



New Chapter In Fitch Way Saga: 'The Return Of Frank Elliott'

By Donald E. Lippincott
Times Staff Writer

There are scores of chapters in the long and fascinating story of the John Fitch Way project. One of the most intriguing has unfolded this past month.

"I think we shall call it 'The Return of Frank Elliott.'"

When Frank Elliott walked into City Hall the first time he was a gauging 23-year-old, completely unknown in Trenton and fresh from a year's experience with the Urban Renewal Administration's regional office in Philadelphia.

He was friendly enough most of the time, but a no-nonsense fellow. Some thought him cocky. With the blessing of the URA, he had just landed a big job with the city-urban renewal director.

The City Commission, in that year of 1958, had just taken over the John Fitch Way project from the Trenton Housing Authority in the first of a series of such shifts, which in themselves constitute an incredible yarn.

Elliott was not a politician and he was imported by the commissioners to administer the 104-acre, multi-million dollar project for that reason and because some URA officials said he could do the job.

Frank Elliott did his job but he had trouble in City Hall almost from the start. He didn't have an office when he showed up for work on the morning of June 2, but after a while they cleared out the phone booth-sized ladies' lunch room on the second floor and Elliott was ensconced.

Elliott didn't know how to deal with politicians. Sometimes they infuriated him, sometimes it was vice-versa.

By the time his political education was very far along, school was out.

Sometimes Frank was too frank. He talked with reporters freely. At first he was prone to carry the ball toward victory over blight without bothering to check on political implications.

There was the time he let it be known that Trinity Lutheran Church on South Broad Street would have to go, for instance. Soos, City Hall was alive with irate Lutherans. After weighing all the arguments, taking a careful head count and casting an eye toward election day, the City Commission ruled that Trinity Lutheran was there to stay.

Elliott was seldom the diplomat. Neither was he very modest. He managed to make some enemies. He was also a hard worker, brilliant, aggressive and visionary. A present city official with access to the records testifies that Elliott turned out a tremendous volume of work.

By Christmas Eve, 1958, Elliott was able to announce that the U.S. had approved the John Fitch Way General Neighborhood Renewal Program. But the gremlins, human and otherwise, which have plagued the Fitch Way project for years, were about their task that Christmas.

Sentiment was mounting to hand the project back to the Housing Authority. And, early in 1959, the Civil Service Commission announced a test to be held May 8 for urban renewal director, either under the City Commission or THA.

The blow came when Civil Service said only those who had been Trenton residents for at least a year would be eligible. Elliott had been here 11 months. Among the eligibles was Joseph E. Garrigan, who had held the post of THA redevelopment director for nearly three years without having to take a test.

The city asked Civil Service to postpone the test so that Elliott would become eligible. The battle was fought at the State House, largely behind closed doors, with Garrigan's attorney, Senator Sido Ridolfi, taking a prominent role.

The Civil Service Commission turned thumbs down on the city. On July 8, over Elliott's protest, Fitch Way was turned back to THA. A week later Civil Service announced that Garrigan, a veteran, had placed first.

Elliott's job was automatically abolished August 1, 1959 and he left City Hall, understandably bitter.

Frank Elliott has returned to City Hall. He sits on the opposite side of the table from the city officials negotiating a complicated agreement for development of the commercial section of Fitch Way.

He is vice president of Hyman Korman Inc., a partner with Capital Center Inc. in the development proposal. He joined the firm a year ago after going back to URA, rising to assistant to the regional director and then assistant to the regional administrator of the Housing and Home Finance Agency.

Elliott drives a hard bargain. He is easily the most impressive of the negotiators—sharp, resourceful.

Not all of those in the marathon negotiating sessions can appreciate the irony of the situation.

But Frank Elliott can.

Absecon's Beacon Will Welcome '64

The New Jersey Tercentenary, Newton, announced plans for a Commission has announced the tercentenary network to broadcast historic Absecon Lighthouse in cast the proceedings live from Atlantic City will be lit New midnight to 12:30 a.m.

Year's Eve for the first time. Hickman said the broadcast in more than three decades. will originate with Trenton station WBUD and WBUD-FM.

Gov. Richard J. Hughes will push a button turning on the lighthouse at a New Year's Eve party in the State House celebrating the state's 300th birthday.

The 110-year-old lighthouse is being restored for the tercentenary celebration by Atlantic City. A fireworks display of historic New Jersey scenes is scheduled to start at the lighthouse at 11 p.m.

The commission said it has acquired Indian tribal dancers and the deputy bailiff of the Isle of Jersey in the British Isles for the New Year's Eve party here.

Judy and Juanita Wackeyonii, 18-year-old sisters from Andarko, Okla., will perform tribal dances accompanied by drummer-singer Matthew Whitehorse. They are direct descendants of the Lemni Lenape Indians, the original populants of New Jersey.

Francis De Lisle Bois, deputy bailiff of the Isle of Jersey, for which New Jersey was named, will be on hand to present tercentenary greetings from old Jersey to New Jersey.

Ronald Hickman, president of the New Jersey Broadcasters Association and general manager of radio station WNNJ,

Year Of The Bonds

From the standpoint of production, 1963 may have been a lean year at the State House but a good time was had by all.

It will be remembered as the year of the bonds.

The \$750 million bond issue, which evoked more angry commentary than any other controversy, also was the center of the yuks.

His Own Idea

They started on the very day the omnibus borrowing proposal was unveiled by Gov. Richard J. Hughes in February.

There, at Hughes' news conference, sat budget director Abram M. Vermeulen, known far and wide for his no-nonsense fiscal viewpoints.

When the question arose whether it was Hughes who actually dreamed up the turnpike-financed scheme, the Governor bristled. Swiveling in his chair suddenly to face Vermeulen,



Jesse Farnell, as Washington's bodyguard, throws a log on campfire before start of river crossing. With him are Peter Pellegrino (standing) as Colonel Glover and reporter Wilson Barto as a soldier.



St. John Terrell (standing right) as General Washington, prepares to cast off for the Jersey shore. Standing also is John Neal as General Sullivan. Seated with flag is Robert L. Walters as Lt. James Monroe.

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Air Pollution Climbs In N.J.'s Urban Areas

(This is the third in a series of four articles on air pollution in New Jersey.)

By John Carley
Times Staff Writer

Eighty-seven percent of the time, the Newark-Jersey City area experiences the same moderate smoke pollution condition as Succasunna in rural Morris County. But it's the other 13 percent that state officials worry about.

William A. Munroe, chief of New Jersey's air pollution program, made this comparison in discussing the State's effort to interpret data obtained from 24 instruments that measure smoke throughout New Jersey.

"We can't attach a number to air pollution and measure it," Munroe said. "But we can measure certain things. About seven years ago, I decided on a measuring project in terms of the soiling characteristics in smoke. We put air sampling devices at various locations across the state and recorded soiling or smoke levels for a year."

These devices, operating automatically in 21 communities, produced a visual indication of smoke density by pumping air onto a filter paper tape. By means of a timing mechanism the tape advanced to a new position at two-hour intervals, producing 12 spots in 24 hours.

The test showed Lakeland and Sparta were the cleanest, while Camden, Newark, Jersey City, Trenton, Paterson, Union, Elizabeth, Plainfield and Phillipsburg were dirtiest in terms of smoke levels.

Second Survey Begins

Now a second smoke survey is under way at 24 test sites. Data gathered thus far indicates that Cape May is the cleanest city in New Jersey while the densely populated areas, once again, are most in need of air pollution control programs.

These studies, which soon will be completed and released to the public, show that

smoke levels are highest between 5 and 9 a.m. and during the winter. This means that home heating units are large contributors of pollutants to the air, Munroe said.

Discussing the comparison between urban and rural areas, Munroe used the Newark-Jersey City area and Succasunna as an example. During 87 percent of 1962, light or moderate smoke levels were recorded in both. But 13 percent of the time, the smoke index soared in the Newark-Jersey City area. During the latter period, smoke was considered heavy more than nine percent of the time, very heavy three percent of the period and extremely heavy less than one percent of the time.

Munroe hopes this research will lead to increased air pollution programs. "It's hard convincing someone to spend money to correct something we can't prove is necessary," he said.

New Jersey's air pollution control program was born in 1954 through an act of the Legislature, which established the New Jersey Air Pollution Control Commission. The commission has attempted to control specific causes of air pollution through an air pollution control code, which has six chapters and may have a seventh before long.

Chapter I deals with definitions and Chapter III says the code does not supersede municipal codes that are not consistent with it.

Chapter II controls air pollution resulting from refuse disposal and salvage operations, but it does not apply to burning on residential properties.

Chapter IV controls the type of smoke that is discharged through smoke stacks.

Chapter V controls air pollution resulting from combustion of solid fuel.

Chapter VI is a broad provision prohibiting air pollution in terms of effect. In other words, State officials

Washington Crossed Here So Did I...In Leaky Boat

By Wilson Barto
Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON CROSSING

— It takes only one trip on a Durham-like boat across the Delaware River here to make a person appreciate more the master stroke of George Washington's 2,400 ragged troops, who captured Trenton 8 miles downstream 187 years ago today.

More than 2,400 spectators left the holiday warmth of their homes yesterday to watch Lambertville showman St. John Terrell and his band of compatriots re-enact the Pennsylvania-to-New Jersey crossing as the afternoon sun sank over the cold, calm Delaware.

Thanks to Terrell, this reporter — wearing the uniform of a Colonial soldier — rode in the bow of the boat, which embarked from a point 500 feet downstream from the Pennsylvania end of the Washington Crossing Bridge. Its course took it under the bridge and into a berth cut in the ice just upstream from the bridge on the banks of New Jersey.

"Raced" Leak

The spectators, who cheered, joked and snapped pictures of the authentic colonial garb, lined both banks and

Christmas March Hazardous; No Blistering Fire... But

By Gregory Farrell
Times Staff Writer

Sixty men and women of various ages — including this reporter — spent Christmas night marching from Washington Crossing to Trenton.

They began at McKonkey's Ferry and ended at the Trent House. They were gay and talkative when they assembled at about 12:30 a.m., and surprisingly, ten miles and six and a half hours later they were still gay and still talkative, though very sore.

Their idea was to recreate Washington's Christmas night march on Trenton in 1776. Dr. Kenble Widmer, state geologist and amateur military historian, planned the route, briefed the marchers, staged scenes and described events along the way.

Robert Smock, chairman of one committee for Washington's march on Trenton said the purpose was "to focus greater attention on this historic area and to spark interest in the important part it played in our country's history."

Smock said this year's march was meant to be a test, a dress rehearsal for a bigger and better version in the tercentenary year of 1964.

Hopefully, he said, the march might even become an annual affair. Any money realized

Little Production, Lots Of Fun At State House

By John Hall
United Press International

Who was quietly minding his own business, he asked abruptly.

"Who thought of this idea, Abe?"

"You did, sir," came the answer.

It will never be known whether that reply was a disclaimer or a loyal reflex action.

High Noon

On Aug. 24, State House newsmen were jolted when they received a one-paragraph announcement from Democratic state headquarters that state chairman Thorn Lord would meet his Republican counterpart, Webster Todd, at high noon in Todd's headquarters.

Remembering that only nine days earlier Hughes had called Todd a "ruthless, self-seeking and ambitious man," reporters expected the opposing chairmen to have their guns drawn.

Lord walked across the street into GOP headquarters, where he found Todd sitting behind his desk in shirtsleeves.

Todd was wearing suspenders decorated with pink elephants. The tension mounted.

"How you been doing?" Lord asked tentatively.

"Nice to see you," responded Todd.

Then Lord deposited a list of 20 questions about the Republican stand against the bond issue for Todd to answer and left. Not a shot was fired.

Only the questions were loaded.

World Circling Bonds

Toward the end of the campaign, both sides were frantically searching for something new to say about the bond issue.

The New Jersey Taxpayers Association finally resorted to announcing that if all 750 million dollar bills were strung end to end they would go around the world three times. Furthermore, the interest on the debt would add 48,000 miles to the total, the association said incredulously.

Historic Court Rulings

It was the year the Appellate Division of Superior Court gave official recognition to "the female ability to deceive the unwitting male by false appearances."

The court reversed a liquor license suspension against a bar-keep who served and employed two under-aged girls, unable to see tender youth beneath the mascara.

The same court ruled that a flatfooted employe of the Motor Vehicles Division was not entitled to a special permit to park in a state lot. His boss, Ned J. Parsekian, said he had observed the plaintiff "on many occasions during the working day...and noted that he is agile of foot and walks about the building and up and down stairs with no apparent hesitation of gait and no apparent discomfort."

It was the year the Legisla-

the New Englander whose troops handled the boats in the icy, windswept Delaware that historical night.

Pellegrino put off a West Coast business trip to take part.

We paddled furiously as the craft moved to midstream. But unlike the night Washington's crossing had been plagued with wind and snow, the wind died down as the craft turned upstream yesterday toward the slit cut in the ice on the Jersey side.

At this point, I exchanged my paddle for the 13-star flag and pole held by Robert L. Walters of Pipersville, Pa., a veteran of other Christmas-day crossings. His grandson was fascinated by Walker's uniform and portrayal of Lt. James Monroe, the nation's fifth president. As a young officer, Monroe was wounded in the fighting that December 26 in King Street, now Trenton's Warren Street.

It was just before the river crossing was completed that I had to use the flagpole to push aside the only cake of ice we encountered yesterday. That, too, was unlike the historic crossing.

But, Terrell noted, this year river conditions resembled those of 187 years ago, when the river also was jammed up with ice at Trenton and prevented Yankee forces downstream from crossing and joining in the assault.

Terrell, in his role as General Washington, had his own historically authentic bodyguard for the first time this year. He was Jesse Farnell of 5725 Mitchell Road, Levittown, Pa., a timber-topper who portrayed Willie Lee and to whom all of us were looking for help if the boat shipped too much water too far from either bank.

Set For Skanking

It was estimated that above the bridge, at least, the water would come up to Jesse's shoulders — making it bad for most of us. We all signed releases so the park could not be held liable if the expedition proved, er...uh...unhistoric.

General Washington's two stellar generals were portrayed by West Amwell Township Mayor Louis Simoonye as Gen. Nathaniel Greene and by Levittown attorney John S. Neal as General John Sullivan.

The late afternoon ceremonies began with a retreat formation by military units from Fort Dix.

They ended with the departure for New Jersey after Terrell recalled the historic night: Washington's troops pushed through the icy waters and down Jersey roads to Trenton—and on to the victory that turned the tide of the Revolution.

After the Jersey landing, Terrell led his tiny force to the McKonkey Ferry House museum in Washington Crossing State Park. Washington had rested there while the rest of his troops, cannon and horses were crossing the river.

And yesterday, too, the occupants of the quaint, colonial structure, Mr. and Mrs. William Cocker, hosted the group who had made the crossing for the 11th year since Terrell began staging the historic reenactment.

The Delaware currents were kind to the small band who recalled again the master military stroke by Washington.

This is a big part of the legend that has built up around him and has prompted some military strategists to write of him as one of the greatest generals of all time.