

## STORIES of New Jersey

to Stephen Sayre for 211 acres of land known as Point Breeze. The following year New Jersey's legislature passed a special law permitting Joseph Bonaparte, an alien, to own property in his own name in this State. The exiled king used this privilege to enlarge Point Breeze until it consisted of 1,800 acres.

In the same year, 1817, his faithful secretary, Louis Mailliard, returned to Europe ostensibly on business for Stephen Girard, merchant and founder of Girard College, who was Joseph's wealthiest and most intimate American friend. In Switzerland, posing as a mining prospector, Mailliard hired a crew of laborers and dug up the hidden jewels which Joseph had carried away from Paris and Madrid. With these gems, valued at approximately five million francs, Mailliard returned to Bordentown. At Point Breeze the jewels were kept in a secret cabinet together with the crown and rings which the former monarch had worn as King of Spain.

In New Jersey Joseph was joined by his two daughters, Zenaide and Charlotte. His wife, Queen Julie, wealthy in her own right and loved by the poor for her generosity, did not come to America because physicians had warned her that the voyage would tax her health too much. After several years of separation from the Queen, Joseph selected as his consort a young Quaker woman named Annette Savage. They had one child, Pauline Joseph Ann Holton, whose descendants may be living in New Jersey today. She was buried in a Trenton churchyard.

Life for the Bonapartes was very pleasant at Point Breeze. The mansion built by Joseph on a high bluff above the meeting point of the Delaware River and Crosswicks Creek became the show place of the region. Visitors drove from miles around to see his art treasures and he enjoyed playing the part of guide. Statues of Napoleon and the entire Bonaparte family, tables and occasional pieces of mahogany and art objects of bronze and marble stood in all the rooms, and in the art gallery were master works by Rubens, Teniers and Vernet and a copy of Napoleon's "Passage of the Alps" by the great French Painter, David. A priceless possession was Raphael Mengs' "Nativity of our Savior," commissioned by a Spanish king for the royal altar.

Blue and silver satin covered windows and furniture, and in each room splendid mirrors gleamed from ceiling to floor. The walls of the dining room were decorated with four murals depicting Napoleonic victories in Italy. Beautiful Sevres porcelain was used for table service. Prominently displayed were two lovely porphyry vases, a gift from brother-in-law Bernadotte of Sweden and Norway. Joseph's uncle, Cardinal Fesch, sent him two white marble mantelpieces from Italy. Worth several thousand dollars, these are said to be in the gatehouse on the Point Breeze estate, now known as Bonaparte Park.

Joseph's grandniece, Princess Caroline Murat, wrote in her old age: "Although I have seen many beautiful estates in Europe, I have seen nothing on this side of the Atlantic that compares to Point Breeze." Twelve miles of roadway and bridle path ran between magnificent pine, beech and oak trees on the estate; statues posed on every knoll; deer roamed about in their own park; and here and there were arbors, rustic bridges, rain shelters, quiet retreats and cool springs. A small stream was dammed to form a lake half a mile long where swans and pleasure craft glided in the summertime. On Crosswicks Creek was a dock for the 16-oar barge presented to Joseph by Stephen Girard. The barge often traveled up and down the Delaware to transport famous guests from Trenton, Philadelphia and other river towns.

Joseph Bonaparte regulated his daily life at Point Breeze by a schedule. In the morning he had toast and coffee at seven; did his writing and reading till breakfast time at eleven; a tour of the estate preceded lunch at two; dinner came at eight and supper at ten. At meals he was often joined by his friend Joseph Hopkinson, of Bordentown and Philadelphia, who wrote the poem *Hail Co-*