

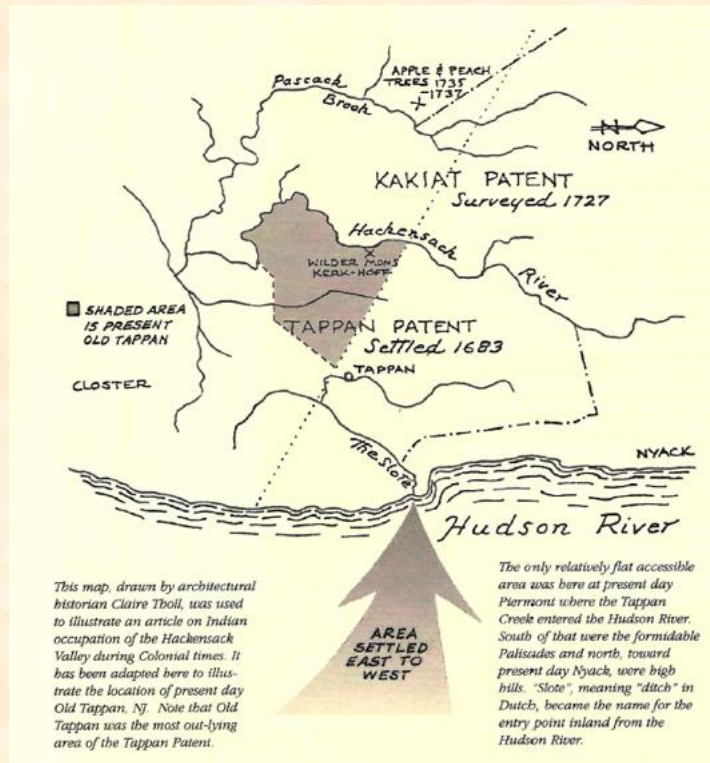
THE EARLY YEARS OF OLD TAPPAN TO THE START OF THE REVOLUTION

The Borough of Old Tappan, New Jersey is situated on land that was part of the region originally inhabited by the Tappan Lenape Native Indian Tribe. The Lenape homeland ranged from southeast New York, through all of New Jersey, to northeast Delaware and eastern Pennsylvania.

From the Hudson River, it was across the salt meadow and through the narrow valley of the Tappan Creek (present day Piermont, NY) that the first inland settlement to the west was made. Land was purchased from the Lenni Lenape Indians on March 17, 1682. The Chief Memsche among other tribesmen were the grantors of the instrument of sale to the patentees. The members of the association who negotiated with the Tappan Lenape were Jan Pietersen Haring, Huybert Gerritsen Blauvelt, and Adrian Lambertsen Smidt.

The shareholders were Dutch in custom and language as it was only a few years earlier, in 1674, that New Amsterdam was ceded to the English and became New York City. Although the land consisting of approximately 16,000 acres was actually in both New York and New Jersey, the purchase was made with the permission of the governor of the Province of New Jersey, Phillip Carteret, under whose jurisdiction the land was believed to lie.

In 1684, as the boundary between the Provinces of New York and New Jersey was better understood, the New York Council ordered the Tappan association to provide the land title documents in order to receive a confirmation by patent (a term for deed).



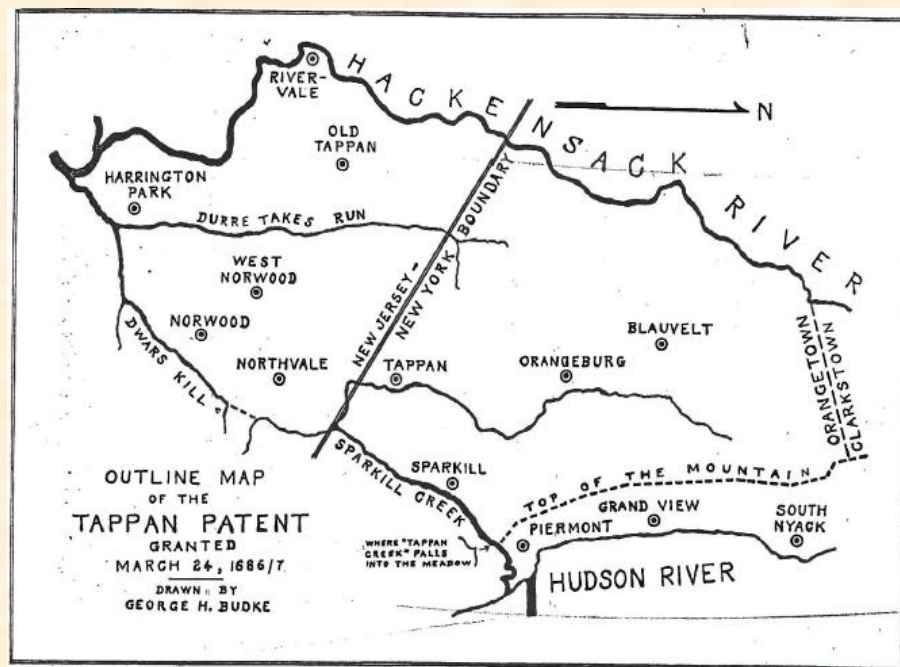
Five years later, March 24, 1687, legal title to the land, known as the Tappan Patent, was granted by Governor Thomas Dongan of New York to thirteen Dutchmen and three free Negroes. The Tappan patent is believed to be the only land grant of its kind in the country to include both blacks and whites on an equal basis. Some of the shareholders brought slaves with them into the area. At this time the patent was considered to be part of Orange County, Province of New York. and included the provision of a township to be called the Town of Orange.

They were all prosperous farmers from the settlement called the Bouwerie which grew up around Peter Stuyvesant's farm in what had been New Amsterdam. In the Bowery Village, Gerrit Hendricksen, whose descendants would be named Blauvelts, lived on a farm along

Bowery Lane. Neighboring his farm was the farm of Jan Pietersen Haring. And near his farm lived a group of former slaves, among them John de Vries and Claus Manuel, emancipated by Governor Kieft in 1664. Later Adriaen Lambertsen and his sons Lambert Ariaensen and Cornelis Ariaensen moved to the Bowery Village from Flatbush and came to be called Smidt. Daniel De Clark and Huybert Gerritsen also lived in the vicinity. They were all among the future 16 Tappan Patentees.

As their farms became overcrowded by the late 17th century, the Bowery Village people came together to purchase new unsettled lands in the wilderness. They also thought the English government too restrictive to give their children to opportunities they had once enjoyed themselves. Their sons and daughters would one day marry and, it was feared, would be unable to thrive in Manhattan as they were once free to do. The time seemed right, with the Indians new selling land across the river, to take advantage of changing conditions. For this tract of land, the Patentees each had to pay the English Crown in New York every year a fee known as a “quit rent” of sixteene bushels of good winter merchantable wheat. “

For 86 years Old Tappan was part of Orangetown, Orange County (South of the Mountains), New York. Tappan was



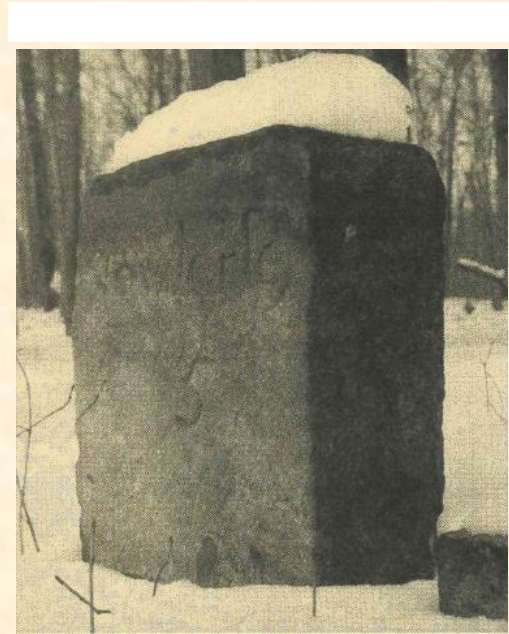
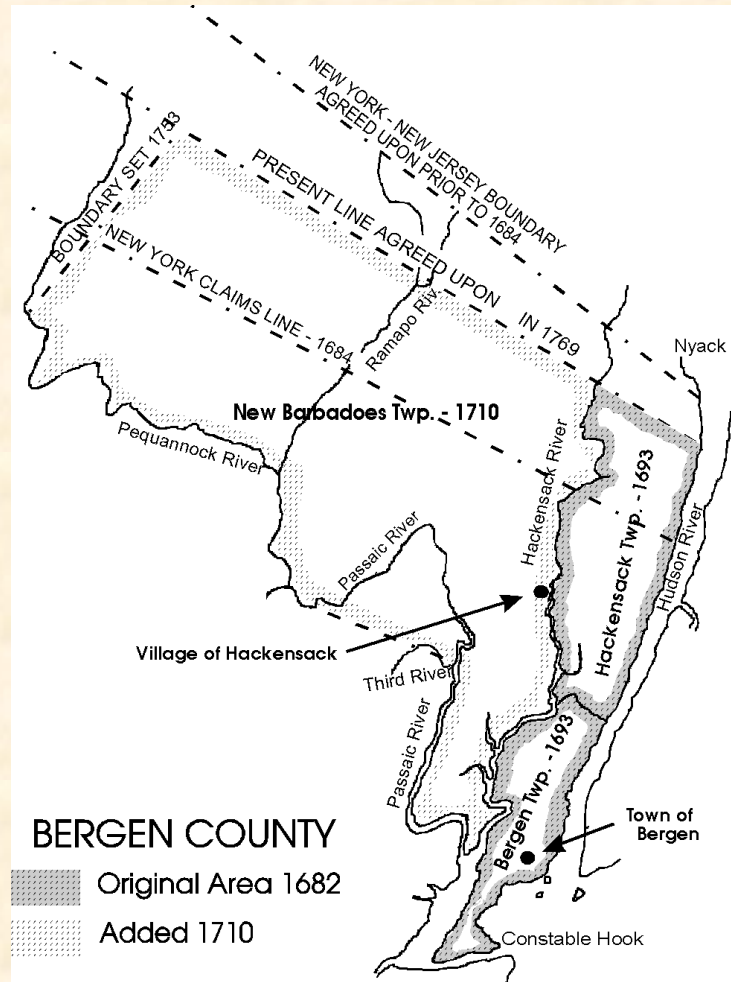
the county seat, and the first public structures built there were a church, jail, inn and courthouse. Inhabitants of Old Tappan served in the Orange County militia, paid taxes to the Colony of New York, and were governed by its laws. The people continued to speak the Dutch language and Dutch customs prevailed. A census of 1702 reveals there were 279 inhabitants in all of Orange County.

During this period, Indians continued to occupy the upper Hackensack Valley. It is said that the last remnants of the Tappan Indians sought for their homes a large area of swampy, untillable land known as the *greun bosch* – Greenbush (later called Greenwoods).

During these Colonial years New York and New Jersey disputed bitterly over their boundary which divided governments as well as land rights. Finally in 1769, commissioners appointed by King George III settled the discord by deciding on the present state line. This settlement severed Old Tappan from its original connection with Orange County and was now part of the Province

of New Jersey. The change in jurisdiction occurred in 1773 and in 1774 the line was marked with milestones at points indicating the distance from the Hudson River. Milestone Four was off Orangeburg Road North. Milestone Five was located in the Old Tappan Greenwoods, five miles from the Hudson River.

Though title to their land was based on a New York land grant, provisions of the Boundary settlement confirmed rights of ownership to Old Tappan landowners who found themselves on the New Jersey side of the line as well as those whose properties were now partly in both states.



At the time of the settlement, the New Jersey portion of the Tappan Patent was part of Hackensack Township. Shortly thereafter in 1775, Harington (later Harrington) Township was formed from the northern part of Hackensack Township. At the outset of the Revolutionary War, Harington Township was a prosperous farming community inhabited by many of the descendants of the original Tappan Patentees. From September 1776 until December 1783, the British Army was headquartered in New York and required a huge quantity of supplies to maintain their forces. During that time period due to the agricultural abundance and proximity to New York, Bergen County farms would incur numerous visits by foraging parties, not only from the British Army and their allies but also the Continental Army.