

State's population shows small gain

WASHINGTON (AP) — The population of New Jersey increased slightly since 1970, with gains in South Jersey compensating for the thousands who fled Northern New Jersey, U.S. Census figures show.

The four most heavily populated northern counties dropped by about 178,000.

The loss in Essex County alone — 81,800 — would have been enough to overflow Giants Stadium. The county has been losing about 11,000 persons a year with Newark accounting for 52,000 of the county's seven-year loss.

The effect of the migration was balanced by more births than deaths among the remaining residents.

Still, Essex County lost 81,800; Bergen County lost 23,000; Hudson County lost 43,800 and Union County lost 30,200.

Passaic County gained 800 and Morris 15,400.

What North Jersey lost was more than absorbed by South Jersey. Ocean County had an increase of 109,500 — a growth of 50 percent from 1970 to 1977.

Locally, Mercer County gained 12,800 residents and Hunterdon County 12,700.

Other counties with large gains were Burlington, 38,100; Monmouth, 29,800; Sussex, 27,100; Gloucester, 23,200; Camden, 17,300; Cape May, 16,500; and Morris, 15,400.

THE SUBSTANTIAL gains in Burlington, Camden and Gloucester counties showed continued growth of the Philadelphia-Camden metropolitan area. The three-county region showed an increase of 78,600.

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East Rutherford crime pinned on Sportsplex

EAST RUTHERFORD (AP) — Giants Stadium and the Meadowlands race track may have brought prosperity to this Northern New Jersey town, but it has also brought an increased crime rate.

Since the Sports Complex opened in the Hackensack Meadowlands in September 1976, the crime rate in East Rutherford has increased by almost 50 percent, police officials reported.

The number of arrests in the borough has gone from 659 in 1976 to 934 in 1977, according to a state report, while crime in the neighboring communities of Rutherford, Wallington and Carlstadt has decreased.

More than one-third of the increase can be attributed to the Meadowlands race track, said Police Chief Daniel Logatto. He said the crimes are either committed on the race track's grounds or in the community.

"We get tagged with the Sports Complex complaints even though they are handled by the State Police and the complex's security personnel," Logatto said.

BECAUSE THE race track is located in East Rutherford, all crime occurring at the track or inside adjacent Giants Stadium is included in borough records.

Logatto said it is unfair for his force to be

blamed for the increase in crime in the borough since a significant number of offenses take place outside the department's jurisdiction.

Les Unger, director of public affairs for the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority, which operates the complex, said the race track and stadium are patrolled by three security forces — internal security, commercial guards and the State Police.

Logatto said the increase in the number of non-violent offenses between 1976 and 1977 was one of the highest for a community of East Rutherford's size — about 6,500.

Incidents of breaking and entering rose from 163 to 218 while larcenies went from 391 to 566 and motor vehicle thefts jumped from 89 to 118. During the year the number of assaults tripled from six to 18.

MUNICIPAL JUDGE George Savino said about 60 percent of the borough's court calendar is taken up by cases relating to the Sports Complex. At one recent court session, Savino heard 33 cases — 28 of them relating to the Sports Complex.

"Crime is not a big problem for us," Unger said. "Of course, crimes are committed. Whenever you get more than two million people congregating in one place throughout a given year, there's going to be crime."



Photo by Bob Sherman Jr.

Hamilton firemen, from left, David Copper, Tom Murray, Dan Gilliland and Frank Schwing carry Ernest Jesso, unconscious, from his burning apartment in Nottingham Village.

Hamilton Township couple injured in fire at apartment

A Hamilton Township couple were in St. Francis Medical Center today under treatment for burns and smoke inhalation suffered in a Christmas afternoon fire in their apartment at 20 Gwyneth Way.

Ernest Jesso, 62, who is assistant superintendent of the apartment complex, Nottingham Village, was listed in guarded condition with burns of the face, chest, arms and hands. Ruth Jesso, 65, was listed in

satisfactory condition with facial burns and a slight head injury.

Chief William Kiernan of the Enterprise Fire Company said the blaze began when a curtain blew across a lit candle on a windowsill in the living room. The flames swept through the living room and hall and caused heat and smoke damage throughout the two-bedroom apartment.

Mrs. Jesso jumped out a rear window. Her husband was overcome by smoke and was rescued, unconscious, from the hallway by Fireman Dan Gilliland of the Enterprise unit, which responded with the Nottingham and Hamilton companies.

Jesso had been assistant superintendent of Nottingham Village for four months. He had previously worked at the Yorkshire Apartments on East State Street.

By George! Kelly crossed Delaware ahead of time

By J. STRYKER MEYER
Staff Writer

The wind was blowing and the Delaware River was choppy, but George Washington and his troops made it across in good shape yesterday in the 26th annual reenactment of the famous Revolutionary War episode of Christmas night, 1776.

And no wonder, with a former Olympic rower directing the operation in the role of Washington.

For the first time since the reenactments were begun in 1953, showman St. John Terrell was not playing the part of the general. This year it was Philadelphia City Councilman John B. Kelly, brother of Princess Grace of Monaco and first vice president of the U.S. Olympic Committee.

It was a hard-earned promotion for Kelly. For nine years he had been a member of the crew which rowed Washington across on Christmas

Day. Now he was standing in the bow of the lead boat, while others did the heavy work.

THE ACTUAL crossing in 1776 was behind schedule, according to historians, but yesterday's reenactment went one-half hour ahead of the 2:30 p.m. time listed in the official program put out by the Washington Crossing Foundation.

Kelly had promised that he would push off from the Pennsylvania side at 2 p.m., and he was as good as his word. He made a brief patriotic speech, quoting the Revolutionary firebrand Tom Paine, and then led his men through a crowd of more than a thousand spectators to the sturdy Durham boats that awaited.

Despite biting winds that exceeded 30 miles per hour, and the swift-flowing river, Kelly's boat, the first of the four now owned by the Washington Crossing Foundation, crossed in less than ten minutes without any major problems.

THE OTHER THREE had similar good fortune, although the crews had to work hard against the currents both in the eastward crossing and later in returning the boats to the Pennsylvania side. At times the current was so strong that the boats were headed upstream as they moved toward New Jersey.

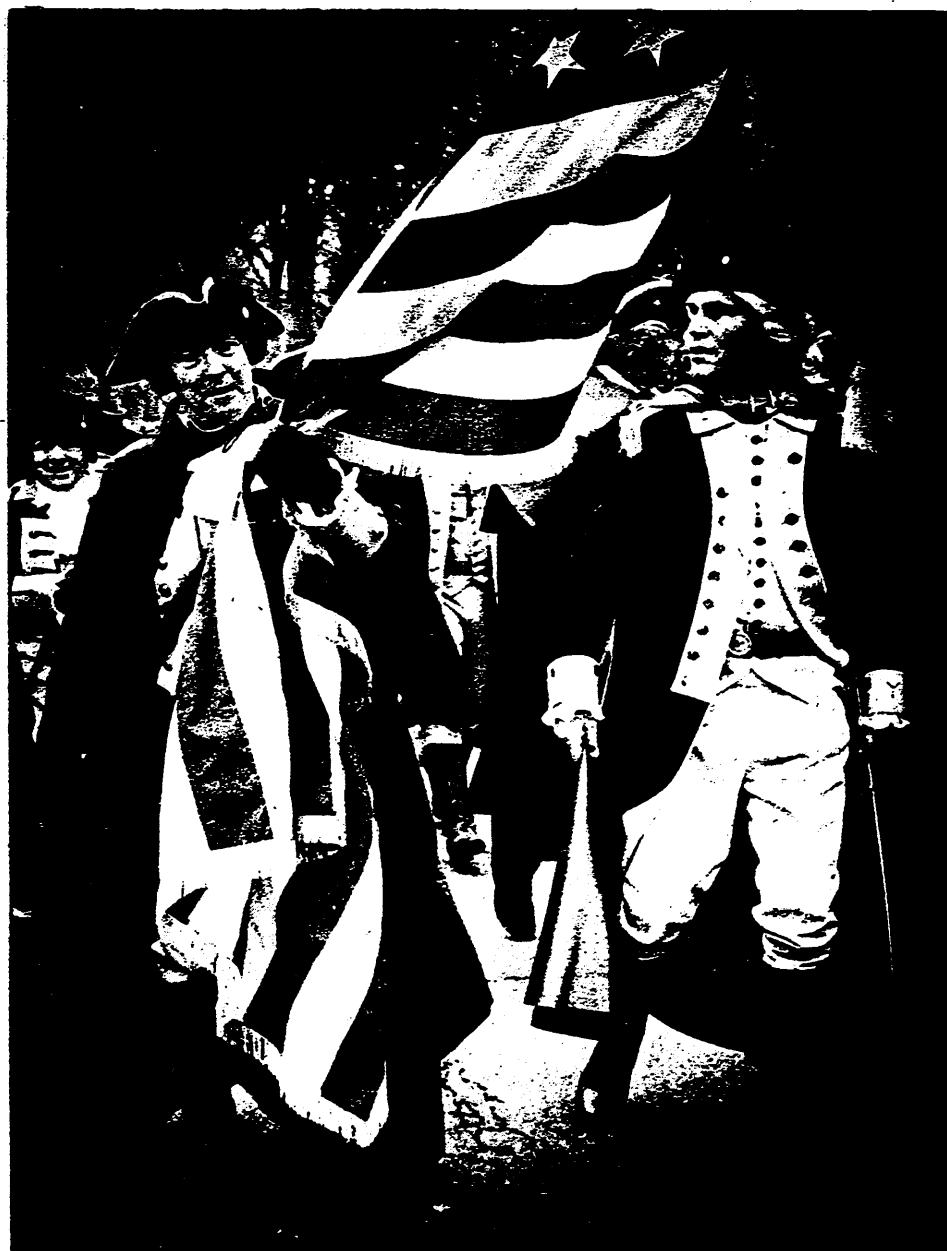
Despite the cold and wind, most spectators seemed to enjoy the reenactment. Several hundred of them mingled with several groups of colonial troops dressed in Revolutionary War garb.

When the units formed and marched from the McConkey Ferry Inn to the front of the south entrance of the Memorial Building in Washington Crossing Park, Pa., the group followed along.

And after Kelly's speech and marching orders, the crowd accompanied the patriots to the river. But only those dressed in revolutionary attire made the crossing.



Spectators at reenactment of Washington's crossing bundle up against the damp chill and winds of Christmas afternoon.



Staff photos by MRCB TOLL

General Washington, with a flag bearer at his side, leads his troops toward the Durham boats waiting on the Pennsylvania shore.