr.
Twining Campbell Bought the Old Garage on
Corner"

A view of the Mountain View section of Wayne in
the 1920s.



Labelled by Emily,

"Our Store, Flood of Sept. 1st 1927, 6 Inches of Water
On Store Floor"



Labelled by Emily,

"Work Being Started in Earnest"

Taken during the department store's major
renovation in 1935.

Barney Sisco

(1817-?)

No one in the Preakness area was as politically and socially involved as Barney Sisco. Born ca. 1817, Sisco owned a hotel and bar on Hamburg Turnpike. He hosted the County's Democratic and Republican Conventions and meetings for the Board of Chosen Freeholders through the 1860s and 1870s.

Sisco's hotel was often referenced in newspaper articles. We've been able to learn about Barney Sisco by tracing mentions of the hotel in Passaic and Paterson newspapers.

"VACATION"

This was the name the Barney Sisco hotel and hostelry went by after Barney passed away. So famous is the political history of the county and the old tavern become that it was a pity to call it by the name of the man proprietor, even though his restaurant was the name on that of the hero of New Orleans.

The thought of today hardly realizes what there was in the past to attract both parties to Barney Sisco's hotel. The bar room in those days was a stuffy place on the lower end, small and so poorly lighted that on a dull day you could hardly tell the difference between Bourbon whiskey and applejack, but the small-lag, jaded—the aroma of the room supposed to have been the best usage of the mythological gods of the ancients, and no man ever visited Barney Sisco's tavern on the darkest day but could find a straight road for his month from that old bar behind which ever stood Barney, only anxious to give his guest the best. There was no room in Barney's bar room if you didn't call it a room and no appears smoking in a discouraged thirst for someone to come in and give them a treat; but, one landlady had comfortable belongings in the parlor for her friends who might call and in a jiffy she could top some sugar cured ham and eggs to suit, with sweet and butter milk, if you were on hand after the regular meal time, and such fresh green clover butter and home made bread. Oh! don't mention it.

But what's the use talking to this town about Barney Sisco's career. Barney has been a long time dead but he left a savory remembrance and we have deepest sympathy allied to a sorrowful pity for the benighted citizen of old Paterson who can forget the roast pig of Barney Sisco's convention dinners.

Those were the days of Joe Taylor and Dan Dillmeyer and everything on wheels and every horse and pig was used to go to Barney Sisco's. The room he and from was first and after the convention there were speeches by Wendell and Taylor and Bentley for the Republicans and by Billy Douglas, Joe Taylor and other Democrats and often times as many from one as the other party. The delegates seated first at the dinner, then there was that table with the pig and every body pig so fat, so juicy, so tasty, with every condition handy and everything served as not even a Democrat could serve it and couldn't get up these benches were there they were all filled with roasts of fat and yet nobody ever came away from Barney Sisco's squealing.

Grateful to the house and delightful to the eye was the pig when placed on all four feet upon Barney Sisco's large platter. The coals was of a rich brown place with the heavy gray coating forth motions to the very soul of the lover of roast pig. Pardonable it was, and they and husbands, and a Jersey smoking masculine pants, and had close set eyes, but delicate. There had been ordinary pig farmers in all times, but having read the Bible through twice when a boy, the writer never found anything so sacred so justly the belief that the Almighty could never bless one Barney Sisco or roast a pig.

From "Editor Van's Series,"
The Paterson Evening News (Paterson, NJ), August 3rd, 1901

"Barney has been a long time dead but he left a savory remembrance and we have deepest sympathy allied to a sorrowful pity of the benighted citizen of old Paterson who can forget the roast pig of Barney Sisco's convention dinners.

The conventions all met there and the long room was filled with delegates and all the big bugs of the county, who, if for no other reason, would go seven miles to eat pig at Barney Sisco's."

The Freeholders Semi-annual Meeting Was held yesterday at Barney Sisco's Preakness. A full Board was present and the regular business of the Board was transacted just as though the meeting was held at its usual place. After the adjournment the assembly repaired to the dining hall and partook of a bountiful repast of roast pig and roast turkey. A large number of assemblymen and politicians were present and joined at the "lay-out." Among others who attracted much attention was a colossal "free American citizen of African descent" who occupied a central position at the table and being the only "gentleman of color" present, called forth much comment.

From The Passaic Daily News (Passaic, NJ),
November 20th, 1879

At the Republican Convention held at Barney Sisco's on Wednesday, G. A. Hobart was nominated by acclamation for Senator, no other candidate being mentioned.

Jacob H. Blauvelt was unanimously nominated for County Clerk amid great cheering.

From The Item (Passaic, NJ), October 7th, 1876

When Garret A. Hobart was nominated for the New Jersey Senate in 1876, it was in the fourth year of his political career. He was President of the NJ Senate from 1881 to 1883, and was later Vice-President of the U.S. under William McKinley (1897-1899).

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Peg and Phebe

(ca. 1830s)

Peg and Phebe were African American women who were enslaved by the Colfax family. They lived and labored in the Schuyler-Colfax House on Hamburg Turnpike, likely serving as maids to Hester Schuyler Colfax. In 1830, Saddle River Township, which included Wayne, had the highest percentage of enslaved people to property owners of any future Passaic County township.

Viewed as property by the Schuyler-Colfax family, Peg and Phebe appear in surviving financial documents.

*Received April 2nd 1839 of Esther Schuyler Colfax
One dollar in full for Peg wife of Joe who
were the property of the late General W.
Colfax deceased. Wm. W. Colfax Executor of
Wm. Colfax decd*

"Received April 2nd 1839 of Esther Schuyler Colfax one dollar in full for Peg wife of Joe who were the property of the late General W. Colfax deceased. Wm. W. Colfax Executor of Wm. Colfax decd"

From the Passaic County Department of Cultural & Historic Affairs

Documents dealing with the purchase or sale of enslaved people often use dehumanizing language.

While we may not have Peg and Phebe's stories in their own words, it's important to remember that they were living, breathing human beings. They had their own personalities and lives separate from the monetary value enslavers put on their labor.

*Received March 1st 1832 of Wm. W. Colfax thirty dollars
for the servitude of a negro girl named Phebe about
ten years of age Henry Vreeland*

"Received March 1st. 1832 of Wm. W. Colfax thirty dollars for the servitude of a negro Girl named Phebe about ten years of age----- Henry Vreeland"

From the Passaic County Department of Cultural & Historic Affairs

Jannett Brown

(ca. 1924-2010)

Jannett Brown grew up in the Mountain View section of Wayne. Her father worked as a chauffeur for LeGrand Parish. She was one of the first African American students to attend Mountain View Grammar School and Pompton Lakes High School.

In 2004, she gave the Wayne Museum a handwritten account and an oral history (recorded interview) of her childhood in Wayne. We are particularly lucky to have her story in her own words.



"My father Charles Herbert Brown was the chauffeur for Mr and Mrs. Le Grand Parish...Dad drove him to business in New York almost every day."

Above: Charles Brown and Madge Parish



"Mr. Carter's son Randall and I went through Mountain View grammar school and Pompton Lakes High School together. Our families were the first African Americans to attend these schools.

Above: Jannett Brown photographed in front of her childhood home, 19 Maple Ave

"My father continued to work for Mrs. Parish until her death in 1939. Her will which is enclosed granted my father \$20,000.00. Dad was able to buy a beautiful home in Montclair, N.J. and continued to live in a very comfortable manner.



"The mansion [the Parish couple] lived in was immense. It included a ballroom...where they frequently entertained sometimes the governor and one time I remember peeking out to see a famous actress."

Above: The Parish home, today located at 231 Parish Drive in Wayne

Sept, 2004

Dear Carol,

Enclosed are the pictures of the Parish Estate I spoke to you about. I was born on the Parish estate and lived on Maple Ave to the age 15 yrs. Now at the age of 80 yrs, it would like you to know all I can remember of those years.

My father Charles Herbert Brown was the chauffeur for Mr and Mrs. Le Grand Parish. Mr Parish was apparently a millionaire in the early 20's and 30's when riches of that kind were a rarity.

Mr. Parish owned most of the property in the town then called Mountain View. The mansion they lived in (without "checks or child") was immense. It included a ballroom complete with baby grand piano where they entertained sometimes the governor and one time I remember peeking out to see a famous actress. They have a large dining room with a foot switch at the head chair to call for service. (Wow)

The first page of Jannett Brown's handwritten account of her life in Mountain View

Given to the Wayne Museum in 2004