

Incorporated June 25, 1894

The Dutch immigrants, along with the Huguenots settled here and named it Schraalenburgh, meaning barren knoll or hill. Most of the residents were Dutch farmers and during this century only one house was inside the limits of what is now Bergenfield, a brownstone parsonage used by the south Church pastor. There were only three other stone buildings, a tavern, a flour and fee mill and a woodworking mill. However by the time of the Civil War, there was a tannery, a saw mill and chair factory, a harness making shop, a shoemaking shop and a blacksmith and wheelwright shop.

In 1873, the New Jersey and New York Railroad decided to build a station in the southern half of Schraalenburgh. They asked the residents to name the station, but no name could be agreed upon so the railroad officials imprinted "Bergen Fields" on the tickets. When the borough was incorporated, its leaders modified it to the more urban "Bergenfield".

The growth and development of Bergenfield from those early days is dramatic. In 1894, the Borough had no central water supply, no gas service or street lighting and no post office. In 1904, the Alert Fire Company No. 1 was organized with a hand-drawn hose as its first piece of equipment. In 1917, Bergenfield Fire Company No. 2 and Prospect Fire Company No. 1 were formed and mechanical equipment was purchased. In 1921, the Bergenfield Police Department was formed. Between 1900 and 1930, the dramatic growth was apparent through the construction and expansion of four public schools and one private school. The growth also fostered the construction of churches and synagogues such as St. John's the Evangelist R.C. Church in 1905, St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in 1908, Trinity Evangelist Lutheran Church in 1910, Clinton Avenue Reformed Church in 1923, the Baptist Church in 1926 and the Bergenfield-Dumont Jewish Community Center in 1927. With this growth came a strong commercial business district and the Chamber of Commerce.

In 1923, the Bergenfield Chamber of Commerce was a sponsor of a meeting which led to the construction of the George Washington Bridge and opened the Borough and northern New Jersey to a period of unparalleled growth. Between 1930 and 1950 the Borough's population more than doubled, growing from 8,816 to 17,647. This dramatic increase in population produced an even greater need for public service and facilities. The Borough responded with the construction of two new public schools with additions made to the existing buildings. In 1934, the Post Office was erected and Copper Pond Park was built by the W.P.A in 1938. In 1936, the Borough Hall was moved from the Knollwood Hotel to its present location in the

former Elks Lodge on North Washington Avenue. The Bergenfield Volunteer Ambulance Cops was founded in 1941 along with organization of the Borough's Civil Defense (now called Emergency Management).

The post-war period brought with it the latest in the Borough's history of boom periods. From the 1950 population of 17,647 the Borough reached a peak of 29,700 in 1970. The most recent census of 1990 placed the current population at 24,458. This period saw the development of the Little League Fields in 1955 and P.A.L. Fields in 1961. The construction of the High School was in 1959 and additions to the Middle School in 1967. In 1969, the Bergenfield Free Public Library moved from Borough Hall to its building on West Clinton Avenue. The 1970s saw improvements to the Borough Hall and the construction of the Department of Public Works garage. In 1975, the Bergenfield Swim Club was formed to operate on land leased from the Borough.

In the 1980s the Volunteer Ambulance Cops building was constructed on South Front Street and the Senior Citizens Housing Development was completed on Murray Hill Terrace. The Borough of Bergenfield has certainly traveled a long way from the village of Schraalenburgh and the first days of Bergen Fields. The Borough now boasts seventeen parks and playgrounds and over 52 miles of improved roads. In 1850 the Borough was comprised of approximately 47 homes and shops and in 1980 had grown to over nine thousand households.

The Mayor and Council would urge that all residents visit the Bergenfield Public Library to learn more about the Borough's history from sources such as Adrian Leiby's, "The Huguenot Settlement of Schraalenburgh" and Michael Birkner's, "A Country Place No More".

TUNIS R. COOPER HISTORIC PROPERTY – MARCHBANK ESTATE MUNICIPALLY OWNED HISTORIC SITE AT 100 COOPER STREET BERGENFIELD, BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

Date Built

	Mill House	ca. 1802 Major additions and dates
ca. 1840 /1850 and ca. 1910/1940.		
□ Barn	mid 19th Century – no additions	
	Stable	mid 19th Century – no additions
	Mill	ca. 1900 Major additions / renovations
after a fire in 1965 Renovations to roof, due to heavy snow and wind, partially collapsed roof, in 1996		

Architectural Styles

Mill House	Late Federal with Greek Revival
-------------------	---------------------------------

and Craftsman alterations

Barn

Gothic Revival

Stable

None

Mill

None

*Architects are unknown / Builder is unknown

Proper planning is needed to understand this historic resource, to direct future capital work, and to plan for its future use and preservation.

The Tunis Richard Cooper Historic Properties is located at 100 Cooper Street Bergenfield, New Jersey 07621. The site is contained in 4.36 acres of the Municipal Historic District as designated by the 2005 Master Plan Report.

On this parcel of property is the property purchased by Tunis Richard Cooper in 1840 and used as a chair factory until 1894.

The Bergenfield Museum Society in conjunction with The Borough of Bergenfield also plans to construct a Museum / Welcome Center on the site.

The Original Mill which was used as a chair factory, built between 1841 and 1860. A gristmill occupied the site prior to 1840. The chair factory was destroyed by fire about 1896 or a flood in 1902. The current structure was built in ca. 1900.

The history of the Tunis R. Cooper property is the history of Bergen County. David Demarest originally purchased the site of the chair factory. The Demarest family first arrived in America in 1663. They were Dutch Huguenots and settled in Staten Island before moving to northeastern New Jersey. This site was under ownership of the Demarest family until 1758.

Between 1785 and May 2, 1840 the property changed hands several times until it was sold to Richard Tunis Cooper and his wife Effie Huyler. The seller, Fredrick Mabie, had developed the site in the early 18th century and had constructed a gristmill on Long Swap Brook, a frame house, and a barn. Richard Tunis Cooper by trade was a chair maker and continued his trade at the site. On January 2, 1849, Richard's son, Tunis Richard Cooper bought the property from his father and developed a very profitable chair making business. He converted the gristmill into a saw mill. The business flourished between 1859 and 1863. Besides the site in what is now Bergenfield, the Coopers's had a nine story warehouse and showroom at 442 Pearl Street in New York City. The chairs were shipped through out the east coast.

In 1860, the Cooper Chair Factory was the largest industry in Hackensack Township employing 25 workers. The business started to decline in 1863 when the New York showroom closed. Some contributing factors for the decline may have been the economics of the Civil War and suspected embezzlement by Tunis R. Cooper's son-in-law, Peter Banta. Peter Banta was drafted during the Civil War but never returned and is believed to have gone west to avoid scandal.

The manufacturing of chairs ended in 1894, seven years after the death of Tunis R. Cooper.

The entire property was divided and his son, Henry Cooper, inherited the section with the factory. In 1897 Henry Cooper sold the property to Oscar Marin, a toymaker. Oscar Martin remained the owner until 1908 when he sold it to a piano maker, Amos Bergman. Mr. Bergman died in 1948 and left the property to his housekeeper, Daisy Coringrato. In 1949 she sold it to Alec and Catherine Marchbank. Alec Marchbank, a New York City wool importer worked to preserve the property because of its historical significance. In 1995 he was able to place the property on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places.

When Alec Marchbank died in 1997, the Borough of Bergenfield would not allow this important part of American history to go the way of development. In 2004 the Borough of Bergenfield was able to purchase the property and four remaining buildings. It is the intent of the Borough of Bergenfield to restore and preserve this important part of American industrial history.

The property is listed on the National & State Registers of Historic Places. Currently the site is not open to the General Public due to the condition of most of the buildings. Plans are to stabilize, to eventually restore, and to create a site that can be opened to the public.