

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Saturday, March 21, 2020

at 10:00 a.m. Speaker

Surinder Kaur Puar

“Sikhs of New Jersey”

Fellowship Hall

The Hillsborough Reformed Church

1 Amwell Road

Millstone, NJ 08844

www.hillsboroughreformedchurch.org

To be excused, call Don Peck at

732-738-5522 or Fred Mueller

at 908-359-3391

Representatives from all

Alliance sites are

welcomed and encouraged

to attend.

Raritan-Millstone Heritage Alliance

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As of January 11, 2020

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**RARITAN-MILLSTONE
HERITAGE ALLIANCE**

P.O. Box 5583, Somerset, NJ 08875-5583

www.raritanmillstone.org

*An organization of individuals,
organizations, and sites working to promote
preservation and understanding of the rich, event-
ful, and cultural heritage of significant historical,
educational, environmental and cultural sites
located in Central New Jersey.*

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The Board of Directors meets on the third or fourth Saturday of March, May, September, and November at designated historic and museum member sites in the region.

The Executive Committee

meets in January and June

YOUR LINK TO THE PUBLIC:

The Link is on a quarterly publication schedule. News of major upcoming events for possible placement in the newsletter may be mailed, emailed, or faxed to the following address. Any questions, please contact:

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PARTY FOR GEORGE WASHINGTON

While our nation no longer celebrates George Washington's birthday as a national holiday and his portrait no longer hangs in every classroom, the Raritan-Millstone Heritage Alliance provides for our individual and site members a unique experience every year to celebrate Washington's birthday!

During the four and a half years of the American Revolutionary War, George Washington spent the majority of his time here at historic sites described or listed in our *Guide Book to Historic Sites in the Raritan & Millstone Valleys*. In a state that had been ravaged, as had no other state, Washington preserved his army through four years and three winters. His ill-clad soldiers experienced more cruel privations by far than did those at Valley Forge.

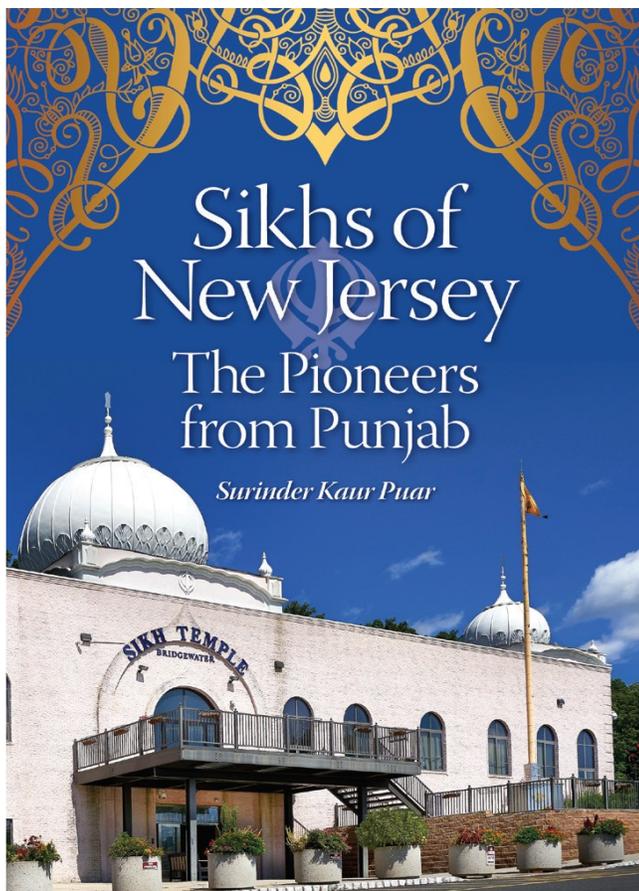
The Sikhs of New Jersey

Surinder Kaur Puar

Sikhs of New Jersey: The Pioneers from Punjab travels through more than a century of time. It escorts the reader back to the struggles of pioneer Sikhs who suffered torture and racial discrimination at the hands of Canadian and West Coast Americans while trying to establish themselves as a Sikh American immigrant community. Indian Sikh migration to the East Coast of America was more favorable because of the relaxed immigration laws, and the migrants to that area quickly became assimilated, thus allowing them to pursue higher education and better career opportunities. This book clearly describes how a handful of New Jersey Sikh families established a vibrant community and a place of worship through their farsightedness, determination, and valor in the early 1970s. The internal conflicts of the Sikh Gurdwara management, the writer points out, are in no way unique places.

Even though the author readily admits that solutions are difficult, she is hoping that the younger, educated generation will take a proactive lead in the management of their Gurdwaras and find answers to the challenges that they will face in the future. It is no coincidence that the publication of this book occurred in the year 2019, the year of the 550th birth celebration of Guru Nanak. It is intended to bring home the universal message of Baba Nanak to all humanity that Ik On Kaar, the same light-spirit, prevails in each of us and LOVE is the way to reach within!

Surinder Kaur Puar is also the author of *Light of Santpura*, *Mother's Day Bliss* and *Punjabi Language Simplified*. She hopes to inspire all other Sikh Gurdwara Sangat and Interfaith Communities to write their own stories to preserve their past for future generations, both for inspiration and historical interest.



Historical Association of Woodbridge Township

Presents:

George Washington Visits New Jersey

David Emerson of History on the Hoof portrays George Washington emphasizing his leadership and activities at the New Jersey battles and encampments during the American Revolution. Mr. Emerson has appeared as George Washington in the 225th and 235th Anniversary events of the American Revolution including the “The Retreat Across the New Jerseys,” the battles of Trenton and Princeton, “The Road to Monmouth” and the encampments at Morristown and Middle Brook.

Monday February 24, 2020

7:00pm

Fellowship Hall First Presbyterian Church

600 Rahway Avenue, Woodbridge

For further information contact

Brenda Velasco, Township Historian

Text 732-428-2403

NJ Women Vote: Alice Paul & the Fight for Women's Suffrage

By Linda J. Barth

This year we celebrate the centennial of the passage of the 19th Amendment!

Many people do not know that in 1776, New Jersey was the only colony that allowed women to vote! The law specified "inhabitants," not just men.

But in New Jersey, women were allowed to vote until the early 1800s. It seems that in the 1806 election to choose the county seat of Essex County (Newark or Elizabeth), there were voting irregularities. It was said that there was rampant and open fraud (in NJ?). The losing side charged that men and women had voted multiple times, some men disguising themselves as women and voting again. Newark won, even though voter turnout in Elizabeth was 279%. (Union did not separate from Essex until 1857.) Who to blame for this mess? Of course, it must have been the fault of the women. So, in 1807, the state legislature restricted voting rights to tax-paying, white male citizens. This law also took voting rights away from women and African Americans.

In 1854, Henry Lafetra, a Monmouth County Assemblyman, presented a petition to the NJ legislature to revise state statutes to establish "legal equality of women & men." The legislative committee responded that women should accept their subservient role.

Three years later, in 1857, Henry's sister-in-law Harriet Lafetra was the first woman known to have petitioned the state legislature on behalf of women's rights and women's suffrage in New Jersey. Although other petitions had been submitted earlier, Lafetra's was the first recorded effort.

The New Jersey Assembly responded that the revision of the state statutes would not only be "a task in comparison of which the labors of Hercules sink into insignificance" but would be contrary to the subordinate position of women to men...since the first woman, Eve, had "introduced sin into the world," concluding... "the task of ruling matters of state and in family relations had forever gone rightly to men, ever since that fateful day in the Garden of Eden."

In 1868, Lucy Stone and Antoinette Brown Blackwell petitioned the NJ legislature for voting and property rights. The legislature responded by mocking their petition with this unsolicited advice: "A lusty brace of twins may weed her of her folly. By the bearing and the training of a child is woman's wisdom."

Lucy Stone and her husband Henry Blackwell lectured in many cities, including Vineland, New Jersey. In fact, Vineland had become a center for the country's greatest thinkers and writers. And it boasted a number of forward-thinkers. Take Susan Pecker Fowler. For over 40 years, Susan wrote annual letters to the *Vineland Observer*. Her letters argued that "taxation without representation is tyranny."

Mary Philbrook was one of New Jersey's most prominent women in the drive for equal rights. She was the first woman attorney in New Jersey. She then used her legal training for the advancement of women's rights and a gender-free writing of the New Jersey Constitution of 1947. Mary applied to be admitted to the New Jersey Bar in February 1894. Although three hundred female lawyers were practicing in thirty other states, the New Jersey Court decided that "[a] woman is not, by virtue of her citizenship, vested by the Constitution . . . with any absolute right. . . to practice as an attorney."

New Jersey's Alice Paul

Alice Stokes Paul was a Quaker girl from South Jersey who would one day change the world. She was born in 1885 to William and Tacie Paul, who had a farm called Paulsdale in Mount Laurel, New Jersey.

Following her 1905 graduation from Swarthmore, Alice moved to New York City to become a social worker. She soon realized, however, that helping individual poor families was not the best way to bring about change for all people. For one year she studied at the University of Pennsylvania (Penn), earning a master's degree in sociology and a minor in political science and economics.

In June 1906 she sailed to Europe “to see something of the world.” While taking a class at the University of Birmingham in England, she first attended a lecture by Christabel Pankhurst, the militant English suffragist. Pankhurst was shouted down by the male students who sang, yelled, and whistled throughout the lecture. The university apologized and invited her back. On this visit, the male students listened silently, and Alice could hear every word of Christabel’s speech. It was then that Alice Paul realized what she had to do.

Alice joined the Pankhursts’ Women’s Social and Political Union (WPSU) and followed the motto, “Deeds, not words.” She was arrested ten times and imprisoned three times in London and had to endure forced feedings.

When Alice returned to the United States in 1910, she was invited to join the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA). The two suffragist organizations that played a role in the final stages of the movement were the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) then led by Carrie Chapman Catt and the National Woman’s Party (NWP) led by Alice Paul.

With little funding, Alice Paul and Lucy Burns organized a publicity event to gain maximum national attention: an elaborate and massive parade to march up Pennsylvania Avenue on the day before Woodrow Wilson’s inauguration. On March 3, 1913 the parade began with the beautiful lawyer, activist, and socialite Inez Milholland leading the procession, dressed in Greek robes and astride a white horse. The women had organized 26 floats, ten bands, six chariots, and 8000 women to march for voting rights. The scene turned ugly, however, when scores of male onlookers attacked the suffragists, first with insults and obscenities, and then with physical violence, while the police stood by and watched.

By the end of the day, 100 marchers were taken to the local emergency hospital and Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson authorized the use of a troop of cavalry from nearby Fort Myer to help control the crowd.

Marching against the status quo was not easy for white women, but it was even more difficult for African American women because of the racist sentiment of the day, as well as white suffragists who did not favor suffrage for black women. Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. was founded on January 13, 1913 by 22 collegiate women at Howard University to promote academic excellence and provide assistance to those in need. Two months later, several Delta Sigma Theta Sorority members planned to march in the suffrage parade under the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. banner. However, white southern suffragists threatened to boycott, so the African-American women were asked by Alice Paul and the NAWSA not to participate or to march in the back of the parade in a segregated unit (instead of with their state delegations) to avoid conflict. Some women, like Ida B. Wells, refused to march in the back of the parade, and all 22 members of The Delta Sigma Theta Sorority participated.

Several years later, the NWP organized “Silent Sentinels” to stand outside the White House holding banners inscribed with incendiary phrases directed toward President Wilson. The president initially treated the picketers with bemused condescension, tipping his hat to them as he passed by. After two years of silent protest, the picketers were arrested on the trumped-up charge of obstructing traffic. They were jailed when they refused to pay the imposed fine.

Thirty-three suffragists from NWP were arrested November 10, 1917. They were sent to the Occoquan Workhouse, a prison in Lorton, Virginia, where notorious warden W.H. Whitaker met them with cruel and swift retribution. Paul and her compatriots followed the English suffragette (the British term) model and demanded to be treated as political prisoners. Their demands were met with brutality as the suffragists, including frail, older women, were clubbed, beaten, pushed, and thrown into cold, unsanitary, and rat-infested cells. The male guards manacled co-founder Lucy Burns by her hands to the bars above her cell and forced her to stand all night. Dorothy Day had her arm twisted behind her back and was slammed twice over the back of an iron bench.

At Occoquan, rats ran in and out of the unlit cells. The prisoners held contests to count the number of maggots in their food. And the prison denied the women a most basic human dignity—their privacy.

The suffragists dubbed their treatment on November 14, 1917, as the “Night of Terror,” and it helped galvanize public support of the suffrage movement. Prison officials denied the protesters counsel. Many began hunger strikes. And Occoquan superintendent Whittaker, who had ordered the beatings, called for Marines to guard the compound.

Arrests continued and conditions at the prison deteriorated. For staging hunger strikes, Paul and several other suffragists were forcibly fed egg yolks in a tortuous method known as forced feeding. Alice was placed in solitary confinement in a psychiatric ward, in hope of getting her declared insane. When news of

the prison conditions and hunger strikes became known, the press, some politicians, and the public began demanding the women's release. As word of their suffering spread, more and more men and women joined the cause. Upon her release from prison, Paul hoped to ride this surge of goodwill into victory.

President Wilson was appalled to learn that the jailed suffragists were being force-fed and he finally stepped in to champion their cause. The president agreed to a suffrage amendment in January 1918. Eight months later, in his September 30 speech to Congress, the president acknowledged the debt owed to women. Although the House of Representatives had approved the 19th amendment giving women suffrage, the Senate had yet to vote on the measure. Wilson's stirring words on that day failed to drum up the necessary votes to pass the amendment. The bill died in the Senate and it would be another year before Congress finally voted again.

Alarmed by the resolve of these women, Wilson's cabinet sent a worried telegram to the President, who had returned to Europe to further postwar peace arrangements. He summoned Senator Harris, the holdout who had prevented passage of the amendment. Thus, it was that on May 21, 1919, the House of Representatives passed the amendment 304 to 89 and on June 4, the Senate passed it with 56 ayes and 25 nays.

But the fight was not over. In order for the amendment to become law, 36 of the 48 state legislatures would have to vote yes. For the next year the women crisscrossed the country, lobbying legislatures in all the states. Some voted yes, some no. The New Jersey Legislature approved it on February 9, 1920. Finally, 35 states had approved the 19th Amendment.

The battle for ratification came down to the state of Tennessee in the summer of 1920. The bill had sailed through the Tennessee Senate but stalled in the Assembly, prompting thousands of pro- and anti-suffrage activists to descend upon Nashville. After weeks of intense lobbying and debate within the legislature, a motion to table the amendment was defeated with a 48-48 tie. Those wearing a yellow rose were in favor; a red rose signified opposition.

The date was August 18, 1920. Twenty-four-year-old Harry Burn, the youngest member of the Tennessee Assembly, was wearing a red rose. But that morning, Harry received a note from his mother, Phoebe Burn. She had written, "Dear Son, ... Hurrah and vote for Suffrage. Don't keep them in doubt. Don't forget to be a good boy and help Mrs. Catt put the "rat" in ratification."

Still sporting his red boutonniere, Harry Burn said "aye," and with that single syllable, he extended the vote to the women of America and ended half a century of tireless campaigning by generations of suffragists, including Susan B. Anthony, Alice Paul, Lucy Burns and Carrie Catt.

The next day, Harry Burn defended his last-minute reversal in a speech to the assembly. For the first time, he publicly expressed his personal support of universal suffrage, declaring, "I believe we had a moral and legal right to ratify." But he also made no secret of his mother's influence—and her crucial role in the story of women's rights in the United States. "I know that a mother's advice is always safest for her boy to follow," he explained, "and my mother wanted me to vote for ratification. I appreciated the fact that an opportunity such as seldom comes to a mortal man to free 17 million women from political slavery was mine."

Six days later, on August 26, 1920, the official documents arrived in Washington. Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby certified the ratification privately at home, and, with the stroke of his pen, American women gained the right to vote after a seventy-two-year battle. **Not a single suffragist was invited to the signing.**

August 26th is now celebrated as Women's Equality Day in the United States.

