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Passport
to
Edison

*A Guide to
Edison*

*Its History
&
Community Resources*

A project of
The Center for Community Renewal
A National Heritage Foundation

This book is presented to
Edison Township Free Public Library
in recognition of and appreciation for
its support and contribution to
"Passport to Edison 2001"
by
The Center for Community Renewal
A National Heritage Foundation

Passport to Edison - 2001 was made possible in part by the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission through a grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, Division of Cultural Affairs, Department of State.

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INTRODUCTION

Two years ago, The Center for Community Renewal designed a self-paced driving tour of Edison Township called **Passport to Edison**. On one weekend each October, volunteers from local organizations staffed "Check Points" in 11 neighborhoods across the township. Visitors to each Check Point received a *Tour Guide* of the neighborhood, talked to volunteers about the neighborhood, and participated in interesting activities.

The tour itself and *Tour Guides* have proven so popular that The Center has bound the materials distributed during Passport to Edison in this book as a year-round reference. The Center welcomes your comments, stories, anecdotes, old pictures, and memorabilia. Call 732-321-0045, or send email to passport@communityrenewal.org.

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<i>Tour Guides</i> (The order of the <i>Tour Guides</i> proceeds north from the Raritan River, roughly following the early settlement of what we now call Edison Township. An account of The Battle of The Short Hills follows the Oak Tree Tour Guide. Each <i>Tour Guide</i> highlights the history of the neighborhood, and describes the parks, schools, public facilities, houses of worship, and other features that give Edison its unique character. More than 250 features are described in the <i>Tour Guides</i> .)	
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The Center for Community Renewal

The Center for Community Renewal was founded in 1997, and is an all-volunteer, non-profit foundation with 501(c)(3) status. The primary focus of The Center is to provide funds, resources, and consulting support to grassroots groups and individuals who have a project with the potential to strengthen and support their community.

For information, email admin@communityrenewal.org, or call 732-321-0045.

Passport to Edison - 2001 Participating Organizations

<u>Organization</u>	<u>For information, call:</u>
BAPS Temple	732-572-1234
Clara Barton First Aid Squad	732-225-2279
Edison Community Policing Division	732-248-7472
Edison Dept. of Health & Human Resources	732-248-7270
Edison Greenways Group	732-985-5821
Edison Job Corps Academy	732-985-4800 x2341
Edison Public Library	732-287-2298
Edison Tower Museum	732-549-3299
Edison Wetlands Association	732-661-1660
Friends of the Edison Public Library	732-321-0045
Healthy Neighbors	732-205-1441
Kiddie Keep Well Camp	732-548-6542
Metuchen-Edison Historical Society	732-985-3217 (Curator)
Mt. Zion Unified Free Will Baptist Church	908-755-4983
Raritan Riverkeeper	732-442-6313
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary	732-248-3377

A Short History of Edison

The Early Days

The first settlers of what is now Edison Township were members of the Raritan (sometimes called the "Raritangs") Tribe of the *Lenni-Lenape*. The area was an important part of the Minisink Trail that connected Minisink Island in the upper Delaware below Port Jervis with the Jersey shore. (This and other well-defined Native American trails were followed by early European settlers and developed into roads we still use today.) Archeological excavations in the Dismal Swamp have found hundreds of artifacts confirming the extended presence of the Lenni-Lenape.



The first European colonists in the region were *Dutch*. After early exploration and having established independence from Spain, the Dutch established the Province of New Netherlands in 1623. In 1651, Augustine Herrman, an important Dutch citizen, obtained a deed from local Native Americans to the large tract of land extending from the Raritan River to the Passaic River, including what would shortly become Woodbridge and Piscataway. Relations with the Native Americans deteriorated, and few Dutch settled in the area although the Village of Bergen on the site of present day Jersey City was established in 1660.

However, Dutch control was short-lived. The *English* had become firmly established in Massachusetts and Virginia, and wanted control of the whole eastern seaboard. On March 20, 1664, King Charles II gave a royal patent to his brother, James, the Duke of York, to all of the lands between the Connecticut and Delaware Rivers, including the power of government. In May 1664, an English fleet landed at New Amsterdam, and the Dutch surrendered control of the lands. On June 23-24, 1664, James, in turn, gave the land between the Atlantic Ocean and the Delaware River to his friends Lord John Berkeley and Sir George Carteret. Berkeley and Carteret assumed that they had powers of government. King Charles II named the territory "*New Jersey*," after the island of Jersey in the English Channel. This was in gratitude to Carteret who had recaptured Jersey from the Parliamentary forces that then became a haven for royalist forces.

In 1665, anxious to establish an English presence in the new territory, Berkeley and Carteret issued the "Concessions," in effect, a first constitution for New Jersey, granting *religious and political rights*.

It is difficult to understand today how important this event was, but at that time, the western world was in turmoil following the Protestant Reformation. Attracted by the promise of religious freedom, many early settlers relocated to New Jersey from New England where strict Puritan laws about religious observance were enforced. Many of these settlers were Baptists or Quakers.

On December 11, 1666, Governor Carteret transferred the tract from the Raritan River to the Rahway River to Daniel Pierce, John Pike and seven associates from Newbury, Massachusetts, for the price of £80. One week later, Pierce and associates sold one-third of the tract



to John Martin, Charles Gilman, Hugh Dunn, and Hopewell Hull for £30 to satisfy a stipulation from Governor Carteret to establish at least two settlements. Pierce and associates founded *Woodbridge* and the four pioneers founded *Piscataway*. The

founders of Piscataway moved from the area where the Piscataqua River in New Hampshire meets the ocean, hence, the name "Piscataway" for their new home. At that time, Piscataway included most of the future Middlesex and Somerset Counties. Other early settlers included the Dunhams, Bonhams, and FitzRandolphs. Many of these family names survive as place names today. In 1666-1668, Piscataway consisted of eight families. So, in the 17th century, what we now call Edison Township was divided between Woodbridge and Piscataway.



Understanding how Edison Township developed from these initial settlements to the present will give some insight into the nature of the Township today, and into the 11 neighborhoods described in the Passport to Edison Tour Guides.

The Colonial Period

Within the large geographical area represented by present-day Edison Township, six settlements were important before and during the American Revolution: Bonhamtown, Metuchen, New Durham (where New Durham and New Brooklyn Roads meet), Oak Tree, Piscatawaytown, and Stelton.



Additional detail about the history and development of these settlements is provided in the neighborhood Tour Guides.

The 19th Century

The 19th century saw the early settlements evolve into villages, and the development of Clara Barton (and the surrounding neighborhoods of Bloomfield, Phoenix, Raritan Manor, Sand Hills, and Valentine), Highland Park, Menlo Park, New Dover, and Pumptown and the Dismal Swamp.

The area was not known as Edison then. It was a part of Woodbridge and Piscataway Townships until 1870. On March 17, 1870, it was incorporated as ***Raritan Township*** because of its proximity to the Raritan River and to honor the Raritan Tribe as the original inhabitants. Other names considered at the time were "Metuchen" and "Washington."



The Early 20th Century

The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw the emergence of railroads and electric trolley lines as the predominant modes of inter-urban travel. These travel options opened up Edison as a desirable locale for summer homes and recreational sites that allowed people to escape the noise and summer heat of nearby major cities.

The boundaries of Raritan Township would not remain stable for long however. In 1900, residents of the *Metuchen* area, nicknamed the "Brainy Borough," petitioned the State of New Jersey to incorporate as a separate municipality. A variety of reasons for secession have been advanced, including that the Metuchenites wanted a stronger voice in the operation of their public schools. In 1905, *Highland Park* incorporated as a separate borough, in part, because residents felt they were paying too large a share of the cost of the township government.



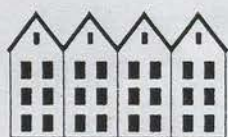
The divergence of city and rural life was highlighted by the secessions of Metuchen and Highland Park, while the rest of the Township retained its rural character. In 1920, the population was just 5,419. The population nearly doubled by 1930 to 10,025, but was still small compared to the population boom following World War II. Roosevelt Park, Nixon, and Potter's Crossing emerged as distinct sections in this time period.

Prior to 1904, the township contained 10 school districts, most consisting of one-room schoolhouses. An old hand-drawn map

indicates these were: Bonhamtown, Clara Barton, Mt. Pleasant, New Dover, New Durham, Oak Tree, Piscatawaytown, Sand Hills, Stelton, and Uniontown (later called Menlo Park). The Lafayette school, in present-day Roosevelt Park, had been consolidated with the Uniontown school. After Metuchen and Highland Park seceded, a movement for larger schools began and four-room schools were built in Bonhamtown and Oak Tree. It is important to understand that for the first 250 years, what is now Edison was primarily a rural agricultural area with scattered settlements. The settlements evolved into separate neighborhood sections that did not share a sense of community.

The Post World War II Era

Camp Kilmer was a major East Coast assembly point for troops going to and returning from Europe. On their return, a strong demand for housing resulted in the development of major sections of southern Edison including Lincoln and Washington Parks, Lindeneau, and Haven Village. By 1960, the population had increased more than four-fold to 45,580. In the 1960s, population growth began to be felt in northern Edison. By the 1990s,



several condominium developments had sprouted up all over the northern half of the Township. Open space, for almost 300 years a seemingly inexhaustible resource, became a scarce commodity.

How Edison Got Its Name

With the loss of the centers of commercial activity provided by Metuchen and Highland Park, Raritan Township struggled for a sense of identity as a community. Residents did not think of themselves as residents of Raritan Township, preferring to say they lived in, for example, Bonhamtown, Nixon, Menlo Park, Stelton, or Sand Hills. None of the post offices serving the township used Raritan Township as a postmark. This was, in part, because other municipalities in New Jersey also bore the Raritan name (one of them still does). There were local post offices in Menlo Park, Nixon, and Stelton, and many residents were served by post offices in surrounding communities.

In 1954, on the 75th anniversary of the perfection of the incandescent lamp, several citizen activists, led by Mrs. Joanna Wira, organized a drive to change the name to Edison Township in honor of Thomas Alva Edison, "The Wizard of Menlo Park." A counter proposal was made to name the township "Nixon" in honor of Lewis Nixon who had moved into the township in 1913 and developed nitration works

here. Nixon also founded the Crescent Shipyard in Elizabeth that built ships for the U.S. Navy, including the first submarine used by the Navy.

The vote was surprisingly close, but the name change to *Edison Township* won in the election of November 2, 1954.



The Struggle for Recognition

Even with the name change, it took another 14 years for the name "Edison" to gain universal recognition as a township. On October 9, 1968, the Edison Post Office was dedicated--the result of a 10-year struggle by municipal government officials and citizens, including a personal appeal to President Kennedy by Mrs. Wira, to overcome the reluctance of the U.S. Postal Service and the resistance of neighboring towns. Today, Edison is a thriving community of 32-square miles with a culturally diverse resident population of 98,000.

Pages 16-17 summarize the major events in the history of Edison Township.



Acknowledgments

Special thanks to The Edison Township Historical Society for permission to abstract information from the 1991 book by David C. Sheehan "Welcome to Edison: An Enlightened Community," and to the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society for their invaluable assistance.

"History of Piscataway Township: 1666-1976" by Walter C. Meuly also provided important information about the formative years of the area.

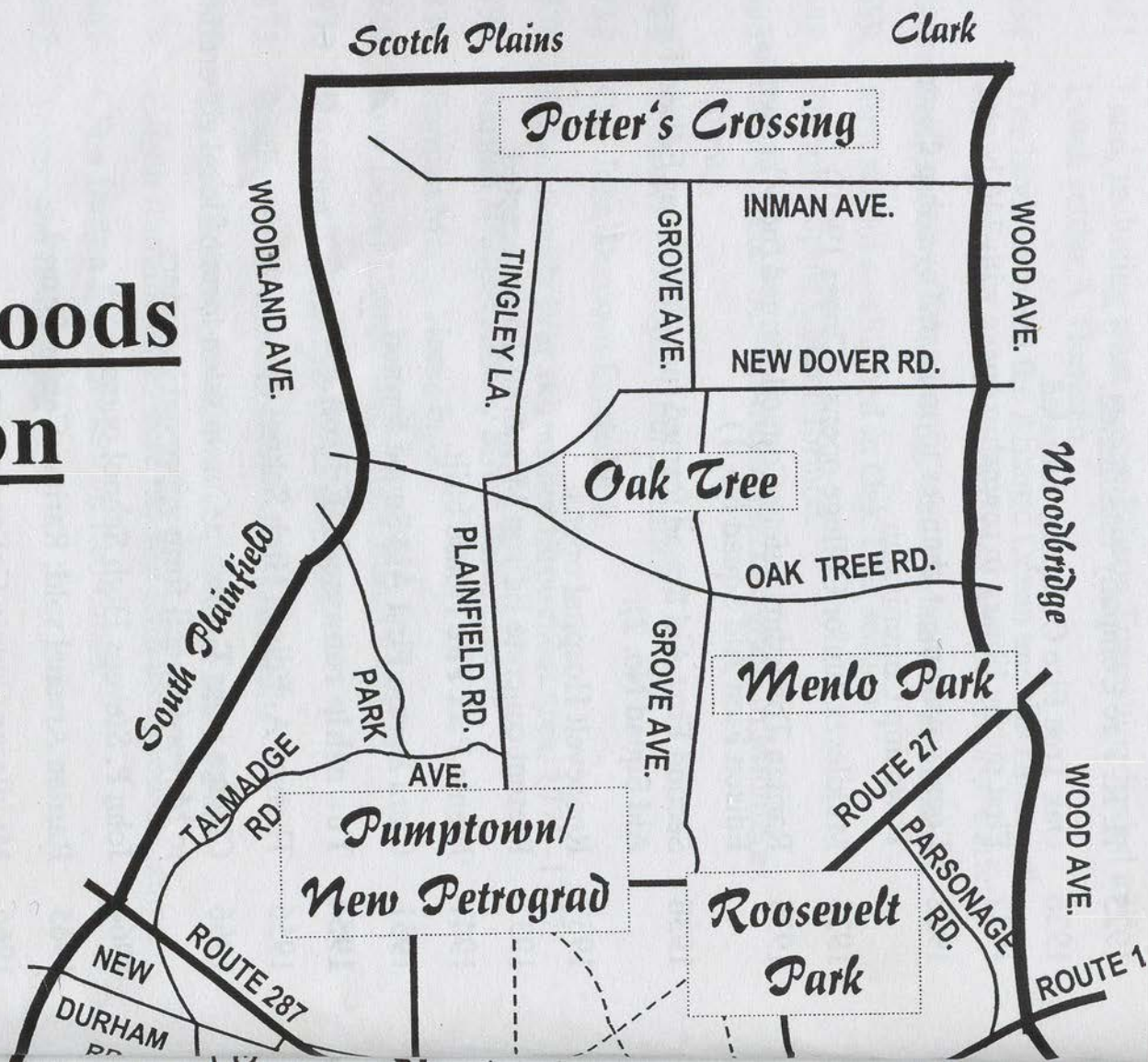
To learn more about the history of Edison, call the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society Curator at 732-985-3217. Anyone wishing to provide additional information for this Tour Guide can contact The Center for Community Renewal at 732-321-0045.

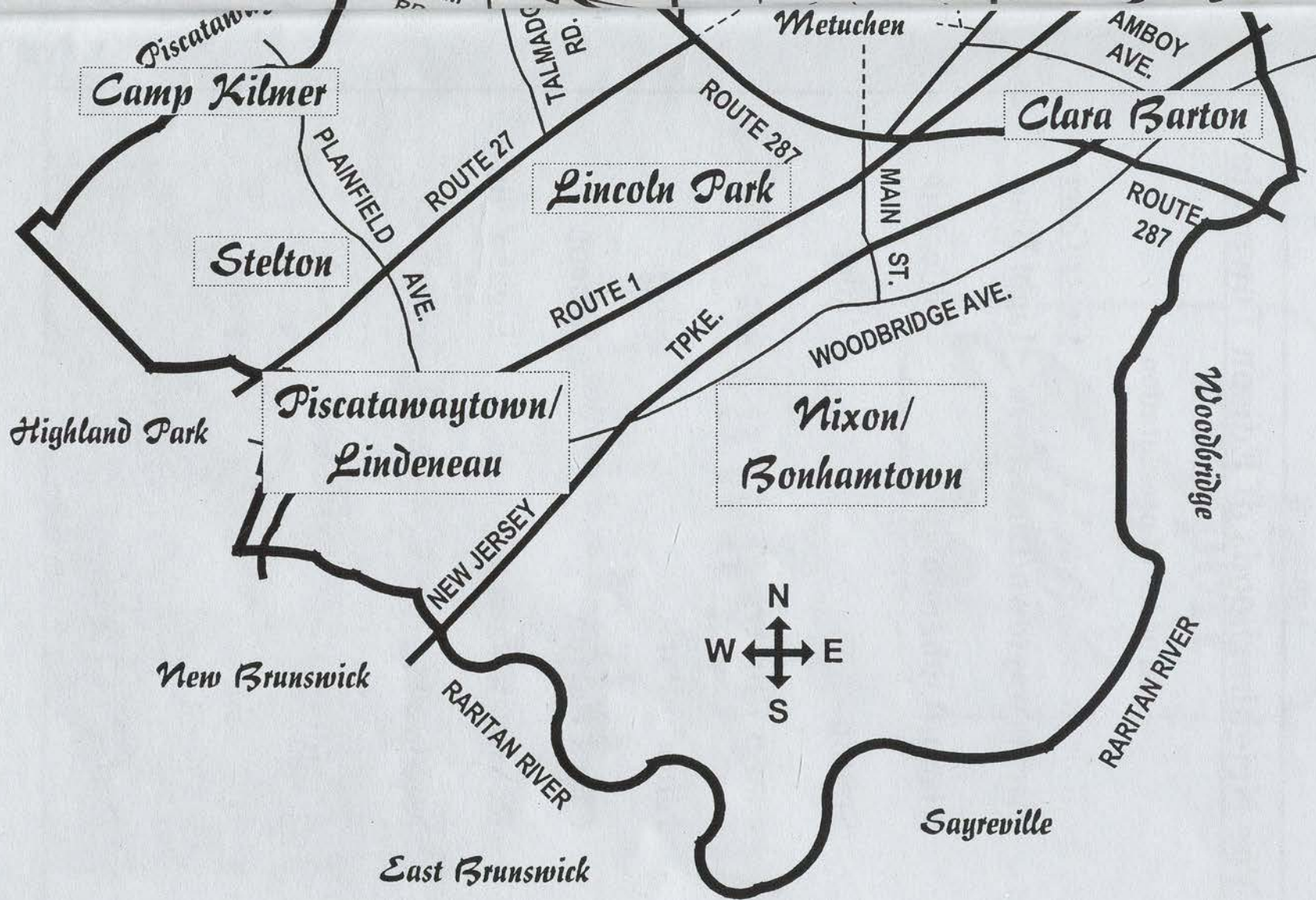
MILESTONES IN EDISON'S HISTORY

- 1651 Land, including what is now Edison Township, deeded to Dutch settler A. Herrman.
- 1664 The lands between the Atlantic Ocean and the Delaware River given to Lord John Berkeley and Sir George Carteret.
- 1665 Settlements of Woodbridge and Piscataway established.
- 1689 First school established in Oak Tree section.
- 1689 Stelton Baptist Church formed.
- 1693 "Mary Jones" buried--oldest marked grave in Middlesex County.
- 1724 St. James Episcopal Church built.
- 1732 Col. John Dunham Estate built.
- 1776 Revolutionary War skirmishes throughout area, 1776 -1777.
- 1795 Raritan Bridge (Albany Street Bridge) built.
- 1830 Forman Martin Home built.
- 1849 New Dover United Methodist Church founded.
- 1870 Raritan Township incorporates.**
- 1875 Bonhamtown Grace Reformed Church built.
- 1876 Thomas Edison establishes laboratory at Menlo Park.
- 1879 Edison illuminates 45-acre lab site with incandescent lamps.
- 1881 Clara Barton forms American Red Cross.
- 1887 Yelencsics Homestead built.
- 1900 First trolley line laid.
- 1900 Metuchen incorporates as a separate borough.
- 1905 Highland Park incorporates as a separate borough.
- 1908 Bonhamtown School built.
- 1913 Piscatawaytown School built.
- 1916 Edison Dept. of Fire formed.
- 1921 Clara Barton School opens. (Closes 1982.)
- 1923 Stelton Elementary School built. (Closes 1982. Now houses the Dorothy C. Drwal Stelton Community Center.)

- 1923 Edison Police Dept. formed with 4 men and a Model T Ford.
- 1924 Raritan Engine Company No. 2 formed.
- 1925 H. K. Fire Company established.
- 1926 Oak Tree Fire Company founded.
- 1927 First public library in township opens with 246 books.
- 1928 Local government changes form from Township Committee to Township Commission.
- 1933 Middlesex Junior College opens. (Closes 1941.)
- 1935 Raritan Township Safety Council formed (now known as Edison First Aid Squad No. 1).
- 1936 Second First Aid Squad formed (now known as Edison First Aid Squad No. 2).
- 1937 Roosevelt Hospital opens.
- 1937 Present concrete Edison Memorial Tower erected.
- 1941 Menlo Park Fire House built.
- 1951 Clara Barton First Aid Squad formed.
- 1954 Township renamed "Edison."**
- 1956 Thomas A. Edison High School opens.
- 1956 Change from Township Commission form of local government to Mayor-Council form approved by voters.
- 1964 John P. Stevens High School opens.
- 1965 Raritan Arsenal sold; Raritan Center formed.
- 1966 Middlesex County College opens.
- 1967 John F. Kennedy Medical Center established.
- 1968 Edison Post Office opens.
- 1971 First codification of local ordinances in 100-year history of Township.
- 1979 *Metuchen-Edison Review* begins publication.
- 1981 New Municipal Complex opens.
- 1990 Minnie B. Veal Community Center opens.

The Neighborhoods of Edison

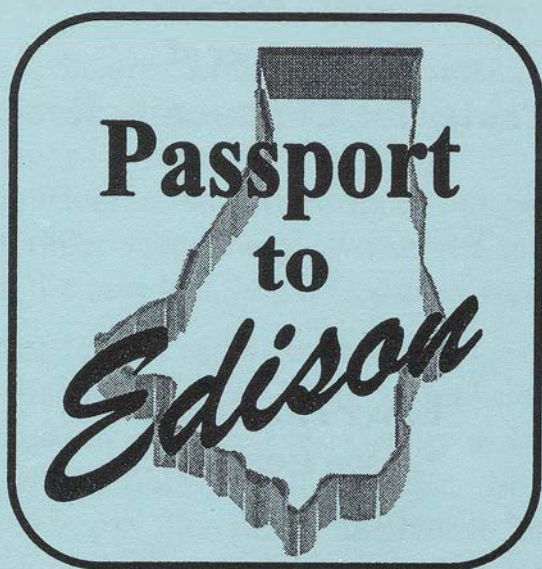




The Neighborhoods of Edison Township

In order of presentation

	<u>Cover Color</u>
Piscatawaytown/Lindeneau	Light Blue
Nixon/Bonhamtown	Goldenrod
Stelton	Violet
Camp Kilmer	Light Green
Lincoln Park	Gray
Clara Barton	Salmon
Roosevelt Park	Light Yellow
Menlo Park	Buff
Pumptown/New Petrograd	Peach
Oak Tree (The Battle of The Short Hills)	Ivory (White)
Potter's Crossing	Pink



Piscatawaytown/ Lindeneau



Tour Guide

Passport to Edison – 2001
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Cover Photograph
Edison Boat Basin

This program has been made possible in part by the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission through a grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, Division of Cultural Affairs, Department of State.

For a large-type edition of *A Guide to Passport to Edison – 2001*, call The Center for Community Renewal at 732-321-0045, or send e-mail to: admin@communityrenewal.org.

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Neighborhood Notes

Piscatawaytown is the area around the intersection of Plainfield and Woodbridge Aves., and dates from the 17th century. In Colonial times, it was the main settlement of Piscataway Township. Located on high ground above the Raritan River, it was safe from floods yet had access to the major "highway" of the time. Piscatawaytown served as the center of Edison government until the new Municipal Complex was dedicated in 1981.

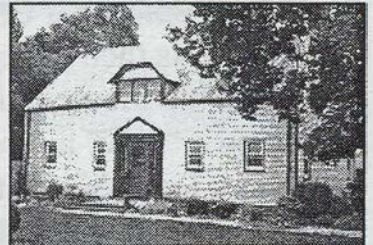
In 1681, a group of settlers established a ferry across the river to New Brunswick near the present day Albany Street bridge. When Somerset County was created out of Middlesex County in 1683, Piscatawaytown became the seat of the court for both counties. In 1685, every inhabitant of the town agreed to pay nine pence in silver to buy nails to erect a Town House close to where St. James Episcopal Church (*see #35*) now stands.

In 1702, New Jersey became a united royal colony under the Governor of New York, with Perth Amboy as one of its capitals. King Georges Post Rd., constructed to carry mail between Perth Amboy and New Brunswick, ran through the middle of Piscatawaytown. Now called Woodbridge Ave., elsewhere it is called Old Post Rd. and King Georges Post Rd. George Washington used the road to travel to New York for his inauguration in 1789. In 1795, a bridge replaced the ferry across the Raritan River.

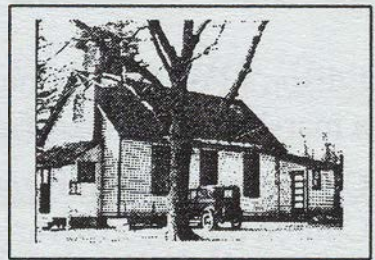
See the map in the center of this booklet for the locations of the sites described.

Historic Sites

1. Edison's Portland Cement Plant was located along the Raritan River in a marsh. The smokestack is visible from the northbound NJ Tpke.
2. Col. John Dunham Estate, at 33 Park Way behind St. James Episcopal Church (*see #35*), overlooks Thomas Swales Park/Edison Commons (formerly Piscatawaytown Commons, *see #17*). The Dunhams, original settlers in the area, may have built the estate as early as the late 1600s. Records indicate that the estate was active in 1732. The estate hosted General George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, and seven soldiers on July 10, 1778. Dunhams lived on the estate until the 1920s. In the early 1960s, plumbing and electricity were added. Today, it is a private home.



3. E. G. Gough House, at 2111 Woodbridge Ave. directly across from St. James Episcopal Church (*see #35*), was built in the first half of the 18th century for the FitzRandolph family, early settlers in the area. Today, it is a private residence.
4. Old Edison Library - The first library was opened by a civic group in 1927, with 246 donated books and in a rented store at Woodbridge Ave. and Thomasine St., across from the Nixon Post Office (*see #30*). In 1928, voters approved it as the municipal library. The library remained in Piscatawaytown for 32 years, moving to Woodbridge Ave. and Myrtle St. in 1931, and to the second floor of the old municipal building at the corner of Woodbridge and Plainfield Aves. (*see #9*) in 1938. It remained in the municipal building until 1959, when it was moved to temporary quarters at 238 Plainfield Ave. south of the present-day Burger King. In 1965, the present Main Library was built in the Stelton neighborhood.
5. Haven Village, south of the intersection of Rt. 27 and Plainfield Ave., was built before World War II and was also called "Haven Homes."
6. Lindeneau, on the Highland Park border, east of Duclos La. between Rt. 27 and Woodbridge Ave., is also called the Blossom section of Edison because streets are named for flowering trees or shrubs.
7. Martin's Dock, located on the Raritan River at the foot of Silver Lake Ave., was used to ship apples and cider from the orchard and cider mill next to the Forman Martin Home at 30 Old Post Rd. Built in 1830 and 1850, Martins lived in the house until the 1960s.
8. Old Meeting House - By the mid-19th century, the Town House erected in 1685 proved too small and "insufficient to keep people from the injuries of the weather." A new Meeting House, built behind St. James Episcopal Church (*see #35*) on what was then called Piscataway Commons (*see #17*), served as the township municipal building and police headquarters until the 1930s, when a "new" municipal building was erected (*see #9*). Plans to use it as a township historical museum were disrupted by a fire of suspicious origin, and it was demolished in 1988.
9. Old Municipal Building, built in the 1930s at the northeast corner of Woodbridge and Plainfield Aves., housed the local government,



Police Department and Municipal Court until 1980 when the new Edison Municipal Complex was built. It also housed the Main Library (see #4) from 1938 until 1959. In 1981, the Rabbi Jacob Joseph School (see #27) purchased the building and uses it as a dormitory.

10. Piscatawaytown Burial Ground surrounds three sides of St. James Episcopal Church (see #35). It was deeded to Piscataway in the 1680s. The oldest marked grave is dated 1693. A tombstone dated



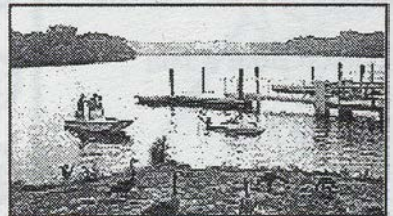
1695 tells of two boys who died from eating poisoned mushrooms. Mary Moore was buried here after being burned as a witch. In addition to the graves of Revolutionary War soldiers, a mound marks the gravesite of six British soldiers killed in a skirmish nearby. An additional 30 British soldiers are buried in simple graves around the church and several slaves are buried in a separate part of the cemetery.

11. Old Piscatawaytown Elementary School is located at 2060 Woodbridge Ave. just west of Plainfield Ave. Built in 1913, with additions in 1916 and 1921, it was the first school in Edison to have a telephone. In 1984, it was closed and sold to the Rabbi Jacob Joseph School (see #27). The Rabbi Jacob Joseph School uses it for classes.

Parks and Open Spaces

12. Blossom Street Park, a 0.8-acre park at the intersection of Blossom St. and Jefferson Blvd., contains a playground.

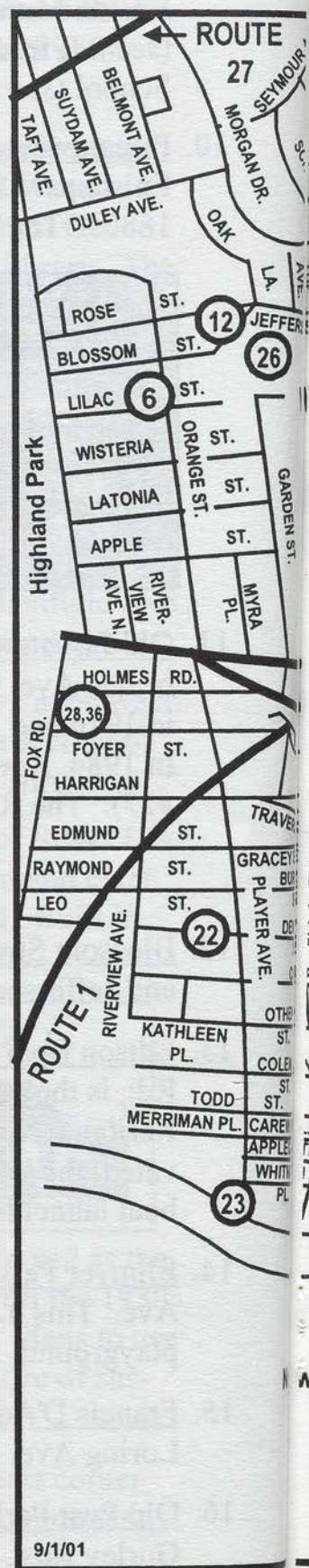
13. Edison Boat Basin at the end of Meadow Rd., is the only public access to the Raritan River in Edison. Recently renovated, the boat basin has a floating dock, boat launching ramps, and a parking lot.

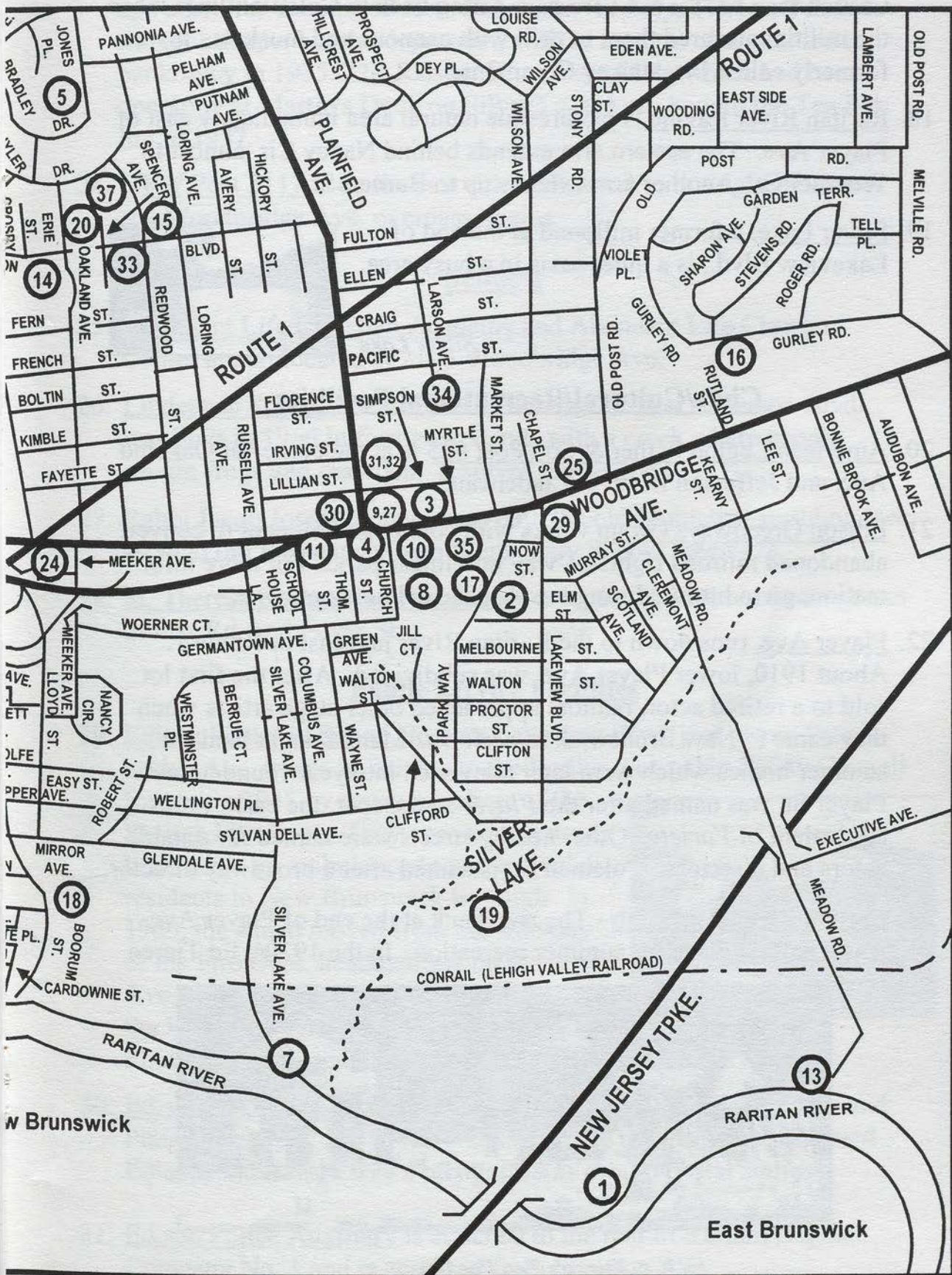


14. Ellmyer Park is located on Jefferson Blvd. at the corner of Oakland Ave. This 4.7-acre park has 2 basketball courts, a hardball court, and a playground.
15. Francis D'Aquila Memorial Field at the corner of Jefferson Blvd. and Loring Ave. is the home of the Edison Boys Baseball League.
16. Old Post Park, a 1.7-acre park at the intersection of Stevens and Gurley Rds., has a playground.

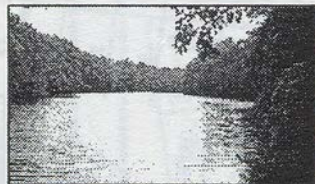
- ① Edison's Cement Plant
- ② Col. John Dunham Estate
- ③ E. G. Gough House
- ④ Site of Old Edison Library
- ⑤ Haven Village
- ⑥ Lindeneau
- ⑦ Martin's Dock
- ⑧ Site of Old Meeting House
- ⑨ Old Municipal Building (same as ②⑦)
- ⑩ Piscatawaytown Burial Ground
- ⑪ Old Piscatawaytown Elementary School
- ⑫ Blossom St. Park
- ⑬ Edison Boat Basin
- ⑭ Ellmyer Park
- ⑮ Francis D'Aquila Memorial Field
- ⑯ Old Post Park
- ⑰ Thomas Swales Park/ Edison Commons
- ⑱ Raritan River Ravine
- ⑲ Silver Lake

- ⑳ American Legion Father & Son Post 435
- ㉑ Edison Greenways Group (not shown on map)
- ㉒ Player Ave.
- ㉓ Raritan River Boat Club
- ㉔ VFW Post 3117
- ㉕ Abundant Life Christian Academy and Center
- ㉖ Lindeneau School
- ㉗ Rabbi Jacob Joseph School
- ㉘ St. Theresa Roman Catholic School
- ㉙ Edison First Aid Squad No. 1
- ㉚ Edison-Nixon Post Office
- ㉛ Edison Police Auxiliary
- ㉜ Raritan Engine Co. No. 1
- ㉝ Church of the Nazarene
- ㉞ Guardian Angels Roman Catholic Church
- ㉟ St. James Episcopal Church
- ㊱ St. Theresa of the Infant Jesus Roman Catholic Church
- ㊲ Temple Beth-El





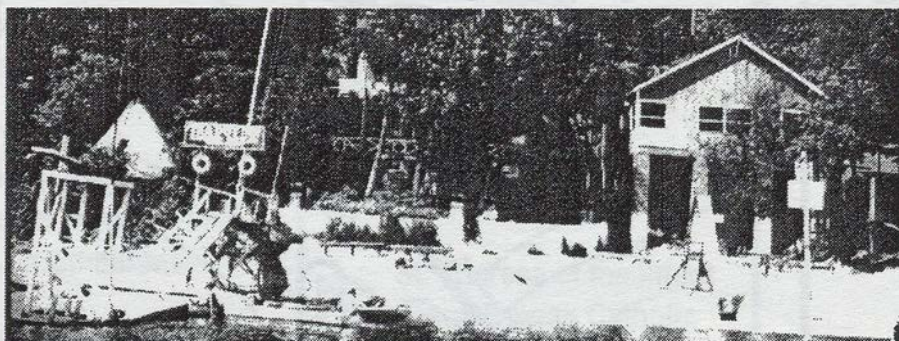
17. Thomas Swales Park/Edison Commons behind St. James Episcopal Church (see #35) is 5.4-acre park dating back to Colonial times when the militia mustered there to drill with cannons and muskets. It was formerly called Piscataway Commons.
18. Raritan River Ravine is picturesque natural area immediately east of Player Ave. The eastern arm extends behind Nancy Cir. almost to Woerner Ct. Another arm extends up to Burnett St.
19. Silver Lake, a former millpond at the end of Lakeview Blvd., is a quiet oasis in a busy area.



Silver Lake

Civic/Cultural/Recreational Facilities

20. American Legion Father & Son Post 435 is at the corner of Oakland Ave. and Jefferson Blvd. in Lindeneau.
21. Edison Greenways Group works with county government to convert abandoned railroad rights-of-way into linear parks. For more information, go to <http://edisongw.webspace.dellnet.com/>.
22. Player Ave. runs down to the Raritan River just east of Route 1. About 1910, lower Player Ave. was subdivided. After the first lot sold to a retired actor, realtors approached other stage artists when they came to New Brunswick to perform. Many bought land for summer homes which were later converted into year-round homes. Player St. was named after the *Player* newspaper, the early 1900s equivalent of *Variety*. Other nearby streets were named for notable actors and directors. Coleman St. is named after a Broadway director.
23. Raritan River Boat Club - The riverbank at the end of Player Ave. was a natural place for summer recreation. In the 1920s, Ed Tierce



Tierce's Tea Pot Inn

developed a swimming area with a playground, a small luncheon area and a hall for dancing to recorded music. Slowly, Tierce's Tea Pot Inn took shape, but the depression and the ravages of winter led to bankruptcy in 1935. The Raritan River Boat Club, which had been operating at Martin's Dock on Silver Lake Ave., bought the Tea Pot Inn in 1937.

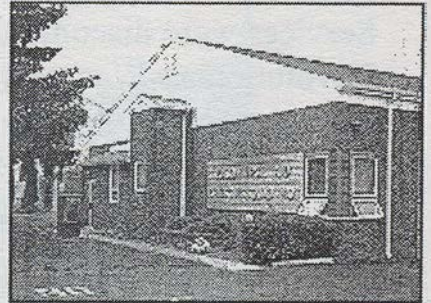
24. VFW Post 3117 is on the east side of Route 1 to the right of where the Woodbridge Ave. overpass begins.

Schools

25. Abundant Life Christian Academy and Abundant Life Christian Center are co-located at 2195 Woodbridge Ave.
26. Lindeneau School, located at 50 Blossom St. near Jefferson Blvd., was built in 1966 in former wetlands with a creek where people caught frogs and crawfish. It serves grades K-5.
27. Rabbi Jacob Joseph School uses both the old Municipal Building (*see #9*) and old Piscatawaytown Elementary School (*see #11*).
28. St. Theresa Roman Catholic School is located on the northeast corner of Fox Rd. and Foyer St.

Public Service Facilities

29. Edison First Aid Squad No.1 on Lakeview Blvd. just below Woodbridge Ave. traces its origins to the Raritan Township Safety Council formed in 1935 by seven members of the Raritan Fire Dept. They converted a used hearse into an ambulance to transport sick residents to New Brunswick hospitals. In 1960, the squad moved from the side-bay of the Fire Dept. headquarters on Plainfield Ave. to Lakeview Blvd. Then known as the Lakeview First Aid Squad, today, it is First Aid and Rescue Squad No.1.
30. Edison-Nixon Post Office, located at the corner of Woodbridge and Plainfield Aves., served the area before the township was renamed Edison, and Edison was a recognized as a valid postal address.
31. Edison Police Auxiliary is attached to the rear of Raritan Engine Company No. 1 and is accessed from Simpson Ave.



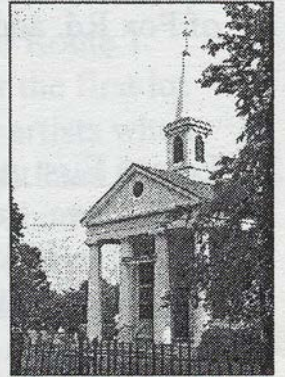
32. Raritan Engine Company No.1, now located on Plainfield Ave. just north of Woodbridge Ave., was started in 1916 by 42 volunteers with equipment borrowed from Highland Park hitched to their own horses.



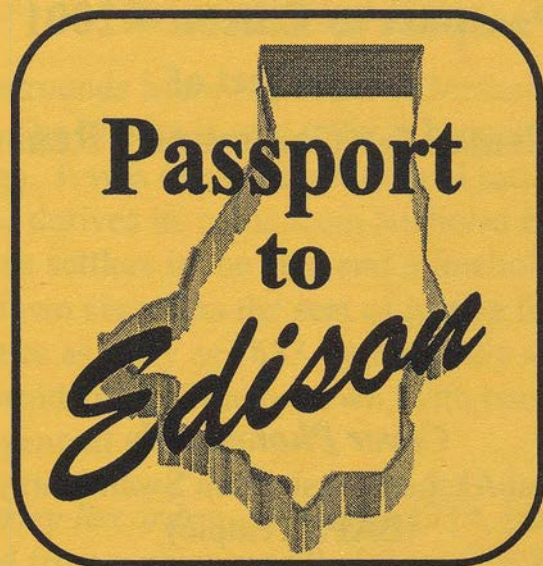
Members brought their own buckets as well as buckets hung on neighborhood poles. In 1917, a firehouse was built between the Swales house and the Nixon Post Office. Ruth Swales would ring the fire alarm gong on her front lawn when there was a call on a dedicated phone. In 1922, an air horn replaced the gong, and in 1923, two new trucks were purchased. The company purchased its first uniforms in 1925. The first paid member was hired in 1926 as a driver.

Houses of Worship

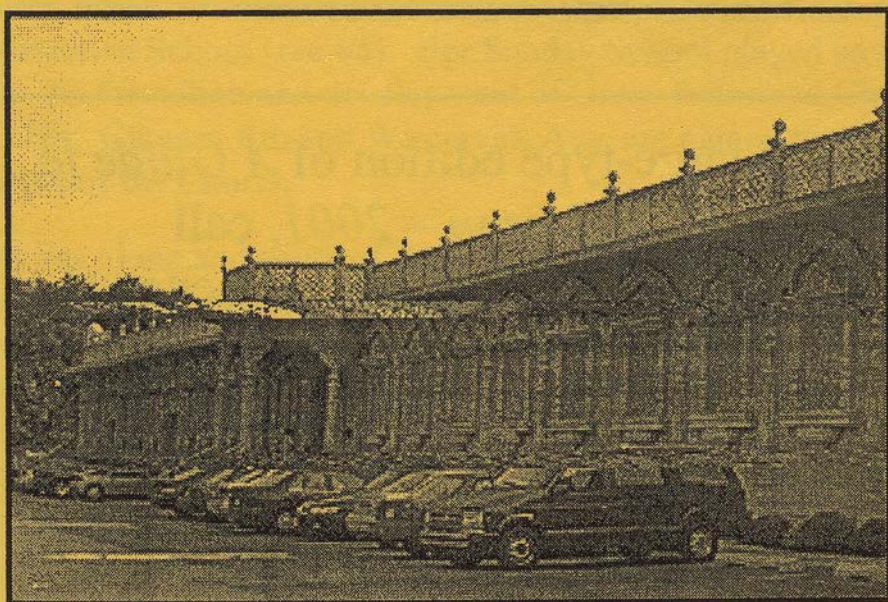
33. Church of the Nazarene is located at 80 Jefferson Blvd.
34. Guardian Angels Roman Catholic Church is located at 37 Plainfield Ave. The building dates from 1961.
35. St. James Episcopal Church, the second oldest church in Edison, is at 2136 Woodbridge Ave. Queen Anne of England granted a charter in 1694, although the church was not fully organized until 1714. The church bell was cast in Leeds, England, and brought to the church in 1702. A handsome wooden chapel was completed in 1724, at a cost of £100, on the site of an old inn where the first Middlesex County government held its meetings. Services were discontinued for a time during the Revolutionary War, and the church was used as barracks and a hospital by British soldiers. Destroyed during the war in 1777, it was rebuilt in 1792, and again destroyed in 1835 by a tornado. The present structure was built in 1836-1837 using the original pulpit and many of the original pews and other fixtures.



36. St. Theresa of the Infant Jesus Roman Catholic Church, on the northeast corner of Fox Rd. and Foyer St., is a mission parish of St. Mary of Mount Virgin Roman Catholic Church in New Brunswick.
37. Temple Beth-El, at 91 Jefferson Blvd., was formed in 1952 by 12 couples. For 4 years religious services were held at the Raritan Engine Co. No.1, Raritan Engine Co. No.2, and the Linwood Grove Ballroom. In 1954, the congregation bought the land on Jefferson Blvd., and construction of the temple began in 1955.



Nixon/ Bonhamtown



Tour Guide

Passport to Edison – 2001
is a project of
The Center for Community Renewal

Cover Photograph

Bochasanwasi Aksharpurushottam Swaminarayan Mandir
(BAPS Temple)

This program has been made possible in part
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Cultural Affairs, Department of State.

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Neighborhood Notes

Bonhamtown surrounds Main St., south of Metuchen, in the southern part of Edison. The hamlet is said to have been the site of a Native American village. It was one of five Colonial settlements in what is now Edison, and derives its name from Nicholas Bonham, one of the first six European settlers in the area and a freeholder from 1682 to 1683. Bonhamtown served as the seat of justice for Middlesex and Somerset Counties as early as 1683. As recently as 1930, there were only 800 residents in Bonhamtown, with two small churches, a school, and a general store.

The *Book of Earley Records* notes that in 1714, Main St., Metuchen, was a 4-rod road from a point near Red Root Creek, where there was a landing on the Raritan River, to Bartlet's Hollow (as the intersection of Oak Tree Rd. and Woodland Ave. was then known). The portion of road south of Woodbridge Ave. was obliterated by the U.S. Army during the construction of Camp Raritan in 1917 (*see #1*).

During the Revolutionary War, the Continental Army camped in Bonhamtown, and it was the site of a skirmish with the British. At one point, five British regiments were stationed there, and British troops plundered homes and farms.

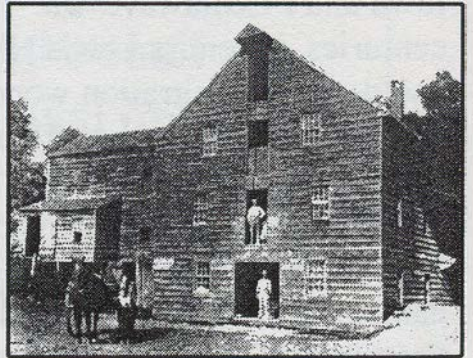
Manning St. is named after Hannah Manning, a member of the Stelton Baptist Church who organized the first Sunday School in the original Bonhamtown School (*see #6*). Her Sunday School played an integral role in the formation and development of Grace Reformed Church (*see #26*). Clausen Rd. and Westervelt Ave. are named for original members of the Church.

Nixon lies along and south of Woodbridge Ave. between Bonhamtown and Piscatawaytown. Developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it honors Lewis Nixon who located in the township in 1913 and developed nitration works here. Nixon also founded the Crescent Shipyard in Elizabeth that built ships for the U.S. Navy, including the first modern submarine used by the Navy. In 1954, when Raritan Township voters were considering changing the township's name, "Nixon" was offered as an alternative to "Edison." Choosing the name of a local industrialist had been followed in Helmetta and Sayreville. The vote was very close, but the change to "Edison" won in the election of November 2, 1954.

See the map in the center of this booklet for the locations of the sites described.

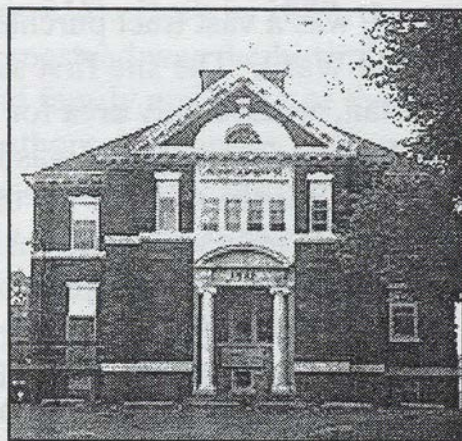
Historic Sites

1. Camp Raritan was a major embarkation point for troops and war materials headed to Europe during World War I. Camp Raritan, also called the Raritan River Ordnance Base, was the precursor to Raritan Arsenal (*see #7*), which is currently the site of Raritan Center. First authorized in October 1917, Camp Raritan grew to a 2150-acre complex with 275 buildings, 52 miles of railroad, and 6 miles of concrete roads. An extensive history of the federal government use and development of the property is available from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - Region II Office on Woodbridge Ave. (*see #22*).
2. Fast Line was a direct, high-speed rail line from Elizabeth to Trenton Junction, with a stop in Bonhamtown. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, most people traveled between cities by train and within urban areas by electric trolley. An extensive network of privately owned rail and trolley lines criss-crossed the state. Building on this network, the new Public Service Railway Company gained control of most street railway systems in central New Jersey. While it was possible to travel throughout the state by rail, long-distance routes were often circuitous and time-consuming. The "Fast Line," constructed in 1913, made the trip much faster, and was quickly extended to Newark and Trenton proper, with connections to Philadelphia. It ran on a private right-of-way that later became Route 1 through this part of New Jersey, and is still shown on Edison tax maps.
3. Mundy and Eggert Mill was located on the lower of two millponds on Mill Brook on either side of Old Post Rd., near where the NJ Tpke. crosses Old Post Rd. today. Before the Turnpike Authority filled in the ponds, local youngsters swam there. Late in the 19th century, the Grimstead brothers operated an ice business near their home on Old Post Rd. In the winter, ice was cut from the upper millpond on the north side of Old Post Rd. and stored in an adjacent ice-house. In the summer, the ice was sold to Metuchen households.



4. Old Bonhamtown School at 2825 Woodbridge Ave., in the triangle formed by Woodbridge Ave., Old Post Rd. and Grace St., was built in 1908 in a Neoclassical Colonial Revival style using brick from local brickworks.

The school served the Bonhamtown and Nixon neighborhoods until 1971 when it was converted for use by the Edison Board of Education. The Board occupied it until 1981, and



then moved into the new Edison Municipal Complex. The Bonhamtown School was sold for use as commercial offices. It now houses the Bonhamtown Academy for Little Learners.

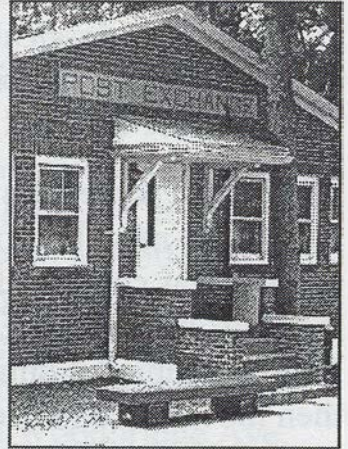
5. Old Post Road - The current Old Post Rd. and Woodbridge Ave. combination follows the path of King Georges Post Rd., the oldest road in eastern New Jersey. It was constructed in the early 1700s to carry mail between Perth Amboy (the home of the Royal Governor) and New Brunswick, and was later extended to Trenton.

A 1762 map shows that the road had three branches. The first branch corresponds to the current Vineyard Rd., which at that time extended from Old Post Rd. past Route 27 to New Durham Rd. The second branch, heading north, appears to match present day Main St., starting in Bonhamtown and proceeding north to Oak Tree Rd. and beyond to Ash Brook in Scotch Plains. A survey of this road in 1705 referred to it as the "Bonhamtown-Oak Tree Road." The third branch seems to follow the same path as Amboy Ave. does today--from Woodbridge Ave. in Clara Barton/Fords to Main St. in Metuchen.

Prior to the advent of railroads and trolleys in the late 19th century, travel by stagecoach through New Jersey from New York to Trenton took two days over dirty, dusty roads.

6. Original Bonhamtown School was one of 10 one-room school houses that served the children in Raritan Township. This one-story school, only 20 x 27 feet, was sold at auction in 1909 when it was no longer needed after the "new" Bonhamtown school was built in 1908 (see #4).

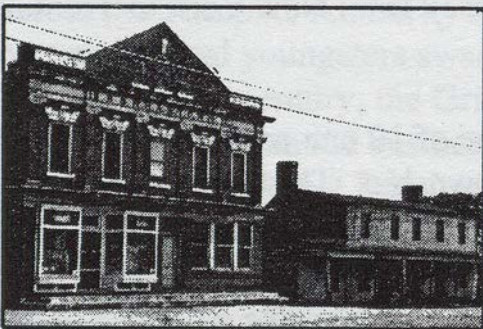
7. Raritan Arsenal, located between Woodbridge Ave. and the Raritan River, was a vast tract purchased by the U.S. government during World War I. The site first served as Camp Raritan, an assembly area for troops heading for Europe (*see #1*), and was later converted into the Raritan Arsenal for the storage and transfer of military munitions. The Arsenal had its own fire department, security, housing, post exchange (*photo, right*), theater, bowling alleys, golf course, and sewage and water treatment plants. The Post Headquarters, still marked by a large flagpole, was across Woodbridge Ave. from St. Margaret Mary Alacoque Roman Catholic Church (*see #29*).



The Arsenal was closed in 1964. Some of the land and buildings were made available to Middlesex County for its new college (*see #17*). The county converted another large tract into Thomas Edison County Park (*see #13*). Other government users include the Environmental Protection Agency (*see #22*) and the General Services Administration.

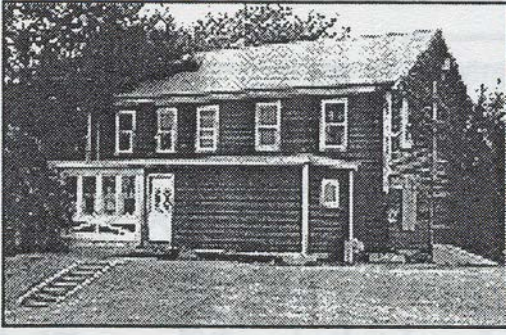
In 1965, the Visceglia brothers purchased almost four square miles of the site to create Raritan Center. In 1975, ownership was split equally between Summit Associates and Federal Business Centers. Today, the daytime population of Raritan Center is estimated at 50,000. The Raritan Center Exposition Hall is close to the Raritan River. In spite of this extensive commercial activity, the undeveloped portions of the former arsenal still teem with wildlife, especially in the marshlands.

8. Union Hotel was located at 2863 Woodbridge Ave., on the site now occupied by the Victorian Manor. Built in 1812, the Union Hotel later became Jedak's Tavern, and then Bo's Tavern before being destroyed by fire. The hotel was built next to Joseph Tappen's circa 1740 tavern.



Union Hotel flanked by Tappen's Tavern in 1959

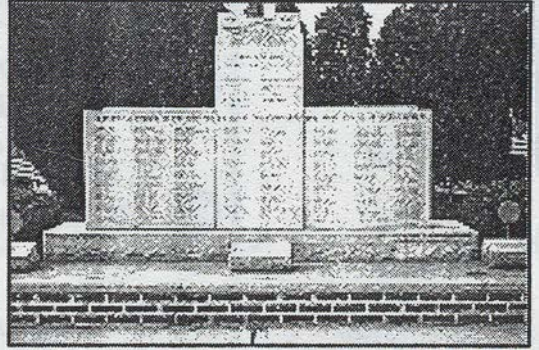
9. Yelencsics Homestead is located at 2965 Woodbridge Ave., adjacent to the Edison Senior Citizen Center (*see #18*). Built in 1887, the



homestead was the birthplace and family residence of the late Anthony Yelencsics, a long-time mayor of Edison. Lacking maintenance, the homestead fell into a state of disrepair and is being demolished to make room for expansion of the Edison Senior Citizen Center.

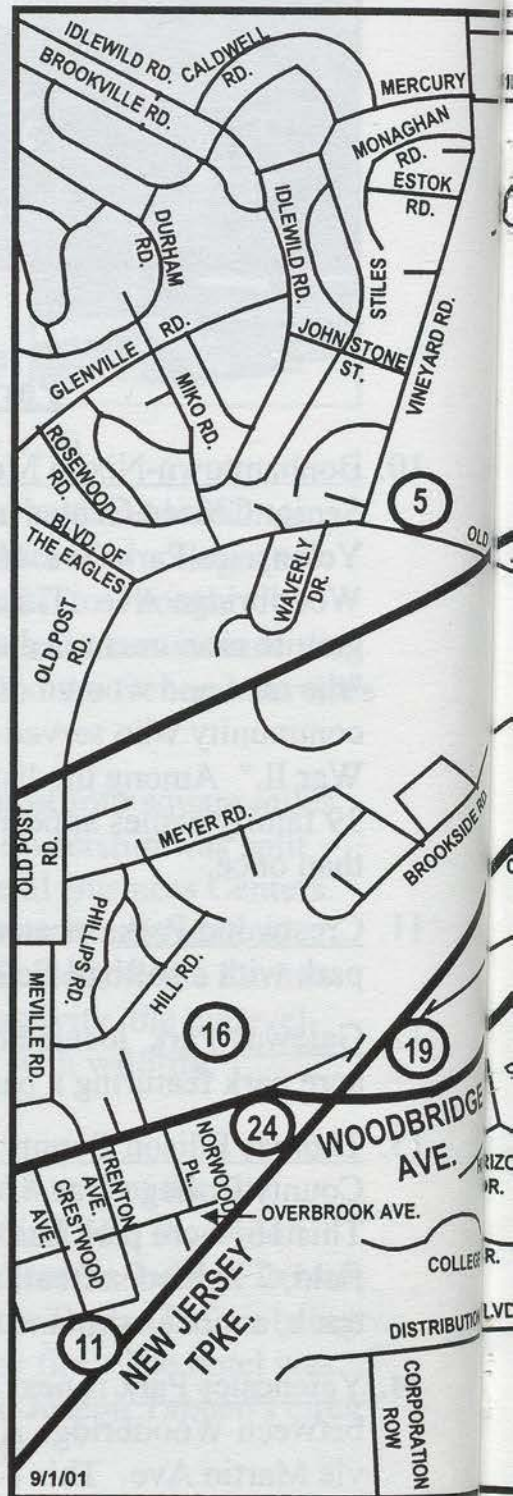
Parks and Monuments

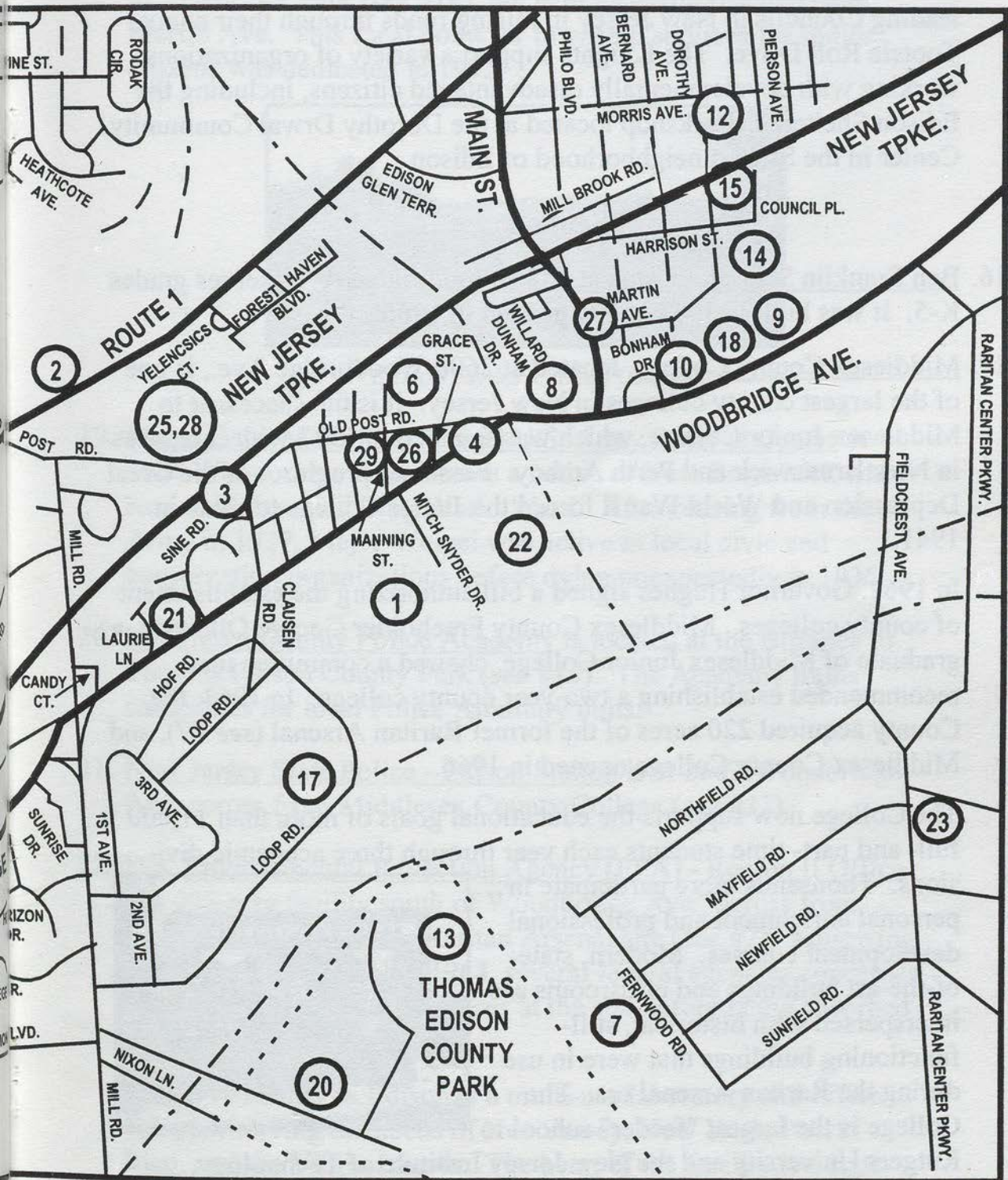
10. Bonhamtown-Nixon Memorial Monument is adjacent to the Edison Senior Citizen Center (*see #18*), in Yelencsics Park (*see #14*) on Woodbridge Ave. This gray granite monument is dedicated to "the men and women of this community who served in World War II." Among the listed names, 39 family names appear more than once.



11. Crestwood Park, located at the end of Crestwood Ave., is a 5.4-acre park with a softball field and a playground.
12. Gateway Park, located on Howard Ave. near Morris Ave., is a 1.8-acre park featuring a basketball court and a playground.
13. Thomas Edison County Park is off Mill Rd. behind Middlesex County College (*see #17*) in the former Raritan Arsenal (*see #7*). This 161-acre park has 16 lighted tennis courts, a lighted baseball field, 2 lighted softball fields, 4 soccer fields, a lighted quarter mile track, a model airplane field, and running paths.
14. Yelencsics Park is next to the Edison Senior Citizen Center (*see #18*), between Woodbridge Ave. and Martin Ave., with the easiest access via Martin Ave. This 8.8-acre park contains a basketball court, 2 bocci courts, 2 horseshoe pits, a pavilion and picnic grove, 2 shuffleboard courts, a softball field, and a volleyball court. It also is the locale of the Yelencsics Homestead (*see #9*).

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| ① Camp Raritan | ①7 Middlesex County College |
| ② Fast Line | ①8 Edison Senior Citizen Center |
| ③ Mundy & Eggert Mill | ①9 Weigel U.S. Army Reserve Center |
| ④ Old Bonhamtown School | ②0 Middlesex County Police Academy |
| ⑤ Old Post Road | ②1 NJ State Police - Edison Station |
| ⑥ Original Bonhamtown School | ②2 U. S. Environmental Protection Agency |
| ⑦ Raritan Arsenal | ②3 U. S. Postal Service - Raritan Center Branch |
| ⑧ Union Hotel | ②4 BAPS Temple |
| ⑨ Yelencsics Homestead | ②5 First Chinese Baptist Church |
| ⑩ Bonhamtown-Nixon Memorial Monument | ②6 Grace Reformed Church |
| ⑪ Crestwood Park | ②7 Living Hope Baptist Church |
| ⑫ Gateway Park | ②8 Raritan Valley Baptist Church |
| ⑬ Thomas Edison County Park | ②9 St. Margaret Mary Alacoque Roman Catholic Church |
| ⑭ Yelencsics Park | |
| ⑮ Knights of Columbus Council 4885 | |
| ⑯ Ben Franklin School | |





Civic/Cultural/Recreational Facilities

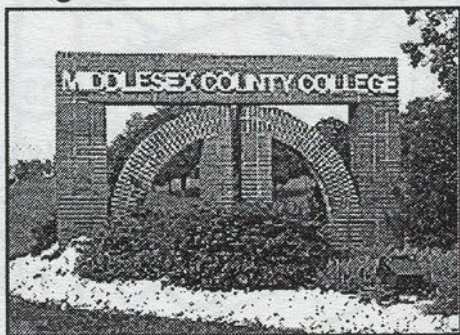
15. Knights of Columbus Council 4885 is on Council Pl. behind the New York Times plant on Woodbridge Ave. Council 4885 is one of the leading Councils in New Jersey in raising funds through their annual Tootsie Roll Drive. The Knights support a variety of organizations working with developmentally disadvantaged citizens, including the Edison Sheltered Workshop located at the Dorothy Drwal Community Center in the Stelton neighborhood of Edison.

Schools

16. Ben Franklin School, located at 2485 Woodbridge Ave., serves grades K-5. It was built in 1961 and expanded in 1966.
17. Middlesex County College, located at 2600 Woodbridge Ave., is one of the largest county colleges in New Jersey. It is the successor to Middlesex Junior College, which was founded in 1933 with campuses in New Brunswick and Perth Amboy. Financial pressures of the Great Depression and World War II forced the Junior College to close in 1941.

In 1962, Governor Hughes signed a bill authorizing the establishment of county colleges. Middlesex County Freeholder George Otlowksi, a graduate of Middlesex Junior College, chaired a committee that recommended establishing a two-year county college. In 1964, the County acquired 220 acres of the former Raritan Arsenal (*see #7*), and Middlesex County College opened in 1966.

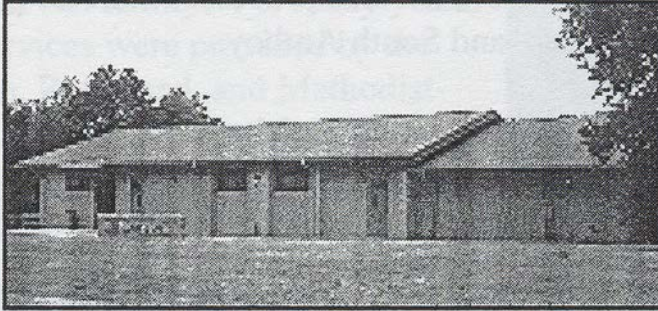
The College now supports the educational goals of more than 11,000 full- and part- time students each year through three academic divisions. Thousands more participate in personal enrichment and professional development courses. Modern, state-of-the-art buildings and classrooms are interspersed with historical, still-functioning buildings that were in use during the Raritan Arsenal era. The College is the largest "feeder" school to



Rutgers University and the New Jersey Institute of Technology, offering the first two years toward a bachelor's degree. Graduates of Middlesex transfer to colleges and universities nationwide and are significantly represented in the technical workforce of the country.

Public Service Facilities

18. Edison Senior Citizen Center is at 2965 Woodbridge Ave., next to Yelencsics Park (*see #14*), but is more easily reached from Martin Ave. This focal point for township services for senior citizens was dedicated in 1992.



Edison Senior Citizen Center

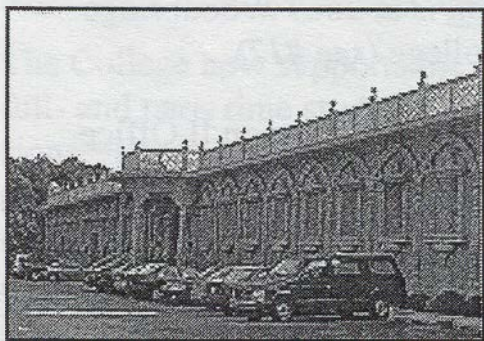
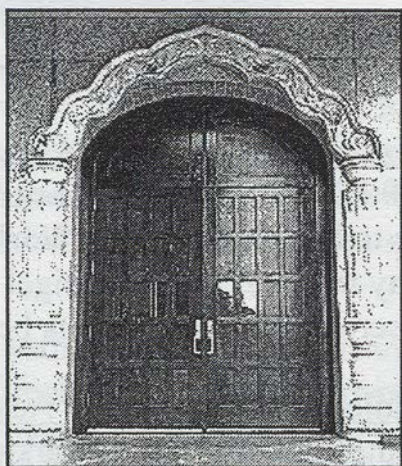
19. Major General William Weigel U.S. Army Reserve Center at 2550 Woodbridge Ave. honors a native of New Brunswick who rose to high rank during World War I. After retiring from the Army in 1927, Major Weigel was active in local civic and conservation organizations before dying unexpectedly in 1936.
20. Middlesex County Police Academy is located at the entrance to Thomas Edison County Park (*see #13*). The Academy trains candidates for local Police Auxiliary units.
21. New Jersey State Police - Edison Station is at 2667 Woodbridge Ave. across from Middlesex County College (*see #17*).
22. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) - Region II Office is a 205-acre facility south of Woodbridge Ave., across from Grace St., on the former Raritan Arsenal site (*see #7*). Following closure of the Arsenal in 1964, several federal agencies concerned with water pollution had offices at the site before being absorbed into the EPA in 1970.

The EPA facility in Edison is a multi-use laboratory and office complex serving the needs of New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The heart of the facility is a state-of-the-art analytic laboratory with detection capabilities down to parts per billion. The complex currently uses nine principal buildings, all of which were constructed between 1917 and 1953.

23. United States Postal Service - Raritan Center Branch Post Office is located at 400 Raritan Center Pkwy., Suite H. This Branch was established in 1994 to relieve pressure on the Menlo Park Branch Post Office. Sixteen carrier routes were transferred from the Main Post Office and the Menlo Park Office to the Raritan Center Branch Office. In addition to serving businesses in the Raritan Center on weekdays, the branch also processes mail for parts of Iselin, Fords, Metuchen, and South Amboy.

Houses of Worship

24. Bochasanwasi Aksharpurushottam Swaminarayan Mandir (BAPS) is located at 2500 Woodbridge Ave., immediately west of the NJ Tpke. overpass. BAPS is a socio-religious, non-profit organization. It made its debut in Edison during the summer of 1991 with its Cultural Festival of India, on the grounds of Middlesex County College (*see #17*). Soon after, BAPS transformed the former Model Rectifier plant into a traditional Indian temple that became the headquarters of the domestic branch of this international organization devoted to Pramukh Swami Maharaj.

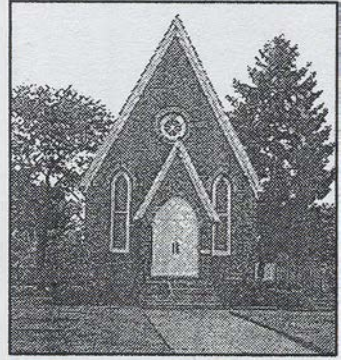


Not only is the building a sacred house of worship, but it also serves as a multi-faceted community center with activities for every age. Following the precepts of Hinduism, the organization is widely acclaimed for its walk-a-thons for family values, relief work efforts, and

addiction-free campaigns. Thousands of devotees visit the temple weekly.

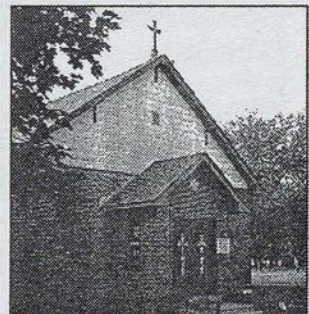
25. First Chinese Baptist Church is located at 592 Old Post Rd. It is a mission of, and shares the facilities with, the Raritan Valley Baptist Church (*see #28*).

26. Grace Reformed Church is located at 2815 Woodbridge Ave. on the corner of Grace St., behind the old Bonhamtown School (*see #4*). The Sunday School was established circa 1800, meeting in the homes of members. In 1876, Grace Chapel was built, debt-free because of the leadership and generosity of the Westervelt family. For many years, religious services were provided by the Presbyterian, Reformed, and Methodist-Episcopal Churches of Metuchen. In 1954, Grace Chapel was organized as a congregation of the Reformed Church of America. The name was changed to Grace Reformed Church in 1955.

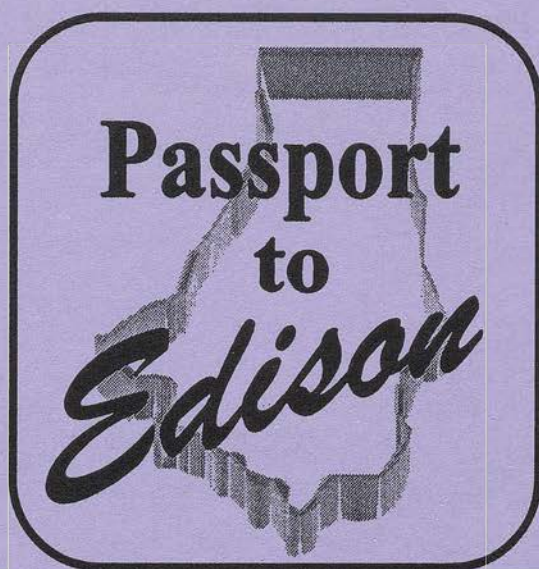


27. Living Hope Baptist Church meets in the Local 401 Building at 26 South Main St. Originally established in 1987 by Rev. Phillip Quagliariello and his family, it is the only Independent Baptist church in the township. The congregation has met in several locations, including the Lincoln Elementary School and, on Sunday mornings, in the Victorian Manor. Living Hope Baptist Church is a self-supporting congregation involved with missionary works in Australia, India, Malta, Romania, and the United States.
28. Raritan Valley Baptist Church is located at 592 Old Post Rd., between Mill Rd. and the NJ Tpke. overpass. In 1961, two southern Baptist families formed a small group, calling themselves the New Brunswick Baptist Chapel. The Chapel quickly became a mission of the Madison Baptist Church of Madison, NJ. In 1963, they changed the name to Raritan Valley Baptist Church, and in 1966, built the present church on Old Post Rd. In the 1960s, they sponsored missions in Lincroft and East Brunswick. In 1990, they sponsored the First Chinese Baptist Church, a Cantonese language congregation, in their church building (*see #25*).

29. St. Margaret Mary Alacoque Roman Catholic Church is located on the north side of Woodbridge Ave., just west of Grace St. St. Margaret Mary is a mission parish of the Guardian Angels Roman Catholic Church on Plainfield Ave., in the Piscatawaytown/Lindeneau neighborhood of Edison.



Neighborhood Notes



Stelton



Tour Guide

Passport to Edison – 2001
is a project of
The Center for Community Renewal

Cover Photograph
The Edison Township Free Public Library
(Main Branch)

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Neighborhood Notes

Stelton is centered on Plainfield Ave. and Route 27 and dates to Colonial times. In early years, Plainfield Ave. was called Mountain Rd. because it led north to Plainfield and the Watchung Mountains. Like many early roads, Plainfield Ave. was named for the destination town, and becomes Stelton Rd. after entering Piscataway, indicating the opposite destination point.

The neighborhood is named after the Stelle family who settled in the area in 1707, and were active in the formation and growth of the First Baptist Church of Piscataway (renamed the Stelton Baptist Church in 1875, *see #19*). Other early families also left their mark on the neighborhood. The Runyon Homestead, reported to have been built in 1698 and demolished about 1970, stood on the northeast corner of Plainfield Ave. and what is now Runyon Ave. A more recent residential neighborhood east of Plainfield Ave. is named after the Lahiere family.

In 1836, the New Jersey Railroad (later the Pennsylvania Railroad) was completed to New Brunswick and a station was constructed at Stelton. Early in the 20th century, Stelton was advertised as a good place to spend a vacation, and as late as 1930, was actively farmed with only 700 residents.

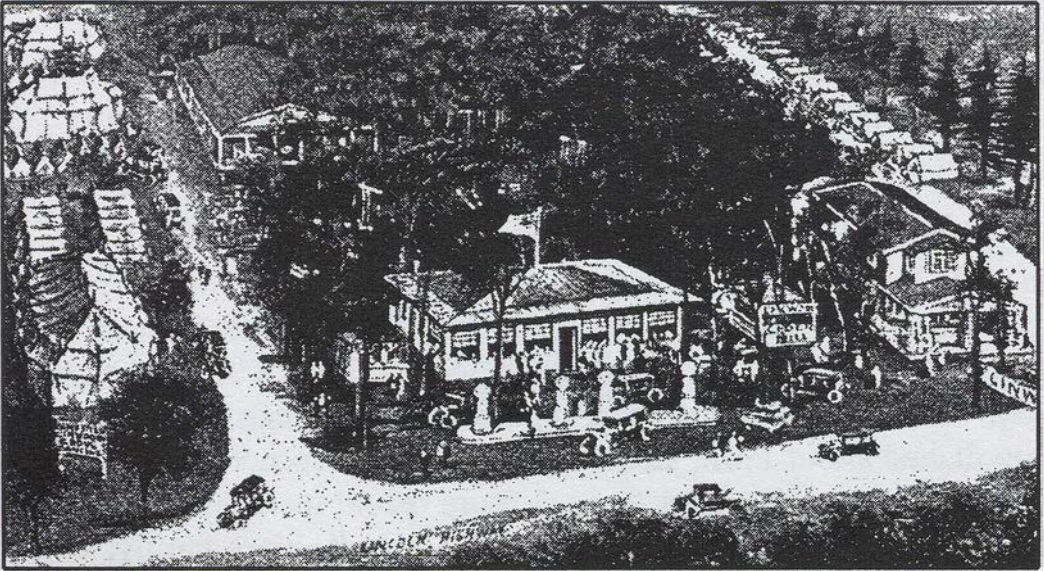
See the map in the center of this booklet for the locations of the sites described.

Historic Sites

1. Linwood Grove was located on the south side of the Lincoln Highway (now Route 27) at Stony Rd. The Ainscow family started a hot dog stand at the site in 1924, which later expanded into the "Linwood Grove Amusement Park & Tourist Camp."

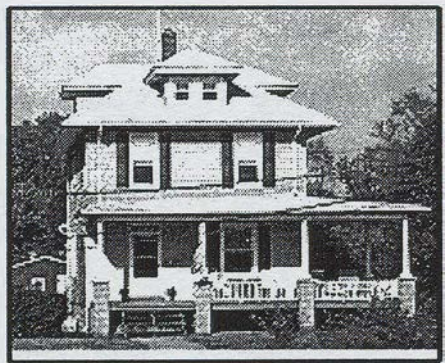
After World War II, the enterprise evolved into the Linwood Grove Ballroom, a nightclub and lounge. The Ainscow family also operated the Lincoln Garage (named after the Lincoln Highway, as Route 27 was then called) with the fleeting distinction of pumping more gas than any other garage between New York and Philadelphia. Business was so good that George Ainscow, Sr., opened the Lincoln Inn across the road in 1921. The garage and inn were

closed in 1924 to focus efforts on Linwood Grove. The extensive establishment was destroyed by fire in 1976.



Linwood Grove Amusement Park and Tourist Camp, circa 1930

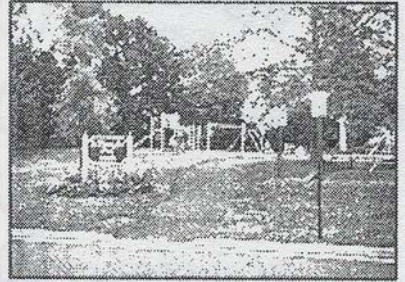
2. Original School House - The first school in Stelton was a one-room school house on Division St. on the site of the present Thomas Jefferson Middle School (*see #12*) behind the Stelton Baptist Church (*see #19*).
3. Stelton Post Office was located at the northeast corner of Plainfield and Central Aves. The Stelton Post Office name changed to the Edison Post Office in 1958 as one step in providing a central post office so that all residents could have an Edison address. It is now a private home. Built beside the railroad in 1875 as a combined house, store, post office and railroad depot, the building served as the Stelton Railroad Station until the 1950s.



Parks

4. Anthony Yelencsics Memorial Sports Complex, on Suttons La. across from Central Ave., is home to Edison Boys Baseball. The park is named for Anthony Yelencsics, a long-time Mayor of Edison.

5. Papaianni Park is located north of Central Ave. adjacent to the railroad tracks, and extends from Stony Rd. to the Edison Municipal Complex. This 60-acre park includes Lake Papaianni and the former Central Ave. Park. It is dedicated to the memory of Police Officer Frank Papaianni who died in the line of duty in 1971.
6. Earl Schenck Miers Park, next to Edgemount Park at the intersection of N. Eighth Ave. and Celler Rd., has 4 tennis courts. The park is named in memory of a former director of the Rutgers University Press and the author of 34 books.
7. Edgemount Park is located at the intersection of Edgemount Rd. and N. Eighth Ave. This park has a basketball court, a football field, 2 tennis courts, a backstop, and a playground.
8. Edison Jets Football Field is located at the north end of Central Ave.
9. Stelton Community Center Park is located behind the Dorothy Drwal Community Center (commonly called the Stelton Community Center, *see #13*) on Plainfield Ave. This 4-acre park contains a playground. Thomas Jefferson Middle School located across Division St. (*see #12*) has additional facilities for outside sports activities.



Schools

10. John Marshall Elementary School is located at 15 Cornell St. close to the intersection with Suttons La. The school was built in 1961 and now serves grades K-5.
11. Rabbi Pesach Raymon Yeshiva is located at 2 Harrison St. between Harrison St. and Edgemount Rd. on the Highland Park border, adjacent to the Ohr Torah Congregation (*see #18*).
12. Thomas Jefferson Middle School is located at 450 Division St. behind the Dorothy Drwal Community Center (commonly called the Stelton Community Center, *see #13*). Thomas Jefferson Middle School was the first of the four middle schools now serving Edison. It was built in 1959 and opened on a split-shift basis. It was expanded in 1968, and now has temporary classrooms to handle growth.

Piscataway

PLAINFIELD AVE.
BRUNSWICK AVE.

KILMER RD. NORTH

TRUMAN DR.

KILMER RD.

3
16

4

10

18

11

7

6

N. FIFTH AVE.

CELLER RD.

HARRISON ST.

N. EIGHTH AVE.

FAIRHILL RD.

BROOKFALL RD.

HIGHLAND AVE.

WASHINGTON AVE.

LEXINGTON AVE.

MINEOLA AVE.

LESLIE ST.

MARSHALL DR.

CORNELL ST.

PRICE DR.
CENTRAL

BARLOW RD.

BACK DR.

CARMELLO DR.

GASKILL AVE.

CAMPBELL AVE.

SUTTONS LA.

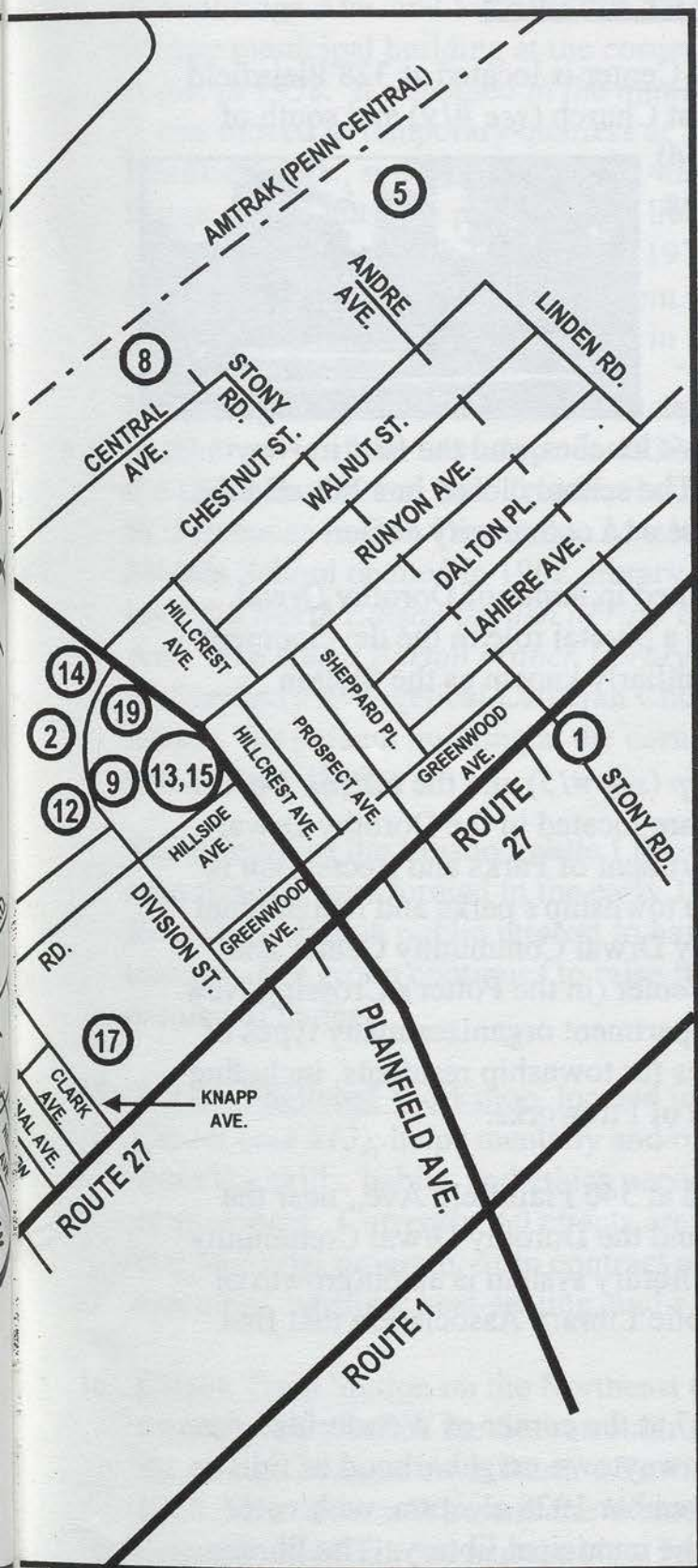
TAFT AVE.

SUDAM AVE.

SIMS RD.

EARDLEY

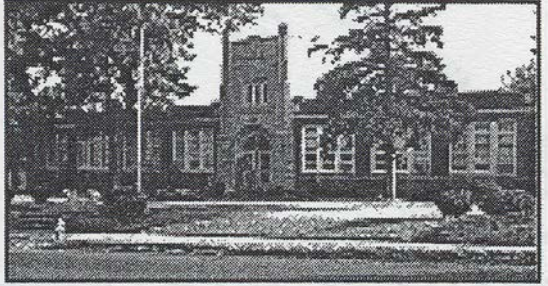
Highland Park



- ① Site of former Linwood Grove
- ② Site of first school in Stelton
- ③ Site of former Stelton Post Office
- ④ Yelencsics Sports Complex
- ⑤ Papaian Park
- ⑥ Earl Schenck Miers Park
- ⑦ Edgemount Park
- ⑧ Edison Jets Football Field
- ⑨ Stelton Community Center Park
- ⑩ John Marshall Elementary School
- ⑪ Rabbi Pesach Raymon Yeshiva
- ⑫ Thomas Jefferson Middle School
- ⑬ Dorothy C. Dwral Community Center
- ⑭ Edison Main Library
- ⑮ Edison Sheltered Workshop
- ⑯ Edison Train Station
- ⑰ Church of Jesus Christ
- ⑱ Ohr Torah Congregation
- ⑲ Stelton Baptist Church

Public Service Facilities

13. Dorothy C. Drwal Community Center is located at 328 Plainfield Ave., next to the Stelton Baptist Church (*see #19*) and south of the Edison train station (*see #16*). Built in 1923-1925, the building originally housed the Stelton School. When it opened, the school had four teachers, one of whom was a teaching principal. Stelton School was the first school in the U.S. to provide hot lunches, and the first in New Jersey to immunize students. The school closed in 1982, and the facilities were converted for use as a community center.



The community center was named in honor of Dorothy Drwal, an Edison resident who played a pivotal role in the development of the township. It is more familiarly known as the Stelton Community Center.

The *Edison Sheltered Workshop* (*see #15*) and the *Edison Department of Parks and Recreation* are located in the Dorothy Drwal Community Center. The Department of Parks and Recreation is responsible for maintaining the township's parks and recreational facilities, including the Dorothy Drwal Community Center and the Minnie Veal Community Center (in the Potter's Crossing/New Dover neighborhood). The Department organizes many types of sports, trips, and other activities for township residents, including the annual Edison Fall Festival of Fireworks.

14. Edison Main Library is located at 340 Plainfield Ave., near the Edison train station (*see #16*) and the Dorothy Drwal Community Center (*see #13*). The present library system is an outgrowth of the Raritan Township Free Public Library Association that first met in 1926.

The first library opened in 1927 at the corner of Woodbridge Ave. and Thomasine St. in the Piscatawaytown neighborhood of Edison with 246 books. After the November 1928 election, with voter approval, it officially became the municipal library. The library remained in Piscatawaytown for the next 32 years, moving to

Woodbridge Ave. and Myrtle St. in 1931 and to the second floor of the former municipal building at the corner of Woodbridge and Plainfield Aves. in 1938. It remained in the municipal building until 1959, when it was moved to temporary quarters at 238 Plainfield Ave., south of the present-day Burger King, until the present main library (*photo, right*) was built in 1965. In 1975, a Bookmobile garage and meeting room were added, and another addition opened in 1987.

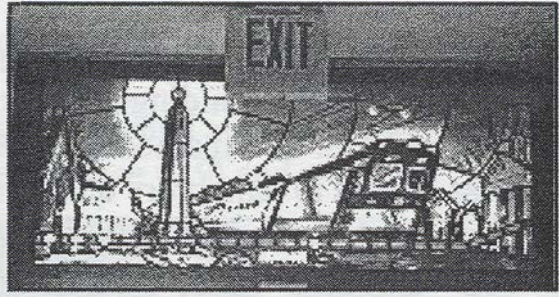


Since very early in the Library's history, services have been extended to other parts of the township. In 1932, services were extended to the Clara Barton and Oak Tree Firehouses, and in 1937, to the Henry St. Firehouse in Oak Tree and to Menlo Park. When John Adams Middle School opened in 1962, library facilities were available there until the *North Edison branch library* opened in 1971 at 777 Grove Ave. The *Clara Barton branch library* started in the former Chapel of St. Stephen's Evangelical Lutheran Church at 76 Pleasant Ave. in Clara Barton. Its present building at the corner of Pleasant and Hoover Aves. was built in 1969.

The Friends of the Edison Public Library, an all-volunteer, non-profit organization, was formed in the early 1960s. It was largely responsible for raising enough public interest to have the new main library constructed. The group continues to raise funds to supplement the library's municipal budget.

15. Edison Sheltered Workshop, located in the Dorothy Drwal Community Center (*see #13*), helps mentally and/or physically challenged adults learn the skills, habits, and ethics needed to find jobs in competitive employment. Currently, 60 clients are involved in either the commercial janitorial program, or in contract production work such as assembly, labeling, heat-sealing, and collating.
16. Edison Train Station on the Northeast Corridor Line at Plainfield Ave. was originally called the Stelton Railroad Station (*see #3*). Following the change of name from Raritan Township to Edison Township in 1954, Mrs. Joanna Wira and the Women for Edison prevailed upon the Pennsylvania Railroad and the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities to rename it the Edison train station.

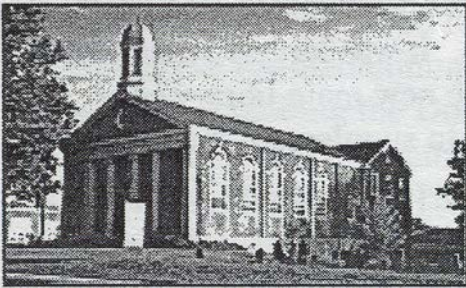
During World War II, the train station was part of the railroad complex that moved soldiers and equipment to and from Camp Kilmer. The station has recently been renovated and now features stained glass windows and murals (*photo, right*).



Houses of Worship

17. Church of Jesus Christ is located at 20 Knapp Ave. off of Route 27.
18. Ohr Torah Congregation is located at the end of Edgemount Ave. adjacent to Rabbi Pesach Raymon Yeshiva (*see #11*).
19. Stelton Baptist Church is located at 334 Plainfield Ave. between the Dorothy Drwal Community Center (*see #13*) and the Edison Main Library (*see #14*). The church was formed in 1689 as the First Baptist Church of Piscataway (this section of the township was part of Piscataway until 1870), and renamed Stelton Baptist Church in 1875.

The Stelton Baptist Church is the second oldest Baptist congregation in New Jersey, and the oldest in Middlesex County. The Stelle family was

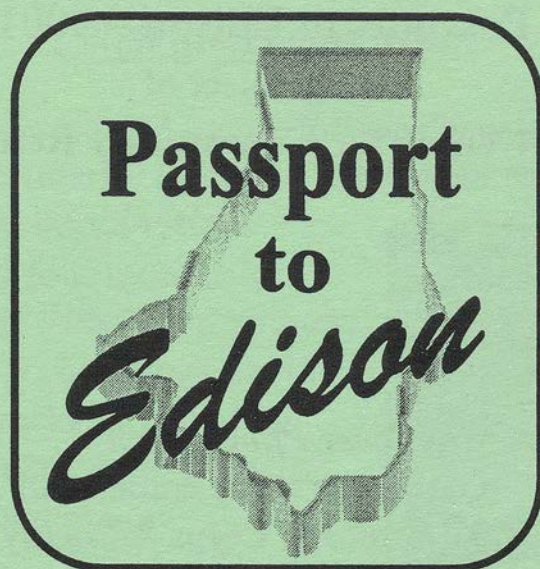


among the first members. Benjamin Stelle, who moved to Piscataway around 1707 from the New York colony, was ordained at age 55 as the second pastor of the Church. His son succeeded him. The congregation first met in the old Town Meeting House off

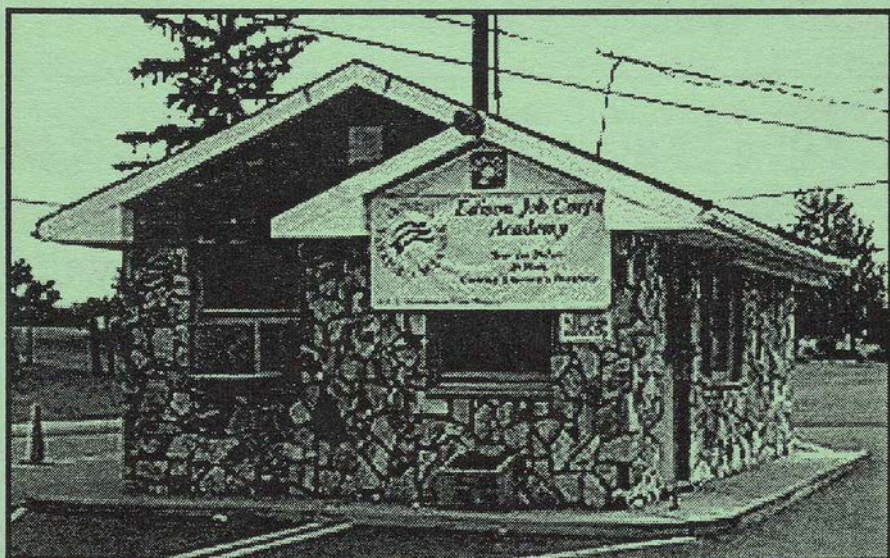
Woodbridge Ave. in Piscatawaytown. The church suffered immensely during the American Revolution, and was destroyed by fire several times in the following years.

In 1819, 100 years before the 19th Constitutional Amendment, the church gave women "an equal right, in all cases with the brethren, in voting, speaking and governing the church." Prior to 1871, new members were baptized by total immersion in the Raritan River, regardless of the temperature. The cemetery surrounding the church provides an interesting view of the early history of the area.

The Stelton Baptist Church is the first structure in Edison Township recognized as an historic site by the newly formed Edison Historic Preservation Committee.



Camp Kilmer



Tour Guide

Passport to Edison – 2001
is a project of
The Center for Community Renewal

Cover Photograph
Gatehouse at the entrance to
the Edison Job Corps Academy

This program has been made possible in part
by the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage
Commission through a grant from the New Jersey
Historical Commission, Division of Cultural
Affairs, Department of State.

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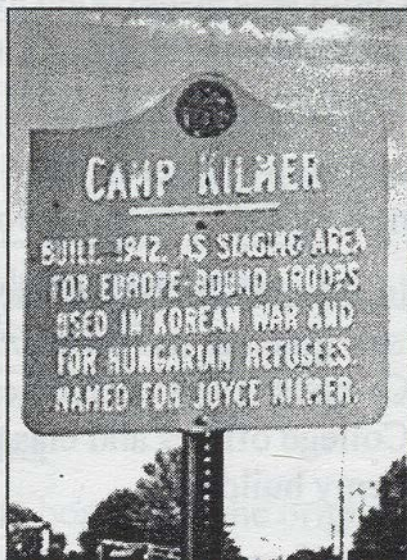
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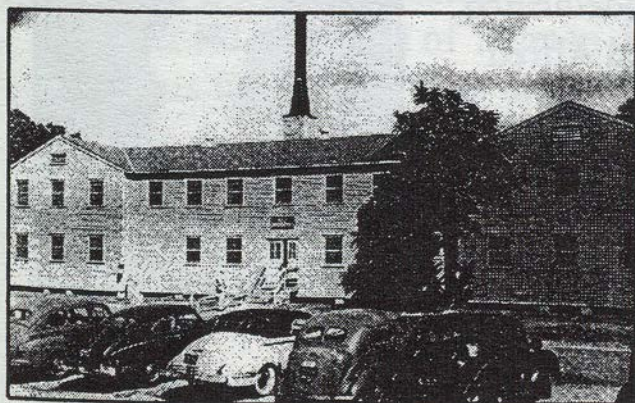
Neighborhood Notes

Camp Kilmer was located on the Edison-Piscataway border, on what had been primarily farmland and vacant acreage prior to 1942. Approximately 11,400 civilians worked four months to transform the site into Camp Kilmer, consisting of 1100 buildings, including wooden barracks, a 1600-bed hospital, a post exchange, chapels, and a garbage incinerator.

Camp Kilmer became the staging area for more than a third of all troops sent overseas during World War II. Almost five million soldiers departed for Europe and returned home at the end of World War II. As many as 3000 soldiers could be outfitted with uniforms and gear in an 8-hour day.



What is now the *Edison train station* (in the Stelton neighborhood of Edison) was part of a system of spurs and switches for the trains that served Camp Kilmer during the war. The *Camp Kilmer Balloon Track* was located on the Northeast Corridor Line close to the present Edison Municipal Complex in the Lincoln Park neighborhood of Edison. It was constructed to allow troop trains coming from the south to loop around to take the branch track back to Camp Kilmer. Viewed from above, the loop looked like a hot air balloon.



*Camp Kilmer Post
Headquarters, circa 1945*

Camp Kilmer was deactivated in 1949, but its land and building continued to be used:

- In 1956, Camp Kilmer became home to 40,000 refugees who fled Europe during the *Hungarian Revolution*. The Camp was deactivated again in 1957 as the refugees settled throughout Middlesex County.
- Vice President Hubert Humphrey reactivated a large portion of Camp Kilmer in 1965 as the *Kilmer Job Corps Center*, now called the Edison Job Corps Academy (see #4).
- In the mid-1960s, 549 acres of the Camp Kilmer property was given to *Rutgers University* for its *Livingston College Campus* (see #6). Rutgers University and Livingston College offices and classrooms still occupy former U.S. Army buildings.
- A portion of the camp is now the Piscataway campus of the *Middlesex County Academy High School* (see #5), a part of the Middlesex County Vocational-Technical School System.
- Another 149 acres of land was given to Edison Township, part of which is now the *Kobilis Complex* (see #3), home of the Edison Angels Girls Softball Field. Other parts of the Camp are now an industrial park.

Joyce Kilmer - Camp Kilmer is named after New Brunswick poet, Joyce Kilmer (1886-1918). Kilmer was born at 17 Codwise Street in New Brunswick, now known as Joyce Kilmer Ave., in a house that now serves as a museum dedicated to the poet. He was christened Alfred Joyce Kilmer after his sponsor, the Rev. Alfred R. Taylor, and the presiding minister, the Rev. Elisha Brooks Joyce. Kilmer later discarded his first name. Kilmer was educated at Rutgers and Columbia Universities.



Kilmer's most famous poem, "Trees," became one of the most familiar poems of the 20th century. It appeared in *Poetry* magazine in 1913.

Joyce Kilmer was killed in action during World War I near the village of Seringes, France, on July 30, 1918. He posthumously received the Croix de Guerre ("Cross of War," a French military decoration). Camp Kilmer is the first U.S. Army installation to be named after an enlisted man.

See the map in the center of this booklet for the locations of the sites described.

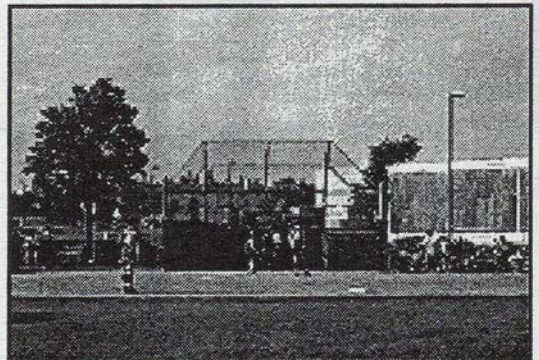
Historic Sites

1. Smalley Burial Ground - Within the borders of the original Camp Kilmer, the Smalley family cemetery is a reminder of one of the families that settled in what is now known as the Piscataway-Edison area. It is located on the Sgt. Joyce Kilmer U.S. Army Reserve Center (*see #9*), just south of Road 2, near the Rutgers University Livingston Campus (*see #6*). The burial ground is not easily accessed today.

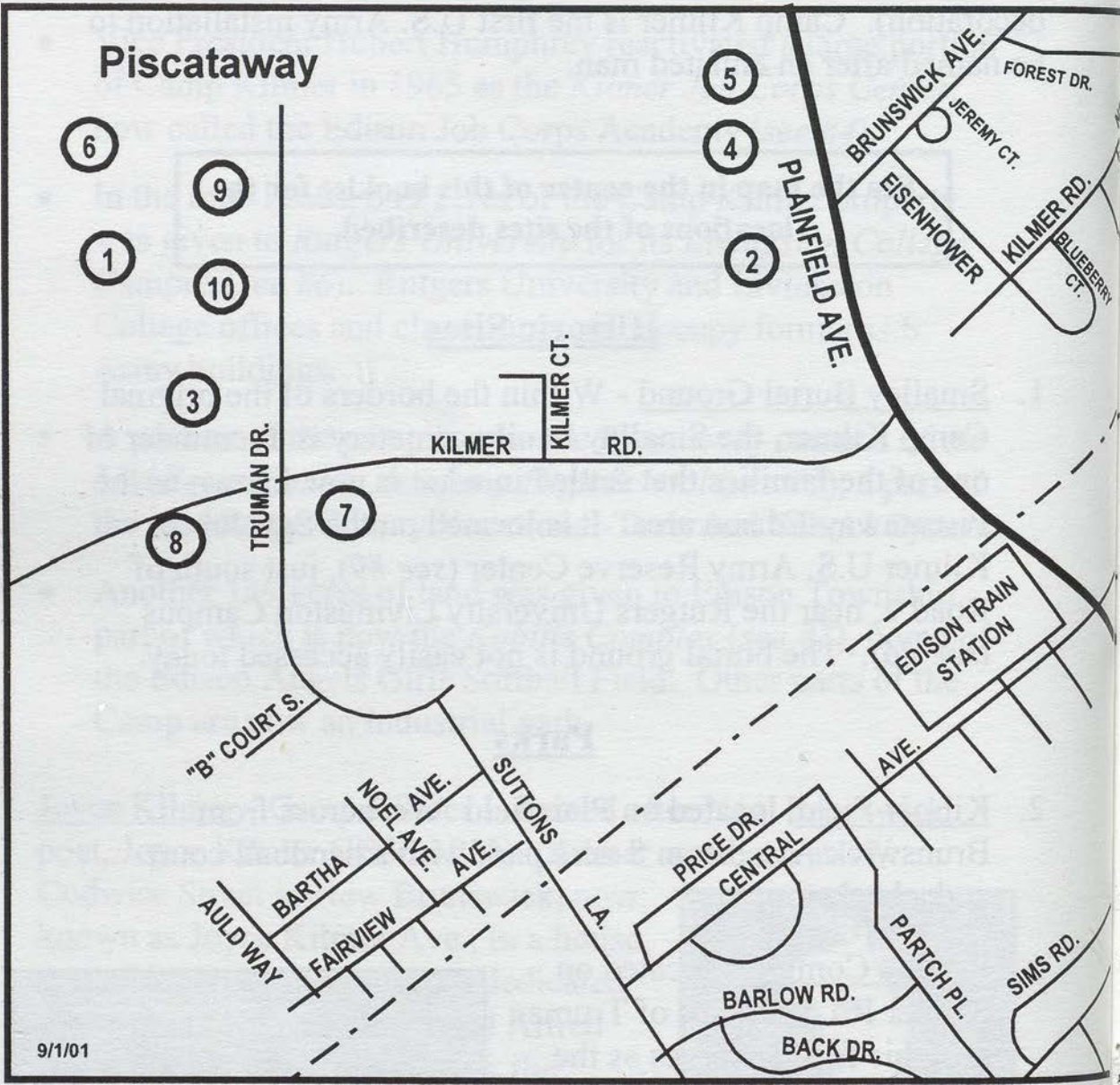
Parks

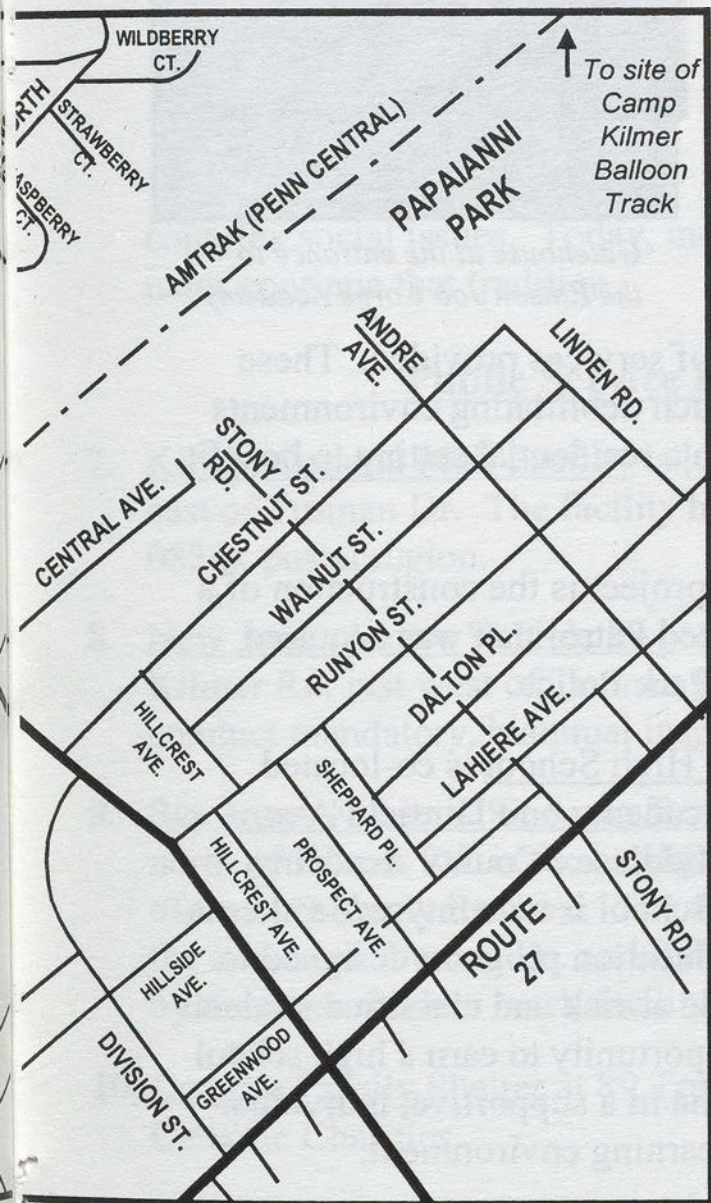
2. Kilmer Field, located on Plainfield Ave. across from Brunswick Ave., is an 8-acre park with a handball court and a backstop.
3. Kobilis Complex, located on Kilmer Rd. just west of Truman Dr., this facility serves as the Edison Angels Girls Softball Field with four softball fields.

The Edison Angels in action



Piscataway

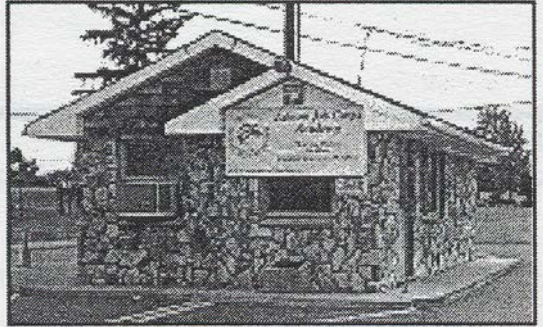




- ① Smalley Burial Ground
- ② Kilmer Field
- ③ Kobilis Complex
- ④ Edison Job Corps Academy
- ⑤ Middlesex County Academy High School
- ⑥ Rutgers University - Livingston College
- ⑦ Kilmer General Mail Facility
- ⑧ NJ Motor Vehicle Inspection Station
- ⑨ Sgt. Joyce Kilmer U.S. Army Reserve Center
- ⑩ Ozanam Family Shelter

Schools

4. Edison Job Corps Academy at 500 Plainfield Ave., is just north of Brunswick Ave. This residential program provides basic education, vocational skills training, work experience, counseling, health care, and related support services.



Gatehouse at the entrance to the Edison Job Corps Academy

The Academy, opened as the Kilmer Job Corps Center in 1965, assists young people who both need and can benefit from the wide range of services provided. These students are typically from such debilitating environments that they must be relocated to a residential setting to benefit from this intensive program.

A special Job Corps student project is the construction of a facility for the Edison Mounted Patrol that was acquired from the Middlesex County Park Police.

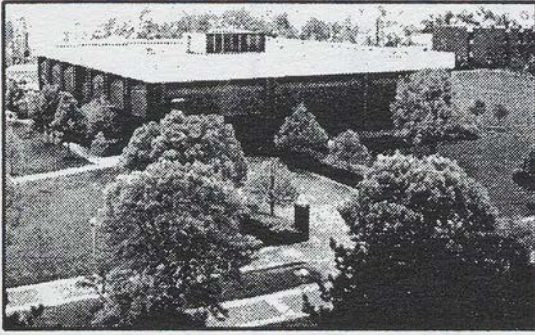
5. Middlesex County Academy High School is co-located with the Edison Job Corps Academy on Plainfield Ave.



The Middlesex County Academy High School is a county-wide alternative education program designed to provide at-risk and classified students the opportunity to earn a high school diploma in a supportive, individualized learning environment.

Students are scheduled in an academic program that meets the credit requirements of their resident school district. Specialized instructional approaches, support services, and individualized self-pacing assist students to develop responsible patterns of behavior.

6. Rutgers University - Livingston College campus is located between Metlars La. and Cedar La. Livingston College,



Livingston College Library

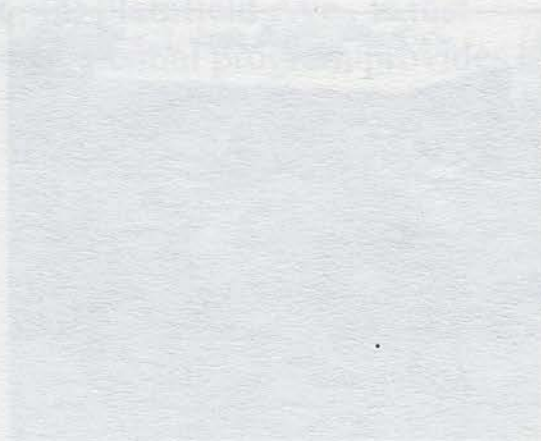
founded in 1969, is the the first co-educational, liberal arts college of Rutgers University to study issues of diversity. The college's primary concern has been to foster an understanding of, and involvement with,

complex social issues. Today, more than 3000 undergraduates continue that tradition.

Public Service Facilities

7. Kilmer General Mail Facility is located on Kilmer Rd. just east of Truman Dr. The facility handles all mail in the 088xx postal region.
8. New Jersey Motor Vehicle Inspection Station is located on Kilmer Rd. just west of Truman Dr. It has three lanes to conduct mandatory, biannual inspections of motor vehicles.
9. Sgt. Joyce Kilmer U.S. Army Reserve Center on Truman Dr. north of Kilmer Rd. is the headquarters of the 78th Division of the U.S. Army Reserve. The armory now boarded up at the corner of Truman Dr. and Kilmer Rd. has been replaced by the more modern brick facility on Truman Dr.
10. Ozanam Family Shelter at 89 Truman Dr. is operated by Catholic Charities.

Neighborhood Notes



The building is a large, multi-story structure with a prominent central tower and multiple wings. It appears to be a school or institutional building. The photograph is in black and white and shows the building from a distance, capturing its full profile and surrounding area.

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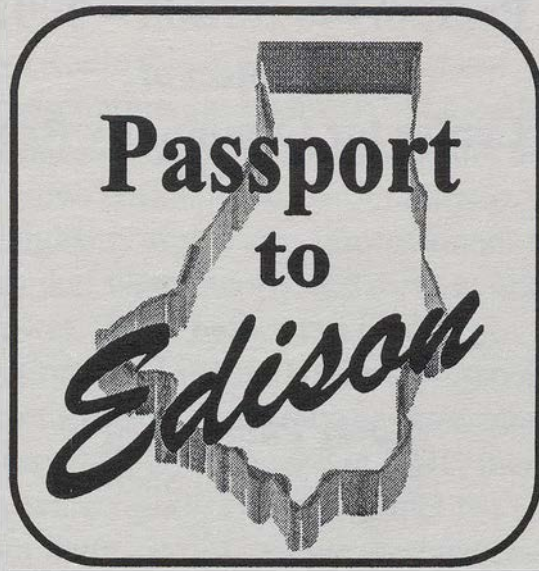
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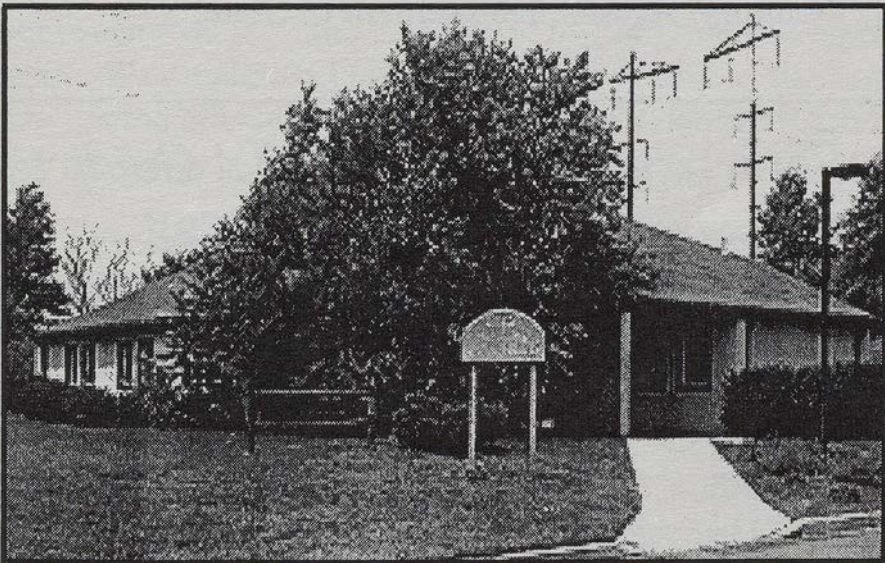
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Lincoln Park



Tour Guide

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is a project of
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Cover Photograph
Edison Animal Shelter

This program has been made possible in part by the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission through a grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, Division of Cultural Affairs, Department of State.

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Neighborhood Notes

Lincoln Highway (Route 27) in Edison is just one small segment of America's first transcontinental highway. The brainchild of Carl Fisher, who built the Indianapolis Speedway, the highway extends 3300 miles from New York City to San Francisco. Dedicated in 1913, the gravel highway was a vast improvement over 2.5 million miles of dirt roads that were bumpy and dirty in dry weather and impassable when wet. Built before the federal government assisted highway construction, the Lincoln Highway Association named the road after Abraham Lincoln to encourage government support. When U.S. Highway 1 was officially opened in 1930, merchants on the Lincoln Highway were rightly concerned that the new highway would take business from them. It did. However, business began to return after World War II.

Vineyard Rd. was named after vineyards in the area, and was an early route through the area. A 1762 map shows Old Post Rd. had three branches. The first branch corresponds to the current Vineyard Rd. that formerly extended from Old Post Rd. past Route 27 to New Durham Rd. Called Vineyard Village, this rural area did not have mail delivery even after World War II.

The rural character of the area was changed forever with the construction of several large industrial facilities. The Ford plant was constructed in 1948. Johnson & Johnson built a massive shipping center between Route 27 and AMTRAK in 1949 that was taken over by Revlon. Westinghouse built a plant (now owned by the Frigidaire Company) at the intersection of Route 27 and Vineyard Rd. on what had been the Dawson farm.

<p>See the map in the center of this booklet for the locations of the sites described.</p>
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Historic Sites

1. Camp Kilmer Balloon Track, located on the Northeast Corridor Line close to where the present Edison Municipal Complex (*see #18*) stands, was constructed during World War II to allow troop trains coming from the south to loop around to take the branch track to Camp Kilmer. Viewed from above, the loop looked like

a hot air balloon. The embankment for the south side of the balloon track was removed in 1980 to make way for the new Municipal Complex (*see #18*).

2. Pines Manor at the corner of Lincoln Highway and Talmadge Rd., followed a path of development similar to Linwood Grove (an amusement park, and later a nightclub, located in the Stelton neighborhood and destroyed by fire in 1976) further south on the Lincoln Highway. The Pines Manor started as a swim club and picnic grove and evolved into today's sophisticated catering establishment.

Parks

3. Idlewild Park is located on Idlewild Rd. behind the Dr. William Toth Memorial Health Center (*see #10*) and one block from Lincoln Elementary School (*see #12*). This 2.4-acre park has 2 baseball fields.
4. Midtown Little League Field is nestled in the middle of a residential block with vehicular access only from Glenville Rd. The 3.2-acre park has 2 baseball fields.
5. New Brooklyn Road Park lies on the west side of New Brooklyn Rd. near Meredith Rd. This 4-acre park is presently undeveloped.
6. Papaianni Park is adjacent to the Northeast Corridor Line and extends from Stony Rd. to the Edison Municipal Complex (*see #18*). This 60-acre park includes Lake Papaianni (*photo, right*) and the former Central Ave. Park. Dedicated to the memory of Police Officer Frank Papaianni who died in the line of duty in 1971, the park is marked by a granite marker next to the lake. Parking is available at the intersection of Chestnut St. and Linden Ave.
7. Dr. Thomas H. Paterniti Park (formerly called Vineyard Rd. Park) is on Vineyard Rd. north of the Ford plant. This 9-acre park has facilities for basketball, handball, tennis, and a playground.



Civic Facilities

8. Edison Youth Service Corps was founded in 1994 as a non-profit, community-based organization that strives to engage Edison youth in full time, meaningful community service. Through two initiatives, Alternative Spring Break and Summer Corps, members are urged to learn about their community through volunteering, and about their peers through team building and leader-ship training. Offices are in the Edison Municipal Complex (*see #18*) at 100 Municipal Blvd.
9. Elks BPOE Lodge 2487, located at 375 Old Post Rd. next to the ShopRite Shopping Center, has an Olympic-size swimming pool.
10. Dr. William Toth Health Center is located at 80 Idlewild Rd. one block from the Lincoln Elementary School (*see #12*). Public Health Nursing Services provided by the Toth Memorial Health Center include chronic disease prevention, immunizations, communicable disease control, and maternal and child health services. The Toth Center is run by the Edison Dept. of Health and Human Resources.

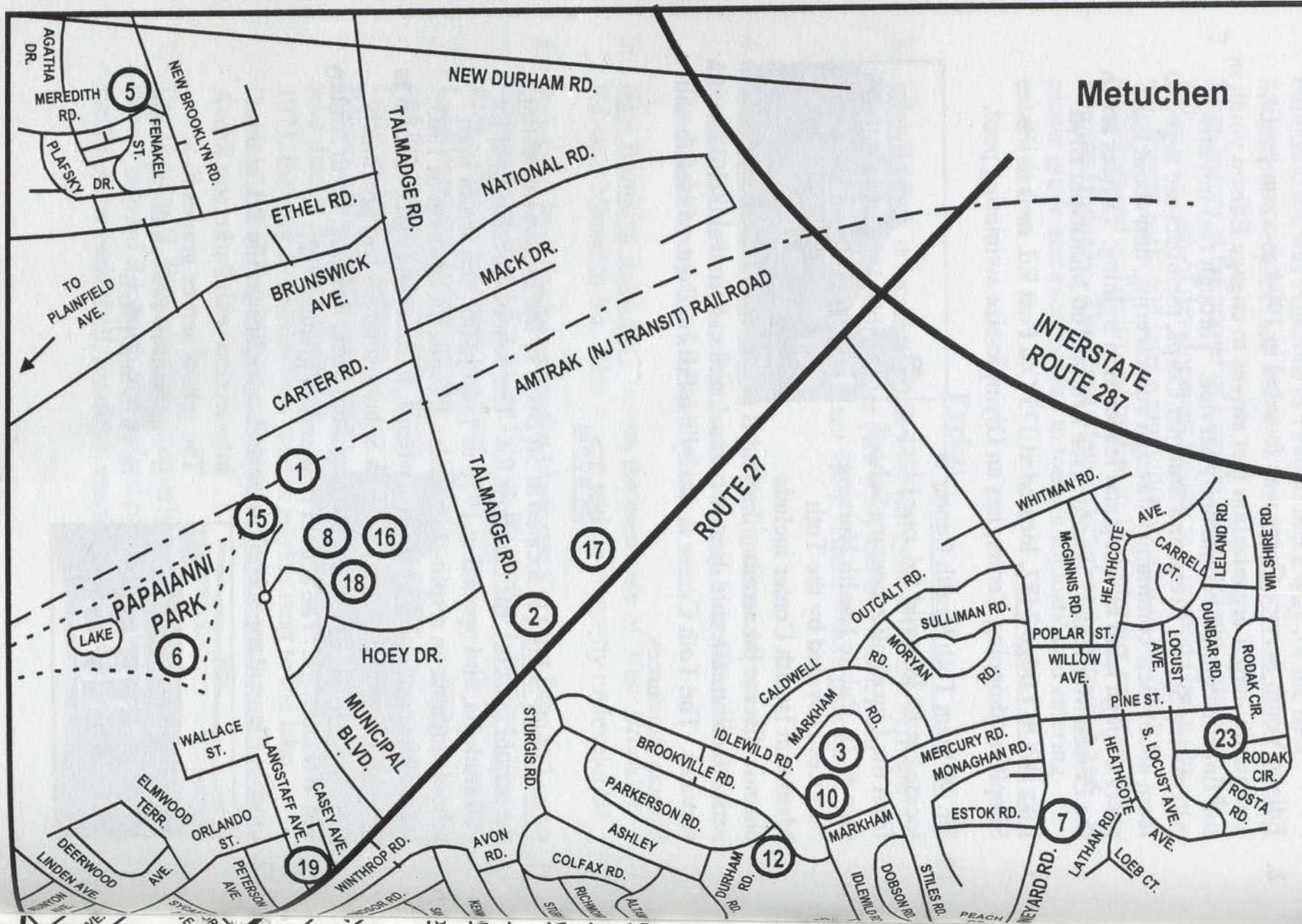


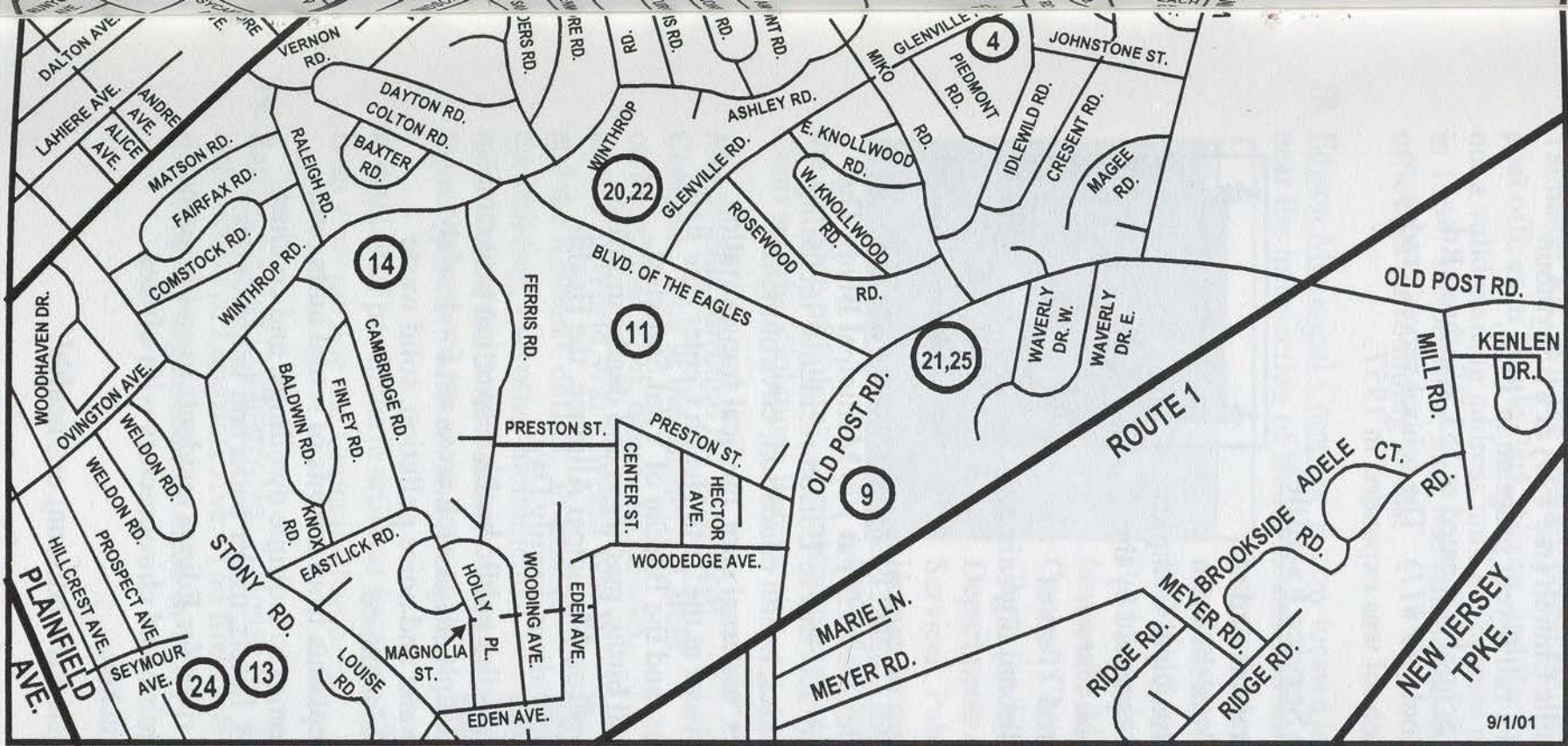
Schools

11. Edison High School is located at 50 Blvd. of the Eagles (reflecting the school mascot), off Old Post Rd. The school was designed for 900 students, and opened in 1956 to 1300 junior and senior high school students on a split-shift basis. Despite an addition in 1963, split shifts continued until 1964 when J. P. Stevens High School was opened in Oak Tree. Edison High School students had previously attended schools in Metuchen, Highland Park, Rahway, Perth Amboy and Woodbridge. The school now serves grades 9-12.
12. Lincoln Elementary School is located at 53 Brookville Rd. at the intersection with Parkerson Rd. The school serves grades K-5. It was built in 1951, and expanded in 1956 and 1963.



Metuchen



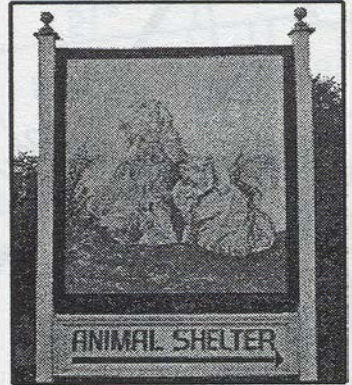


① Camp Kilmer Balloon Track	⑥ Papaiani Park	⑫ Lincoln Elementary School	⑰ Edison Main Post Office	②② New Spirit Korean Presbyterian Church
② Pines Manor	⑦ Paterniti Park	⑬ St. Matthew's Roman Catholic School	⑱ Edison Municipal Complex	②③ Polish Christian Center
③ Idlewild Park	⑧ Edison Youth Service Corps	⑭ Washington Elementary School	⑲ Raritan Engine Co. No. 1 House No. 2	②④ St. Matthew's the Apostle Roman Catholic Church
④ Midtown Little League Field	⑨ Elks BPOE Lodge 2487	⑮ Edison Animal Shelter	⑳ Community Presbyterian Church	②⑤ St. Paul's Lutheran Church
⑤ New Brooklyn Rd. Park	⑩ Toth Health Center	⑯ Edison Health Dept.	㉑ Fishermen's Presbyterian Church	
	⑪ Edison High School			

13. St. Matthew's Roman Catholic School is adjacent to St. Matthew's the Apostle Roman Catholic Church (*see #24*) at 81 Seymour Ave. The school opened a full 8-year program in 1954.
14. Washington Elementary School is located at 153 Winthrop Rd., west of Edison High School (*see #11*). The school serves grades K-5. Built in 1953, the school was expanded in 1957.

Public Service Facilities

15. Edison Animal Shelter is at the end of Municipal Blvd. across from the main building of the Edison Municipal Complex (*see #18*). The shelter is operated by the Edison Dept. of Health and Human Resources. To see featured "Pets of the Week," visit www.edisonnj.org/animals/.



16. Edison Dept. of Health and Human Resources offices are in the Edison Municipal Complex (*see #18*) at 100 Municipal Blvd. The department provides many services to Edison residents, including animal control, rabies clinics, health education, environmental services, housing services, maternal care, medical transportation, public health nursing services at the Toth Health Center (*see #10*), substance abuse resources, and the Bureau of Vital Statistics, which officially records all births, marriages and deaths in Edison. In cooperation with the Edison Municipal Alliance, the Health Dept. organizes the annual Edison Family Day.

Environmental services handles public health inspection programs and responds to citizen complaints in such areas as: food safety, rodent infestations, air, water and noise pollution, solid waste disposal, and property maintenance.

Housing responds to complaints from tenants of rental units ranging from single-family homes to multiple dwellings, and conducts inspections of apartments, hotels, trailer parks and laundromats.

Transportation provides rides for Edison residents to and from the offices of physicians, dentists and chiropractors with offices located in Edison or Metuchen.

For more information, visit www.edisonnj.org/health/.

17. Edison Main Post Office is on Route 27 near the intersection with Talmadge Rd. It is the primary postal facility in Edison, with branch post offices in Menlo Park, Nixon, and Raritan Center. "Edison" was not a valid mailing address until the present main post office opened in 1968. Before then, mail was handled through neighborhood offices or surrounding towns.

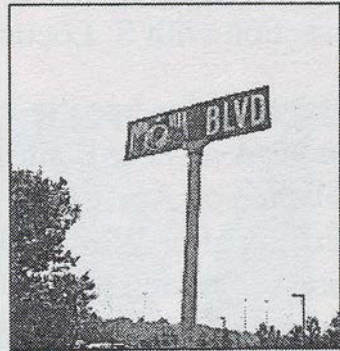
18. Edison Municipal Complex is now located at 100 Municipal Blvd. near the intersection of Route 27 and Talmadge Rd. The Complex



was dedicated in 1981, replacing a smaller structure at the corner of Plainfield and Woodbridge Aves. in Piscatawaytown. The Complex houses the Mayor's Office; Township Council Chambers; the Township Clerk; the Township Attorney; the Departments of Finance, Technical Services, Public Works, Health and Human Resources, and Public Safety (including the Division of Fire and

the Division of Police); administrative offices; and the Municipal Court and the Violations Bureau.

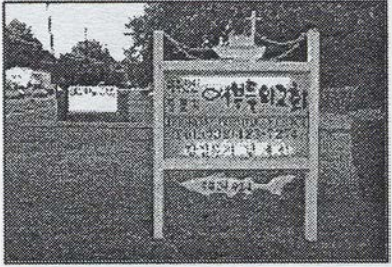
Monuments surround the Municipal Complex. One in the Memorial Circle on Municipal Blvd. honors those who served in World War I, World War II, and the Korean Conflict. In front of the building, two other monuments memorialize the contributions of former township police officers and firefighters.

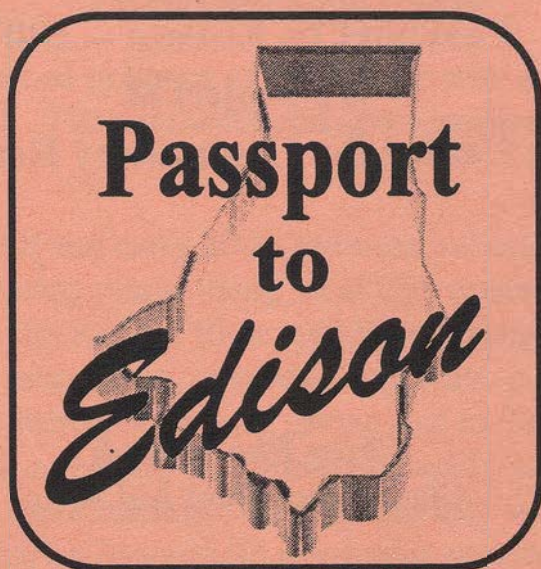


A display of pre-historic artifacts excavated from the Dismal Swamp is on view outside the Council Chambers.

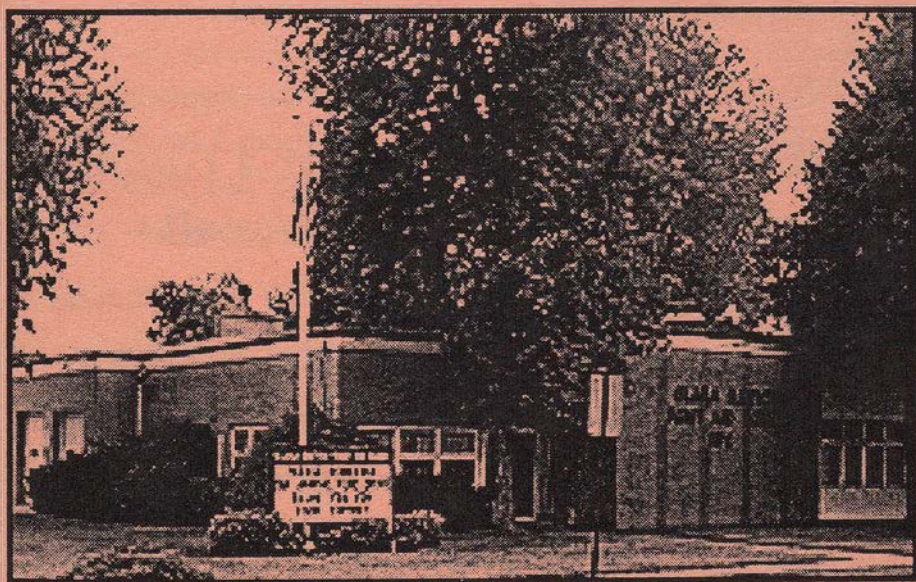
19. Raritan Engine Company No. 1, House No. 2 is on Route 27 at the intersection of Langstaff Ave. The firehouse is a branch of the first fire company organized in Edison in 1916.

Houses of Worship

20. Community Presbyterian Church is located at 76 Glenville Ave. near the Blvd. of the Eagles. The church began with a survey of the needs of Nixon Park and Lincoln Village in 1950. In spring 1952, a store in the Nixon Shopping Center was rented for services. Started in 1953 on farmland and wooded marshes, the Church was dedicated in 1954. The church successfully bid \$5 for pews being auctioned off for firewood from a chapel at Camp Kilmer. The Christian Education wing was added in 1964. The pews were replaced in 1990.
21. Fishermen's Presbyterian Church shares the facilities of St. Paul's Lutheran Church (*see* #25) at 445 Old Post Rd. This new church serves Asian and Middle Eastern immigrants.
- 
22. New Spirit Korean Presbyterian Church shares the facilities of Community Presbyterian Church (*see* #20) located at 76 Glenville Ave.
23. Polish Christian Center is located at 10 Rodak Circle close to the intersection with S. Locust Ave.
24. St. Matthew the Apostle Roman Catholic Church is located at 81 Seymour Ave. near Plainfield Ave. The parish was formally established on April 23, 1952, during the housing boom in southern Edison after World War II. Prior to the dedication of the the present church in 1954, many other locations were used for services, including the Stelton School auditorium, St. Margaret Mary Church in Bonhamtown, St. Francis Church in Metuchen (now St. Francis Cathedral), the Linwood Grove in Stelton, and the cafeteria of the Westinghouse plant on Route 27 (now the Frigidaire plant). After almost 50 years, St. Matthew's has grown to be a vibrant faith community of 2850 families.
25. St. Paul's Lutheran Church, at 445 Old Post Rd. near the Blvd. of the Eagles, was founded in 1954. The church building is also used by the multi-ethnic Fisherman's Presbyterian Church (*see* #21).



Clara Barton



Tour Guide

Passport to Edison – 2001
is a project of
The Center for Community Renewal

Cover Photograph
Clara Barton First Aid Squad

This program has been made possible in part by the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission through a grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, Division of Cultural Affairs, Department of State.

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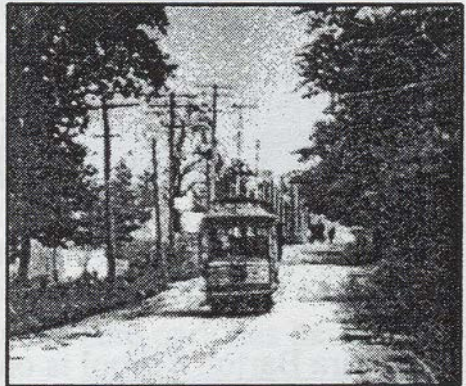
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Neighborhood Notes

Clara Barton is named in honor of the woman who founded the American Red Cross in 1881. The neighborhood saw significant development in the early 1900s.

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, several brickworks and ceramic manufacturing plants using local clay operated in Clara Barton. The area between the Raritan River and Woodbridge and Amboy Aves. was largely a salt marsh that covered an extensive deposit of clay. Gravel and sand deposits were also mined, giving rise to the neighborhood of Sand Hills. Work in the clay pits attracted immigrants from Ireland, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia where they worked for about 10 cents an hour. Charles Bloomfield purchased several railroad trucks, coaches, and cars from Thomas Edison to use in his clay pits. At least five other companies mined and shipped fire clay and sand including two firms owned by the Valentine family. Barges on the Raritan River were used to transport sand, gravel, and clay that was not used locally.

Trains and trolleys were a common sight in the 1920s. Several railroads and electric trolleys served Edison. The Perth Amboy trolley ran along Amboy Ave. from Metuchen to Perth Amboy (*photo, right*). Another trolley started at the intersection of Main St. and where Route 1 is today, crossed the Perth Amboy line and ran north towards Avenel and on to Carteret and Elizabeth. The right-of-way for the New Jersey Short Line Railroad between Newark and Trenton was used for the construction of Route 1 in 1930.

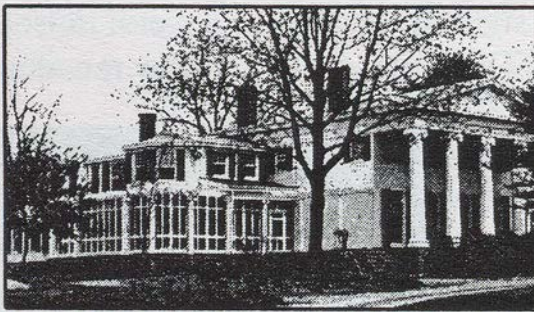


In 1960, a monument on the northwest corner of Amboy and Woodbridge Aves. was dedicated to the memory of all the deceased members of American Legion Clara Barton Post 324 (*see #7*) and of Raritan Engine Company No. 2 (*see #18*). An attractive fountain sits in the Heights of Edison in the triangle formed by Third St. and Roosevelt Blvd. Several water towers are maintained by Middlesex Water company on a hill above Grandview Ave. near Dartmouth St., the highest point in the area.

See the map in the center of this booklet for the locations of the sites described.

Historic Sites

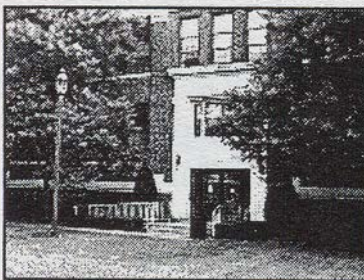
1. Bloomfield Mansion - The Bloomfield family has a long history in New Jersey. In 1665, Thomas Bloomfield II moved to the part of Woodbridge that became part of Edison in 1870. General Joseph Bloomfield was twice Governor of New Jersey. The family grew wealthy from local businesses. The Bloomfield Clay Co., incorporated in 1911, was located on the Raritan Ridge, a bluff along Woodbridge Ave. that became part of Raritan Arsenal. Charles Bloomfield created a grand mansion by adding to a structure built by his grandfather in 1810. The Bloomfield estate was situated on the northeast corner of Amboy and Woodbridge Aves., and there is some evidence that the property had been in the family since 1639. While the family is no longer active in the area, Bloomfield Ave. in the far eastern section of Edison, and the town of Bloomfield in Essex County carry on the family name.



*Bloomfield Mansion, above, and
Bloomfield Estate, right, circa 1900*



2. Old Clara Barton School is on Amboy Ave. at the intersection with Fourth St. The school was turned into a senior citizen residence in 1984, and converted into an assisted living facility called Heritage at Clara Barton (*photo, left*). Clara Barton School opened as an elementary school in 1921, and within 3 years, was rated the best school in the country. In 1935, a junior high school level was added. Clara Barton was a teacher for 18 years, and organized New Jersey's first public school in Bordentown in 1852, so it is fitting that a school be named for her.



During the Great Depression, teachers were paid on an irregular basis, often in script that was accepted by some local merchants. Teachers sometimes accompanied their neighbors to the tax collector to receive some of the tax payment as back salary. Prior to 1904, the Clara Barton section was served by a one-room school house.



Clara Barton School, circa 1930

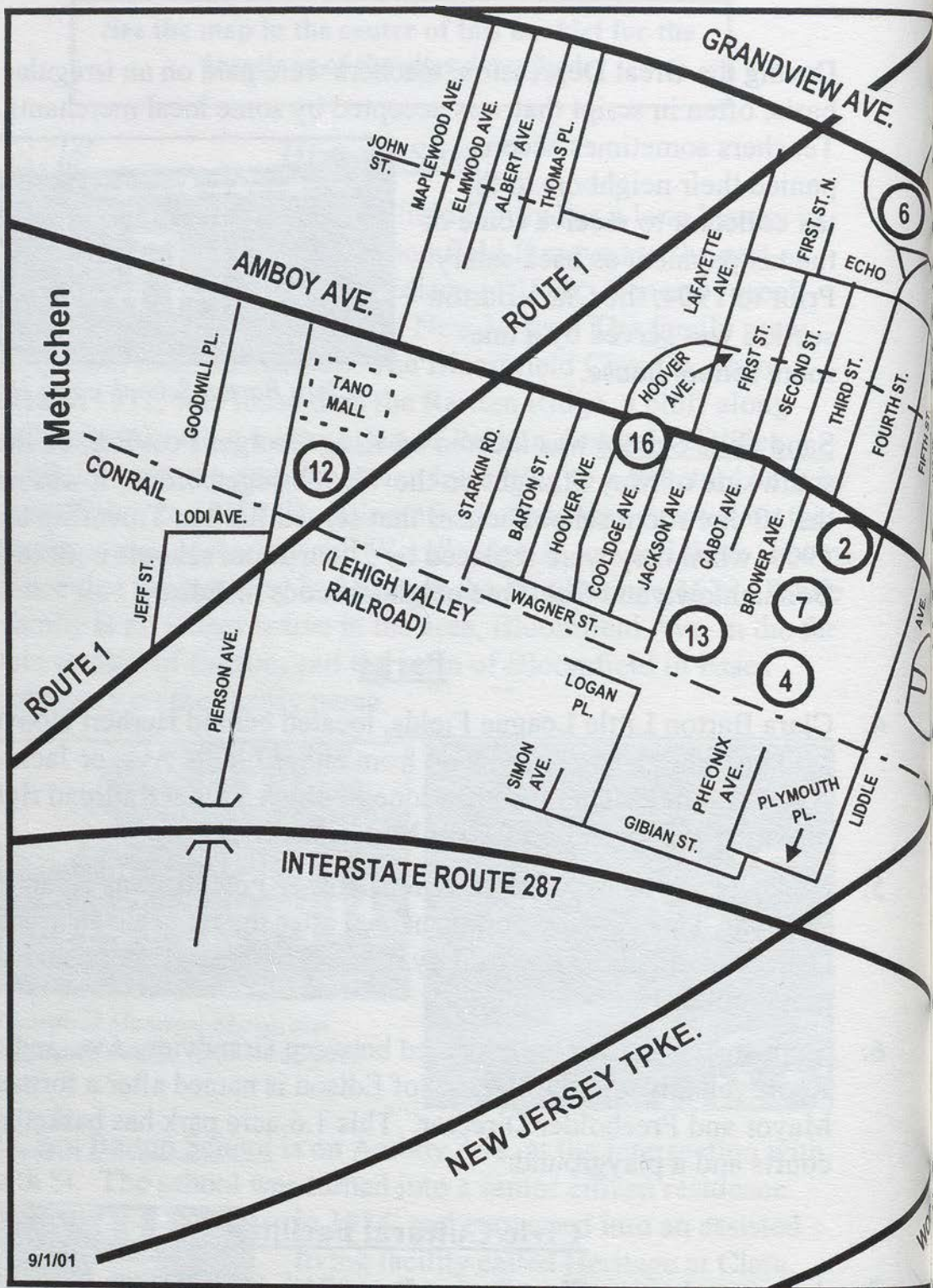
3. Sand Hills School was located on King Georges Post Rd., on the south side of May St. right on the Woodbridge border. It was one of the 10 one-room school houses that served Raritan Township before 1909, when they were replaced by 2 four-room schools built in the Bonhamtown and Oak Tree neighborhoods of Edison.

Parks

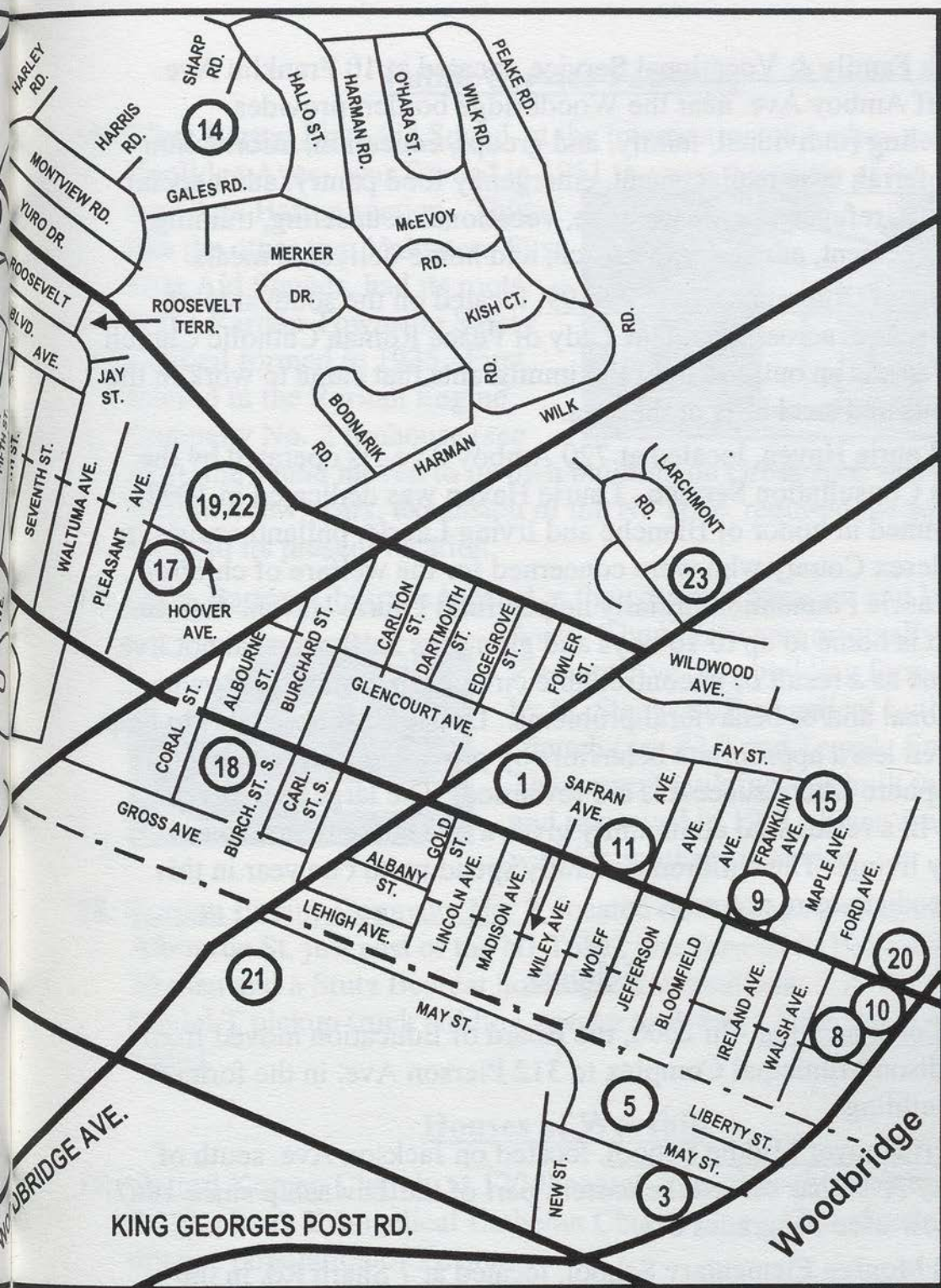
4. Clara Barton Little League Fields, located behind Herbert Hoover Middle School, can be reached from either Liddle Ave. or Jackson Ave. The fields abut the abandoned Lehigh Valley Railroad right-of-way that is proposed for the Middlesex Greenway.
5. Dudash Park on May St. off King Georges Post Rd. was completed in 1998. This 6.5-acre park is named after the first Edison Police Officer to die in the line of duty. It has 2 basketball courts and a playground.
6. Stephen J. Capestro Park located between Grandview Ave. and Roosevelt Blvd. in the Heights of Edison is named after a former Mayor and Freeholder Director. This 1.6-acre park has basketball courts and a playground.

Civic/Cultural Facilities

7. American Legion Clara Barton Post 324 is located on Brower Ave., off Amboy Ave.
8. Catholic Charities, located at 26 Safran Ave., is a voluntary, non-profit, human service agency of the Diocese of Metuchen. It provides a wide range of quality services to individuals, families, and communities, and reflects the concerns of the Church and all people of good will on behalf of those in need, especially the economically poor and those devalued by society.



① Site of Bloomfield Mansion	⑤ Dudash Park	⑨ Jewish Family & Vocational Services
② Site of Old Clara Barton School	⑥ Stephen J. Capestro Park	⑩ Knights of Columbus Council 9199
③ Site of Sand Hills School	⑦ American Legion Clara Barton Post 324	⑪ YCS Laurie Haven
④ Clara Barton Little League Fields	⑧ Catholic Charities	⑫ Edison Board of Education



- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>13 Herbert Hoover Middle School</p> <p>14 James Monroe Elementary School</p> <p>15 Our Lady of Peace School</p> <p>16 Clara Barton First Aid Squad</p> | <p>17 Clara Barton Library</p> <p>18 Raritan Engine Company No. 2</p> <p>19 Onnuri Korean Church</p> <p>20 Our Lady of Peace Roman Catholic Church</p> | <p>21 St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church</p> <p>22 St. Stephen's Evangelical Lutheran Church</p> <p>23 Wesley United Methodist Church</p> |
|---|--|---|

9. Jewish Family & Vocational Service, located at 10 Franklin Ave. just off Amboy Ave. near the Woodbridge border, provides counseling (individual, family, and group), education, information and referral, case management, emergency food pantry, adult social day care, refugee microenterprise, vocational counseling, training and placement, advocacy, outreach, and home-delivered meals.
10. Knights of Columbus Council 9199, located on the south side of Amboy Ave. across from Our Lady of Peace Roman Catholic Church (*see #20*), is an outgrowth of the immigrants that came to work in the clay pits and sand hills in the area.
11. YCS Laurie Haven, located at 720 Amboy Ave., is operated by the Youth Consultation Service. Laurie Haven was dedicated in 1998, and named in honor of Blanche and Irving Laurie, philanthropists in Middlesex County who were concerned for the welfare of children. The Laurie Foundation initially helped fund Laurie Haven. Laurie Haven is home to up to 10 boys and girls ages 5-10, who cannot live at home as a result of uncontrollable circumstances, or their own emotional and/or behavioral problems. Laurie Haven's goal is to help children learn appropriate behaviors by providing a structured atmosphere where successes are rewarded. The large ranch-style house in a residential community gives a real sense of structured family living. The children generally spend up to one year in this intermediate-term program.

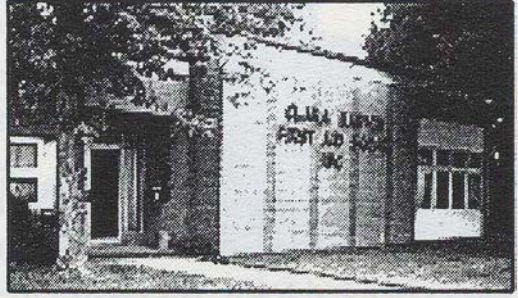
Schools

12. Board of Education - In 2000, the Board of Education moved from the Edison Municipal Complex to 312 Pierson Ave. in the former HIP building.
13. Herbert Hoover Middle School, located on Jackson Ave. south of Amboy Ave., has served the eastern part of the Township since 1967. It is now used for grades 6-8.
14. James Monroe Elementary School, located at 7 Sharp Rd. in the Heights of Edison, has served the Clara Barton area since 1963. It is now used for grades K-5.
15. Our Lady of Peace School is located at the end of Franklin Ave., off Amboy Ave., 2 blocks from Our Lady of Peace Roman Catholic Church (*see #20*). It serves the needs of the parish for grades K-8.

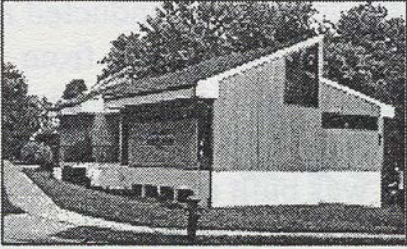


Public Service Facilities

16. Clara Barton First Aid Squad, at the intersection of Amboy and Coolidge Aves., was formed in 1951 to serve the needs of the growing Clara Barton section. This, like the other two Volunteer First First Aid Squads, had its roots in the Raritan Township Safety Council formed in 1935. First housed in the Raritan Engine Company No. 2 firehouse (*see #18*), the squad moved to its own building on Gross Ave. in 1962. Within a few years, expansion of the NJ Tpke. required the squad move to its present location.



17. Clara Barton Library is located at the corner of Pleasant and Hoover Aves. The library was originally at 76 Pleasant Ave. in a building formerly used by St. Stephen's Evangelical Lutheran Church (*see #22*) and Temple Emanu-El. The present building was built in 1969 and improved in 1971. Plans are under-way for another expansion.



18. Raritan Engine Company No. 2, located on Amboy Ave. across from Albourne St. just east of the NJ Tpke., was formed in 1924 with "about 20 men and a Stutz Bearcat holding a chemical tank." A 1918 Ford Model T pickup truck holding a water tank and a hose was soon added.

Houses of Worship

19. Onnuri Korean Church, at 120 Pleasant Ave., uses the facilities of St. Stephen's Evangelical Lutheran Church (*see #22*) and reflects the diverse population of Edison.

20. Our Lady of Peace Roman Catholic Church is located at the intersection of Amboy and Ford Aves. This church and the accompanying parochial school (*see #15*) were established to serve the needs of the many Irish immigrants who settled in the Sand Hills section of Clara Barton.

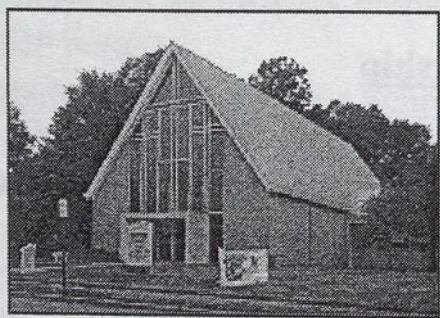


21. Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church at 215 May St. is the newest church building in Edison, and is distinguished by its gold-foil-covered dome. The congregation was originally established in 1889 by thirteen families under the name of St. Octa Nikolaja Greek Catholic Congregation to serve the needs of immigrants from eastern Europe who came to work in the clay pits and the brick, pottery, and ceramic industries in the area. The name was later changed to St. Nicholas Greek Catholic Church, and, still later, to its present name. The first church, built in 1922 on Second St., Fords, had only 10 pews.

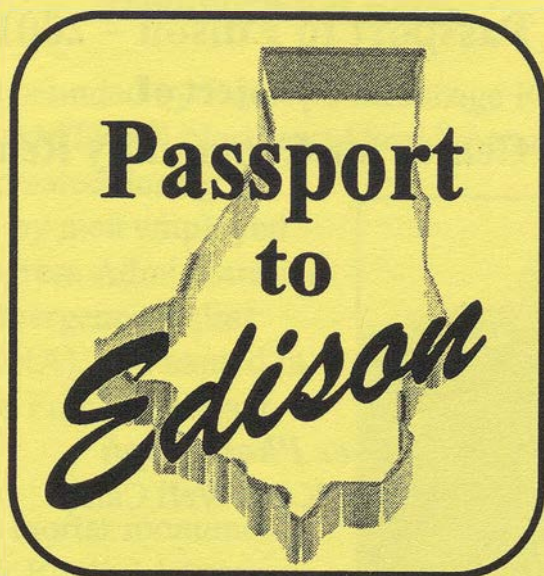


22. St. Stephen's Evangelical Lutheran Church at 120 Pleasant Ave. has moved several times since its founding in Perth Amboy in 1872. Begun by Danish immigrants, most early services were conducted in Danish. Worship was conducted in both English and Danish from 1941 until 1964, when Danish was discontinued. The congregation had three churches in Perth Amboy before opening a facility in 1940 in Edison on donated land. In 1947, a Chapel was built at 76 Pleasant Ave. In 1957, with membership moving to Edison, the church in Perth Amboy was sold. The present church was built in 1960. The Chapel was sold to Temple Emanu-El, then to Edison Township for the Clara Barton Branch Library (see #17).

23. Wesley United Methodist Church at 5053 Woodbridge Ave. was founded by Danish immigrants in Perth Amboy attracted to revival services in the Simpson Methodist Episcopal Church. As their numbers grew, they organized the First Danish Methodist-Episcopal Church in 1874. A modest frame church erected in 1876 was followed by a handsome brick church in 1889, seating 250. Services were conducted in Danish until 1925,



and, in 1941, the name was changed to Wesley Methodist Church. Prompted by changes in demographics, and a fire in the Perth Amboy church in 1957, the present church was erected in 1960. In 1963, a disastrous fire destroyed the interior. On a happier note, the church mortgage was burned in 1987.



Roosevelt Park



Tour Guide

Passport to Edison – 2001
is a project of
The Center for Community Renewal

Cover Photograph
Kiddie Keep Well Camp

This program has been made possible in part by the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission through a grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, Division of Cultural Affairs, Department of State.

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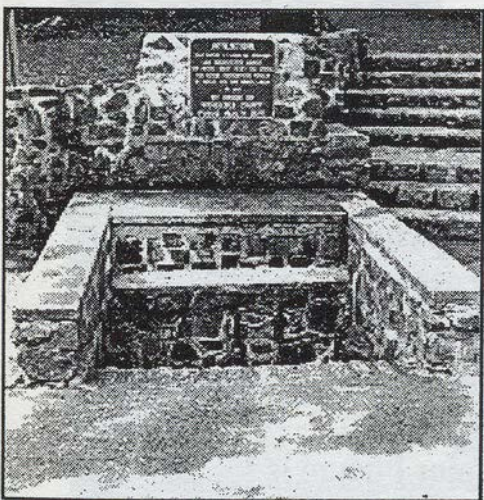
Neighborhood Notes

Roosevelt Park is bounded by Route 1, Parsonage Rd., the Reading Railroad, and the AMTRAK Northeast Corridor tracks. This 217-acre county park was created during the Great Depression by men employed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Emergency Relief Administration (ERA), and named in honor of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

A 1933 stone and mortar monument (*photo, right*) near Route 1 honors the men of Middlesex County who labored to develop the park.

The park features 7 lighted tennis courts, 4 basketball courts, a softball field, 3 playgrounds, 7 picnic groves, fishing, bicycle paths, and walkways. "Plays-in-the-Park" (*see #7*) has been a favorite summer attraction since 1963. At one time, the Roosevelt Stables provided horses for hire, and people skated on Roosevelt Lake in the winter.

Roosevelt Lake was created by damming up the South Branch of the Rahway River. The lake and the surrounding picnic groves and open fields have been popular recreational spots for residents for generations.



Even today, two springs in the Park provide residents with drinking water. One of the springs is on Evergreen Rd. by the entrance to the NJ Home for Disabled Soldiers (*see #11*); the other (*photo, left*) is down the hill from the monuments dedicated to Madame Curie (*see #5*).



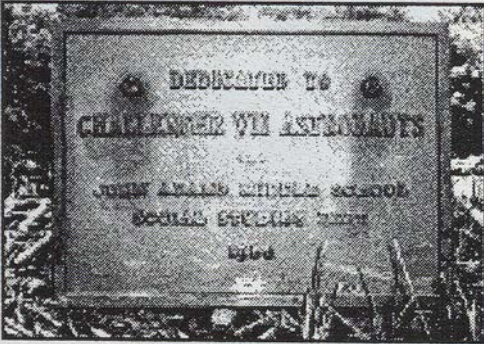
See the map in the center of this booklet for the locations of the sites described.

Historic Sites

1. Lafayette Union School - An 1882 map of Raritan Township schools indicates the Lafayette Union School was located at the northeast corner of Parsonage and Lafayette Rds. The school was consolidated with the Uniontown school (renamed Menlo Park school) in the late 19th century, and the building was completely abandoned by the 1920s.

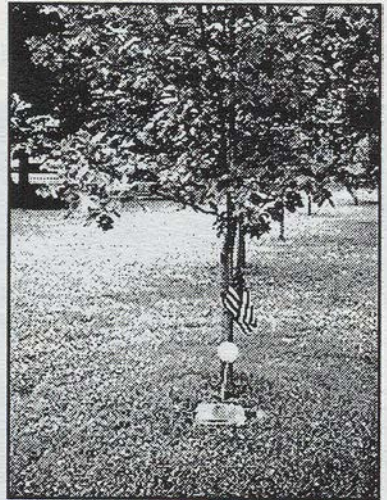
Monuments

2. Challenger VII Astronauts Plaque, in honor of the crew of the January 1986 ill-fated space mission, was dedicated by the John Adams Middle School Social Studies Department in 1986. The plaque is located near the monument that commemorates the men who constructed Roosevelt Park.

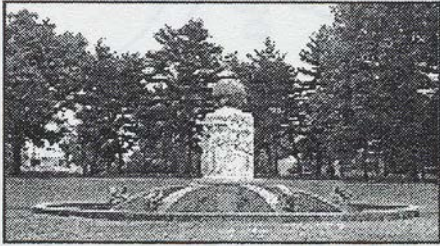


3. Joyce Kilmer Plaque, honoring the New Brunswick poet killed in France during World War I and the namesake of Camp Kilmer (located in southern Edison) was erected by the Edison Job Corps Academy. Camp Kilmer was the first U.S. Army installation named after an enlisted man.

Christened Alfred Joyce Kilmer after his sponsor, the Rev. Alfred R. Taylor, and the presiding minister, the Rev. Elisha Brooks Joyce, Kilmer later discarded his first name. He was born at 17 Codwise St. in New Brunswick, now known as Joyce Kilmer Ave., and the house now serves as a museum. Kilmer's most famous poem is "Trees." The Joyce Kilmer Plaque is located near the monument that commemorates the men who constructed Roosevelt Park.



4. "Light Dispelling Darkness" Fountain sits in Roosevelt Park close to Grandview Ave. and Route 1. This art-deco fountain is a monument to Thomas Edison and the improvements in people's lives made possible by his perfection of the incandescent lamp. The sculptured terracotta and concrete fountain was designed by Waylande Gregory, a native of Kansas who came to New Jersey to work for the WPA and stayed until his death

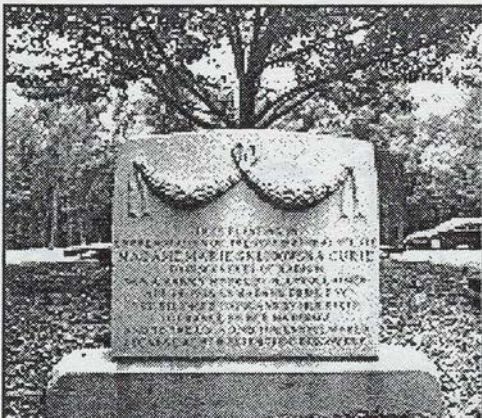


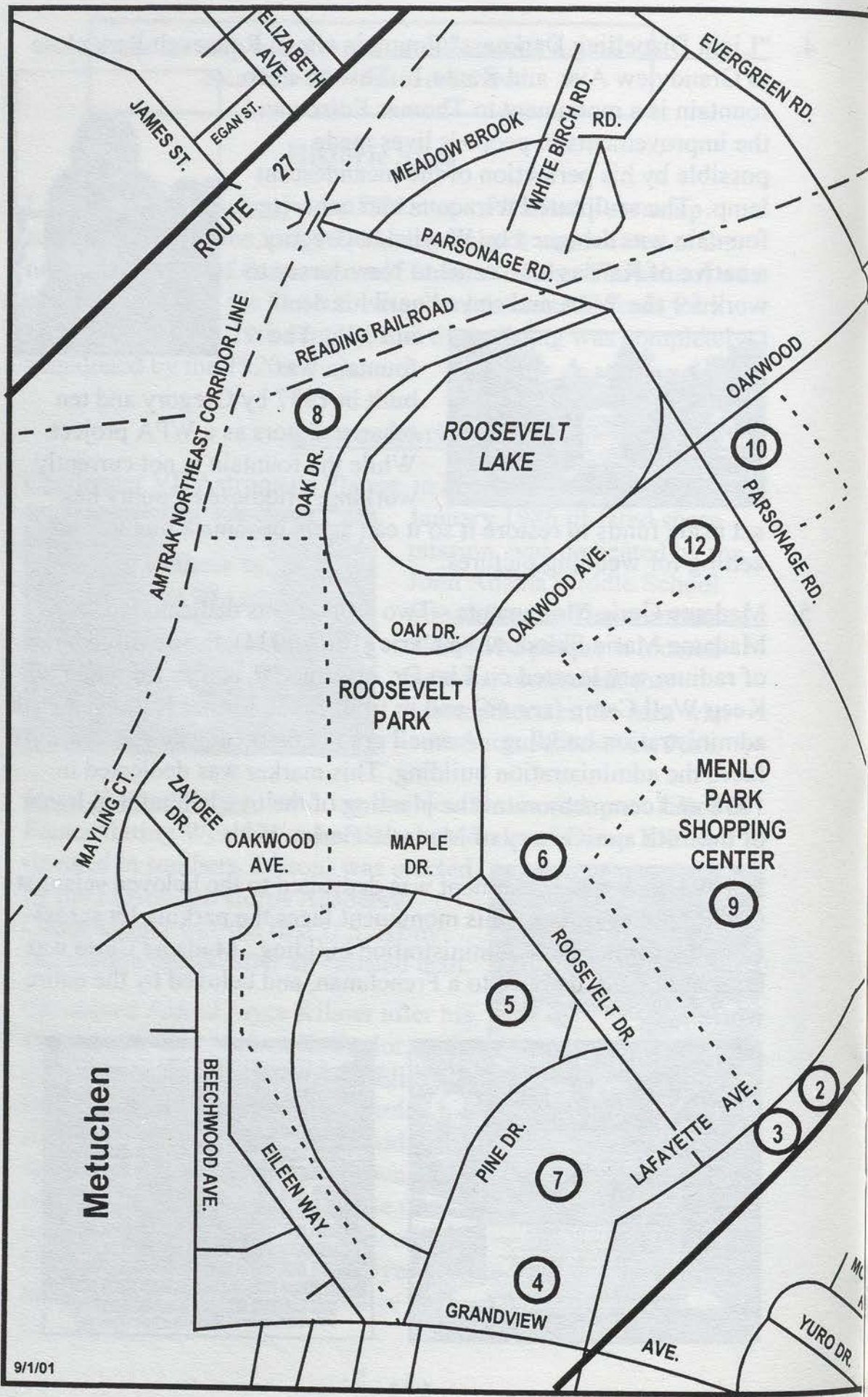
in 1971. The fountain was built in 1937 by Gregory and ten other sculptors as a WPA project. While the fountain is not currently working, Middlesex County has

set aside funds to restore it so it can again become a picturesque setting for wedding pictures.

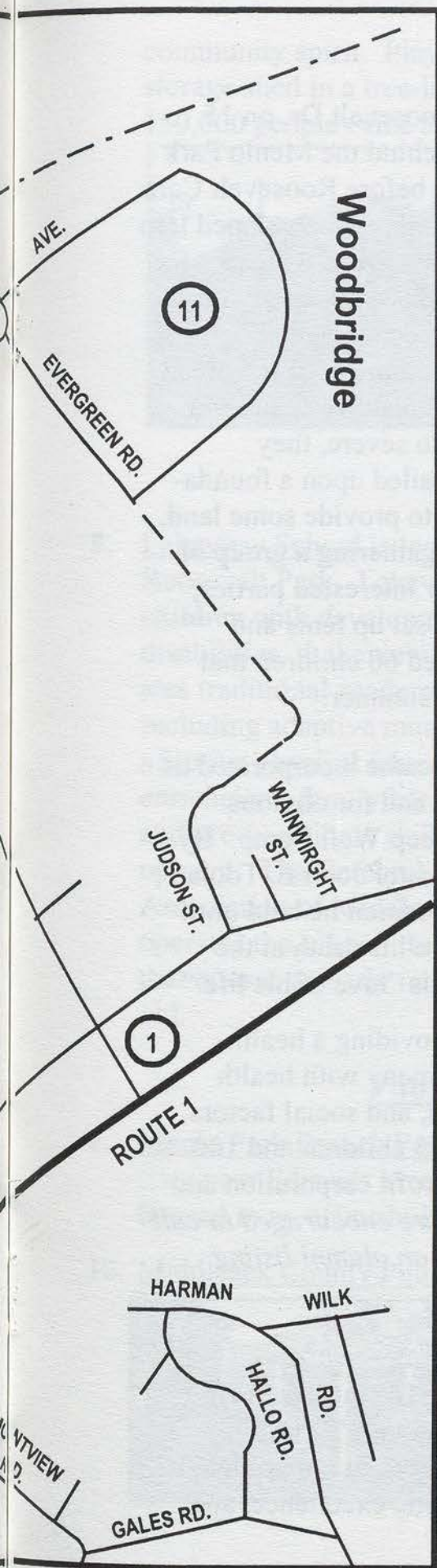
5. Madame Curie Monuments - Two monuments dedicated to Madame Marie Sklodowska Curie (1867-1934), the co-discoverer of radium, are located on Elm Dr. off Pine Dr. across from Kiddie Keep Well Camp (*see #6*) and in front of the former Roosevelt Park administration building. A small granite marker (*photo, below left*) faces the administration building. This marker was dedicated in 1938 and commemorates the planting of the tree behind it in honor of the 70th anniversary of Madame Curie's birth.

In 1993, a second monument was dedicated to the beloved scientist (*photo, below right*). This monument faces the parking lot across from the former park administration building. Madame Curie was born in Poland, married to a Frenchman, and beloved by the entire world.





Metuchen



- ① Lafayette Union School Site
- ② Challenger VII Plaque
- ③ Joyce Kilmer Plaque
- ④ "Light Dispelling Darkness" Fountain
- ⑤ Madame Curie Monuments
- ⑥ Kiddie Keep Well Camp
- ⑦ Plays-in-the-Park
- ⑧ Lakeview School
- ⑨ Menlo Park Branch Post Office
- ⑩ Middlesex County Public Health Dept.
- ⑪ NJ Home for Disabled Soldiers
- ⑫ Roosevelt Care Center

Civic Facilities

6. Kiddie Keep Well Camp is located at 35 Roosevelt Dr. on 15 acres on a wooded hill in Roosevelt Park behind the Menlo Park Mall. The camp was in operation a decade before Roosevelt Care Center (*see #12*) was built and Roosevelt Park was developed into the resource it is today. The camp began as a Fresh Air camp for children at high risk for tuberculosis. In 1925, a group of volunteers led by Dr. Silk and Jane Packard were concerned about children exposed to tuberculosis during an outbreak of the dread disease. The treatment at the time involved rest, fresh air, and good nutrition. Because the problem was so severe, they



prevailed upon a foundation to provide some land, and gathering a group of other interested parties, they set up tents and hosted 60 children that first summer.

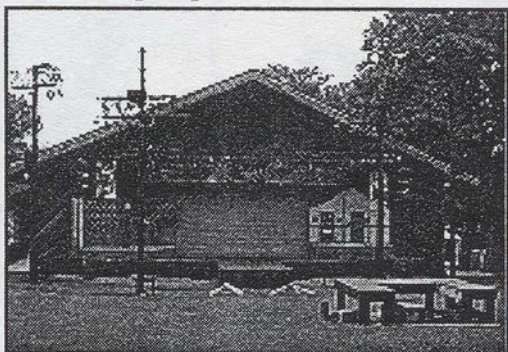
At the completion of the year, the group became incorporated as the Middlesex County Recreation Council, and for obvious reasons, the Camp was known as Kiddie Keep Well Camp. By 1927, the first buildings were built, and Senator John E. Toolan became the temporary Board president, a position he held until his death in 1979. He spent the week before his death at the Camp arranging an orderly transition for this "love of his life."

Today the camp continues its mission of providing a health-focused camp for less-privileged children, many with health problems related to physical, psychological, and social factors. In the summer of 2001, the camp hosted 675 children and 100 senior citizens. The camp remains a non-profit corporation and there is no charge for attendance. *Alumni are encouraged to call 732-548-6542 to aid in the development of an alumni listing.*

Cultural Facilities

7. Plays-in-the-Park theater is located off Pine Dr. in Roosevelt Park close to Grandview Ave. Middlesex County's Plays-in-the-Park is a unique partnership that represents an unparalleled collaboration of government initiative, artistic excellence, and

community spirit. Plays-in-the-Park started in 1963 with a wooden storage shed in a tree-lined grove. By the mid-1970s, more than 150,000 people came to the theater each year. A fire in the middle



of the 1975 summer season burned the wooden building to its concrete foundation. Eventually, county funds were met by dollars from the New Jersey Green Acres Commission and the new Roosevelt Park Amphitheater opened in 1978.

Schools

8. Lakeview School is located on Oak Dr. overlooking the lake in Roosevelt Park. Lakeview is a private school alternative for children with developmental disabilities. Lakeview incorporates traditional academics, including adaptive music and adaptive physical education, life enrichment, family life, self-help, and pre-vocational skills development. The Cerebral Palsy Association of Middlesex County operates the school. In December 2000, a new pavilion was opened that houses an early intervention program for children 3 to 5 years old.



Public Service Facilities

9. Menlo Park Branch Post Office was originally located on several sites near Edison's Menlo Park laboratories. The Post Office is now housed in an office building in the rear of the Menlo Park Mall.

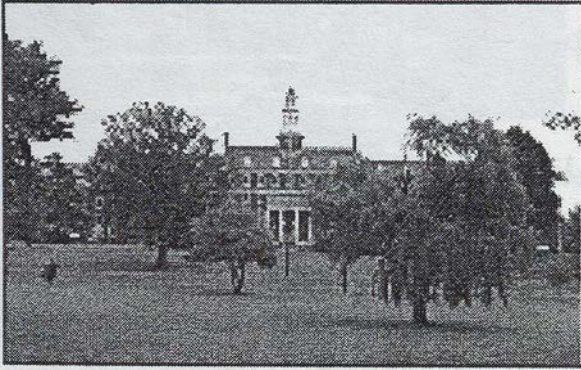
10. Middlesex County Public Health Dept. is located in a stately house at 35 Oakwood Ave. just east of Parsonage Rd. The department provides public health services on a contractual basis for 20 of the smaller communities in Middlesex County.



11. NJ Home for Disabled Soldiers is located at 132 Evergreen Rd. just east of Roosevelt Park. The 109-acre facility is one of New Jersey's three state-operated veterans' nursing homes. Originally built in 1932, the 332-bed facility was rebuilt in 1999 around a "town square" core with resident living areas located around the perimeter. A full-time professional medical staff provides around-the-clock medical and nursing care. Rehabilitative services and recreational activities are also provided. Residents can join American Legion Post 479.



12. Roosevelt Care Center (formerly called Roosevelt Hospital) is located astride Parsonage Rd. at the eastern end of Roosevelt



Park. The facility began as a county facility to treat tuberculosis patients. In 1917, Middlesex County purchased 208 acres in an area "free of population and free of any kind of buildings." However,

actual construction of the facility was delayed by lack of funding until, under the New Deal of President Franklin Roosevelt, money was received through the Emergency Public Works Administration.

Construction of the Colonial Revival-style building began in 1935, and the first patients were admitted in 1937. As the medical needs of county residents changed, the focus shifted to diseases of the chest and chronic illnesses.

In the 1960s, a 250-bed, long-term care wing and special care unit was added. Since the 1990s, as the cost of health care escalates, Middlesex County freeholders have struggled to balance the needs of patients and their families against the cost to county taxpayers. Current plans call for Roosevelt Care Center to be taken over by Solaris Health System, which may replace some or all of the buildings with newer facilities.



Menlo Park



Tour Guide

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Cover Photograph
Edison Tower Museum

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Neighborhood Notes

Menlo Park is named after Menlo Park, California, which, in turn, was named after a part of Ireland. In 1836, the New Jersey Railroad (later the Pennsylvania Railroad) was completed to New Brunswick and stations were constructed in Menlo Park and Metuchen. Uniontown (or Unionville, as Menlo Park was once known) had only a few dwellings, which were near the railroad station. In 1876, Menlo Park was a peaceful area of summer homes belonging to residents of New York City with ready access to New Brunswick and New York via the Pennsylvania Railroad Main Line. Residential development began in 1869 after a massive tract of farmland was sold and subdivided. However, the real estate development failed and the location provided some inexpensive space and a remote spot for Thomas Edison to concentrate on inventing.

Edison purchased two parcels, and the real estate sales office at the corner of Christie St. and Middlesex-Essex Turnpike became the family home. In those days, what we now know as Route 27 was Thornall St., and the Middlesex-Essex Turnpike crossed over the railroad tracks at the bottom of Christie St. Motorists will note that there is still a jog in the road between Christie St. and Frederick St. as a residue of the early alignment.

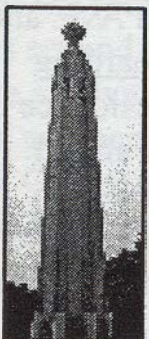


*Edison Homestead,
circa 1910*

**See the map in the center of this booklet for the
locations of the sites described.**

Parks and Historic Sites

1. Edison State Park, on Route 27 across from Evergreen Rd., encompasses most of the sites associated with Thomas Edison's Menlo Park laboratories--the *world's first research and development facility*.



The location of Edison's laboratory buildings and workshops on Christie St. is marked by the Edison Memorial Tower, made of Portland Cement, which was just one of Edison's 1093 patents (*see the map on page 5*). A previous steel tower built in 1929 was damaged by a severe storm and replaced by the present concrete structure in 1938. For more information on the tower, visit www.edisonnj.org/menlopark/towerhistory.

Motorists traveling north on the NJ Tpke. can still glimpse the remains of Edison's Portland Cement plant in south Edison. A tall smokestack is visible on the right from the Raritan River overpass.

From 1876 to 1886, while working at Menlo Park, Edison received more than 400 patents for his inventions and discoveries, earning him the nickname, "The Wizard of Menlo Park".



Edison Laboratory, circa 1910

At one time, Edison employed as many as 200 workers in Menlo Park. He was also among the first employers in the area to hire Asian and African-Americans as skilled workers.

For Christmas 1879, Edison and his workers placed lamps on Christie St. and elsewhere on the 45-acre site to demonstrate the viability of incandescent electric lamps made in his lamp factory, which was just over the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks. Middlesex Ave. next to the Tower was the location of the railroad tracks on which Edison's patented electric locomotive traveled in 1881. Later, the line was extended from Menlo Park to near Pumpton on the grounds of what is now the Metuchen Country Club. Copper is an important metal for electrical conductors, so Edison reopened a copper mine in Mine Gully, located approximately where the United Skates of America roller skating arena is today. The mine was more than 100 feet deep, but did not provide sufficient materials and was abandoned.

The small Museum adjacent to the Tower houses many artifacts from this prolific period of Edison's life. Rutgers University, the Smithsonian, and many others are collaborating on the Thomas A. Edison Papers Project to organize and publish a select edition of his papers. Documents from Parts I-III (1850-1898) of the papers are now online at <http://edison.rutgers.edu/>.

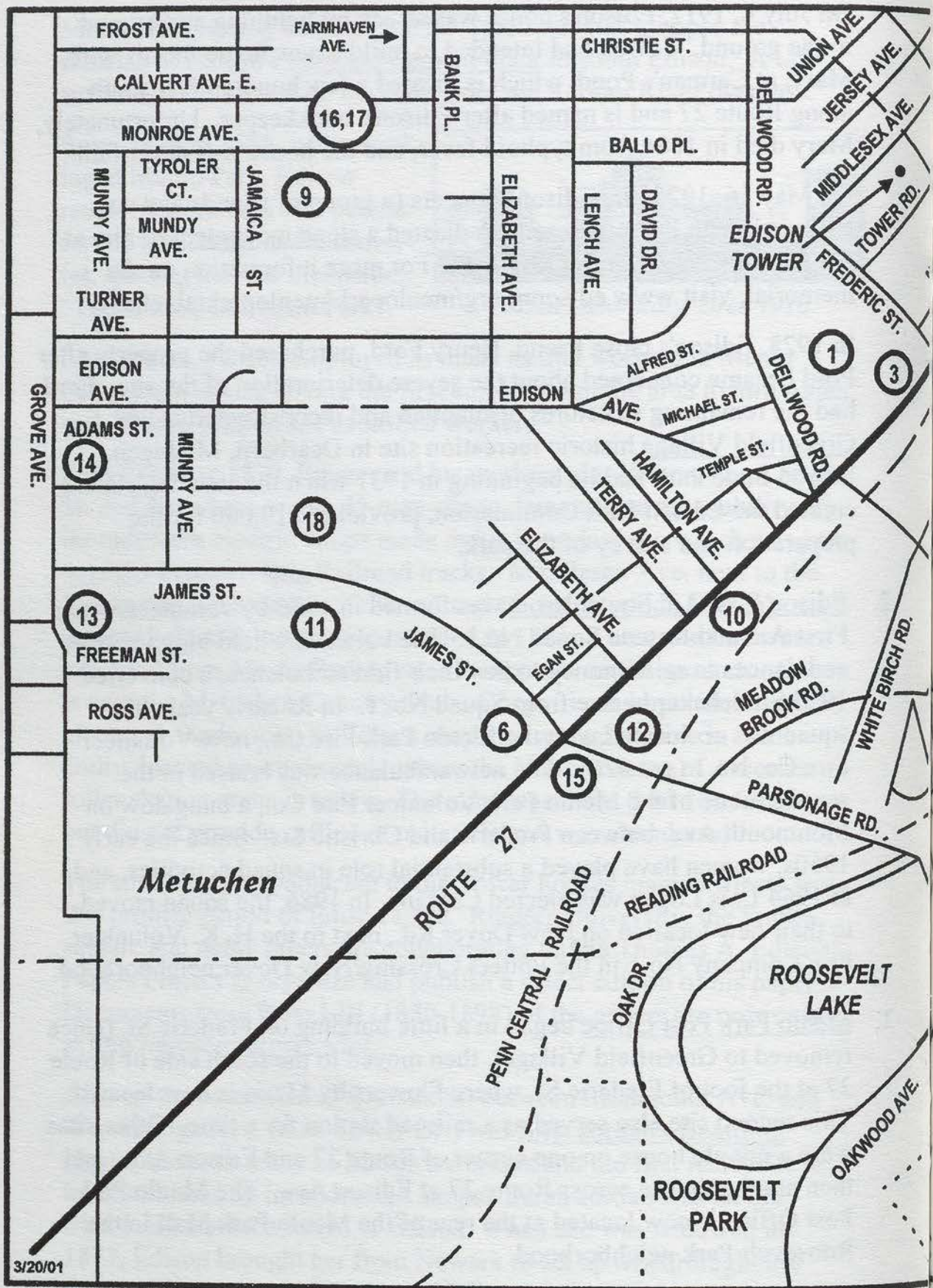
Also on the north side of Christie St. between Monmouth Ave. and Woodbridge Ave. (now Tower Dr.) was Mrs. Jordan's Boarding House, home to many of Edison's workers and the first residence to be illuminated by incandescent lamps. Sarah Jordan was an old friend and distant relative of Edison. When she was widowed in 1877, Edison brought her from Newark to set up a boardinghouse that provided a home for many of Edison's unmarried employees and provided Mrs. Jordan with income.

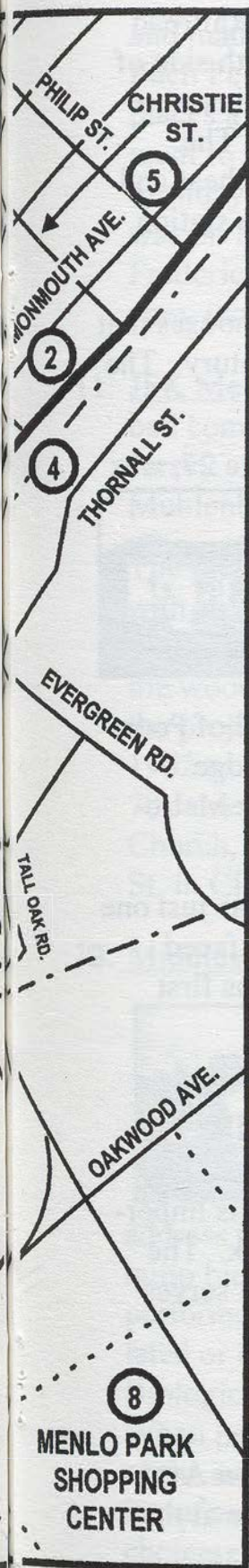
On July 4, 1917, Edison's house was struck by lightning and burned to the ground. Edison had intended to build a new home for his wife, Mary, at Carman's Pond, which is located a few hundred feet south along Route 27 and is named after Edison's bookkeeper. Unfortunately, Mary died in 1884 from typhoid fever, and the house was never built.

On May 16, 1925, the Edison Pioneers (a group of friends and co-workers), with Edison present, dedicated a stone monument to him at the foot of Christie St. on Route 27. For more information on the memorial, visit www.edisonnj.org/menlopark/menloparktablet.asp.

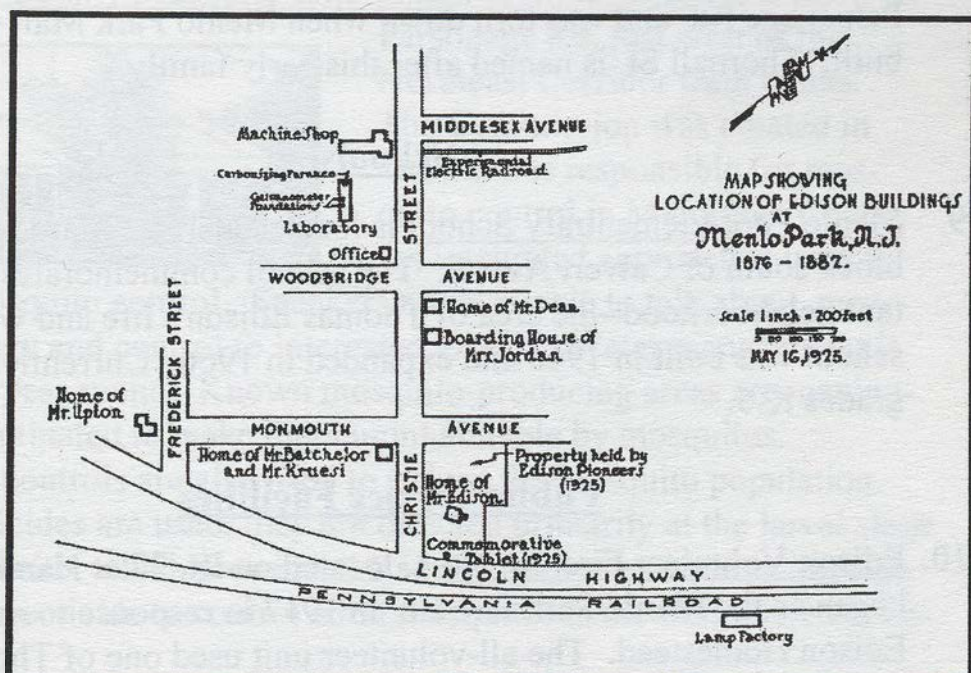
In 1928, Edison's close friend, Henry Ford, purchased the property after Ford became concerned about the severe deterioration of the site. Ford had the remaining structures dismantled and reconstructed at his Greenfield Village historic recreation site in Dearborn, Michigan. Edison State Park had its beginning in 1931 when the state legislature created the Edison Park Commission, providing \$10,000 for the preparation and survey of the park.

2. Edison First Aid Squad No. 2 was formed in 1936 by volunteers from First Aid and Rescue Squad No.1. The volunteers held bingo parties and dances to raise money to buy their first ambulance, a converted 1927 Studebaker hearse from Squad No. 1. In its early years, the squad was co-located with the Menlo Park Fire Co., now Volunteer Fire Co. No.1 (*see #10*). The new ambulance was housed in the second home of the Menlo Park Volunteer Fire Co., a bungalow on Monmouth Ave. between Frederic and Christie Sts. Since the early 1950s, women have played a substantial role in squad activities, and in 1964 Lois Logan was elected Captain. In 1986, the squad moved to their new location on New Dover Rd., next to the H. K. Volunteer Fire Company No.1 in the Potters Crossing/New Dover neighborhood.
3. Menlo Park Post Office began in a little building on Frederic St. (since removed to Greenfield Village), then moved to the south side of Route 27 at the foot of Frederic St. where Flowers by Maria is now located. This second site also served as a railroad station for a time. Other sites were a private house on one corner of Route 27 and Edison Ave., and then another house across Route 27 at Edison Ave. The Menlo Park Post Office is now located at the rear of the Menlo Park Mall in the Roosevelt Park neighborhood.



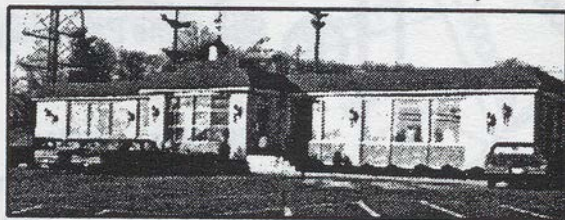


- | | |
|---|--|
| ① Edison State Park | ⑩ Edison Volunteer Fire Co. No. 1 |
| ② Former site of Edison First Aid Squad No. 2 | ⑪ JFK Medical Center |
| ③ Former site of Menlo Park Post Office | ⑫ Middlesex County Mosquito Extermination Commission |
| ④ Former site of Menlo Park Train Station | ⑬ Monument to Korean & Viet Nam War Veterans |
| ⑤ Site of Old Menlo Park School | ⑭ Chabad of Edison |
| ⑥ Site of the Parsonage Diner | ⑮ Eckankar Satsang Society of NJ |
| ⑦ Site of the Raritan Township Poor Farm (not shown on map) | ⑯ Korean Presbyterian Church |
| ⑧ Site of the Thornall Farm | ⑰ Our Savior's Lutheran Church |
| ⑨ Menlo Park Elementary School | ⑱ Temple Emanu-El |



Location of Edison buildings, 1876-1882

4. Menlo Park Train Station was situated on the Pennsylvania Railroad Line, now known as the Northeast Corridor Line, on the south side of the tracks at the foot of Frederic St. Before automobiles, trains were the only convenient way to travel between cities and towns. The Menlo Park station allowed New York residents to leave the heat and noise of the city for their summer homes in the country. The station even served as the locale for a Sunday School in the 1870s.
5. Old Menlo Park School was one of the 10 one-room school houses that served Raritan Township up to the beginning of the 20th century. The building was used until the 1940s.
6. Parsonage Diner, located at the corner of James St. and Route 27, was a favorite gathering spot for high school students and other residents for many years. In 1998, it was torn down and a Rite Aid pharmacy was built on the site.



7. Raritan Township Poor Farm was located at the southern end of Poor Farm Rd., an extension of Wood Ave. just over the Woodbridge border. Established before 1875, the site is now occupied by Metro-park office buildings.
8. Thornall Farm, located at the site of the Menlo Park Mall, was just one of many family farms in the area. The Israel Thornall house faced Parsonage Rd. and was torn down when Menlo Park Mall was first built. Thornall St. is named after this early family.

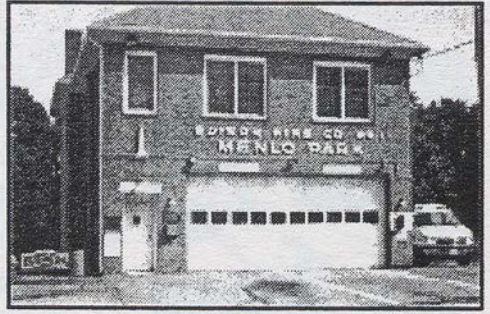
Schools

9. Menlo Park Elementary School is located at 155 Monroe Ave., one block south of Calvert Ave. E. The school commemorates this important neighborhood--the area of Thomas Edison's life and work. The school was built in 1963 and expanded in 1966. Currently, it serves grades K-5.

Public Service Facilities

10. Edison Volunteer Fire Co. No.1, located on Rt. 27 at Hamilton Ave., began as the Menlo Park Fire Co. in 1917 in response to a fire at the Edison Homestead. The all-volunteer unit used one of Thomas Edison's old machine shops to house their hook and ladder apparatus,

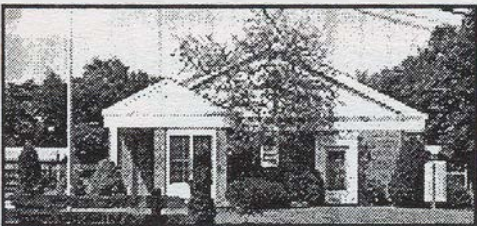
and made him an honorary member. Each February 11, the Fire Company places a wreath at the Edison Monument to commemorate the inventor's birthday. The company's second home was on Monmouth Ave. between Frederick and Christie Sts. The company moved to the present firehouse on Route 27 in 1941.



11. JFK Medical Center, located at 65 James St., has grown from a 205-bed community hospital in 1967 to one of the largest hospitals in New Jersey. It is now part of the Solaris Health System which also includes Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center in Plainfield.

The idea for a hospital to serve Edison's growing population started with a conversation during a coffee break in an Edison Town Council meeting in 1958. At the time, James St. was just a dirt track through the woods. Former Mayor Anthony Yelencsics was a prime mover in the project, and encouraged the formation of the JFK Auxiliary in 1962 to help with the capital campaign. The JFK Conference Center, 70 James St., had been part of St. Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church, which now occupies a spectacular new building at 215 May St. in Clara Barton.

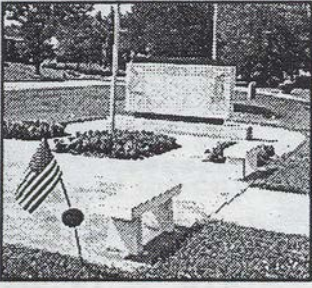
12. Middlesex County Mosquito Extermination Commission is located on



Parsonage Rd. just west of the Northeast Corridor train tracks. The Commission was created in 1914 and is responsible for mosquito control in Middlesex County. An integrated approach is used to

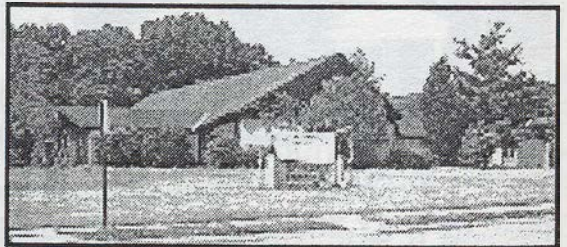
address mosquito control. Speakers are available to talk about mosquito biology and control to interested groups. Water management is performed year round. Known mosquito-producing areas are manipulated or eliminated to make them uninhabitable by mosquitos. Biological controls are also used to reduce the mosquito population. When pesticides are used, they are directed primarily at the larval stage of the mosquito, which prevents the adults from ever forming. Spraying of an insecticide to control adult mosquitos is the Commission's last choice.

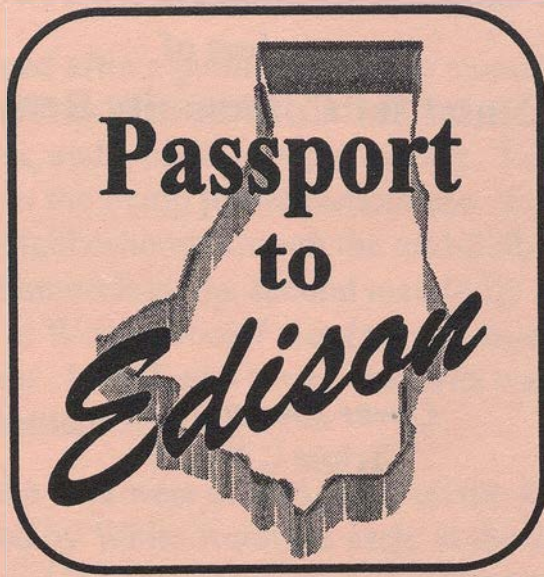
13. Monument to Korean & Viet Nam Veterans is located at the triangular intersection of Grove, Freeman and Cutter Aves., south of James St.. This black and gray granite monument honors 13 area servicemen lost in Viet Nam and 3 area servicemen lost in Korea. It was sponsored by VFW Posts 3117 and 9626 and American Legion Posts 435 and 479.



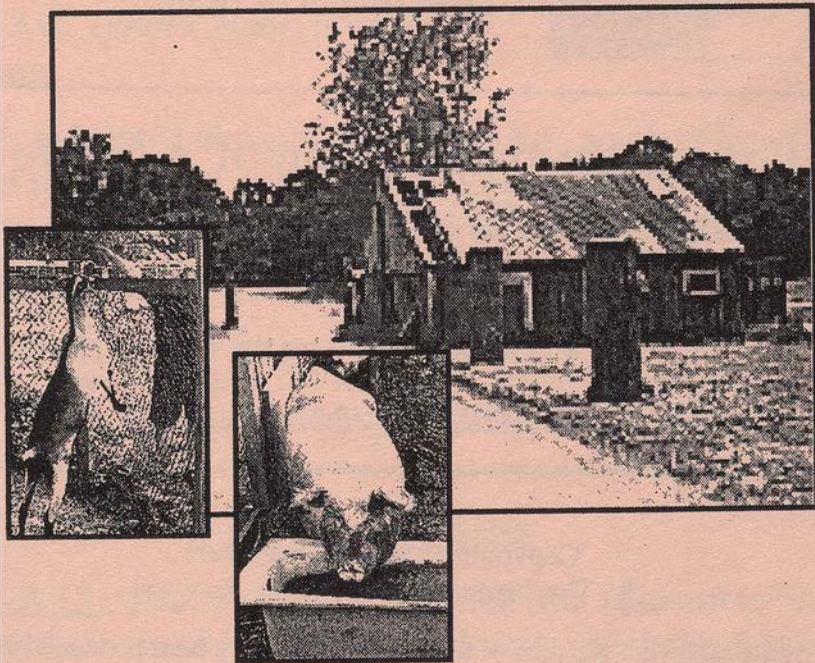
Houses of Worship

14. Chabad of Edison , at 527 Grove Ave., provides outreach, Hebrew Schools, hospital chaplaincy, summer camps, Dial-a-Torah message, counseling, Moshiach Campaign, and holiday programs.
15. Eckankar Satsang Society of NJ is located at 3 Route 27 close to the intersection with James St. Eckankar, an ancient philosophy that resurfaced in 1965, emphasizes the value of personal experiences. For more information, visit www.eckankar-nj.org.
16. Korean Presbyterian Church, located at 50 Calvert Ave. E., uses the facilities of Our Savior's Lutheran Church (*see #17*).
17. Our Savior's Lutheran Church, located at 50 Calvert Ave. E., generously shares its building and facilities with the Korean Presbyterian Church of Edison (*see #16*).
18. Temple Emanu-El is located at 100 James St. across from JFK Medical Center (*see #11*). This Reform congregation was organized in 1961. In early years, it held many services in the Fellowship Hall of St. Stephen's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Clara Barton. Other services and functions were held in Wesley Methodist Church and the Raritan Engine Co. No. 2 firehouse. When the congregation outgrew the Fellowship Hall, they purchased the old St. Stephen's Lutheran Church Chapel, and in 1966, purchased from the Township the 4 acres of land on James St. where the Temple now stands.





Pumptown/ New Petrograd



Tour Guide

Passport to Edison – 2001
is a project of
The Center for Community Renewal

Cover Photograph
Triple C Ranch

This program has been made possible in part by the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission through a grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, Division of Cultural Affairs, Department of State.

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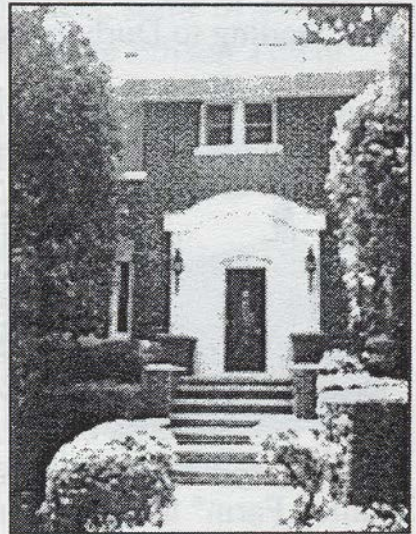
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Neighborhood Notes

Pumptown is named after a public pump that stood in the middle of the intersection of Park Ave. and Plainfield Rd. There was a tin cup for people to drink, and a place to water horses. Local residents also fetched water from the pump for household use. Several dairy farms operated in the neighborhood through the mid-20th century. There are pictures of Chamberlain, the second man to fly across the Atlantic, next to his plane at Wood Brook Farm (*see #5*) where he stopped for milk and ice cream. In Colonial times, this area was considered part of the Oak Tree settlement.

New Petrograd, the area west of Park Ave. on the South Plainfield border, was settled by White Russians early in the 20th century.

Accessed by either Universal Ave. or Nevsky St., its streets abound with names such as Peace, Hope, Spring, Summer, and Alexander. Nevsky St. was originally called Nevsky Prospect after the celebrated main thoroughfare of St. Petersburg, site of the Russian Winter Palace, now the world-famous Hermitage Museum. A close look around the area will reveal several original settlement homes. For example, the old Russian parsonage at 200 Fleet Ave. (*photo, right*) is now a private home.



New Durham located along New Durham Rd., south of Interstate 287, was one of the Colonial settlements in Edison Township. New Durham School was one of the 10 one-room school houses that served the township until early in the 20th century.

See the map in the center of this booklet for the locations of the sites described.

Historic Sites

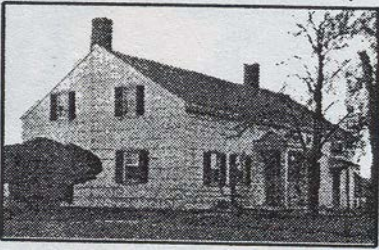
1. Paddock Ct., a cul-de-sac off Plainfield Rd. adjacent to St. Joseph's High School (*see #16*), is built on the site of a horse farm that succumbed to development pressures in the 1980s.

2. Pumptown Corners Tavern at 222 Plainfield Rd. is now known as Charlie Brown's Restaurant (*photo, right*). Pumptown Corners Tavern was a stop for the stagecoach to New Brunswick. A rough map of the area, circa 1800, shows that there was an older Pumptown Inn near the present day intersection of Park Ave. and Talmadge Rd. (*see page 8*).

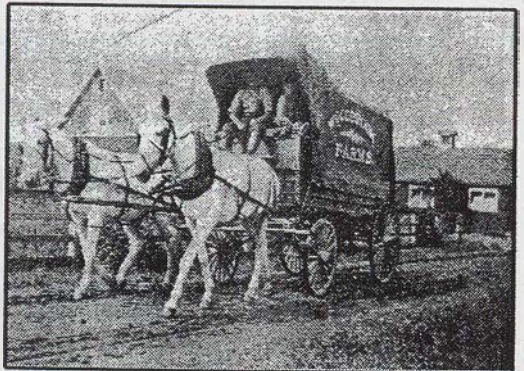


3. Reading Railroad is one of several built in the area at the end of the 19th century. To provide additional rail access to Camp Kilmer during World War II, a branch off the main line was built, starting where Durham Woods Apartments now stand. Reading Rd., leading to Durham Woods, is the legacy of this branch line.

4. Shotwell House, at 26 Runyons La., was built by Benjamin Shotwell prior to 1775. His daughter inherited the house and sold it to John Runyon. It remained in the Runyon family until 1946. Runyons La. and Runyon Ave. in the Stelton neighborhood of Edison are named for the family. Entered in the National Register of Historic Places in 1987, it is still a private home. The area was named "Happy Valley Farm" to distinguish it from the neighboring "Dismal Swamp" (*see #6*).

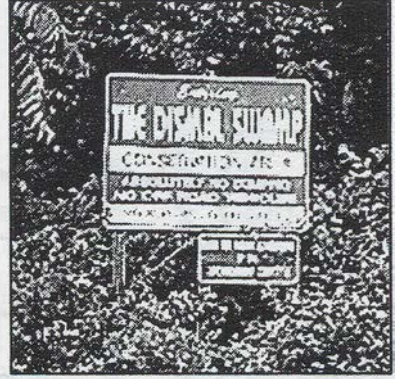


5. Wood Brook Farm was at the intersection of Talmadge Rd. and Park Ave. where the Woodbrook Corners development is now located. The dairy farm served the area for many years. By 1922, the dairy delivered milk to 150 cities and towns. The Woodbrook Corners development was built on the site from 1982-1988. The farm's location in the Dismal Swamp (*see #6*) illustrates the changing human uses of the Swamp--from Native American settlements to Colonial-era farms, and now to housing developments.



Parks

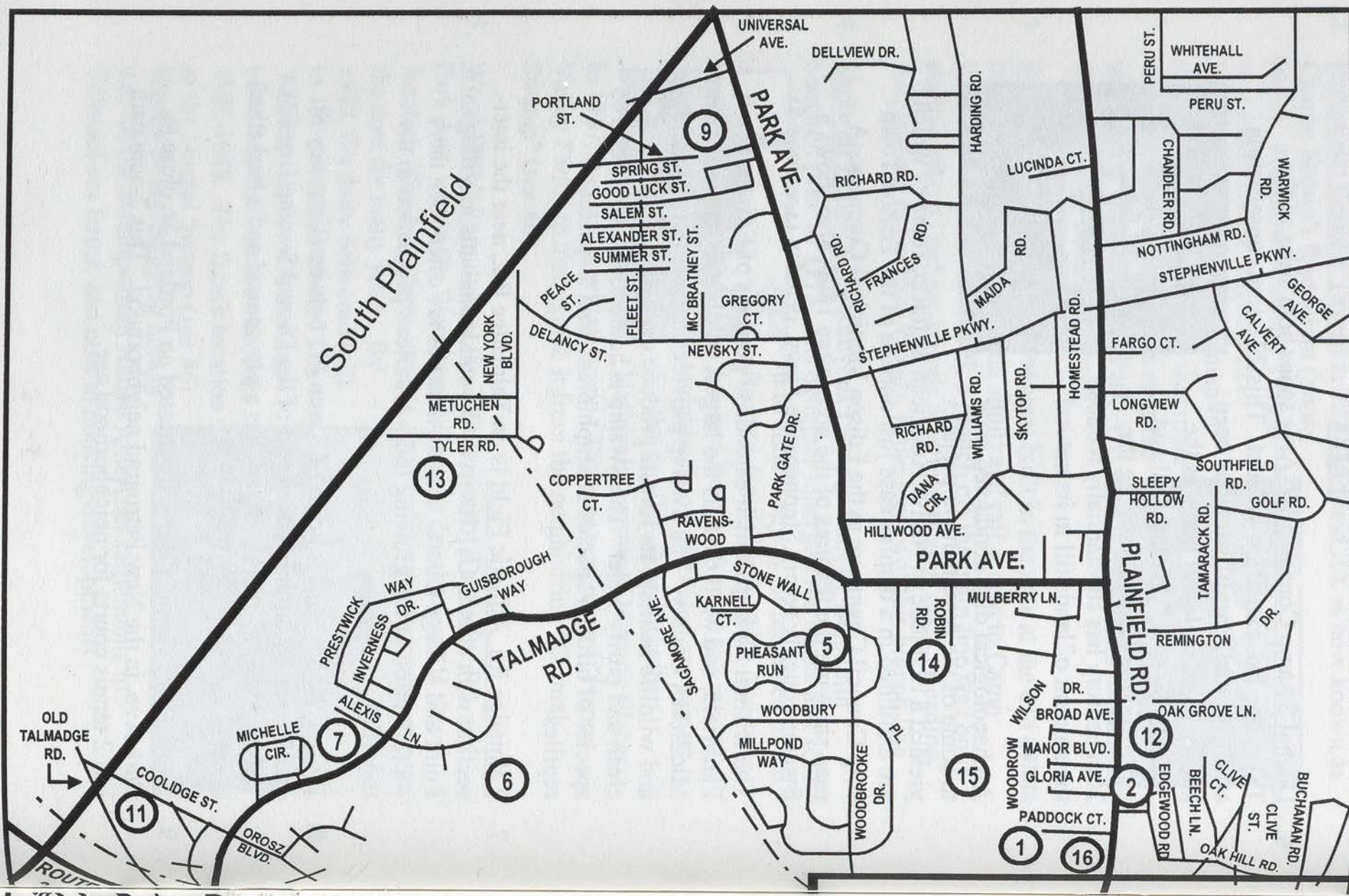
6. Dismal Swamp Conservation Area spans both sides of the Talmadge Rd. extension viaduct. This 272-acre conservation area is a small part of what has been known since Colonial times as the "Dismal Swamp." Residential and industrial development during the 20th century has substantially reduced the amount of land still in its natural state.

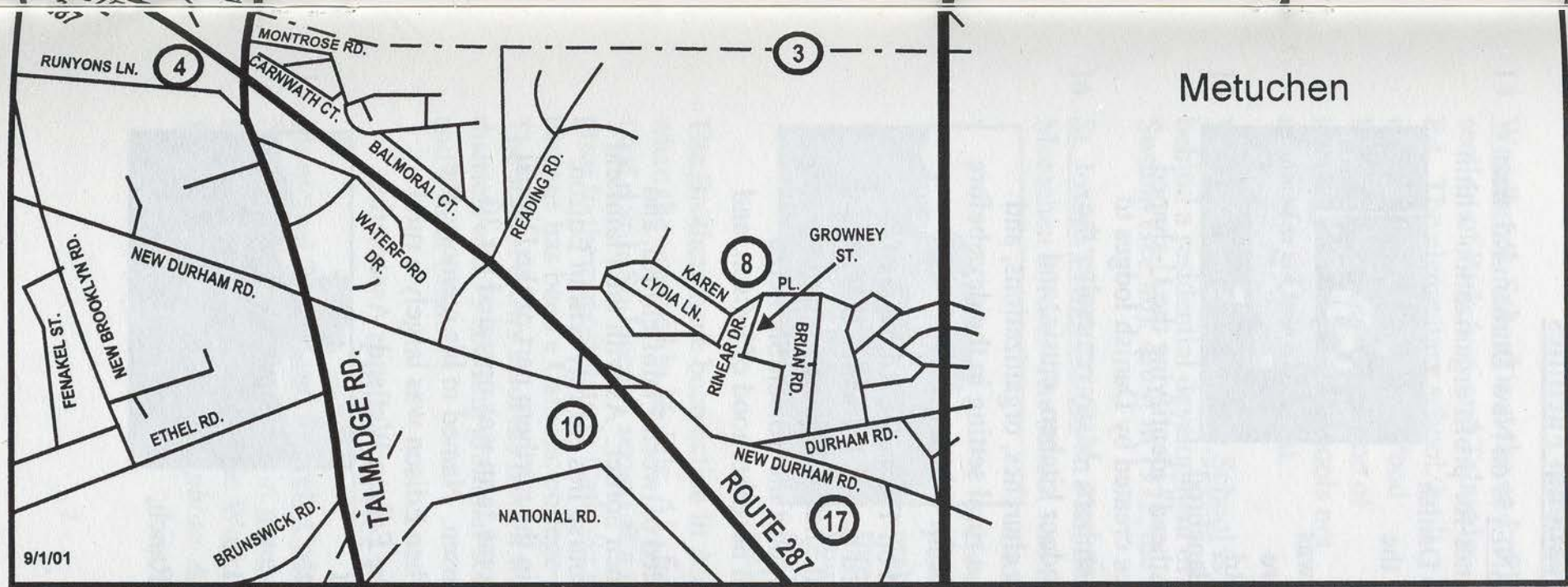


Archaeological digs conducted prior to some of the development projects yielded a rich lode of Native American artifacts, some of which are exhibited in a display case just outside of the Edison Township Council Chambers in the Edison Municipal Complex. A map showing the features of the area, circa 1800, also shows a Swamp roughly where Stephenville Pkwy. is today (*see page 8*).

The Dismal Swamp, which extends to portions of Edison, South Plainfield, and Metuchen, is the largest wildlife refuge in northern Middlesex County. The Swamp provides natural flood control and wildlife habitat. Its forests produce oxygen, and its wetlands clean and purify water. The Swamp is home to an estimated 165 species of birds, 6 species of amphibians, and 8 species of reptiles.

7. Talmadge Rd. Athletic Field is on Talmadge Rd., near the intersection with Alexis La. It serves the condominiums in Village Point and Village Court. Cricket matches are often seen there --a reflection of the growing Indo-American population in the township.
8. Edison Woods Park is north of Karen Pl., between Growney St. and Rinear Dr. in the eastern part of the Dismal Swamp (*see #6*). This 3-acre neighborhood park has a playground and a basketball court.
9. Portland St. Tennis Courts are located on Portland St. close to Park Ave. in the New Petrograd neighborhood. This 2-acre park has 2 tennis courts for neighborhood use.





- ① Paddock Ct.
- ② Site of Pumptown Corners Tavern
- ③ Reading Railroad
- ④ Shotwell House
- ⑤ Site of Wood Brook Farm
- ⑥ Dismal Swamp Conservation Area

- ⑦ Talmadge Rd. Athletic Field
- ⑧ Edison Woods Park
- ⑨ Portland St. Tennis Courts
- ⑩ Danish Archives North East
- ⑪ Loyal Order of Moose
- ⑫ Metuchen Country Club

- ⑬ Triple C Ranch
- ⑭ Woodbrook School
- ⑮ Woodrow Wilson Middle School
- ⑯ St. Joseph's High School
- ⑰ Municipal Garage & Recycle Center

Civic/Cultural/Recreational Facilities

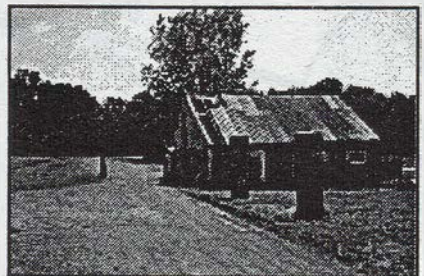
10. Danish Archives North East (DANE) is on New Durham Rd. near Interstate 287. DANE is a new, not-for-profit organization within an old community landmark, the Danish Home for the Aged, now simply the Danish Home.



The Danish Home for the Aged was established in 1914 on the 72-acre Tonnele farm on New Durham Rd.

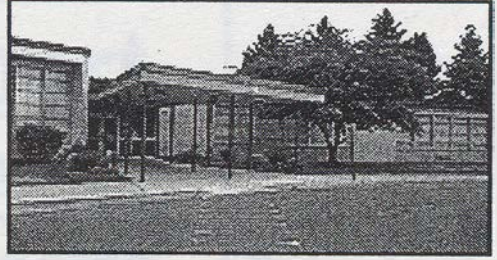
Today, the American flag and "danebrod" (the Danish flag) fly on the "masthead" identifying the U-shaped, Danish farmhouse-style residence created by Danish lodges to care for generational needs of members. Many remember the grassy fields, picnic benches, outdoor kitchen, music, and dancing. It became the place for churches, organizations, and family groups to have picnics in a rural setting in the days before Interstate 287. It is still available for this purpose.

11. Loyal Order of Moose is located on Talmadge Rd. west of Coolidge St. The lodge is located across Talmadge Rd. from the former site of the Edison Animal Shelter, now the site of a sewage pumping station. The Moose support the Edison Sheltered Workshop, located in the Stelton neighborhood of Edison, and other local civic projects.
12. Metuchen Country Club is situated between Plainfield Rd. and Grove Ave., north of the Metuchen border. As with the Plainfield Country club, this private golf course lies entirely within Edison.
13. Triple C Ranch is on Tyler Rd. in the northern part of the Dismal Swamp (see #6). This former horse farm was operated for 30 years by Christopher C. Christensen. Named in his memory, the site is reminiscent of the time when Edison was largely a rural farming community. In 2001, the Edison Wetlands Association, a local environmental non-profit organization, purchased the ranch, and plans to create an environmental education and nature center, and to restore the ranch. For additional information about the Triple C Ranch, visit www.edisonwetlands.org.



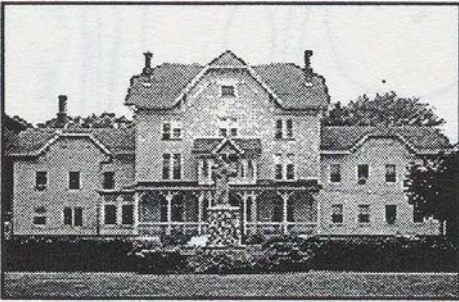
Schools

14. Woodbrook School is at the end of Robin Rd., near the intersection of Park Ave. and Talmadge Rd. The elementary school, built in 1967, and named for Wood Brook Farm (*see #5*), is one of the few Edison public schools not named for a U.S. president.



15. Woodrow Wilson Middle School is on Woodrow Wilson Dr. behind a residential development off Plainfield Rd. in the Dismal Swamp (*see #6*). Built in 1972, the school serves grades 6-8.

16. St. Joseph's High School on Plainfield Rd. straddles the Edison-Metuchen border. The school was founded in 1901 by the



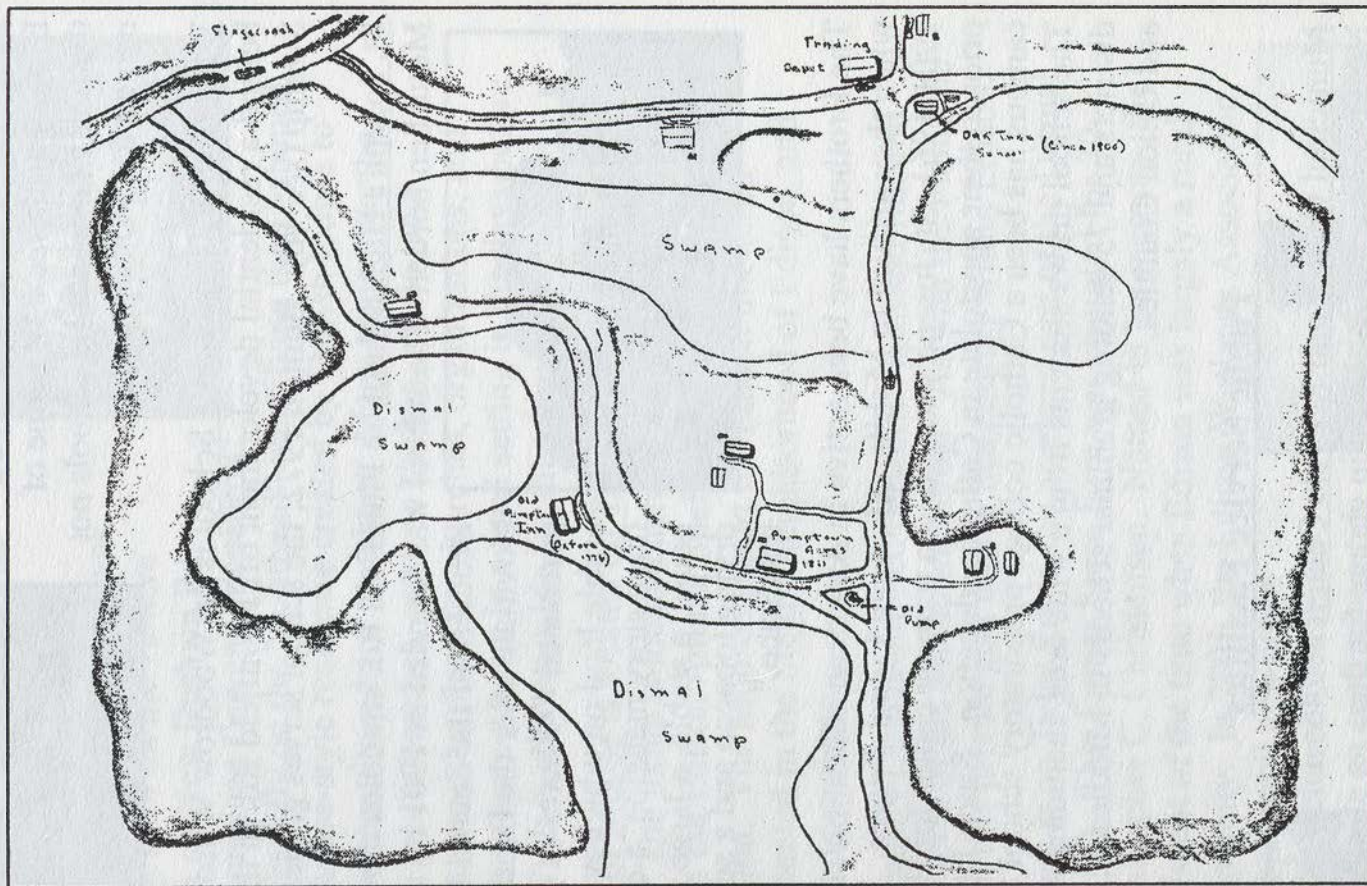
Brothers of the Sacred Heart as a Novitiate after the Brotherhood purchased "75 acres of good arable land on which was a large three story mansion, a carriage house, a stable, a large shed for drying tobacco and a servant's residence."

The Brothers have been active in American education since 1847 when they arrived in Mobile, AL, from Lyons, France. From 1901-1961, St. Joseph's served as a training center for Brothers prior to their apostolate in Catholic education. Since 1961, the campus has been a Catholic college-preparatory school for boys. The school draws students from a wide area, including 40 school districts and 75 sending grammar schools in Middlesex, Somerset, and Union Counties.

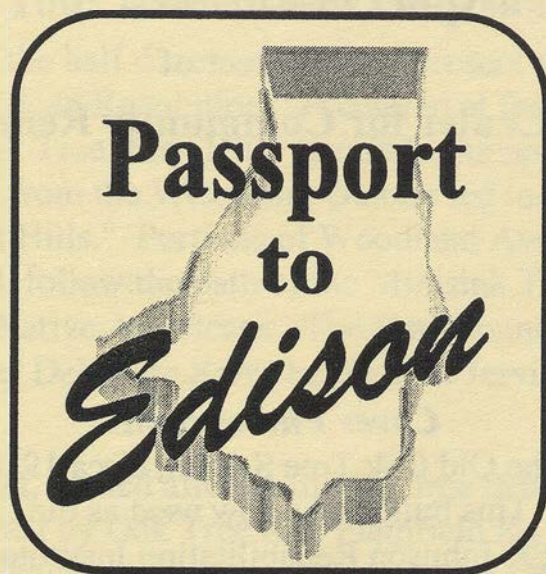
Public Service Facilities

17. Municipal Garage and Recycle Center, at 745 New Durham Rd., is the main garage for the Edison Department of Public Works. A graceful fountain stands on the site (*photo, right*).

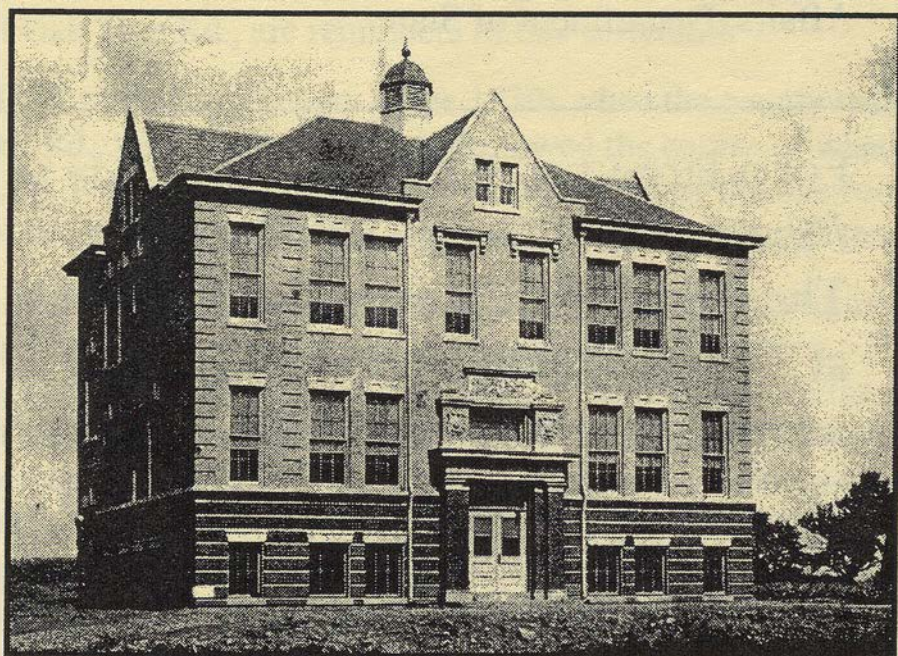




This map of the Pumptown and Oak Tree areas, circa 1880, shows the public pump at the intersection of Plainfield Rd. and Park Ave. Note that Park Ave. turns to the right about the location of the present day Nevsky St. and then proceeds northwest along the alignment of the present day Metuchen Rd. Also note the designation of a swamp a little north of the present day Stephenville Pkwy.



Oak Tree



Tour Guide

Passport to Edison – 2001
is a project of
The Center for Community Renewal

Cover Photograph

The Old Oak Tree School, circa 1910.

This building is now used as the
JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute.

This program has been made possible in part
by the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage
Commission through a grant from the New Jersey
Historical Commission, Division of Cultural
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Neighborhood Notes

Oak Tree, one of the half dozen sections of present-day Edison that predates the American Revolution, is centered at the intersection of Plainfield and Oak Tree Rds. Hilly terrain to the north caused by terminal moraine from the Wisconsin Glacier led to the area being called "The Short Hills." Portions of Woodland Ave., Oak Tree Rd., and Plainfield Rd. follow the path of the Minisink Trail used by the Raritan Tribe of Native Americans. The Trail connected Minisink Island in the upper Delaware River below Port Jervis with the Jersey shore.

Oak Tree is, in fact, named after an old oak tree that stood in the triangle now formed by Oak Tree Rd., Plainfield Rd., and Marion St., and is cited as a landmark in many deeds. In the 19th century, Oak Tree Rd. was known as the road to Uniontown--an earlier name for what we now call Menlo Park and Iselin. Until about 1850, Oak Tree was a *colonial trade center* with a farmers' market under the tree, and a trading depot on the northwest corner of the intersection. Oak Tree later included the communities of Swamton (later called Brookville), Dog Tavern, and Pumpton. Prior to the formation of Raritan Township in 1870, Woodbridge Township extended to Woodland Ave. and included Oak Tree. In the first half of the 20th century, Ten Eyck's *sawmill* operated at the intersection of Oak Tree Rd. and Grove Ave. Timber Rd. and Ten Eyck Pl., off Grove Ave. south of Oak Tree Rd., are reminders of this early mill.



The old oak tree was cut down in the 1930s when the county realigned Oak Tree Rd., which had previously followed the course of what is now Marion St. Rachel Kelly planted a new oak tree near the one-room schoolhouse that is a real estate office today. The tree is still there.

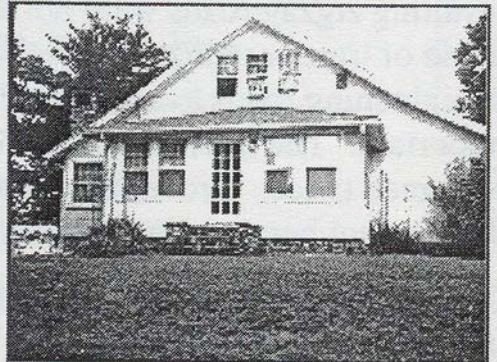
(Roads in the Colonial period often followed Indian trails, adjusted for the boundaries of farms and to avoid large trees and boulders. The resulting zigzag roads were not a problem when horses were the main mode of transportation. With the advent of automobiles, however, straightening roads to speed traffic flow and reduce accidents became important. The intersection of Grove Ave. and Oak Tree Rd. was realigned twice. Grove Ave. at New Dover Rd. is a colonial era road that has not been realigned and straightened.)

Grove Ave. (Dark Lane) was established as a 2-rod road in 1784. Early in the 20th century, there was an airport on the north side of Oak Tree Rd., between Wood Ave. and the Garden State Parkway of today.

See the map in the center of this booklet for the locations of the sites described.

Historic Sites

1. Battle of The Short Hills - Early on June 26, 1777, a British column under Lord Cornwallis left Perth Amboy and marched through Woodbridge to Oak Tree Rd. They encountered resistance from Americans under the command of Captain Dark at Strawberry Hill, just outside Woodbridge. The British continued west, encountering another group of Americans under General Conway near what is now Wood Ave. Although these Americans retreated west, the British encountered a more significant American corps with cannon on a small hill at the corner of Oak Tree and New Dover Rds. The British drove the Americans off the hill, and the battle continued through the area between Tingley La. and Woodland Ave. into Scotch Plains. As a result of the delay caused by these skirmishes, the main contingent of the Continental Army was able to retreat to the safety of the Watchung Mountains. Frustrated by their inability to engage and defeat General Washington, the British retreated to Perth Amboy, then left New Jersey. In recognition of this resistance by American troops, the Oak Tree Pond property, on the northeast corner of Oak Tree and New Dover Rds., is currently under review for listing as a National Historic Site. (*For more about this important Revolutionary War battle, see the booklet "The Battle of The Short Hills."*)
2. Dutch Miele's Dugout - Dutch Miele was a local baseball player who played for a minor league team in Syracuse, NY. He started a hot dog stand where the Krausers' Store now stands at the corner of Oak Tree and New Dover Rds. Later, he moved and set up a nightclub on Oak Tree Rd. across from the current location of the Liquor Locker. It was a favorite gathering spot for teachers until it was destroyed by fire.
3. Early Oak Tree Schoolhouses - In 1689, James Fullerton established the first school in the area. In 1816, Bethune Dunkin began a 45-year teaching career at the Oak Tree School that stood by the name-sake old oak tree. Later, Oak Tree School No. 6 was built in the triangle formed by Oak Tree Rd., Plainfield Rd., and Marion St.; today, the building houses a real



estate office. After a larger Oak Tree School was built in 1909, the old school was sold to Myra Biggs, a teacher and principal at the school, who converted it into a house.

4. Old Oak Tree School at 2050 Oak Tree Rd., just east of Plainfield Rd., was built in 1909, replacing the two, one-room schoolhouses in the area. An annex was added in 1950-1952. The school was closed in 1982 as enrollment declined throughout the Township and pupils were shifted to newer schools. The building now houses the JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Center and other health-related services affiliated with JFK Medical Center, including JFK Hartwyck at Oak Tree.

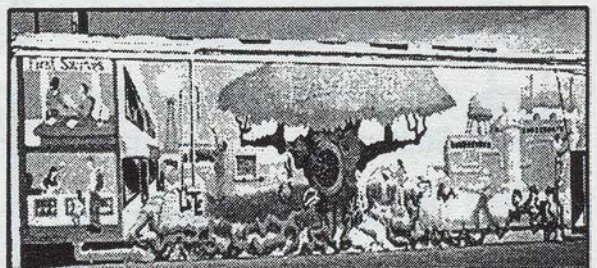


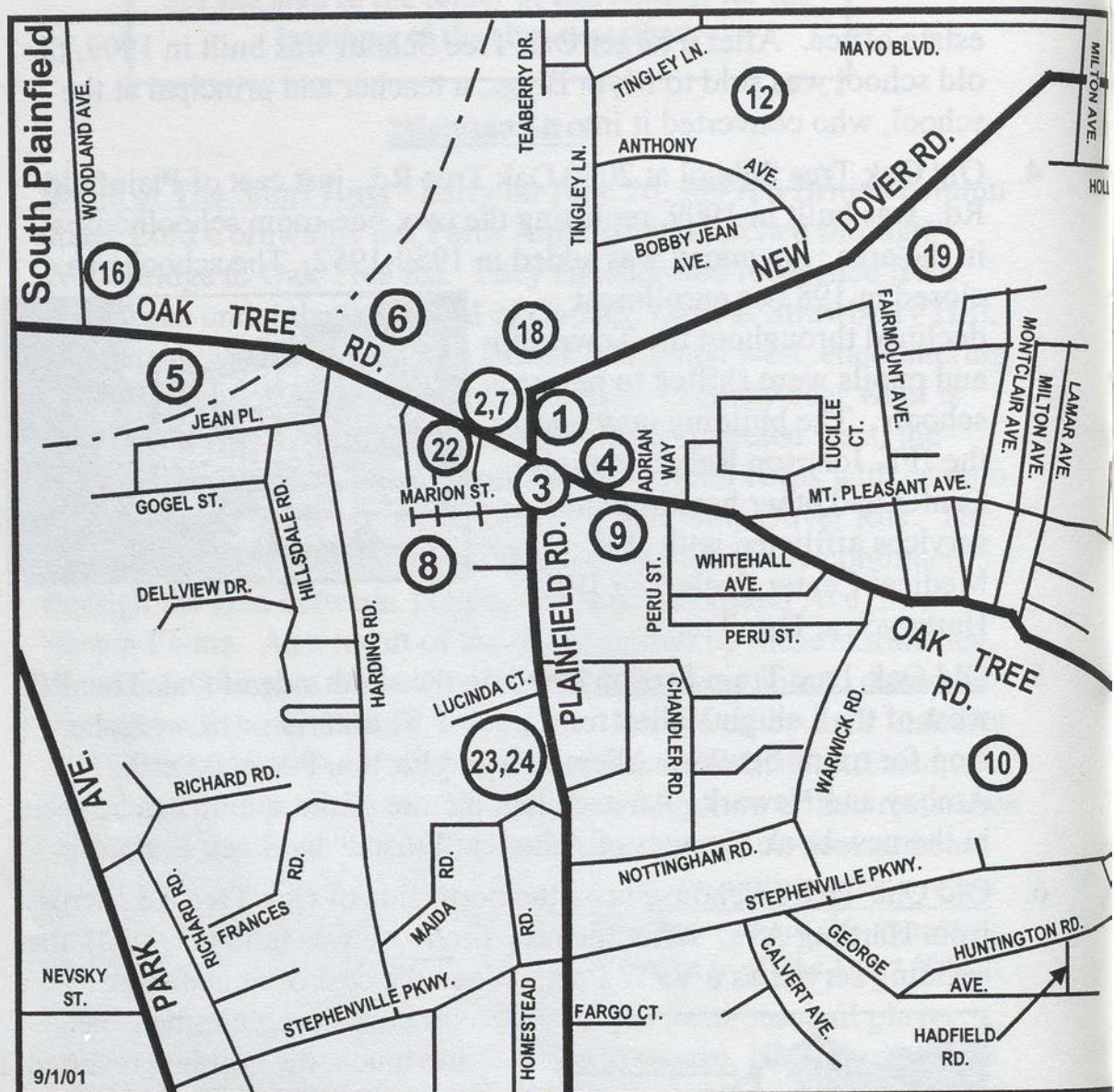
5. Old Oak Tree Train Station stood on the south side of Oak Tree Rd. west of the Lehigh Valley train tracks. The station was a regular stop for trains between Allentown and Easton, PA, and Perth Amboy and Newark. An excellent picture of the station can be seen in the new book "Images of America: Edison" by Stacy E. Spies.
6. Old Oak Tree Firehouse is on the north side of Oak Tree Rd., across from Harding Ave. After the new firehouse was built (see #22), the building served as a VFW Post. When the cost of remediating



structural problems became too much, the building reverted to the Township. In 1999, it was sold to a local builder who is renovating it for commercial use.

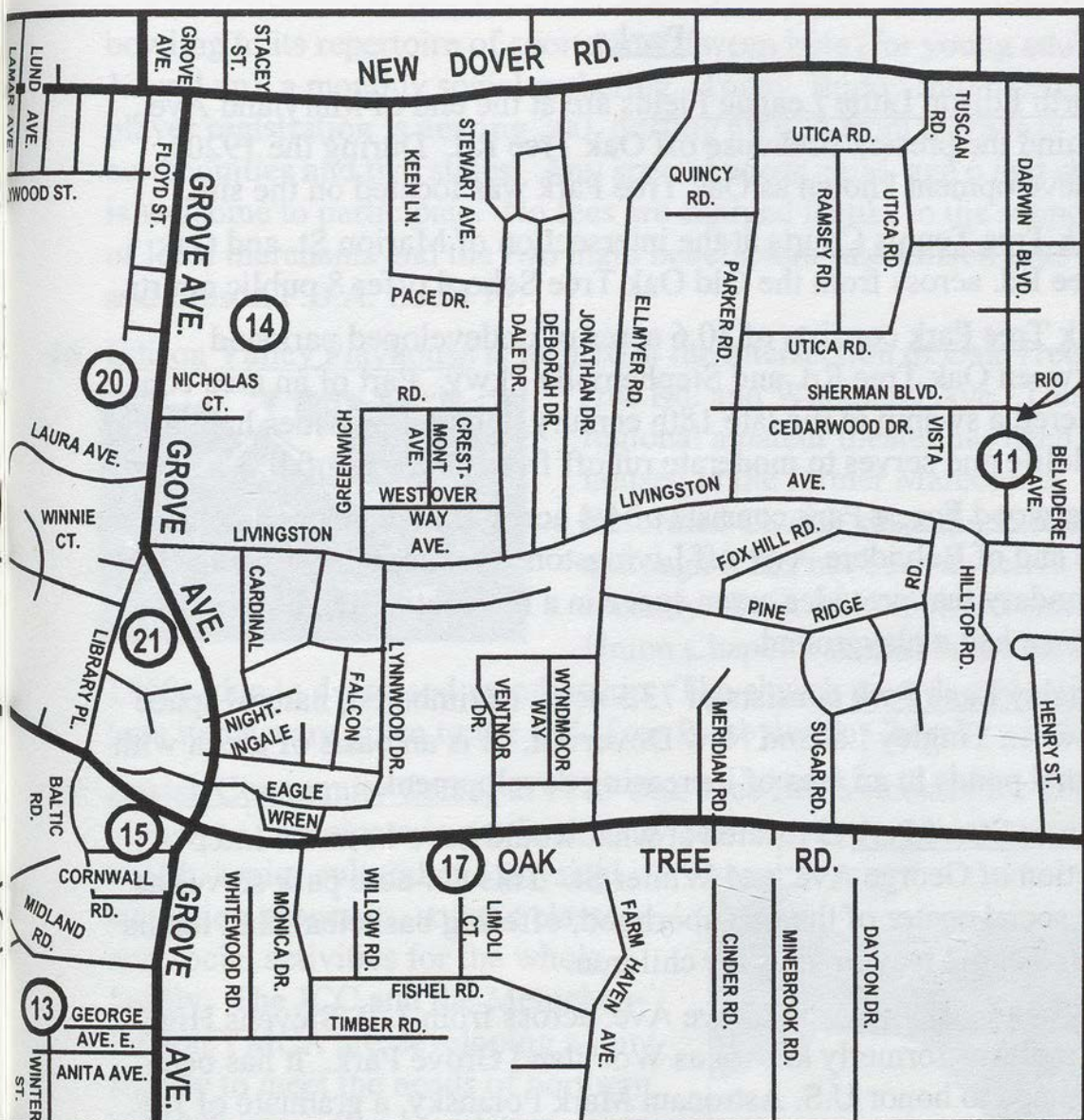
7. Edison Mural - Painted on the side of the building housing the strip mall at the intersection of Plainfield and New Dover Rds., the only mural in Edison depicts the past, present, and future of the Township. The mural was designed by Eric Hreha as a senior thesis while he was attending Rutgers University in 1999. The Edison Arts Society, the Edison Youth Service Corps, and students from the Edison Job Corps Academy helped turn the design into reality.





- ① Site of the Battle of The Short Hills
- ② Site of Dutch Miele's Dugout
- ③ Early Oak Tree Schoolhouse
- ④ Old Oak Tree School
- ⑤ Site of Old Oak Tree Train Station
- ⑥ Old Oak Tree Firehouse

- ⑦ Edison Mural
- ⑧ North Edison Little League Fields
- ⑨ Oak Tree Tennis Courts
- ⑩ Oak Tree Park
- ⑪ Sherwood Forest Park
- ⑫ Tingley Lane Park



- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------|----|----------------------------------|
| 13 | Winter Street Park | 19 | John Adams Middle School |
| 14 | Mark Polansky Park | 20 | John P. Stevens High School |
| 15 | Buddy Ball of Edison | 21 | North Edison Library |
| 16 | Edison Valley Playhouse | 22 | Oak Tree Fire Company |
| 17 | Jewish Community Center | 23 | Oak Tree Presbyterian Church |
| 18 | Bishop Ahr High School | 24 | Lord of Hope Presbyterian Church |

Parks

8. North Edison Little League Fields are at the end of Maryland Ave., behind the present firehouse off Oak Tree Rd. During the 1920s, a development known as Oak Tree Park was located on the site.
9. Oak Tree Tennis Courts at the intersection of Marion St. and Oak Tree Rd. across from the Old Oak Tree School offer 8 public courts.
10. Oak Tree Park consists of 30.6 acres of undeveloped parkland between Oak Tree Rd. and Stephenville Pkwy. Part of an area considered a swamp in the late 18th century, today it provides habitat for wildlife and serves to moderate runoff from heavy rainfall.
11. Sherwood Forest Park consists of 4.4 acres of undeveloped land at the end of Belvidere Ave. off Livingston Ave. near the Woodbridge boundary that provides green space in a residential neighborhood. It once had a playground.
12. Tingley Lane Park consists of 73.5 acres of timbered, natural space between Tingley La. and New Dover Rd. It is an oasis of green with vernal ponds in an area of increasing development.
13. Winter Street Park is located at what would have been the intersection of George Ave. and Winter St. This 8.4-acre park serves as the social center of the neighborhood, offering basketball and tennis courts and 2 playgrounds for children.
14. Mark Polansky Park on Grove Ave. across from J. P. Stevens High School was formerly known as Woodland Grove Park. It has been renamed to honor U.S. Astronaut Mark Polansky, a graduate of J. P. Stevens High School. The 23.4-acre park features a nature walk through a wooded area, a softball field, and playground.

Civic/Cultural/Recreational Facilities

15. Buddy Ball of Edison, Inc., headquartered at 6 Cornwall Dr., provides sporting and social activities without charge for children with special needs. In the spring of 1994, "Buddy Ball," a baseball league for special needs children, was organized under the banner of North Edison Baseball and Softball. The league experienced such wonderful success that it tried its "foot" at Soccer under the Edison United Soccer Associates umbrella. Starting with only enough players for two baseball teams and then two soccer teams, Buddy Ball's growth exploded. Incorporated as a non-profit organization on November 1, 1995, Buddy Ball of Edison, Inc., added basketball and

bowling to its repertoire of sports, and Tween Nite (for young adults 12 and up), a monthly social gathering. Today, Buddy Ball of Edison player registration is nearing 200, hosting players from more than 35 communities and two states. Any special needs child, age 6 and up, is welcome to participate. No fees are charged thanks to the support of local merchants and the two main benefactors--the Edison Elks and Edison P.B.A. Local 75.

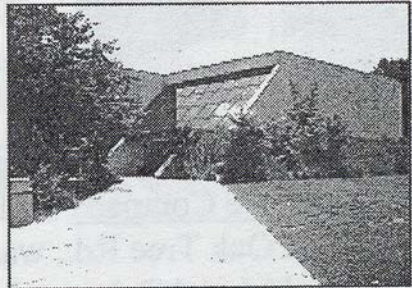
16. Edison Valley Playhouse is located at the intersection of Oak Tree



Tree Rd. and Woodland Ave. This regional amateur theater has been housed in the former Marconnier Reformed Church since the 1960s, although it has not been as active recently. Built in 1895, Marconnier Union Chapel was sold in the early

1960s, due to decreased membership. The church records and religious items were given to the Oak Tree Presbyterian Church (*see* #23).

17. Jewish Community Center at 1775 Oak Tree Rd. welcomes the community to participate in professionally developed pre-school, teen, health, senior cultural and physical education programs, aquatic classes, and social activities for the whole family. The JCC and the Metuchen-Edison YMCA are developing a joint facility to meet the needs of northern Edison's expanding population.



Schools

18. Bishop George Ahr High School at New Dover Rd. and Tingley La. opened in 1969 as St. Thomas Aquinas High School. In 1983, this Catholic high school was rededicated as Bishop Ahr High School in tribute to Bishop George Ahr's 30 years of service to the Diocese of Trenton. It shared the building, but not faculty or administration, with Pope Pius X High School for several years until Pope Pius moved to its own building in Piscataway. Pope Pius X High School closed in 1990; the building is now used as the headquarters for the Diocese of Metuchen.

19. John Adams Middle School at 1081 New Dover Rd. was built in 1962, and is one of four middle schools in Edison for grades 6-8.

20. John P. Stevens High School at 855 Grove Ave., near New Dover Rd., is named for John P. Stevens, Jr., a local resident who headed the J. P. Stevens textile mills and was actively involved in local education for many years. The school opened in 1964 to serve the growing population of northern Edison, with major additions in 1974 and the mid-1990s.

Public Service Facilities

21. North Edison Library is located at 777 Grove Ave. between Oak Tree and New Dover Roads. Library services formerly housed at John



Adams Middle School were transferred here when the branch opened in 1971. Expansions were completed in 1979 and in 1992. A large granite monument on the north side of the library is dedicated to the exempt firemen of Edison Township. On September 4, 1999, four members of Junior Girl Scout Troop 1045 dedicated a Peace Pole in the front of the library. The 8-foot high red cedar pole displays the words "May peace prevail on Earth" in eight languages.

22. Oak Tree Fire Company on Beverly Rd., behind the Oak Tree Bus Garage on Oak Tree Rd., was formed in 1926. The first truck was a 1917 Ford Model T, housed in the barn of one of their members.

Houses of Worship

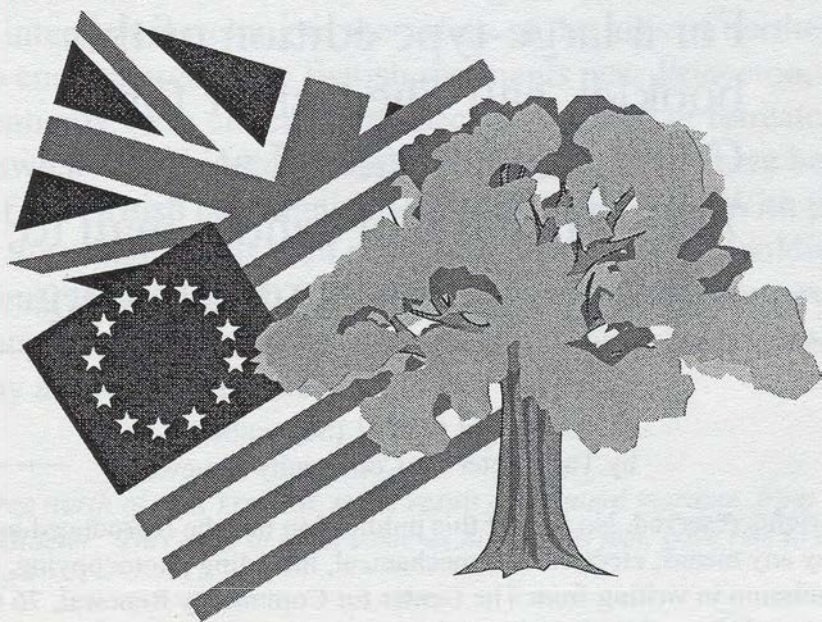
23. Oak Tree Presbyterian Church at 455 Plainfield Rd., began in 1966 as a mission of the Community Presbyterian Church, and merged with Marconnier Reformed Church. Services were held in the old Oak Tree School for 2 years until the new building was finished.
24. Lord of Hope Presbyterian Church was established in 1993 to serve the Korean community in the Edison area. Initially, the church shared the facilities of St. Paul's Lutheran Church at 445 Old Post Rd. In 2001, the church relocated to 445 Plainfield Rd., sharing the building with the Oak Tree Presbyterian Church. Church members volunteer at Roosevelt Hospital and Elijah's Promise in New Brunswick.

The Battle of The Short Hills

*(Commonly known as
The Battle of Oak Tree)*

June 26, 1777

A Turning Point
of the American Revolution



Passport to Edison – 2001
is a project of
The Center for Community Renewal

This program has been made possible in part by the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission through a grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, Division of Cultural Affairs, Department of State.

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June 26, 1777:

A Turning Point of the American Revolution

1776 - Background of the Battle of The Short Hills¹

Most of 1776 had not been favorable for the Americans. After the loss of Fort Washington on Manhattan Island on November 16, the Americans were forced to retreat through New Jersey and across the Delaware River into Pennsylvania. Morale was not high among the troops or the patriots. However, as an invading army, the British and Hessians began making enemies among the Colonists.

General William Howe put his troops in winter quarters, leaving 1400 Hessian soldiers in Trenton. Sensing that the Hessians were unsupported, General Washington determined to attempt their capture. At that point, Washington had a force of about 6000. On the night of December 25, he was able to get 2500 soldiers across the Delaware and surprise the Hessians before they could form effectively. Over 900 Hessians were captured and their colonel was mortally wounded. Washington crossed back over the Delaware with his troops and prisoners. On December 30, Washington recrossed the Delaware and occupied Trenton.

In response, General Charles Lord Cornwallis marched with 7000 troops and drove the Americans to the banks of the Delaware. Unable to cross back to Pennsylvania, Washington boldly escaped being trapped by the British the next morning. Quietly breaking camp, he took a byroad to Princeton, intent on marching to the safety of the hills of northern New Jersey. He encountered three British regiments near Princeton, but the British eventually were either driven back to Trenton or retreated towards New Brunswick. Washington marched to Morristown where he was on the flank of the British communications with New York. With these two successes, Washington was well positioned to recruit new soldiers, and in a good defensive position. It is important to recall that there are few passes through the Watchung Mountains, and those could easily be defended by a few hundred men.

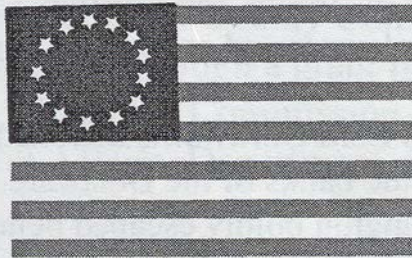
¹ The hilly area north of Oak Tree Rd. is the result of terminal moraine from the Wisconsin Glacier. This area of hills, some as high as 60 feet, gave rise to the name "Short Hills."

See the map in the center of this booklet for the locations of the sites indicated by circled letters.

Early 1777

The British were anxious to quell the rebellion, and sought to control New Jersey so they could march overland from New York and capture Philadelphia, site of the Continental Congress. However, emboldened by the American successes of the past winter and reports of British atrocities, patriots and local militia harassed British parties sent out to gather supplies. American troops were in constant skirmishes with the British, threatening significant movements of British troops across New Jersey.

At the same time, it became obvious to the Continental Congress that the American Colonies could not remain part of Great Britain. Early American flags had been based on the British Union Jack, but on June 14, 1777, the Stars and Stripes were established as the standard when the Flag Resolution was passed.



Also on June 14, General Howe attempted to provoke General Washington into battle with an aggressive move to a position between Middlebush and Millstone. However, Washington remained safely in the mountains at Middlebrook. On June 19, Howe withdrew to New Brunswick. On June 22, the main body of British troops slogged through summer rain to Perth Amboy, harassed by Colonial troops. A pontoon bridge was constructed to Staten Island in apparent preparation for the retreat of the entire British Army.

- A** In response, Washington came out of the mountains into Quibbletown, now New Market, in present day Piscataway. Wisely, Washington posted Lord Stirling and about 2500 troops and militia at Ash Swamp to protect the eastern passes into the Watchung Mountains.

June 26, 1777 - The Battle of the Short Hills²

Hearing intelligence reports of Washington's movements, Howe secretly ordered his troops back to Perth Amboy. Howe's military objectives at this time may be summed up as follows:

- a) attack General Washington's Main Army in Quibbletown in the hope of destroying the American forces, and
- b) destroy Washington's advanced division under Major General William Alexander (Lord Stirling) and possibly get through the passes in the Watchung Mountain range. This would have forced the Continental Army out of the protection of these heights.

If either of these plans had succeeded, it would have vastly tilted the outcome of the Revolution in favor of the British.

The British Army, consisting of nearly 18,000 soldiers, was divided into two columns in order to attempt a classic pincer attack. Howe had intended to move his army out as early as 1:00 a.m. on June 26, but unforeseen delays occurred. The right column, which started out

- (B) before sunrise from Strawberry Hill (Woodbridge), consisted of approximately 5000 troops under the command of Lord Cornwallis.
- (C) The second column, led by General Vaughan, and accompanied by General Howe, moved out on the left from Perth Amboy, along the road above the Raritan River. This column moved out around sunrise towards Bonhamtown and Metuchen.

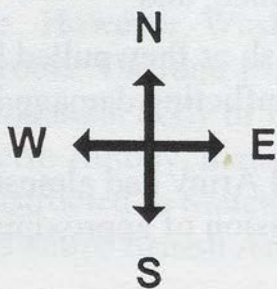
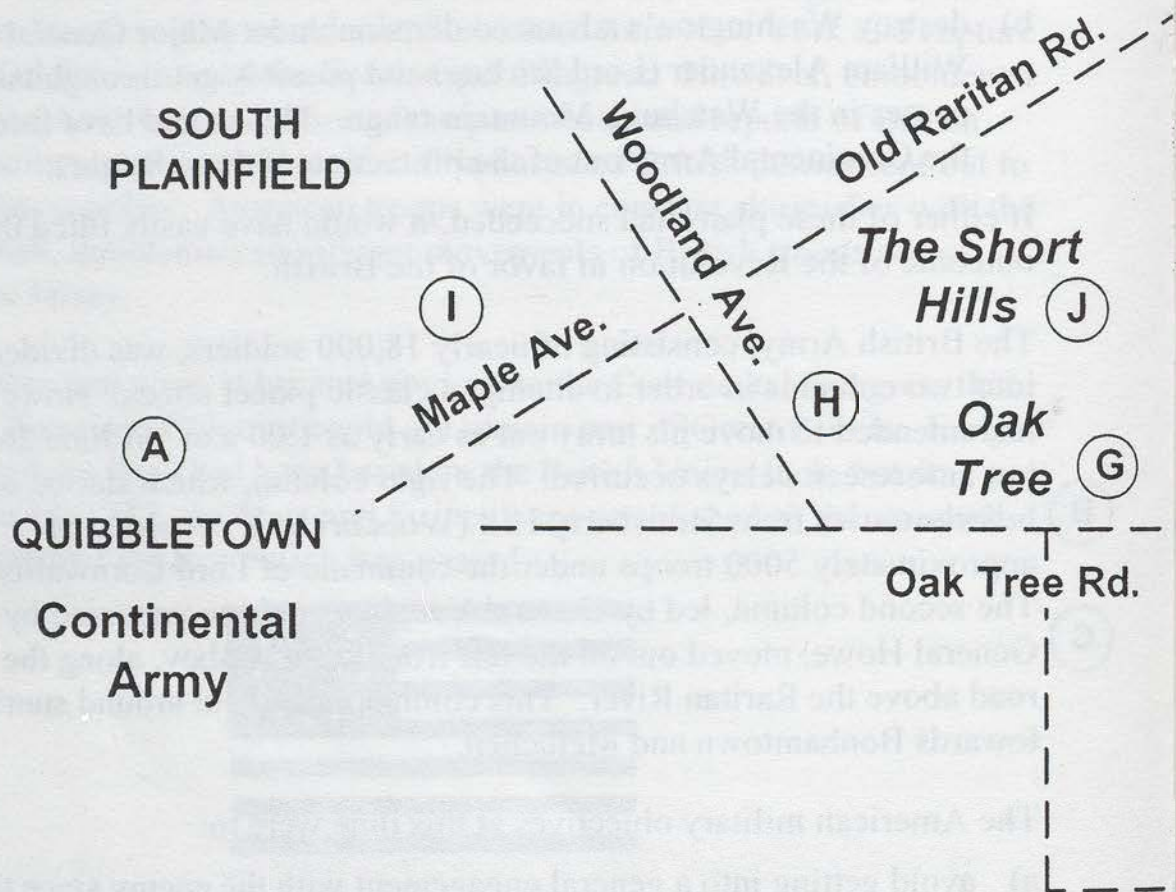
The American military objectives at this time were to:

- a) avoid getting into a general engagement with the enemy since the American forces had inferior numbers, and were still insufficiently organized and trained, and
- a) keep watch on the British as they pulled back from New Jersey, with the possibility of inflicting damage in a rear guard action.

At this time the Continental Army had almost 10,000 soldiers. Major General Lord Stirling's division of approximately 2000 men consisted

² The detailed account of the events on June 26, 1777, was prepared by George W. Stillman. His account was developed using extensive research and primary sources found in the U.S. and overseas. For further source material information, please contact the author, George W. Stillman, c/o Walter Stochel, Jr., 2118 Oak Tree Road, Edison, NJ 08820, or wstochel@earthlink.net, 732-906-0529.

The Battle of The Short Hills



(K)

WESTFIELD



Ash
Swamp

(D)



CLARK & RAHWAY

(L)

(F)

(E)

Strawberry
Hill

(B)

Lord Cornwallis'
Column

METUCHEN

(C)

Gen. Howe's
Column

BONHAMTOWN

PERTH AMBOY



of General William Maxwell's New Jersey Brigade (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th New Jersey Regiments) and General Thomas Conway's Pennsylvania Brigade (3rd, 6th, 9th, 12th Pennsylvania Regiments and 5th New Jersey Regiment). These Brigades were posted in advance at Ash Swamp and The Short Hills, extending towards the Metuchen Meeting House. Washington also sent some of the American light dragoons (mounted infantry) and riflemen forward to assist Stirling. Another American Division, led by Major General Sullivan, was posted at Sampton (present day South Plainfield).

(D) Washington stayed at Quibbletown with about three divisions and was accompanied by Major General Green, Major General Stephen, and Major General Lincoln. The New England brigades of General Varnum and General Parsons were also in the vicinity. No doubt, some of the local New Jersey militia were active as well.

Fortunately on the day of battle, Stirling's men had been prepared as early as 4:00 a.m. The opening skirmish occurred in Woodbridge, near present Routes 1 & 9, when a detachment of Virginia and New Jersey Continentals discovered the advancing troops of Lord Cornwallis' column. This British column advanced westerly along present Green St. and Oak Tree Rd. Elements of Colonel Daniel Morgan's riflemen appear to have been busy in the early skirmishing.

Upon hearing the firing, Conway's Brigade advanced, under the command of General Maxwell, to a hill on Oak Tree Rd. in Edison, near the present ShopRite. Realizing they were badly outnumbered, Conway's troops retreated, after exchanging cannon fire, towards The Short Hills in Edison Township. General Maxwell narrowly escaped being captured.

(F) Upon hearing the firing, Conway's Brigade advanced, under the command of General Maxwell, to a hill on Oak Tree Rd. in Edison, near the present ShopRite. Realizing they were badly outnumbered, Conway's troops retreated, after exchanging cannon fire, towards The Short Hills in Edison Township. General Maxwell narrowly escaped being captured.

(G) A small American unit of about 80 men, Ottendorf's Corps, under the command of Colonel Armand, was next attacked near the crossroads of New Dover Rd. and Oak Tree Rd. This corps suffered 32 men killed or missing.

The British now reached the vicinity of The Short Hills heights near Woodland Ave. Conway's Brigade continued to fall back towards Quibbletown, no doubt passing along The Short Hills.

(H) Suddenly, the right flank of the British army was hit by cannon fire, apparently by the American rear guard. The British moved their light

I infantry and flankers towards this direction. In the meantime, Conway's Brigade continued their retreat along Old Raritan Rd./Maple Ave., South Plainfield, and managed to suffer few casualties.

J The New Jersey Brigade was now moving close to the action from the vicinity of Ash Swamp. They had intended to join up with Conway's Brigade but the movements of the enemy prevented the Brigades from linking up. For the New Jersey line, this was to be their first "Brigade" action of the war and they appear to have had the fighting spirit that day. The 1st and 3rd New Jersey Regiments, on the right side of the New Jersey Brigade, attacked the 1st British Light Infantry after advancing into a wood, apparently from the northeast side of The Short Hills. The New Jersey regiments temporarily drove the enemy back. Lord Cornwallis moved up with the German Jaegers (riflemen) and the British Guards. The Jaegers attempted to get through the ravines in the hills to help surround the Jersey troops. Cornwallis also sent the 1st British Grenadiers to the heights near Oak Tree with cannon to fire on the Americans. Hessian Colonel Donop was sent with the Hessian Grenadiers through the valley on the eastern side of the heights. The British Guards continued a movement further to the right of the Hessians. Fortune was with the "Jersey Blues," as they discovered Cornwallis' trap in time.

Lord Stirling posted the 2nd New Jersey Regiment with two cannon on the left of the New Jersey line, presumably on some small hills near Tingley La. Stirling stayed in the center of the line with the 4th New Jersey Regiment and two additional cannon. Heavy discharges of musketry and cannon fire ensued. Part of this action took place near Old Raritan Rd., Inman Ave., and Rahway Rd.

K Now heavily outnumbered by the advancing British army, the New Jersey line was forced to retreat toward Westfield, but not before a hardy defense, which lasted about 1½ hours. The New Jersey troops had fought hard, losing three valuable cannon and suffering about 46 casualties. Lord Stirling had personally fought bravely with his men and was nearly captured. However, their defense had helped buy valuable time for Washington to extricate his main Army and move back into the protection of the Watchung heights. Lord Stirling's troops, who moved toward the gaps near Scotch Plains and Westfield, also managed to help frustrate the attempt of the British to move into these heights.

The initial skirmish started in Woodbridge around 6:00 a.m. on June 26. By the time the main battle ended, it was near 12:00 noon. Casualties suffered by both armies were moderate. An estimate for the American forces is about 200 troops. Estimates for the British forces ranged between 35 to 200 troops.

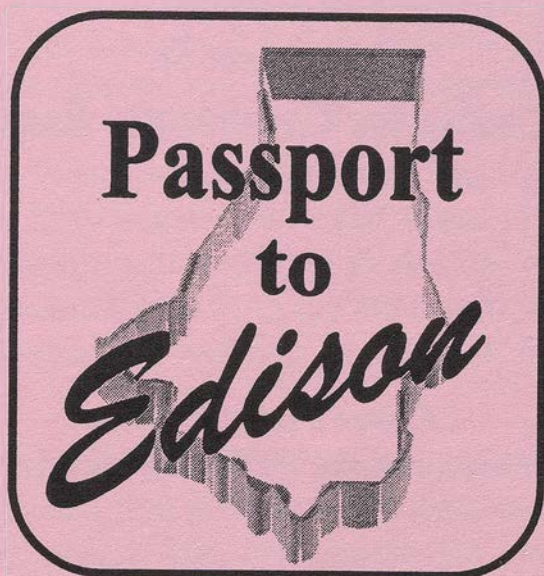
(K) The day had been hot and the troops were exhausted. The British and Hessians took out their hostility on the local citizens later that day and on June 27, terrorizing them and destroying much of the local citizens' property. In Westfield they "burned, stripped and destroyed all as they went along." Westfield residents alone filed over 100 claims for British damages. Washington sent 300 barrels of flour for the residents. On (L) June 27, the British moved into Clark and Rahway on their way back to Perth Amboy.

Significance of the Battle of Short Hills

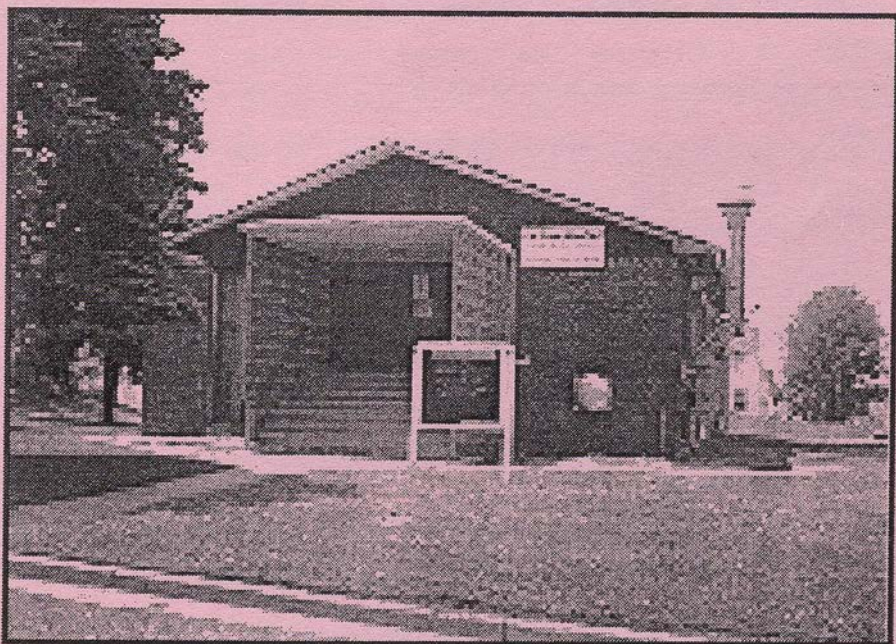
The principle achievement of The Battle of The Short Hills was that it kept the American forces under General Washington intact, so they could fight against the British military when conditions were more favorable. It also helped British General Howe decide to give up the occupation of New Jersey and begin his controversial campaign for Philadelphia (the American capital) by sea. By the end of the June, the British totally abandoned New Jersey to the Americans. Howe subsequently lost much valuable campaign time in conducting this movement.

Howe had been preoccupied with his contest against Washington's main Army in the Middle States and, as a result, could provide little assistance to another large British force coming down from Canada under the command of General Burgoyne. Eventually, Howe captured Philadelphia. But with the American army still intact, even after major battles at Brandywine and Germantown, it was a hollow victory. When the British captured Philadelphia, the Continental Congress moved to other locations in Pennsylvania. To add to the dilemma, Burgoyne's forces, without any real support from Howe, were finally defeated and captured at Saratoga.

Hence, the campaign of 1777, of which The Battle of The Short Hills was a part, played a significant role in helping to achieve the independence of the new American nation.



Potter's Crossing/ New Dover



Tour Guide

Passport to Edison – 2001
is a project of
The Center for Community Renewal

Cover Photograph
Mt. Zion Unified Free Will Baptist Church

This program has been made possible in part by the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission through a grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, Division of Cultural Affairs, Department of State.

For a large-type edition of *A Guide to Passport to Edison – 2001*, call The Center for Community Renewal at 732-321-0045, or send e-mail to: admin@communityrenewal.org.

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Neighborhood Notes

Potter's Crossing, where the Lehigh Valley Railroad tracks cross Inman Ave., is named for the railroad stop along the property of J. R. Potter, a white farmer, who owned a large farm on the north side of Inman Ave. now occupied by the West Gate development. The Potter's Crossing community is said to have begun with seven, upper middle class African-American families who moved here from Harlem in 1917. Soon it attracted African-American men from the South who came seeking a better life for their families by working on the farms in northern Raritan Township.

From the 1920s through the mid-1900s, the area was a thriving African-American community of 1,500 residents with African-American-owned businesses providing jobs, its own fire department, a community center, and three churches. Mt. Zion Unified Free Will Baptist Church is the oldest of the churches and remains at its original location on Beaver Ave. The original Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church on Grove Ave. was demolished as part of an urban renewal project and rebuilt a little further south. The House of Jacob Church relocated to Beatrice Parkway. Ms. Minnie Veal ran the community center, which was located where Burger King is today in the Inman-Grove Shopping Center. Potter's Crossing was known throughout the area for its food, music, and summer softball games, familiar to many of the residents who migrated from the South. Earlier names for Grove Ave. were Dark Lane and Edward Ave.

The rural African-American community was destroyed in the late 1970s when 170 acres near Inman and Grove Aves. were taken by eminent domain for renewal by the Edison Housing Authority. Homes and businesses were bulldozed. Unfortunately, the project took 20 years to complete, and many of the original residents moved away. The African-American community was eventually replaced by a diverse community, and the renewal project was replaced by single- and multi-family housing for low- and moderate-income families and commercial buildings, in what is now northern Edison.

Mount Pleasant, another early settlement, was centered around the intersection of Inman Ave. and Tingley La. Mt. Pleasant School House No. 11 (*see #4*) was located on the southeast corner of the intersection. The school was later converted into a private home.

Tingley La. was initially known as the "Road from Oak Tree to Mt. Pleasant," and as recently as the 1950s, was called Mt. Pleasant Rd.

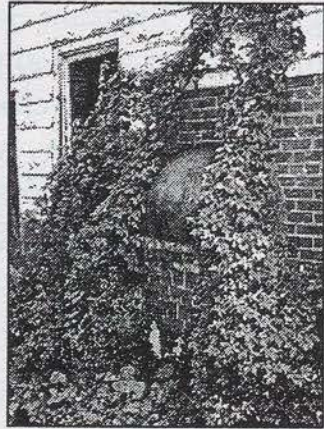
West of Tingley La., Inman Ave. was known as the "Road to Mt. Pleasant School House." East of the intersection, it was called Mt. Pleasant Rd. Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church on Grove Ave. keeps the name alive.

New Dover, another early settlement in northern Edison, remained small well into the 20th century. In the late 19th century, the settlement consisted of one store, a post office, New Dover School House No.12, and the New Dover Methodist Church. The school was sold after the new Oak Tree School was built in 1909.

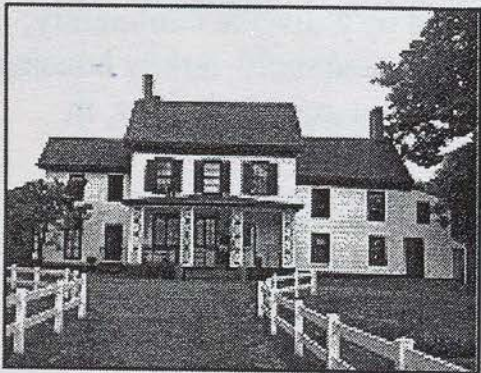
See the map in the center of this booklet for the locations of the sites described.

Historic Sites

1. Beehive Oven House was in a wooded area to the west of Featherbed La. at the bend as it turns into Oak Ridge Rd. The house featured an outside masonry oven built in the shape of a large beehive, a style of oven fairly common in Colonial times. Unfortunately, the house fell into disrepair, and subsequently, the remains were destroyed by fire.



2. Homestead Farm at Oak Ridge Revolutionary War Site is now the Club House of the Union County Oak Ridge Golf Club. The Homestead Farm at Oak Ridge was involved in two significant events in the American Revolution. The oldest section was built about 1730 as the house of an outer farm serving Woodbridge by descendants of John Smith of Barnstable, MA, one of the original founders of Woodbridge. The Smith family had a prestigious



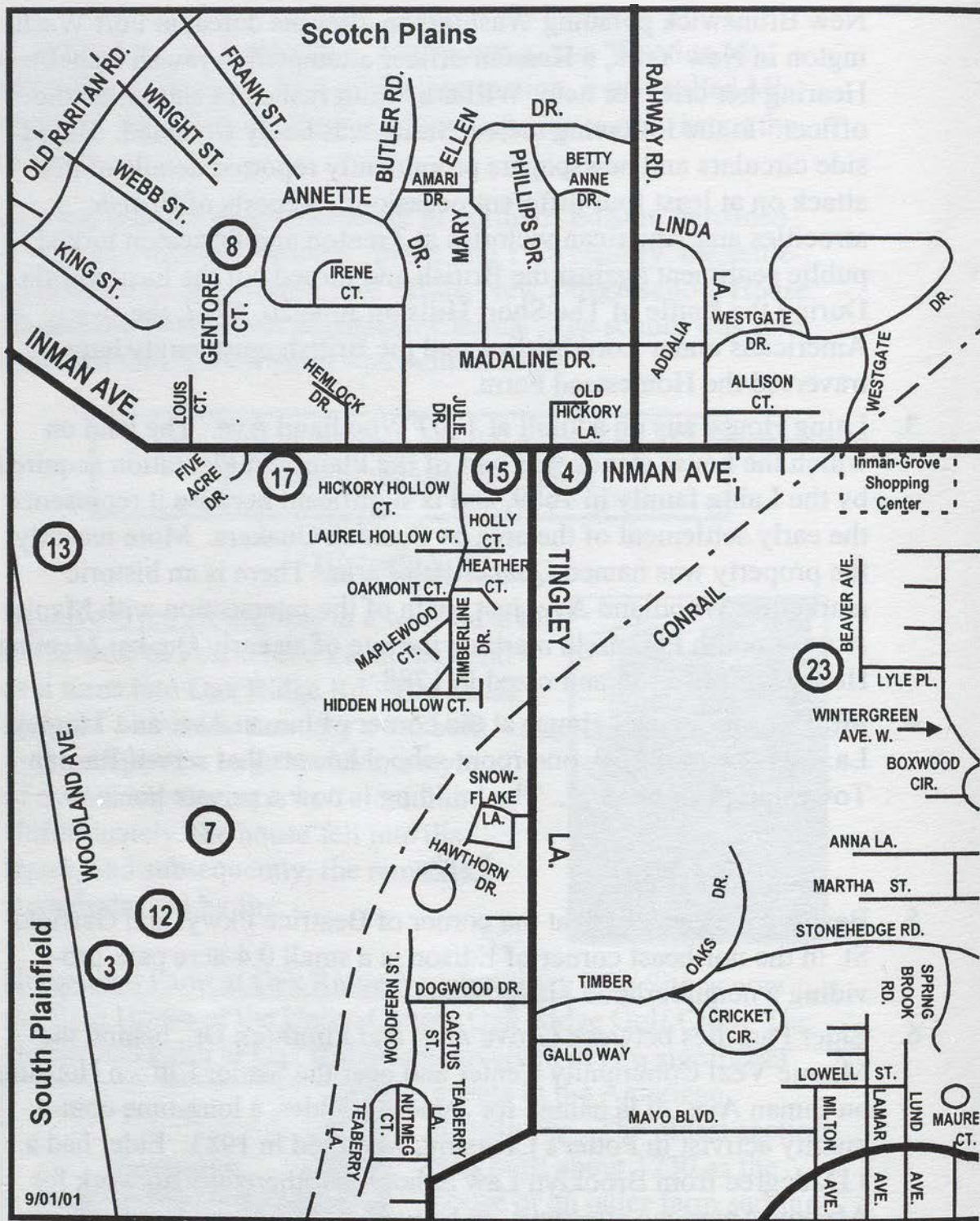
Quaker lineage including four Colonial governors. In 1776, the farm was tended by William Smith and his daughter, Isabel. In early December 1776, as the British marched from Hackensack to

New Brunswick pursuing Washington after his defeat at Fort Washington in New York, a Hessian officer attempted to ravish Isabel. Hearing her cries for help, William Smith rushed in and killed the officer. In the following melee, Smith was badly wounded. Broad-side circulars and newspapers prominently reported details of the attack on at least four different occasions. Reports of British atrocities and American victories at Trenton and Princeton turned public sentiment against the British and turned out the local militia. During the Battle of The Short Hills on June 26, 1777, the Americans under Lord Stirling and the British must surely have traversed the Homestead Farm.

3. Laing House sits on a knoll at 1707 Woodland Ave. The land on which the house stands was part of the Plainfield Plantation acquired by the Laing family in 1689, and is significant because it represents the early settlement of the area by Scottish Quakers. More recently the property was named Quaker Hill Farm. There is an historic marker on Woodland Ave. just south of the intersection with Maple Ave. in South Plainfield marking the site of an early Quaker Meeting House built in 1736 and razed in 1788.
4. Mt. Pleasant School House at the corner of Inman Ave. and Tingley La. was one of the 10, one-room school houses that served Raritan Township prior to 1904. The building is now a private home.

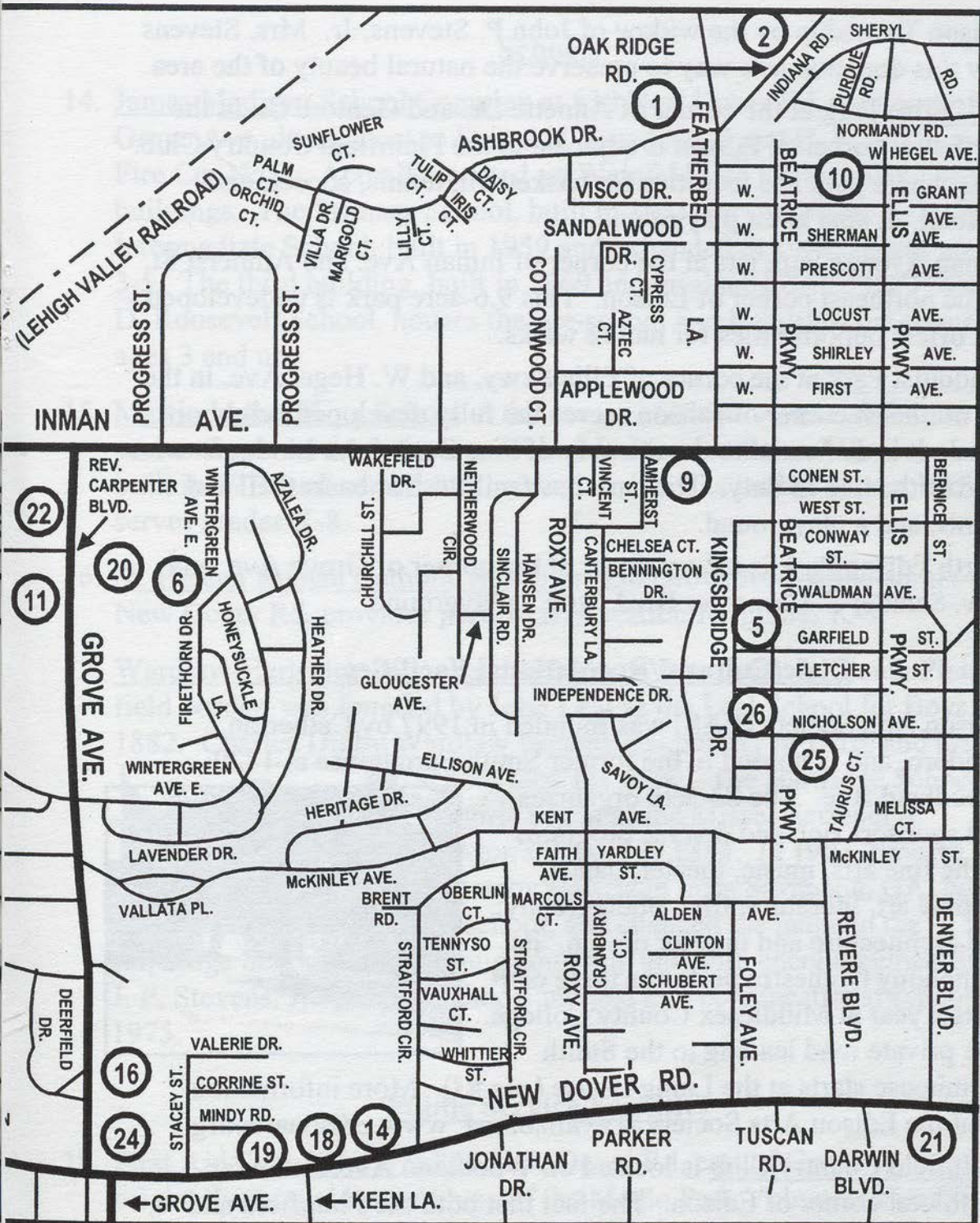
Parks

5. Beatrice Parkway Park at the corner of Beatrice Pkwy. and Garfield St. in the northeast corner of Edison is a small 0.4-acre park providing a neighborhood playground.
6. Elder Park lies between Grove Ave. and Firethorn Dr., behind the Minnie Veal Community Center and near the Senior Citizen Housing on Inman Ave. It is named for James D. Elder, a long-time community activist in Potter's Crossing, who died in 1983. Elder had a J.D. degree from Brooklyn Law School, but there was no work for African-American attorneys, so he worked in a New York post office. He understood the need for improved housing in Potter's Crossing, and was one of the commissioners of the newly created Housing Authority that transformed the area into what we see today. The 11-acre park has facilities for basketball, football and softball, and a picnic grove, pavilion, and playground.
7. Edith Stevens Memorial Wildlife Preserve is a 57-acre tract in the wooded hills between Tingley La. and Woodland Ave. donated to



9/01/01

- | | | |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| ① Beehive Oven House | ⑥ Elder Park | ⑪ North Edison Park |
| ② Oak Ridge Country Club
Revolutionary War Site | ⑦ Edith Stevens Memorial
Wildlife Preserve | ⑫ Edison Arts Society |
| ③ Laing House | ⑧ Golf Edge Park | ⑬ Plainfield Country Club |
| ④ Mt. Pleasant School Site | ⑨ Inman Ave. Park | ⑭ James Madison School
Complex |
| ⑤ Beatrice Parkway Park | ⑩ Lindquist Park | ⑮ Martin Luther King School |



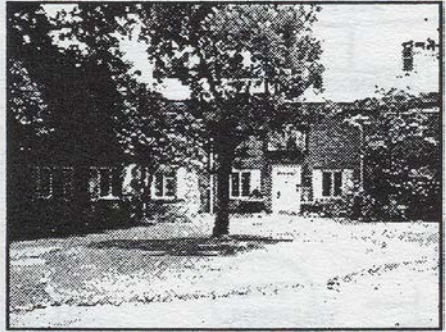
<p>16 St. Helena Roman Catholic School</p> <p>17 Wardlaw-Hartridge School</p> <p>18 First Aid Squad No. 2</p> <p>19 H. K. Volunteer Fire Co. No. 1</p>	<p>20 Minnie Veal Community Center</p> <p>21 New Dover United Methodist Church</p> <p>22 Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church</p>	<p>23 Mt. Zion Free Will Baptist Church</p> <p>24 St. Helena Roman Catholic Church</p> <p>25 White Rock Baptist Church</p> <p>26 House of Jacob Church</p>
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Edison Township by the widow of John P. Stevens, Jr. Mrs. Stevens saw this donation as a way to preserve the natural beauty of the area.

8. Golf Edge Park at the corner of Annette Dr. and Gentore Ct. in the northwest corner of Edison is adjacent to the Plainfield Country Club. This 8-acre park has facilities for basketball, tennis, soccer, and softball. It also has a playground.
9. Inman Avenue Park sits at the corner of Inman Ave. and Amherst St. in the northeast corner of Edison. This 9.6-acre park is undeveloped but offers opportunities for nature walks.
10. Lindquist Park at the corner of Ellis Pkwy. and W. Hegel Ave. in the far northeast corner of Edison serves the fully developed neighborhood. It is dedicated to the memory of Fire Capt. John Lindquist who died in the line of duty. The park has facilities for basketball and tennis, and a playground.
11. North Edison Park is a 2-acre park at the corner of Grove Ave. and Rev. Samuel C. Carpenter Blvd. with a playground.

Civic/Cultural/Recreational Facilities

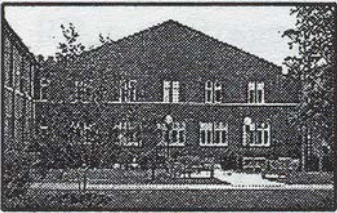
12. Edison Arts Society (EAS) was founded in 1997 by Catherine Spadaro, and is housed in the former Smith Farmhouse at 1729 Woodland Ave. The Society organizes and sponsors rich and diverse programs in the fine arts, music, theater, dance, graphic art, literature, film, photography, and architecture and interior design. Its Symphony Orchestra performs three concerts a year at Middlesex County College. The private road leading to the Smith Farmhouse starts at the Laing House (*see #3*). More information about the Edison Arts Society is available at www.edisonarts.org.



13. Plainfield Country Club is located on Woodland Ave. in the far northwest corner of Edison. The fact that both the Plainfield and Metuchen Country Clubs are in Edison is another sign that the Township was once largely undeveloped open space. The Plainfield Club was established in 1890, and Donald Ross, a well-known designer, laid out the golf course in 1916. The rolling topography at the Plainfield Country Club has changed little since 1777. The ravine that British forces said was on their left on June 26, 1777, is clearly visible at the southern side of the club. The Stoney Brook Gap is clearly visible from the north side of the clubhouse.

Schools

14. James Madison School Complex at 838 New Dover Rd., just east of Grove Ave., is adjacent to First Aid Squad No. 2 and H. K. Volunteer Fire Co. No. 1. Actually located on Weinfeld Dr., the complex has three buildings. The Primary School, built in 1971, serves grades K-2. The Intermediate School, built in 1959 and expanded in 1968, serves grades 3-5. The third building, built in 1969 and originally called the Franklin D. Roosevelt School, houses the pre-school and Headstart programs for ages 3 and up.
15. Martin Luther King School at the corner of Inman Ave. and Tingley La., across the street from the site of the Mt. Pleasant School House, was built in 1970 and named for the slain civil rights leader. The school serves grades K-8.
16. St. Helena Roman Catholic School at 950 Grove Ave. at the corner of New Dover Rd. provides parochial education for grades K-8.
17. Wardlaw-Hartridge School at 1295 Inman Ave., near the South Plainfield border, was founded by John Leal as the Leal School for Boys in 1882. Charles Digby Wardlaw became headmaster in 1916, and the school took his name. The Hartridge School for girls began as the Misses Scribner & Newton's School in 1884. In 1903, Emelyn Battersby Hartridge from Savannah, GA, bought the school, and changed the name to the Hartridge School. After a long courtship and with encouragement from J. P. Stevens, Jr., the two schools merged as a co-educational school in 1975.

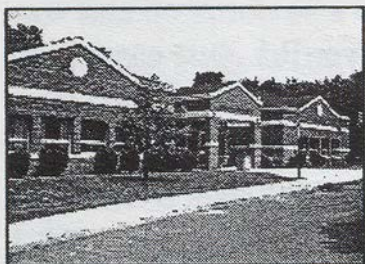


Public Service Facilities

18. First Aid Squad No. 2 at 836 New Dover Rd. east of Grove Ave., was originally formed by members of the Menlo Park Volunteer Fire Co. in 1936. It was first housed in a bungalow on Monmouth Ave. in the Menlo Park neighborhood. The Squad had several other homes before moving to its present location in 1986.
19. H. K. Volunteer Fire Co. No. 1 is situated at 834 New Dover Rd., next to First Aid Squad No. 2. Founded in 1925, the first firehouse was on Midwood Ave. on land donated by Henry Kuntz, and is named in his honor.

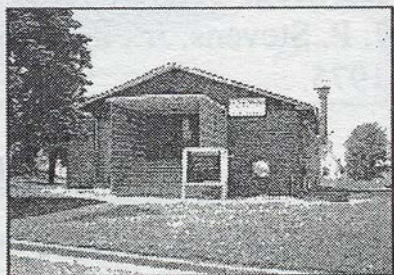


20. Minnie Veal Community Center is at 1070 Grove Ave. just south of Inman Ave. The Center was dedicated in 1990 to honor Minnie Veal, who was a mother figure to countless African-American youngsters and a tireless volunteer. She left an indelible imprint on her community.



Houses of Worship

21. New Dover United Methodist Church at 687 New Dover Rd, near the Woodbridge border, is part of the early New Dover settlement. The sanctuary was built in 1849 so families would not have to travel to Rahway and Woodbridge. Construction cost \$2,700 on land donated by Gussie Wood. At the time of construction, there were only 18 members. Although expanded several times, electricity was not added until 1924, and the two pot-bellied stoves were not replaced by central heating until 1951.
22. Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church is now located at 1087 Grove Ave. across from the Minnie Veal Community Center. Founded in 1928, services were first held in the Mt. Pleasant School House at the corner of Inman Ave. and Tingley La. (see #4). In 1984, an earlier structure was demolished to make way for the Inman-Grove Shopping Center, and the present church was built a little further south under the leadership of Rev. Samuel C. Carpenter. The street alongside the church is named in his honor.
23. Mt. Zion Unified Free Will Baptist Church is still at its original location at 47 Beaver Ave. This is the oldest of the three African-American churches in Potters, and retained its original location during the urban renewal project of the late 1970s.



24. St. Helena Roman Catholic Church is located at 950 Grove Ave. at the corner of New Dover Rd.
25. White Rock Baptist Church is located at 247 Nicholson Ave. in a residential area between Inman Ave. and New Dover Rd., near the Woodbridge border.
26. House of Jacob Church moved to 889 Beatrice Pkwy. near Nicholson Ave. as a result of the urban renewal project that disrupted the African-American community in Potters in the 1970s.

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References are to the particular section or Tour Guide in this book and the page number in that section or Tour Guide where you will find the entry referenced. The following abbreviations are used for the sections and Tour Guides; the list is in the order in which they appear in this book:

I	=	Introduction to the book	
PL	=	Piscatawaytown/Lindeneau Tour Guide	(Light blue cover)
NB	=	Nixon/Bonhamtown Tour Guide	(Goldenrod cover)
S	=	Stelton Tour Guide	(Violet cover)
CK	=	Camp Kilmer Tour Guide	(Light green cover)
LP	=	Lincoln Park Tour Guide	(Gray cover)
CB	=	Clara Barton Tour Guide	(Salmon cover)
RP	=	Roosevelt Park Tour Guide	(Light yellow cover)
MP	=	Menlo Park Tour Guide	(Buff cover)
PNP	=	Pumptown/New Petrograd Tour Guide	(Peach cover)
OT	=	Oak Tree Tour Guide	(Ivory cover)
B	=	The Battle of The Short Hills Booklet	(White cover)
PND	=	Potter's Crossing/New Dover Tour Guide	(Pink cover)

For example, the entry:

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means that you will find a reference to the Ainscow Family on page 1 of the Stelton Tour Guide.

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Edison Twp. Pub. Library
340 Plainfield Ave.
Edison, NJ 088



REFERENCE

Passport to Edison – 2001
is a project of
The Center for Community Renewal

The Center for Community Renewal supports community-building projects by grassroots groups and individuals through mini-grants, resources, and information and education. It was founded in 1997, and is an all-volunteer, non-profit foundation with 501(c)(3) status.

Mini-grants: Twice a year, The Center awards mini-grants of up to \$500 to small groups or individuals to “jump-start” their community-building projects. The Center also works with mini-grant recipients to define and clarify projects, and may provide volunteers and other resources. Over the last three years, nine mini-grants have been awarded for projects addressing literacy, economic disadvantage, the special needs of infants in neonatal care, environmental education, hunger, help for victims of disaster, development of youth, and assistance to seniors.

Resources – A Few Examples: In 2001, The Center began a *computer recycling program* to provide reconditioned computers free to non-profit organizations and needy individuals. In 2000, Center members collaborated with the Edison Wetlands Association and John P. Stevens High School clubs to organize the “*Clean the Stream*” project. Almost 400 young people and adults cleared trash and debris from 50 acres along the Robinson’s Branch of the Rahway River. In 1999, Center members collaborated with The Friends of the Edison Public Library and the Edison Arts Society to create the *Edison Book and Arts Fair*--the only community-wide event ever held in Edison with a focus on literacy and the arts.

Community-Building: In 2000, The Center organized the first annual *Passport to Edison*, engaging a dozen non-profit and community service organizations and township agencies in the event.



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