

Carlstadt New Jersey

Carlstadt was known as the "friendly little German village on the hill" and is where Bob grew up from birth through High School while living at 417 Fifth Street. Originally, Carlstadt was part of Lodi Township in the early 1800s. In 1876 a group of German Freethinkers led by Dr. Carl Klein bought the land encompassing the town. Klein was the president of the German Democratic Land Association and the town was later named for him. "Stadt" is town or city in German, so literally, Carlstadt means "Carl's Town." The association bought 140 acres of land for \$16,000. Carlstadt was officially incorporated as its own borough municipality in 1894.

Throughout Carlstadt's history, German was a mandatory class in school. All children learned the intricacies of English grammar and the German language. The minutes of early Carlstadt governance meetings were in German, but also translated to English. The Carlstadt Free Press, was printed in German until the early 20th century. German stopped being taught in the schools after World War I.

The early settlers of Carlstadt were farmers, factory workers, dairy producers, textile workers, button factory workers, bakers, delicatessen owners and everything in between. One of the longest traditions in Carlstadt is having a school picnic for every child in town at the end of the year. The tradition started in 1866 and continues to this day. The early settlers of Carlstadt also had very literal names for some of the streets or landmarks in town. Paterson Plank Road was actually made of planks of wood and the Halfway House (a hotel in Carlstadt) was actually halfway between New York City and Paterson. Early on, education and exercise were two major points of emphasis for the German Freethinkers. They did not stress religion, and in fact did not allow a church in the German section of Carlstadt. But some of the first residents were religious, either German Catholics or German Evangelicals, and they wanted a church. Carlstadt's first Evangelical church, now the First Presbyterian Church, was strategically placed on "Division Avenue" so it would not be within the living space of Carlstadt's residents.

Another integral part of the history of Carlstadt is the German Turnverein. The Turnverein began in 1857 as a meeting place for residents and was a place for exercise, singing and socializing. The Turnverein society also helped fund the Carlstadt early schools and fire/police departments. The current Turnverein on Broad Street was built in 1900, and after a fire in 1952, the Turnverein was almost torn down. However, members decided to rebuild the Turnverein and the current Turnverein holds gymnastics and singing classes, and an Oktoberfest event.

Immigrants of other nationalities began to move in throughout the 19th and 20th century. The Hackensack and New York Railroad, now part of the Erie Lackawanna Railway, ran through the center of town and the Carlstadt stop was a popular destination for recent immigrants. Many of the immigrants came from Italy. Louis Cuneo and his family was the first Italian family in Carlstadt and they settled here for one simple reason...they got off the train in Carlstadt and stayed. Carlstadt's historical society may now be found in the historic Carlstadt Firehouse where they preserve Carlstadt history through historical pictures, artifacts and documents.

Bob graduated from Becton Regional HS in 1976, graduated from Stevens Institute of Technology in 1980 and then moved to the Seattle area after joining Boeing. Bob has fond Carlstadt memories of his devoted and kind mom; his many inspirational teachers (Al Ward, Jim Williams, Bob Mead, Walt Siri, Carol Mezzadri); his early childhood best friends Nancy Bode and Rob Sauter; sleigh riding on Big Broad and the Woods Hill roads; his grandfather Fred Dungan who owned the butcher shop on Hackensack Street and who lived in the house at the top of Big Broad; his namesake Uncle Robert Dungan, his wife Ann Pinto and their MG convertible; spending time with his cousin Jeff Lahullier in Keansburg NJ where Bob's grandfather and the Lahullier family had bungalows; his 13th birthday gift from the adventurous 15 year-old neighbor girl in Keansburg and Summer of 1971 working on mysteries without any clues and first taste of joy; camping and hunting with the Gumbman family; being a Carlstadt school custodian assistant during his HS years; drinking beer on the spotlight cat walk during HS stage plays with David Terranova; fishing and hunting with his HS best friends Butch Baker and Chris Grasso and being a member of and surviving the Rob Schick juvenile delinquent gang.

Here are some photos of Bob's childhood Carlstadt home, the Carlstadt Firehouse and our Carlstadt Firehouse Christmas ornament (special thanks to George McCoy) which is now displayed in our [Remote Southern Oregon Retirement Mountain Retreat Home](#).



