

# THE TOWN JOURNAL

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Hometown Newspaper

Serving Allendale,  
Ho-Ho-Kus,  
Saddle River and  
Upper Saddle River

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## Black History Month Heroes before the Civil War

In recognition of Black History Month The Town Journal has, throughout February, presented a series of articles compiled from documents and books belonging to local historical societies and libraries. Undoubtedly all accounts are not historically accurate but are included to present a true narration of a people who, along with the Dutch settlers, pioneered and built the communities we now call Allendale, Ho-Ho-Kus, Saddle River and Upper Saddle River.

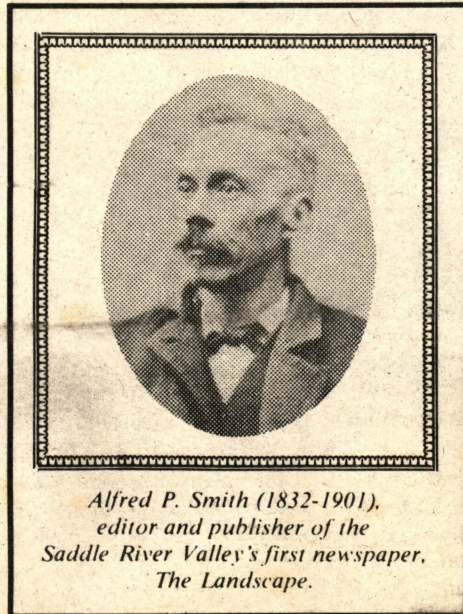
Judy Skelton

In 1756 the Lenni Lenape Indians who had lived in the Saddle River Valley for a thousand years left the area forever.

Three quarters of a century before the Dutch settlers watched as "the Original People" left their camp on the river banks, Youngham Antonius Robert, a free-born black man received permission from the governor of New Jersey to purchase land along the Hackensack River from the Indians. Joining Youngham Robert were free-blacks from Manhattan including Claes Manuel, Jan Van De Vries, Sr. and Jr., and the Van Donck family.

### The happiness of liberty

Fifty years after Youngham Robert's 1684 purchase, many free-black farmers who had settled in the Saddle River area



Alfred P. Smith (1832-1901),  
editor and publisher of the  
Saddle River Valley's first newspaper,  
The Landscape.

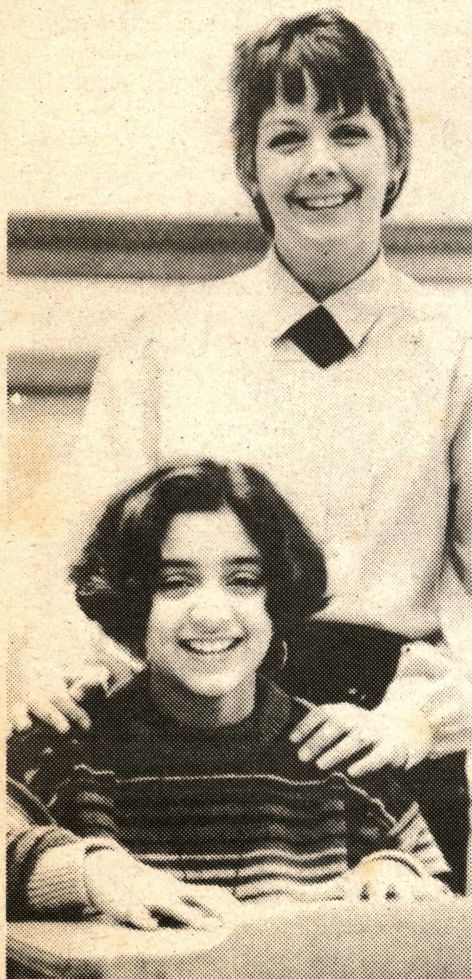
joined with escaped slaves to fight with British troops in the Revolutionary War. Both freemen and runaways joined the British forces in anticipation of an ideal. Escaped slave Boston King described that ideal as "the happiness of liberty, of which I knew nothing before."

While it is hard to document the numbers of slaves who ran away from masters in Bergen County during this period because Dutch landowners were reluctant to advertise in newspapers owned by the English, a few advertisements record that slaves usually escaped with only meager possessions and frequently left in groups.

Jack, who left Abraham Van Buskirk of Hackensack, took with him "a grey

See HEROES page 6

## HHK girl first in statewide contest To compete with winners from 11 states



Purva Panday, New Jersey winner of the D.A.R. essay contest, shares the excitement with her teacher, Janet Woodbury. photo by Ruth Skoyron

Carole FitzPatrick

HO-HO-KUS — Winning awards seems to have become a way of life at the Ho-Ho-Kus School. The latest cause for excitement is the award won by eighth-grader Purva Panday in the annual D.A.R. essay contest. Her essay on Crawford Williamson Long, the inventor of ether anesthesia, was chosen by the Saddle River Chapter of the D.A.R. and then went on to become the New Jersey winner.

"I'm a bit overwhelmed," said Purva after hearing the good news, "but I guess it's pretty good. I'm just happy I got it." On March 20, Purva, along with ten or eleven other winners from Ohio, Pennsylvania, Delaware and the Northeast, will read their essays at an awards ceremony at Rutgers. The winner from that group will compete with others across the nation.

When social studies teacher, Janet Woodbury gave her class the assignment to write an essay on an American inventor for the D.A.R. contest, Purva chose Crawford Williamson Long as her subject.

"At first I picked David Rittenhouse," said Purva, "but a couple of others in the class were doing him. I was open to anything, so I chose Crawford Long." Asked if her choice of the inventor of ether anesthesia indicated an interest in studying medicine, Purva replied that she is really interested in journalism and writing. English is her best subject in school, and she also leans toward French, social studies and the arts. She has not yet

See HHK GIRL page 4

## Residents like downtown plan, the merchants are cautious

Marsha Stoltz

ALLENDALE — About \$30 of this year's tax bill for a home assessed at \$300,000 will complete resident payments for the borough's proposed downtown renovation project, according to council president Al Klomburg.

Cost and finance figures for the \$672,000 proposal were detailed for the first time Feb. 14 (see boxes). Residents were quick to shower mayor and council with praise for a project often described as "long overdue."

Merchants whose stores line the town center section of West Allendale Avenue were more cautious, indicating a "wait-and-see" attitude toward borough promises of increased customer traffic and property values as a result of the beautification plan.

The timetable, according to Councilman Klomburg, is "A.S.A.P. as far as we're concerned" with a three-month

See DOWNTOWN page 4

## Rosh Hashanah, King Day OK'd in 3-2 board vote

Marsha Stoltz

ALLENDALE — A narrow 3-2 school board vote approved adding one day of Rosh Hashanah and Martin Luther King Day as holidays in the 1990-91 calendar Feb. 12.

Board president Maureen Rosenthal cast the deciding vote with members Susan Poskanzer and Bill Kempey.

"This is a very sensitive issue, and I have to vote on the side of understand-

*"We go late enough in the year as it is. We have no air conditioning, and kids can't concentrate on school work in June," Mrs. Jones said.*

ing," Mrs. Rosenthal concluded.

Board members Betty DiGruttilla and Libby Jones voted against the two holidays in a rare display of board disunity.

"I hate to expand the calendar," Mrs. Jones explained. "We go late enough in the year as it is. We have no air conditioning, and kids can't concentrate on school work in June. I would prefer to complete school earlier so children are not in school during the heat of the summer."

### No religious holidays

Although the district provides both Christmas and Good Friday holidays, Mrs. Jones suggested that as public educators "we probably shouldn't be providing religious holidays." Christmas, she explained, was considered a "generic holiday observed across the country."

"In some areas the majority of the students observe Rosh Hoshanah, and then it makes sense to make it a holiday," Mrs. Jones concluded. "They are certainly

See ROSH HASHANAH page 8



Allendale's long downtown renovation map was closely examined by merchants and residents during Feb. 14 hearings.

photo by Marsha Stoltz

### Rehabilitation costs:

Construction	\$458,670
Engineering	114,668
Legal and advertising	5,300
Utility relocation	87,000
New Jersey Transit Parking	6,600
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$672,238</b>

### Rehabilitation funding:

N.J. Dept. of Transportation	
Grant (road widening)	\$155,000
Donations (clock, light fixtures)	73,500
1989 budget allocation (reserved)	137,872
1990 budget allocation (proposed)	133,866
Merchant assessments	172,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$672,238</b>

### Who pays for what:

Clock (\$10,000-\$11,000)-private donation.
Street lamps - private donation
Train station parking renovations - New Jersey Transit (redesign and paving) and the borough (donation for non-commuter parking privileges)
Road widening - N.J. Department of Transportation
Curbs and sidewalks - merchant assessment (about \$58 per storefront foot)
Landscaping - borough
Utility relocation - borough in cooperation with various utilities
Road resurfacing - borough, D.O.T. grant

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