



Sloterdam®  
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The text in this specimen was taken from the book **Fair Lawn: Know Your Town** as published by the League of Women Voters.

**IN THE BEGINNING:** No historic account of Fair Lawn would be complete without recognition of the **LENNI-LENAPI (ORIGINAL PEOPLE)**, native tribes of northern New Jersey. Their trails, campsites, rock shelters and hunting grounds became the roads and towns we use today. When the first Dutch settlers made their way up to what we know as the Hackensack and Passaic Rivers, it was to establish fur trading posts with the **HACK-INGHAESAKY INDIANS**, one of the tribes of the Lenni-Lenapi. The great chief of the tribes was **Oratam**. As settlements grew, the Lenni-Lenapi were forced further west to unsettled land. They left behind place names of Indian origin. Few of us realize how many such names are still with us, for example: **PASSAIC (EITHER WHERE THE RIVER GOES OVER THE FALLS OR VALLEY), PARAMUS (FINE STREAM OR PLACE OF WILD TURKEYS), WAGARAW**

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**(CROOKEDPLACE OR RIVER BEND).** Typically, River Road, one of the oldest roads in the eastern part of our country, was once an Indian trail, leading to the **GREAT ROCK** tribal council site in Glen Rock. The most interesting Indian relic in Fair Lawn is the fish trap (**WEIR**) in the Passaic River. It can be seen during low water 200 yard upstream from

the Fair Lawn Avenue bridge. The trap consists of two rows of stones forming a V-shaped dam into which the Indians drove the fish during migration, closing the opening at the point of the V with weighted nets. The Dutch called this the **SLO-TENDAM** or **SLOTERDAM** from the verb sluiten, **SHUT**. This gave rise to the name of **SLOOTERDAM** (also

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spelled Sloterdam) which was used to describe the surrounding area. Fair Lawn was known as Slooter-dam as late as 1791, and River Road was called the **SLAUTERDAM ROAD** until after the Civil War. Life in the area was rigorous but settlers prospered. Farms were fruitful; fish and game were abundant. Surprisingly, slavery was encouraged by the

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early proprietors. A bonus of land was granted the freeholders for every slave brought into the colony. Slaves worked the farms and cut the sandstone that went into building the farmhouses. By 1790, **BERGEN COUNTY** has approximately 2,300 slaves. Early Houses: Probably the oldest structure standing in FAIR LAWN IS THE **GARRESTONROCKER**

law, a paymaster to General Lafayette's troops. Lafayette stayed in this house for several days in 1824 when he returned to this country after the Revolutionary War. Another old structure is on Fair Lawn Avenue, east of Plaza Road. It is known as the **DUTCH HOUSE** and has been a restaurant or tavern since 1929. The sandstone construction is typical of the early Flemish Colonial style. No early ownership has been established but it is believe to be the Bogert House built between 1740 and 1760. The land stretched to the Glen Rock

located off Fair Lawn Avenue (formerly Dunkerhook Road) east of Saddle River Road. The west wing, the original structure, had five rooms and the unfinished second floor was used for the children and slaves' quarters. General Lafayette is said to have visited the local militia headquarters here during the Revolution. The east wing of the house was built in the 20th century. Nearby, on Dunkerhook Road ("DONCKERHOEK" or "DARK CORNER" in old Dutch) is the Naugle House, built in the 18th century by Jacob Vanderbeck's son-in-

**HOME**, now known as the **GARRESTON FORGE AND FARM** Restoration, on River Road, south of Morlot Avenue. The west wing, the kitchen, was the original building built some time between 1708-1730. The main wing was built before 1800 but the gambrel roof, dormer and porch were added in 1903. The property, known at its purchase in 1719 as the Sloterdam Patent, was originally a huge plantation stretching between the **PASSAIC** and **SADDLE RIVERS**. The Garreston household had as many as 18 slaves. Another structure, almost as old, was built by **JACOB VANDERBECK**. It is